

Faculty Handbook Update

From Internal Communications <InternalCommunications@stjohns.edu>

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To Internal Communications <InternalCommunications@stjohns.edu>



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Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

I am writing to provide an update on the progress of the Faculty Handbook Working Group in reviewing and refining our Faculty Handbook, a process we have been collaborating on since the end of April 2026.

As you recall, all faculty members were invited to join this Working Group. We have had participation from the faculty across schools and colleges, the Deans, and representatives from the Office of the Provost, Institutional Research, and Grants and Sponsored Research. Our discussions have focused on priority topics identified by the group and have ensured alignment with University Statutes and the new structure of the University Senate.

The main group and its subgroups have met over 15 times. Our collaboration has resulted in revisions that strengthen shared governance, enhance career stability, and better support your work, including a permanent statutory guarantee of faculty input on future governance changes, a new three-year contract opportunity for contract (teaching) faculty, and guidelines that prioritize student success and honor service.

These updates foster a flexible, equitable framework advancing our Vincentian mission.

Specifically, we have made progress on:

- **A new Statutory provision (1.30c)** was suggested to ensure that faculty have a meaningful opportunity to be heard regarding proposed statutory changes to Articles 3-10. This was approved by the Board of Trustees (May 2026).
- **Initial Appointment as a Full-Time Contract (teaching) Faculty Member (Section 2.2)** was revised to add a three-year contract option at the rank of “Teaching Professor”.
- **Teaching Load (Section 2.6.4)** was updated to address lab/studio credit for Art Studio courses.
- **Adjustment of Teaching Load for Professors Not Engaged in Research and Scholarship (Section 2.7)**, language was added to allow flexibility for non-tenured faculty who do not meet research expectations. A caveat was added to opting-up that accounts for faculty who have sacrificed research for extensive service, ensuring their contributions are recognized.
- **Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (Chapter 4):**
 - The Presence on Campus and Office Hour Policy (**Section 4.5**) is being rewritten to clarify that student success is its main objective, not logging hours.
 - The Overload Policy (**Section 4.12.2**) has been updated to include opportunities for volunteering.
 - The Conflict of Commitment Policy (**Section 4.18**) now includes revised, more permissive language, and the implementation of a Formstack process is underway.
- **Faculty Directors (Section 7.2)** is being redrafted to unify Directors and Coordinators under one title (Directors) and to create a tiered, more equitable system with clarification of job responsibilities.

Several items, including Student Evaluations, Post-Tenure Review, Annual Faculty Activity Report, and the Personnel Action Form have been designated as future charges for the University Senate as part of its ongoing work.

An updated draft of the Faculty Handbook will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final approval in August. Following that submission, any further revisions will be managed by the Faculty Handbook Committee of the University Senate.

We are deeply grateful to the thoughtful engagement of faculty colleagues in this process as we work together to build a stronger and more agile St. John’s for the future. If you are interested in participating in the Working Group there is still an opportunity to do so. Please contact Karen Pennacchio at pennacck@stjohns.edu with your topic of interest.

We will provide you with further updates on the Handbook and on the University Senate and Statutes in the coming weeks. Thank you for your continued engagement and have a wonderful summer.



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