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INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Early History

On October 15, 1855 an immigrant Italian Catholic priest opened the doors to a one room school in the middle of the sand dunes surrounding San Francisco on what is today Market Street. Father Antonio Maraschi, S.J. saw the need for a high school and college (Saint Ignatius Academy) that would institutionalize the Jesuit ideals of educating leaders in service. The first three students who enrolled in the Academy in 1855 were soon joined by others, and by 1859 the group had grown to 65 students who were immigrants or children of immigrants, of Italian, Irish, and Mexican origin who now attended what had become Saint Ignatius College.

By 1863, the College awarded its first Bachelor of Arts degree and by 1867, the first Master’s degree. The fires of the 1906 earthquake destroyed the College’s second campus, forcing its relocation to a temporary building. In 1927, USF moved to its current location by the Golden Gate Park. In 1930, the College was renamed the University of San Francisco as a reflection of its historical place as the oldest institution of higher education in the city and an expression of its commitment to serve, educate, and be an ongoing part of this unique and thriving metropolis.

Academic Affairs and Leadership

Today the University of San Francisco (USF) enrolls more than 10,800 students in its five schools and colleges: The College of Arts and Sciences; the School of Business and Management; the School of Education; the School of Law; the School of Nursing and Health Professions. USF’s academic programs are accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The University is recognized as one of the most ethnically diverse universities in the country and has consistently received the new Carnegie designation as a ‘Community Engagement Campus’.

Classes are offered at the main 50 acre San Francisco campus and at 101 Howard St, at four branch campuses in Northern California (San Jose, Sacramento, Pleasanton, Santa Rosa) and in Southern California (Orange County). The University is a private institution, distinguished by its Jesuit Catholic tradition, San Francisco location, diverse community and global perspective (Attachment __).

USF is governed by a 43 member Board of Trustees that includes 10 priests of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Mr. Stephen Hamill is Chair of the Board of Trustees and Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J. is the university President. The Rector of the Loyola House community, John Koeplin, S.J., is an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees and of its Executive Committee.

Student Demographics

The undergraduate student body is 62% female, 38% male. USF is proud to be rated the 7th most diverse undergraduate student body of any university in the US. We are 4% African American, 25% Asian American, 27% Caucasian, 20% International, 20% Latino/Hispanic, and 3% Native American/Native Hawaiian/API. According to freshman application data, our undergraduate students are 3% Buddhist, 29% Catholic, 1% Hindu, 2% Jewish, 2% Muslim, 6% Protestant, 20% none, 7% other and 31% unspecified. To put it another way, only 49% of our undergraduate students claim a religious identity, thereby leaving a large number of individuals who are either spiritual but not religious, “seeking”, atheist or agnostic.

MISSION, VISION and VALUES

On September 2001, The Board of Trustees approved the current Vision, Mission and Values statement [cf., Appendix __. That document was the result of lengthy discussions and extensive reflection by the entire University community. USF’s vision to be “internationally recognized as a premier Jesuit Catholic, urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world.”

The University’s Mission is to “promote learning in the Jesuit Catholic tradition...for undergraduate, graduate and professional students” and to provide them with “the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals, and the values and sensitivity necessary to be men and women for others.” The Vision, Mission and Values statement further defines USF as a “diverse, socially responsible learning...
community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor sustained by a faith that does justice” that is fully engaged with San Francisco and with the Pacific Rim.

In 2008, the University community engaged in an effort to further expand its understanding of the key characteristics that determine USF’s uniqueness among the constellation of universities across the country. These characteristics are: Jesuit Catholic tradition; Academic Excellence; diversity of the university community; San Francisco location; educating from a global perspective. The product of this effort was the “USF 2028 Planning Document”. That document stated that the above-mentioned “five qualities are not discrete attributes that may be neatly separated one from the other, but five closely interwoven strands that together, and only together, are the ‘whole cloth’ of educational excellence in USF’s distinctly Jesuit tradition”.

With regard to the Jesuit Catholic tradition, USF 2028 states:

“The Jesuit tradition is fully committed to the pursuit of excellence in the framework of students’ realizing the fullness of their humanity—of their developing into intelligent, sensitive and responsible members of society. As a Catholic university, USF asserts the centrality of God as mystery that should engage believers and non-believers alike and the compatibility of faith and reason in the pursuit of truth. Therefore USF:

a. Challenges students to wrestle in a disciplined and thoughtful way with “big questions” of ultimate meaning and purpose so that they may live lives of passion, integrity and purpose;

b. Rigorously explores the transcendent dimensions of human experience and its consequences for individuals and society;

c. Promotes learning from other cultures and informed conversation between faith and reason, religion and culture, belief and non-belief and among the different faith traditions;

d. Serves the Catholic Church, local and universal, through teaching, research, creative expression and service;

e. Offers students the knowledge, skills, sensitivities and motivation to succeed as persons and as professionals contributing to the common good of all, especially the most vulnerable;

f. Provides opportunities for persons of faith, and or Catholics in particular, to explore, share, celebrate and appropriate their faith tradition;

g. Offers programs and resources that allow trustees, faculty, staff and students to experience the dynamics of Ignatian spirituality, which animates USF’s Jesuit Catholic educational tradition.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR JESUIT MISSION

The University of San Francisco does not have a Vice President for Mission or any single person with primary responsibility for promoting its Jesuit Catholic tradition. The President, Vice Presidents, and Deans share this responsibility with all faculty, staff, centers, divisions and departments across the University. In 2012, the University established a University Council for Jesuit Mission to coordinate and promote the various activities and programs at USF that promote our Jesuit Catholic mission. The council is co-chaired by the directors of the St. Ignatius Institute, University Ministry, and Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership. Membership is ex officio to include directors or chairs of the following centers and departments:

- Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost
- Athletics
- Center for Pacific Asian Studies
- Center for Teaching Excellence
- Faculty/Staff Spirituality Program, University Ministry
- Human Resources Professional Development
- Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership
- Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought
- Lo Schiavo Chair in Catholic Studies and Social Thought
- Loyola House Jesuit Community (rector or his representative)
- Marketing and Communications
- McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good
- Office of Diversity Engagement and Community Outreach
- St. Agnes Spiritual Life Center and Parish
- St. Ignatius Parish
- St. Ignatius Institute
- Student Life
- University Ministry
- USF Jesuit Foundation
- Anyone assigned by the President

The Council meets approximately twice each semester and sponsors programs to promote leadership development and campus conversations on the Jesuit and Catholic mission and heritage of USF. (See Appendix ___ for a list of AY16 activities). The University Council for Jesuit Mission works closely with the University Council for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Diversity Engagement and Community Outreach to promote campus programs and policies that align the Jesuit mission with our goals of diversity and inclusion. In the Fall semester of 2015 we sponsored Western Conversations with a specific focus on diversity and mission, and followed that up with a campus-wide Living the Mission event on the same topic.
UNIVERSITY CONVERSATIONS ON MISSION

In August 2015 the University Council on Mission sponsored a series of grassroots conversations on the University’s Jesuit Catholic tradition (Appendix __). The University chose to use its own articulation of defining characteristics rather than the AJCU’s Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities because it wanted to engage in an exercise of institutional integrity rather than external compliance and because the central concerns of “Some Characteristics” is adequately captured in the University’s 2028 document. With regard to “Some Characteristics,” USF opted to use the document in “the manner that best fits its circumstances and even to write its own document…” (Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, p. 1).

These multi-tiered university-wide conversations began with the Leadership Team and thereafter filtered down through every level of the institution. Vice Presidents hosted such conversations across their areas; Deans promoted these conversations among the schools’ leadership groups and by academic departments in their schools. Over seventy pages of minutes were taken at each of these meetings and sent back to the Council on Mission, which compiled a summary document that was subsequently distributed across the university as a catalyst for continued discussion (Appendix __).

Generally, USF 2028 was seen as a useful document that warranted wider circulation and broad discussion. 2028’s articulation of the key defining characteristics was regarded as thoughtful, comprehensive and engaging. For many, this was the first time they had read the document and had the opportunity to talk in depth about the Jesuit Catholic character of the University. The process was largely seen as a successful method for engaging the University; many expressed the desire to continue the discussions. A number of individuals noted that conducting the routine business of the University left little time to step back and consider such critically important issues as mission and values.

Below is a summary of some common themes that surfaced during these discussions. They are taken from over seventy pages of notes taken at the various campus conversations on USF’s Jesuit Catholic tradition and subsequently sent to the University Council on Jesuit Mission. The summary below only identifies what was common to many of those conversations and makes no attempt to capture the richness of the discussions that have taken place from September 2015 and continue through the present.

The most salient considerations include the following:

• A general sense that USF 2028 is a thoughtful and comprehensive statement that should enjoy broader circulation across the campus community;
• Appreciation for the variety of reflective experiences — retreats, book clubs, spiritual walks — available to faculty and staff, along with a hope that more people take advantage of these;
• Concern that part-time faculty and staff in San Francisco at the branch campuses are not sufficiently exposed to USF’s Jesuit tradition;
• Ethical decision making figures prominently in many academic programs, though this focus still remains somewhat compartmentalized and insufficiently integrated across the curriculum;
• “Higher standards” terminology is open to be misinterpreted as “elitist” and “exclusive”;
• The relationship between Ignatian Spirituality and Ignatian pedagogy warrants amplification;
• USF 2028’s defining characteristics should be more evident in the student experience (e.g. classroom, residence halls, campus activities);
• Stressing USF’s Jesuit Catholic tradition should carefully avoid limiting decisions and policy formation to “real Catholics” and excluding non-Catholics;
• Consideration should be given to a required course that exposes all students to USF’s Jesuit Catholic tradition—101 courses are cases in point;
• The university could do a better job of communicating the multiplicity of programs in the Jesuit tradition that are available for faculty and staff;
• Illustrating how exploring the “transcendent dimension” of human experience moves people beyond the superficialities of popular culture;
• A recurring concern to clarify and better understand how the university “serves the Catholic Church” without compromising a fundamental value: “the freedom and the responsibility to pursue truth and follow evidence to its conclusion” (USF Core Values);
• A genuine sense of the Common Good requires far greater transparency and better top-down and 360 degree communication to break down “silos” and promote collaboration across departments, offices, and schools;
• An identified need for greater intercultural competency education for students’ education for students, faculty and staff, given the wide diversity of the USF community.
IMPLEMENTING USF 2028

In addition to the above listed points, these conversations produced numerous examples of how the University was implementing each of the seven bullet-pointed characteristics listed under “Jesuit Catholic Tradition” in USF 2028. Those examples are too numerous to list here but have been compiled into a single document that is available in Appendix ___.

1. Challenges students to wrestle in a disciplined way with “big questions” including ultimate meaning and purpose so that they may live lives of passion, integrity and purpose.
   • Core curriculum’s three courses or twelve unit requirement in philosophy, theology, and ethics, where the learning outcomes for these courses explicitly support this component;
   • The Center for Academic and Student Achievement’s (CASA) use of an interpretive advisory model that encourage the purposeful personal development of each student;
   • Daily group reflection during immersion experiences and workshops, pre- and post-immersion, for students and faculty to focus on questions of meaning and purpose in light of direct experience of human suffering;
   • Student retreats provide opportunities to reflect prayerfully on one’s experience as the focus of grace.

2. Rigorously explores the transcendent dimension of human experience and its consequences for individuals and society.
   • The learning outcomes for the required theology/religious studies course explicitly address this aspect of the Jesuit Catholic tradition;
   • Immersion experiences, domestic and international, as well as the community-engaged learning required of every undergraduate promote reflective engagement with the depth dimension of human experience to counter the superficialities of popular culture;
   • Communities of Reflection (CORE) offer students structured opportunities to communally reflect on the demands of faith in everyday life;
   • 19th Annotation retreats for faculty and staff during the academic year

3. Promotes learning from other cultures and informed conversations between faith and reason, religion and culture, belief and non-belief, and among different faith traditions.
   • The core curriculum’s diversity requirement directly addresses this dimension;
   • USF’s Office of Diversity Engagement and Community Outreach promotes critical dialogues within the University and within the multicultural communities surrounding the University;
   • The Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice promotes understanding between Christians and Jews;
   • Interfaith Prayer space institutionalizes the University’s commitment to promote understanding across religions

4. Serves the Catholic Church, local and universal, through teaching, research, creative expression and service.
   • The Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership prepares individuals for careers in Catholic primary and secondary education;
   • The resident ministry training program prepares young adults for careers in ministry;
   • The Lane Center for Catholic Thought and Social Justice offers numerous public lectures open to the public through the academic year and through its Summer Scholar program;
   • The University has a close working relationship with St. Anthony’s Foundation that supports internships, faculty research, and direct faculty involvement with programming for the homeless.

5. Offers students the knowledge, skills, sensitivities, and motivation to succeed as persons and professionals contributing to the common good of all, especially the most vulnerable.
• The America Reads program takes USF students into the community to teach underrepresented children to read;
• Since 2008 the University’s efforts to educate for the common good have earned an ‘excellence’ ranking from the Carnegie Foundation for “excellent alignment between mission, culture, leadership, resources that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement;
• The Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and Common Good has launched “Engage San Francisco” to advance collaborative projects addressing family issues in the Western Addition, one of the City’s most underserved communities;
• The Community Engaged learning requirement of the Core Curriculum directly supports this component.

6. Provides opportunities for persons of all faiths, and for Catholics in particular, to explore, share, celebrate and appropriate their faith traditions.
• University Ministry hosts affiliated ministers to serve Muslim, Jewish and Protestant students;
• A prayer space has been set aside where persons of all faiths or no faiths may comfortably pray or reflect at any time;
• University ministry works to promote faith development with persons of all faiths through liturgies, retreats, reflective experiences, service opportunities and spiritual direction.
• The Saint Ignatius Institute is a residential program that integrates academics, spirituality, service and communal living.

7. Offers programs and resources that allow trustees, faculty, staff and students to experience the dynamics of Ignatian Spirituality, which animate USF’s Jesuit Catholic educational tradition.
• The Lane Center sponsors discussions among faculty and staff of books on spirituality during the academic year;
• The 19th annotation version of the Spiritual Exercises is available each year for faculty, staff and trustees;
• The Board of Trustees general dedicates its June meeting to a retreat/reflective experience on some aspect of Ignatian Spirituality;
• Through 2016 the University has offered faculty and staff the opportunity to participate in a one week immersion experience in a developing country.

In addition to all of the ways that the mission has been integrated into the life of the University, three institutions, in particular, bear an explicit responsibility for advancing the University’s Jesuit Catholic mission: University Ministry, The Joan and Ralph Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought, and the Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good. Appendix ___ lists the various activities and opportunities provided by each of those centers.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR ADVANCING USF’S JESUIT CATHOLIC CHARACTER:

1. Work with the four other Jesuit universities in the two provinces to collaborate in sharing resources and coordinate formation programming for trustees, faculty, and staff.

2. Centralize research funding at USF to more effectively support community engaged research efforts that involve faculty and students working collaboratively with St. Anthony’s Foundation in San Francisco and the Kino Border Initiative with immigrants in Nogales, Arizona and Mexico.

3. Increase endowed funding for both the recruitment and hiring of mission-focused faculty and to support formation programs that advance the Jesuit Catholic character of USF with trustees, faculty and staff.