



National Communication Association

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Mr. William Donnelly, Chair of the Board, boardchair@jcu.edu
Prof. Michael Johnson, President of the University, president@jcu.edu
Prof. Steven Herbert, Provost and Academic Vice President, provost@jcu.edu

John Carroll University
University Heights, Ohio

To the leadership of John Carroll University:

On behalf of the nearly 7,000 members of the National Communication Association (NCA), I write in opposition to the recent decision by the Board of John Carroll University to lower the threshold whereby the university may fire tenured faculty members without cause. Using the low standard of “budgetary hardship” as a justification for removing faculty members with tenure poses a direct threat to the job security and employment satisfaction of John Carroll’s faculty; that threat is exacerbated by John Carroll’s decision to limit rights of appeal from faculty members for these draconian actions. Those threats will adversely influence both the generation of knowledge and effective teaching that are hallmarks of the faculty at John Carroll University.

NCA is the preeminent learned society in the discipline of Communication and its mission seeks to advance Communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry. NCA serves the scholars, teachers, and practitioners who are its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests in research and teaching and we are writing to you today at the request of our colleagues at John Carroll University.

NCA confidently embraces the principles undergirding academic tenure as first articulated by the American Association of University Professors in 1915 and promulgated in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure by the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities). Tenure was designed precisely in the recognition that scholars and scientists need academic freedom – protection from short-sighted, politically motivated, or budgetarily hasty actions. Even after tenure has been

granted, misconduct by tenured faculty may be punished by involuntary separation. And, significantly, under conditions of publicly demonstrated extreme financial exigency, institutions may let faculty go. Lowering that standard of “financial exigency,” as John Carroll has done, directly violates these principles, so fundamental to the success of the academy.

John Carroll University proudly proclaims its mission, rooted in the Jesuit tradition and the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, as pursuing “academic excellence and service to the common good” and as “serving the human search for truth and value, and for justice and solidarity.” NCA hopes that the leadership of John Carroll University will reconsider and rescind its decision to lower its threshold for when the university may dismiss tenured faculty members; doing so would demonstrate the university’s continued commitments to academic excellence, the common good, and the pursuit of justice and solidarity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trevor Parry-Giles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Trevor Parry-Giles, Ph.D.
Executive Director