

Dear Colleagues,

As Fordham continues to respond to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, many of you have been asking questions about the continuity of key items of University business. We know that the spring semester is a time when departments, areas, and schools make important decisions on personnel matters, among others, and we have heard concerns about the ability of committees, especially faculty personnel committees, to achieve quorum and to meet statutory deadlines.

The Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee have been working together, in the spirit of shared governance, to facilitate flexibility with regard to meetings, the submission of materials, and deadlines. Our primary goal is to preserve the principles that underlie our statutory procedures, while enabling us to achieve those purposes through a wider range of mechanisms than would usually be available. We especially seek to protect confidentiality, promote robust conversation among colleagues, and ensure the privacy of voting.

We are therefore announcing the following adjustments to our normal ways of proceeding, which are effective immediately:

- Although meetings, especially personnel meetings, should be held whenever possible with all colleagues present in the same room, we recognize that in present circumstances this may be impossible. Colleagues who are home sick or under mandatory- and/or self-quarantine may participate at a distance if the following requirements are met:
 - All colleagues participating in a meeting, including those joining by distance means must be able, at minimum, to hear each other at the same time. The University is in the process of acquiring an enterprise-wide license for Zoom, but in the interim, instructions for using [Webex](#), as well as for taking advantage of conference calling capabilities, have been posted to the home page of the my.fordham.edu portal.
 - Colleagues participating by distance means in meetings that are held under the statutory requirement of confidentiality (e.g., personnel committee meetings) must ensure that others are not able to hear, see, or otherwise observe the proceedings.
 - If secret votes are taken, all colleagues participating must have the opportunity to register their votes in a way that does not reveal how they voted. We recommend that the committee chair create a survey in Qualtrics, a program [licensed by Fordham](#) which will allow members to cast secure, anonymous votes either at the meeting location (via a laptop or smartphone) or at a remote location. For

technical assistance with creating/preparing an anonymous Qualtrics survey to record your committee's votes, please contact Shawn Hill at shill18@fordham.edu.

- As a reminder about the relevant statutory provision (4-05.01(3)), when calculating the number of faculty members required for the presence of a quorum, if a faculty member is not on leave, even if working from home, s/he is automatically included in the calculation of a quorum and is expected to participate in personnel meetings even if from a distance.
- For matters other than recommendations concerning reappointment, tenure, and promotion, departments and committees can take action without holding a meeting if everyone entitled to be present at the meeting consents in writing (including by email) to taking the action proposed without holding a meeting.
- Documents and other materials that would normally need to be signed or submitted in writing may be submitted by electronic mail. If a document requires a signature, it must be submitted in an email sent from the sender's fordham.edu account.
- If a faculty member, department, or committee finds that due to circumstances related to the coronavirus it will be impossible to meet a statutory deadline, an extension to the deadline may be requested by emailing provost@fordham.edu and the appropriate dean. Such requests are not guaranteed to be accepted, but will be reviewed and responded to as quickly as possible.

We hope that these adjustments will make it possible for the work of the University to move forward even despite the evolving situation that we face. We are grateful for your ongoing efforts to respond flexibly in these challenging circumstances.

Sincerely,

Dennis C. Jacobs, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Eve Keller, President of the Faculty Senate