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From: **Paul Lauritzen** <[plauritzen@jcu.edu](mailto:plauritzen@jcu.edu)>

Date: Thu, Mar 4, 2021 at 3:42 PM

Subject: Thanks and a couple of stories

To: <[bgbrossmann@gmail.com](mailto:bgbrossmann@gmail.com)>

Hi Brent,

Please extend my thanks to all the members of the Faculty Council, the Faculty Handbook Committee, and the JCU chapter of the AAUP for the enormous amount of time and energy everyone devoted to working with the Board on recent Handbook issues. It was clear that the faculty was devoted to finding a way to stabilize JCU's financial situation *and* maintain its tradition of academic excellence and integrity. The Board's decision will, in the end, compromise both.

You asked for stories "of what the loss of tenure protection means to you; how it will change the way you teach or research; how it changes your relationship with the university; etc." Because I am a retired, emeritus professor, the decision has little direct impact on me, except that it makes me profoundly sad to see the beginning of the end of the fine liberal arts university to which I devoted thirty-five years of my life.

Although the decision of the Board to eliminate tenure will have little impact on the courses I continue to teach and the research I continue to do, I can assure you that I would not have accepted a position at John Carroll early in my career if it had not offered the protection of academic freedom that tenure provides. My career was spent teaching and writing about controversial issues, including abortion, stem cell research, sexual ethics, the commodification of higher education, and war. Yet despite the calls for my removal by the Cardinal Newman Society, and individual John Carroll Board members over the years, I never changed what I taught or wrote because I knew that the university was deeply committed to academic freedom. With the Board's recent decision to eliminate tenure, a deep commitment to academic freedom is no longer a hallmark of John Carroll University.

Brent, you also asked for personal anecdotes of what would be lost if the Board does not reverse itself and reestablish strong protections for academic freedom. Here are two. In 2003, I was asked to write a report for President Bush's Council on Bioethics that addressed the moral issues raised by embryonic stem cell research. The report took up the controversial issue of the moral status of a 5-day-old embryo. I laid out the arguments for why many consider the embryo a person at that stage, including the arguments of the Catholic church, but I made it clear that I—and many others—do not think the early embryo is a person with rights. That report was the basis of the Cardinal Newman Society's call for my dismissal from John Carroll. Had the University not been deeply committed to tenure, it would have been easy for Board members themselves to call for my dismissal and it would have been harder for the president to resist those calls.

Here is a second example. In 2012, forty-six faculty members signed a letter to the president of John Carroll requesting him to urge the U.S. Catholic bishops to accept the accommodation offered by the Obama administration that allowed religiously affiliated colleges to comply with the mandated contraceptive coverage of the Affordable Care Act. We made it clear that we were committed to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, but that access to contraception is central to the health and well-being of women and children. We noted that the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society of Adolescent Medicine, the American Medical Association, and the American Public Health Association had all recommended family planning services as part of preventive health care regimens for women. This letter to the president was drafted by two distinguished faculty award winners, and a Culicchia award winner and signed by faculty from across the university. Without the protections afforded by tenure, actions like this would likely disappear, along with the robust debate that should accompany controversial decisions about public policy.

Again, thank you for all your hard work in seeking to keep JCU a place where rigorous academic work, including controversial academic work, takes place.

Paul

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