Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate
            Seton Hall University

From: Katia Passerini, Ph.D.

            Katia Passerini

            Provost and Executive Vice President

Re: Timely Process for Onboarding
            2022-FS-46

Date: May 6, 2022

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We have received 2022-FS-46, Timely Process for Onboarding, which the Faculty Senate passed at its March 18, 2022 meeting.

We agree with the value of our adjunct faculty and other instructional personnel having timely access to Blackboard, ID services, University course management systems, room access, parking, library services, payment, and other appropriate assets that support delivery of education to students. To be clear, our current system is designed to onboard faculty in these ways in as efficient a manner as possible, given the important requirements outlined below. We have made some important changes recently, which should be producing improved results soon. We have identified some areas where different actors can increase the speed with which we are able to connect our adjunct faculty with the tools they need. And we are open to suggestions if there are specific changes this body would suggest.

A discussion with the Deans, members of our Office, and Human Resources did not reveal a systemic or procedural cause for the alleged delays, though we did uncover a few possible issues that have occurred from time to time. We investigated the Provost's Office inbox this week and noted several contracts, one of which arrived in the inbox 17 weeks after the paperwork had been dated. Because so many different people are involved, responsible Faculty, Chairs, and Deans do need to act expeditiously with their approvals of paperwork.

We have worked toward a process that is as streamlined as possible for hiring adjunct faculty, both for when that occurs as a new hire or reactivation after a lapse in the system. One College has written out the workflow, and it involves 27 steps where responsibility bounces back and forth between the Dean, the Adjunct Instructor, the Department Chair, two Administrative Assistants, Human Resources, a vendor that

completes background checks, the Provost's Office, Division of Information Technology, and the Dean's Office. There are many links in this chain. We have shared this workflow with the Deans so that each school or college may write up a process where sequence and responsibilities are clear. Three sticking points have emerged as we have reflected on our processes. It will help if everyone involved in onboarding adjuncts and other personnel knows how the process ought to flow.

First, access to the campus assets described in the resolution begins with a Faculty Activation Form, which must be completed by the Department. This process was described in detail in August 2019 here: https://www.shu.edu/human-resources/upload/FAF-workflow-steps.pdf. Briefly summarized, the process involves submitting transcripts and a CV for the proposed faculty member, work by one or more administrative assistants, approval by the Department Chair, entry into Banner, and work by HR.

Second, we operate under a federal law that mandates in-person processing of I-9 Employee Eligibility Verification forms and other state and federal laws that require document submissions. Though we are not in control of the federal law requiring the completion of I-9 forms in person https://www.uscis.gov/i-9, we do understand the difficulty associated with having a potential adjunct professor come to campus from afar to complete the I-9 in person. To alleviate this burden, we work with partners around the country who can process the form for those who may live outside of the area. And our Human Resources department has offered evening hours for this purpose. As you may know, the government allowed a temporary exception during Covid to permit I-9s to be completed remotely, and we know this was convenient; but that practice is not currently allowed. Also note that I-9s can be processed well in advance, but they are often left until the last minute, delaying the rest of the process. As we get close to the start of the summer, our HR office reaches out to alert budget center managers of I-9s that have yet to be completed. Please inform adjuncts and other hires that we cannot circumvent this requirement.

Third, once the adjunct has completed and submitted these legally required documents, University policy requires that we initiate a background check. Appropriately, we ask the proposed faculty member to consent to the background check with an email that the faculty member should receive about an hour or so after Human Resources initiates the background check. Human Resources observes that it frequently has to follow up on two parts of this step: sometimes potential faculty do not open the email, and sometimes they neglect to consent to the background check. We can all help reduce the delays attendant to that follow up by alerting adjuncts that these e-mails are coming. In the weeks leading up to a semester, a member of our Office meets regularly with HR to check for any obstacles that stand in the way of onboarding faculty members. Perhaps this information can also be updated in the Adjunct Faculty Handbook to emphasize the importance of these steps: https://www.shu.edu/provost/upload/Adjunct-Faculty-Guide-5-3-2011.pdf

Note we have recently implemented a more rigorous method of collecting information about proposed hires for the coming year by May 1. Certainly, when hiring decisions have been made earlier and when procedures have been followed, we should have no trouble equipping our faculty to teach effectively in a timely manner. We expect to authorize all adjunct hires by August 1, provided that paperwork is in on time. This enables us to meet our Office's September 1 deadline to let HR process these later hires by September 15 so that they may be paid according to the adjunct pay schedule in October.

We do understand that there will always be emergencies when there is increased demand for a course or a faculty member becomes unable to teach unexpectedly. If there is another problem we have not addressed, we invite the Faculty Senate to investigate where the bottlenecks are occurring in the various schools and

colleges and to provide us with this information. We are currently exploring options within our Office to have more of the faculty recruitment steps managed through our PageUp system, and we have been discussing the pros and cons of having our adjunct hires go through PageUp as well.

We believe open, continual communication between faculty, administrators, and staff will help allay this and other problems, which affect us all. In conjunction with HR, our Office will hold Academic Pay Procedures annual training for budget center managers and administrative staff involved with hiring again this July to prepare everyone to understand the hiring process in advance of the Fall deadlines. We encourage all budget center managers and the relevant administrative staff to attend, so that our adjunct faculty can be connected with the resources they need for teaching as soon as possible.