

From: Office of the Provost
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 3:38 PM
To: 'pt-fac-response-l@listserv.jmu.edu'
Subject: Provost Message to Adjunct Faculty

Dear Adjunct Faculty Members,

I hope that you and your families are doing well as we deal with these unprecedented circumstances.

The support that you provide as adjunct faculty members, whether that is for one semester or multiple years of service, is highly valued by the university, and I thank you for the ways in which you assist our students and our programs. Your talents complement the strengths of our full-time faculty and help us to meet the evolving needs of our programs.

At JMU and so many other institutions of higher education, some things are different this year. With uncertain funding and questions about enrollment, we are taking a cautious approach to our budget decisions. Two things that have not changed are our commitment to providing the courses students need to make successful progress to graduation and the process by which we hire adjunct faculty members. Those two elements are inextricably linked.

When determining our adjunct needs for any academic year, program directors and academic unit heads look first at student demand – what courses must be offered? How many sections are needed? When, based on the necessary facilities, can these courses be scheduled? The next step is matching those courses with the expertise and availability of our full-time faculty.

When our full-time instructional faculty are not available to meet the needs of the students, we then turn to our pool of adjunct faculty. Again, we look at areas of expertise and availability, then make selections carefully to optimize our offerings. This is the normal process we follow every year. This year, due to the number of critical issues in flux, we are looking more carefully at those additional sections. We may be making decisions later than in years past as we await more detailed information on our budget. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate this uncertain landscape.

As a reminder, enrollment shifts are often not settled until the first week of the semester. In previous years, when we had the resources to be less precise, we may have erred on the side of over-scheduling, which allowed more time for planning and course preparation. This is simply a luxury we do not have right now.

I wanted to share this information and context with you in the interest of transparency at this uncertain time. I also want to reiterate, however, that our top priorities in this crisis continue to be our core educational mission and our people, who are the greatest resource we have. We are profoundly aware of the challenges facing so many of you during this pandemic, and we will communicate with you as quickly as possible as we have more information. I apologize for the uncertainty you are left with regarding the upcoming semester and ask for your patience and understanding. We will communicate with you as more information becomes available and as additional decisions are made. Stay well.

Sincerely,
Heather

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