

USF 2028 Planning Document

THE CORE MISSION of the University of San Francisco is to “promote learning in the Jesuit Catholic tradition” (*Mission Statement*). In this tradition, education aims at fully developing every dimension of a person’s humanity — intellectual, moral, social, religious and aesthetic — so that our graduates, in addition to mastering a requisite body of knowledge, think clearly, analyze critically, communicate effectively, evidence a disciplined sensitivity to human suffering, construct lives of purpose and meaning and work effectively with persons of varying background and cultures for the common good.

In pursuit of its mission, USF offers students a demanding, integrated and holistic education that is the product of: 1) its Jesuit Catholic tradition, 2) academic excellence, 3) its San Francisco location, 4) the diverse experiences, perspectives and opinions within the University community and the Bay Area, and 5) a global perspective. These five qualifiers 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 our distinctively Jesuit tradition.

1. Jesuit Catholic Tradition

The Jesuit tradition is fully committed to the pursuit of academic 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 a 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 dimension 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 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 all faiths, and for Catholics in particular, to explore, share, celebrate and appropriate their faith tradition;
- g. offers programs and resources that allow trustee, faculty, staff and students to experience the dynamics of Ignatian spirituality, which animates USF’s Jesuit Catholic educational tradition.

2. Academic Excellence

The University holds-up “excellence as the standard for teaching, scholarship, creative expression and service” (*Core Values*). USF evidences this commitment to excellence in the core activities of discovering, communicating and applying knowledge. Therefore, USF:

- a. offers demanding academic programs that challenge students to maximally expand and develop their intellectual capacities and transformative educational experiences that will “act” them into new ways of thinking about the world and their role in it;
- b. supports a faculty of teaching scholars whose pedagogy is informed by rigorous research and who engage in their disciplines, participate in scholarly discourse that constitutes serious inquiry and involve students in their research efforts;
- c. encourages faculty to address issues, questions and problems of import through their scholarly work;
- d. fosters the development of curricula that reflect the most recent advances within and between the disciplines;
- e. sponsors campus programs and activities that promote student development and resident hall experiences that enhance learning and strengthen community;
- f. challenges students of demonstrated academic capability to develop the intellectual curiosity and discipline that support advanced learning;
- g. promotes close student-faculty relationships and effective mentoring/advising by faculty and staff on the personal and professional development of students.

3. San Francisco Location

USF contributes to and benefits from the energy, resources, diversity and opportunities of a world-class city on the edge of the Pacific Rim. Therefore, USF:

- a. draws on the cultural, civic, legal, commercial, service and scientific resources in San Francisco to create opportunities that connect classroom learning with out-of-class experiences;
- b. taps into the creativity, diversity, and entrepreneurial energy of the Bay Area to enrich curricular and co-curricular experiences;
- c. cultivates partnerships with local organizations that mutually benefit the university and the community;
- d. works with community organizations on issues of common concern and provides space for conflicting interest groups to work towards the common good;
- e. serves as a social and educational agent by applying creative expression, knowledge, and research skills to promoting human development, advancing understanding, and improving the quality of life for all Bay Area residents and promoting academic engagement from the university;

4. Diversity

USF prepares students for the complexities of a diverse and interdependent world through curricular and co-curricular offerings which capitalize on the differences within the city and the university. Therefore, USF:

- a. creates structures, programs, and courses that engage differences of persons, perspectives and opinions so that students appreciate the commonality of our humanity as well as what distinguishes individuals and groups within the human family;
- b. ensures that different voices and perspectives are present in curricula, programs and activities across the university so that students engage the complexities and subtleties of human experience;
- c. recruits and retains a richly diverse mix of students, faculty and staff so that the university community, as much as possible, broadly resembles the world to which our students will contribute;
- d. promotes disciplinary competence for students and faculty while also providing opportunities to cooperatively probe issues, questions, and problems from multi-disciplinary perspectives;
- e. offers students a wide variety of activities that promote engagement with each other and affiliation with the University, as well as opportunities to develop important life skills;
- f. draws from the cultural offerings of San Francisco to enrich students' understanding and appreciation of a diverse and multicultural world class city.

5. Global Perspective

USF educates students to responsible global citizenship in an increasingly interdependent world that offers innumerable opportunities for good, but is also home to two billion people who struggle to survive on \$2 a day or less. Therefore, USF:

- a. exposes students, faculty and staff to the multiplicity of values, the rich artistic and cultural achievements and the natural beauty of our world, as well as to the inhumane conditions which diminish the lives of seventy-five percent of the world;
- b. recruits and retains students, faculty and staff from other countries, who have global exposure and perspectives that insure a breadth of experiences and views inform a campus culture which challenges students to think and act in a globally responsible manner;
- c. acts in an environmentally responsible way, which acknowledges that the earth and its resources are to be shared justly among all people and held in trust for future generations;
- d. challenges students to pursue a common good that transcends local and national boundaries;
- e. educates students to issues affecting the global community, e.g., environmental justice, the creation and distribution of wealth and resources, war, migration, health, and education;
- f. offers on-site courses, programs, and experiences that help students understand and appreciate the complexities of our global reality, so that they may succeed in an interdependent world and contribute professionally across the globe.

The University's challenge is to interweave these five qualities into a single multi-hued tapestry that is Jesuit Catholic education at the University of San Francisco.

It is critical for the future of USF that it recruit, retain and develop faculty, staff and students who share its understanding of and commitment to offering this academically rigorous, integrated, holistic education. USF's continued success demands that we be increasingly intentional, focused and accountable in educating the minds and hearts of our students so that they change their piece of the world.