

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a pleasure these last few weeks to gather in community, to reunite in person, or to meet each other for the very first time. Whether celebrating our tenured and promoted faculty, launching our strategic plan implementation, or thanking faculty, librarians, and staff across campus for the work you have done to lift up our students, the joy of being together and the sense of community at these gatherings are palpable.

Investing for Growth

In this message, I explore both the difficulty and the potential of the moment we are in and share some of my thoughts about how we can advance our vision of transformative Jesuit education while tending to our present day budget realities. First, I want to acknowledge the painful reality of another year of fiscal belt tightening required to balance the budget for FY 2023. I am very grateful to all the vice presidents, deans, associate deans, and budget managers who are working to undertake the very difficult exercise of identifying necessary savings. It is essential for our ongoing fiscal health that we balance our budget. At the same time, we know that ***we cannot cut our way to a healthy future. It is time for us to invest in the academic innovation that is central to a thriving academic enterprise.*** We need to grow our enrollments, strengthen our existing academic programs, and invest in new academic programs that meet the demands of today's and tomorrow's students. We also need to extend and diversify our sources of revenue. I'll touch on plans for each of these below.

Growing Our Enrollments

Congratulations to April Crabtree and members of the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) team who have led us through a recruiting season that has generated tremendous excitement and resulted in the highest levels of undergraduate deposits USF has had in the past five years. We must await census in September and incorporate graduate enrollment figures to better understand the full budgetary picture, but these initial results bode well for meeting our enrollment targets. The positive trajectory, particularly in relation to undergraduate first-time and transfer students, is critical for our growth over the next few years, as we finalize and implement the Integrated Strategic Enrollment Plan (ISEP). The ISEP will contain a roadmap for growing our enrollments back to 11,000. That roadmap depends on our ability to reimagine Jesuit education by evolving and innovating our academic portfolio.

Academic Innovation Fund

One of my top priorities is to build a "future-ready" institution by investing in academic innovation, building new academic programs, and updating existing programs. Academic programs take 12 to 18 months to develop and move through shared governance, and then at least another year to market, so getting started now is essential.

To this end, I am delighted to announce the provost's new **Academic Innovation Fund (AIF)**, thanks in large part to the efforts of Vice President Lindsey McClenahan and her development team. My goal in creating the fund is to seed new academic programs and support creative reenvisioning of existing programs to attract new students and better prepare our students for a rapidly changing world. The initial focus of the fund will be on innovation that drives enrollment growth and/or enhances mission by aligning programming more closely with our values of ADEI, global engagement, transdisciplinary collaboration, community-engaged learning, and environmental sustainability as outlined in the USF strategic plan. Funds will be available to support design teams in developing proposals, curricula, assessment plans, and community-engaged and active learning plans. Support could take the form of summer stipends, NTAs, retreat funding, consultancy fees, research assistants, materials, market research, or development of marketing materials. Academic deans will be invited to apply for the first round of funding this summer, with a broader call for proposals to be launched in early fall.

One of the projects that will be funded next year by the AIF is the revisioning of the core curriculum. The core and graduation requirements were adopted almost 20 years ago. While areas of the core were assessed just prior to the pandemic, which led to the reenvisioned Community Engaged Learning (CEL) requirement, the strategic plan's call to reimagine Jesuit education provides impetus to pursue a thorough and integrated reexamination of the core and graduation requirements. At the request of the Core Advisory Committee, the Joint University-Wide Curriculum Committee (JUCC) has recommended to me the creation of an exploratory task force in fall 2022 as a starting point for the revision of the USF undergraduate core curriculum. A call for nominations to serve on the university-wide exploratory committee will go out early in the fall.

Reimagined Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG)

I am pleased to announce a second investment that also aims to enhance our revenue generation opportunities. Senior Vice Provost Shirley McGuire has reorganized OCG to enhance our ability to write successful large federal grants, serve as an anchor institution for collaborative grants, and develop grant-writing teams. The newly envisioned OCG will be headed by Camille Coley, who is joining USF to serve as our first associate vice provost for sponsored programs and external partnerships. Camille will be responsible for creating and promoting a grant-seeking culture in Academic Affairs, securing funding for strategic priorities across and within the schools and the college, and helping the provost's office diversify revenue streams. Camille has over 20 years of research administration experience. She previously served as a vice president for institutional advancement at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, where she raised over \$16 million and grew the research portfolio three-fold. She frequently collaborated with the museum's scientists and educators in strategic, proactive, and capacity-building activities designed to attract extramural research funding. Before working at the museum, Camille was the associate vice president for research at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), where she restructured the office and raised and oversaw \$70 million in grants annually.



Associate Vice Provost for Sponsored Programs and External Partnerships
Camille Coley

As we enter the final month of the spring term, we also kick off Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. In this era of continued anti-Asian hatred and Indigenous invisibility, it is more critical than ever that we come together to celebrate the unique traditions, cultures, and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. **Please register** and join members of our AAPI community on Monday, May 9 at 3:30 p.m. outside Gleeson Library for an hour of healing and reflection titled "Movement for Asian Joy."

Warmly,

Chinyere Oparah
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

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