



Mr. William Donnelly  
Board Chair  
[boardchair@jcu.edu](mailto:boardchair@jcu.edu)

Dr. Michael Johnson  
President  
[president@jcu.edu](mailto:president@jcu.edu)

Dr. Steven Herbert  
Provost and Academic Vice President  
[provost@jcu.edu](mailto:provost@jcu.edu)

March 16, 2021

Mr. Donnelly and Drs. Johnson and Herbert,

On behalf of the American Political Science Association, we are writing today to express concern regarding the amendments to the financial exigency policy proposed by the board of directors at John Carroll University. These amendments represent an alarming erosion of protections for faculty at the university. They substantially lower the bar for terminating faculty appointments and violate academic norms and standards that require faculty involvement and clear standards for financial exigency.

We deeply understand the unprecedented financial and logistical challenges facing universities globally and recognize that many institutions have been forced to take drastic measures. We respect that the university has prioritized maintaining programs and departments. We urge the board of directors to work with faculty at the university to chart a path forward that prioritizes academic freedom and tenure protections. As leaders in the political science discipline, we know that academic freedom is essential for maintaining rigorous, valuable, and open classroom experiences for students, particularly at liberal arts colleges and universities. Removing or altering tenure protections could have a chilling effect on current faculty and future hires. In these difficult times, we understand that universities need to be flexible and responsive to the shifting landscape. We are hopeful that John Carroll University can make adjustments for the troubled present while protecting the values and educational experience that allow the university to fulfill its mission of providing instructional excellence.

Sincerely,

Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier  
President

John Ishiyama  
President-Elect

Paula D. McClain  
Past President

Steven Rathgeb Smith  
Executive Director