

September 4, 2018

Dear Magis Steering Committee,

Thank you, again, for your leadership on this very important project. Your work and recommendations have already helped move our campus in a direction that embraces shared excellence.

Given the overlap between the Magis Project and the findings of the Campus Climate survey, I have asked three existing university-wide groups --- Mission Council, University Ministry, and Diversity and Inclusion --- to follow up on the recommendations from both initiatives. The chairs of these councils, Erin Brigham, Julie Dowd, and Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi, all serve on the Leadership Team and report to either me or the Provost. I am charging the two councils and the University Ministry staff, along with members of the recently formed University Council on Community Engagement (led by David Donahue, Director of the Leo T. McCarthy Center) with identifying priority items from the Campus Climate findings and the areas from Magis that overlap with Climate survey findings. The council members will make recommendations this fall on areas that will lead to measurable change in our community.

The Cabinet will work with the recommendations of the councils in implementing these changes. You will recall that when she delivered the Campus Climate findings, our consultant Sue Rankin said that improving the climate at USF "is on all of us." This decentralized approach aligns with her recommendation.

During the University Convocation, I outlined a few steps that Cabinet has already taken thanks to your work on the Magis Project. Below, you will read more details about how we are addressing the 459 ideas from the working groups, especially the 105 that were highly ranked by you.

Cabinet found your synthesis into six enablers and six detractors very useful. We are truly fortunate to have a gifted, mission-driven community committed to student learning, social justice, and the pursuit of excellence. We are also, as you wrote, willing to take risks in order to change the world from here. We agree that we can indeed change detractors into enablers. In that spirit, I use the detractors here to share with you examples of ideas that are in progress and under consideration by the University's Leadership Team, thanks to your recommendations:

1. *Perceived lack of effective communication across all aspects of the university.*

We will be making changes on multiple levels. Vice presidents and vice provosts are engaging in conversations with the community through university fora. We will be adding surveys to better understand ways those divisions can improve operations and

communicate more effectively. In some instances, information about recent past progress has not reached the entire community. To cite a couple of examples: the Magis report raised questions about USF's plan to secure a larger endowment. Peter Wilch and his Development team are building the endowment, and the Investment Committee is growing the endowment, both of which are priorities in the Comprehensive Campaign. Human Resources and Student Life are providing clearer information about resources available through their offices, such as the Red Folder initiative. The Provost has been holding coffees with faculty and staff to answer questions and hear suggestions about how to more fully realize our university mission.

2. *Perceived lack of transparency in decision-making.*

We will continue to work on greater transparency. A specific example can be found in Academic Affairs. The provost office is implementing new system for curriculum development and management. The new system (called Curriculog) will allow faculty and staff to see the entire approval process in real time, see input at multiple levels of the decision-making process, and for approved changes to be directly uploaded into the catalog.

3. *Perceived inability to articulate a strategic vision for USF going forward.*

Thanks to constructive conversations with the University's Leadership Team and the University's Board of Trustees, along with the foundational guidance that USF 2028 gives us, we have begun to articulate a framework for the future that we can build together. It involves four transformative directions. I outlined these directions at Convocation, and present them here as well.

First: That we stand committed to transforming students into leaders, lifelong learners, and "persons for and with others" in an increasingly uncertain, diverse, and interconnected world. How? That is up to all of us, but some of the ways are already emerging or in the works. The Honors College, increasing endowed financial support for students, establishing and enhancing living/learning communities. We are working toward offering USF 101 to all incoming freshmen and transfer students. We have also set a goal called "20 by 2020" – that is, every undergraduate student will have 20 global education options available to them by fall 2020.

Second: Offering educational opportunities grounded in creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation. We are already well on our way to launching an amazing engineering program that is designed for, and committed to, confronting the challenges faced by people and organizations in the Bay Area and beyond. An engineering program that will attract women and people of color, both groups historically underrepresented in this discipline. I want us to work together to transform students into values-driven decision-makers and leaders, and to see a bloom of faculty-student partnerships, with concomitant storytelling to spread the word about USF's distinctive promise.

Third: We need to further leverage our extraordinary location by engaging with – and working to transform -- San Francisco and the Bay Area. We are uniquely positioned to build new and stronger connections with Bay Area corporations, non-profits and the public sector. We can further strengthen our community-engaged learning and scholarship across the university – with such new and existing resources as Star Route Farms and the McCarthy Center.

And fourth: Creating One University of San Francisco – a community grounded in diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. A community that is environmentally sustainable. An engaged and excited community of alumni and friends. A thriving and financially sustainable enterprise that steadily navigates the competitive pressures currently bearing down on institutions of higher learning.

A roadmap for communicating this strategic framework to the community is an important next step. We will engage members of the community to sharpen this vision in the months ahead.

One concrete example of the implementation of this framework will be, I am glad to report, a strategic facilities condition assessment (FCA) of all buildings on campus. That work has already begun, and will be completed this fall with a report that will allow Facilities to effectively prioritize certain capital projects. Separately, Student Housing and Residential Education (SHaRE) engaged its own consultant to perform an FCA for residential facilities. That work began in June and SHaRE will undergo a comprehensive review of its facilities and operational framework. These efforts will result in a strategic plan for housing that will stretch across the University in cross-functional ways.

4. *Profound frustration with the current mix of centralized and decentralized services across campus.*

Magis suggested improvements to our alumni outreach and recommended a more coordinated approach. In terms of functional changes, that work is still in process, but one of the first steps took place this summer by assembling a university-wide alumni event strategy group with central alumni engagement, SOL alumni, and SOM alumni. The Development team is working on a geographic strategy and division of labor, including coordinating calendars and reducing duplicative events.

Another population of special concern emerged in your comments: our international student population. The Working Group on the International Student Experience (WISE) in the Provost Office has begun tackling this and will make recommendations to the Provost in the Spring 2019.

5. *Concern about institutional identity and the potential conflict in future direction between our stated mission and our current financial situation.*

There does not need to be conflict between mission and financial stability. Development has secured large gifts that are supporting a range of mission-centered initiatives -- from sustainability to scholarship and engineering. These donors and potential donors share a strong affinity with our mission, and they see USF as a viable recipient for their philanthropic interests.

As stewards of the institution's financial resources, we keep in mind the Jesuit concept of *cura apostolica*, or care for the institution. This concept binds us to making difficult financial choices that ensure that the University of San Francisco serves its mission not only in the present but for decades to come.

6. *Diversity, equity, and inclusion: concern about how we are operationalizing our mission, especially for faculty, administrators, and staff.*

We have much more work to do in this area, but as a first step Provost Don Heller has charged Vice Provost for Diversity, Engagement and Community Outreach Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi to work with the deans to improve the diversity in our faculty searches this year. In addition, both Magis and the Campus Climate survey raised the issue of mandatory cultural competency training for students. A committee is being formed and will meet in the coming weeks. Student Life expects that curriculum development will take place this fall, with focus groups conducted in the spring. Human Resources has also established a new module on microaggressions within our required every-two-years online training in sexual harassment. We can and will do more to improve and strengthen these resources and opportunities for training and capacity building.

Again, on behalf of the entire university community, thank you for the time, research, critical thinking, and creative collaboration you contributed to the Magis Project. As a community, we are enormously grateful to you. In the months ahead, I look forward to sharing with you the recommendations that will emerge from the university councils --- and to celebrating our collective success in implementing change.

You will soon be receiving an invitation to a social hour so that we can toast your accomplishments and encourage each other for the work that lies ahead.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J.
President