



SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY™

— EST. 1818 —

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# Living Our Institutional Vocations

## *A Five-Year Academic Strategic Plan*

5-1-2023

# Preamble

A hallmark of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy is the iterative cycle of critical self-examination, reflection, and action – all predicated on an informed understanding of our historical and contemporary contexts, and the specific institutional and environmental experiences that influence them. Engaging in regular academic strategic planning throughout the University is, for Jesuit universities, a fundamental expression of that cycle.

Inspired by the [Jesuit Apostolic Preferences](#) for 2019-2029 (developed by the Society of Jesus' General Congregation 36 and approved by Pope Francis), Saint Louis University's Division of Academic Affairs has developed this five-year Academic Strategic Plan (ASP).

# Relationship of this Plan to Other Institutional Commitments

This ASP identifies five strategic priorities that will particularly guide our work over the next five years. **These priorities do not constitute an exhaustive list of things we care about as an institution.** Rather, they comprise a subset of institutional priorities that – *at this particular point in SLU’s history, in this particular higher educational landscape, and for the next five years* – warrant and will receive additional strategic attention, planning, and resources.

Of course, these priorities should not detract from important institutional commitments that transcend any strategic plan. More explicitly, as we implement this ASP, we will continue to:

- diversify our faculty, staff, and students, and create an inclusive, equitable environment that fosters a sense of belonging for all
- continue to prioritize efforts to address external (market) and internal (equity) compensation disparities

- advance our new University Core Curriculum, which seeks to nourish undergraduate students' minds, hearts, souls and well-being, and guide them in discerning how to use their talents for the good of others and to find God in all things
- strengthen our engagement with area high schools to ensure our student body increasingly reflects our St. Louis region and that we are increasing access to a SLU education
- draw more deeply on the expertise and networks of our alumni to better support student success while also creating community and lifelong learning for and with our larger Billiken family
- embrace our responsibility to be good neighbors and partners in midtown St. Louis, in ways that align with our Catholic, Jesuit values

# ASP Structure and Components

The architecture of this ASP features three interrelated components:

- **Strategic Priorities**
- **Strategic Goals**
- **Priority Actions**

Identified under each of the five **Strategic Priorities** (defined on Slide #9) are several **Strategic Goals** that articulate *what we aim for SLU to have achieved, by the end of the 5-year ASP timeline*. Goals are intentionally written to a) operationalize the Strategic Priorities and b) be observable/measurable (qualitatively and/or quantitatively) in order to foster accountability from institutional leaders.

Under each Strategic Goal is a short list of **Priority Actions**: key actions necessary for the achievement of the Goals. Priority Actions are not exhaustive – but they are essential starting points for the achievement of the Goals.

## **! *Important Note Re: Structure and Components***

In some cases, the Priority Actions will have clear starting points; for others, there may be a variety of ways to approach the actions. **Wherever we can, we will invite faculty, staff, and student ideas and projects to shape the Actions and advance achievement of the Goals.** We anticipate learning through implementation that some actions will not work as originally designed, or should be replaced by other, alternate actions. **We are open to experimentation and pilot-testing of actions, and will support, as we are able, faculty and staff initiatives to change what is demonstrably not working.**

# Commitment of Institutional Resources

The priorities and goals set forth in this plan are ambitious – and the work to achieve them will happen alongside other important, ongoing work of the University that must continue. Yet, we recognize and respect the limits on faculty and staff time, and our limited institutional resources, that in turn limit the scope of this plan.

We pledge that available institutional resources – human and financial – will be invested in the advancement of the Priorities, Goals, and Actions articulated in this plan. More specifically, the Provost, as well as all Deans and Vice Presidents reporting to the Provost, share in their commitment to ensure that major decision-making throughout the ASP’s five-year implementation period is conducted in alignment with, and to intentionally advance, this ASP. Their shared commitment will greatly inform resource allocation, hiring, operational planning, and other key activities and decisions within Academic Affairs.



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# Living Our Institutional Vocations

## *A Five-Year Academic Strategic Plan*

## Strategic Priority #1: Teaching and Learning

Consistent with our Ignatian educational identity, we will prioritize inclusive, evidence-based, and learning-centered instruction.

### Goal 1.1:

Recognize and reward inclusive, evidence-based, and learning-centered instruction and curriculum design.

### Priority Actions:

- Develop shared definitions of inclusive, evidence-based, learning-centered teaching
- Revise protocols for the evaluation of teaching (including student feedback on teaching)
- Align P&T standards to ensure appropriate valuing of effective teaching and participation in the University Core
- Expand investments in faculty development programs to advance inclusive and Ignatian instruction and course/curriculum design
- Create an annual recognition event to celebrate effective teaching

## Strategic Priority #1: Teaching and Learning

Consistent with our Ignatian educational identity, we will prioritize inclusive, evidence-based, and learning-centered instruction.

### Goal 1.2:

Expand/enhance experiential learning for both graduate and undergraduate students.

### Priority Actions:

- Continue to invest in full implementation of the Core, especially those Core Components requiring/supporting experiential learning
- Expand our support for and student participation in credit-bearing internships
- Expand our support for and student participation in non-credit bearing applied learning experiences
- Assess and strengthen the residential learning curriculum, particularly the relationship between the Core and Learning Communities
- Assess and strengthen partnerships with industry, community organizations, and alumni to better support reciprocal learning and professional development opportunities for students

## Strategic Priority #2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

As we pursue Carnegie Research I status, we will prioritize research, scholarship, and creative work that enhances our scholarly strengths and advances our Jesuit mission.

### Goal 2.1:

Expand research, scholarship, and creative work that advances our University-articulated *Areas of Scholarly Impact* and *Centers of Excellence*, while continuing to encourage research excellence in all fields.

### Priority Actions:

- Finalize and publicize the updated, interdisciplinary Areas of Scholarly Impact
- Develop and implement a process for designating college-level Centers of Excellence
- Support the continued growth of university-level Big Ideas and other mechanisms for interdisciplinary collaboration
- Accelerate hiring and retaining of research-intensive faculty, particularly in areas of research strength
- Implement our plan (including designation of leadership) to become a Laudato Si' campus
- Ensure the success of the Taylor Geospatial Institute to position SLU as the academic leader for geospatial research and talent

## Strategic Priority #2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

As we pursue Carnegie Research I status, we will prioritize research, scholarship, and creative work that enhances our scholarly strengths and advances our Jesuit mission.

### Goal 2.2:

Expand opportunities for undergraduates to engage in faculty-led scholarship and research experiences.

### Priority Actions:

- Build infrastructure/pathways to ensure undergraduates can engage equitably in scholarship and research opportunities
- Create funded opportunities for undergraduates from under-represented/historically marginalized groups to engage in scholarship and research

## Strategic Priority #2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

As we pursue Carnegie Research I status, we will prioritize research, scholarship, and creative work that enhances our scholarly strengths and advances our Jesuit mission.

### Goal 2.3:

Enhance faculty research support and eliminate institutional obstacles to continued growth of funded research.

### Priority Actions:

- Strengthen research support systems and grow staff to enable continued growth of funded research
- Assess and improve processes for funded research, including compliance, sponsored awards, and technology roadblocks (Workday and other administrative systems)
- Revise SLU's policy governing the internal distribution of indirect costs
- Assess and address research space/facilities needs through reallocation of existing and investment in new spaces
- Develop and implement a University-wide mentoring program for faculty researchers/scholars
- Develop and implement a University-wide plan for marketing of faculty's research/scholarship
- Enhance support for philanthropic, industry, and government funding of SLU research

## Strategic Priority #3: Community Well-Being and Equity

**We will prioritize creating a culture of holistic well-being for all students, faculty, and staff.**

### **Goal 3.1:**

Implement programs, policies, and processes that help create a culture of well-being for students, faculty, and staff.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Complete the implementation the near-term recommendations from the [Student Well-being Task Force](#)
- Lay the necessary groundwork to implement the mid- and long-term recommendations from the Student Well-being Task Force
- Fully implement the JED Campus partnership
- Create a Faculty/Staff Well-being Task Force (similar to the Student Well-being Task Force) and charge them to develop recommendations for faculty and staff well-being

## Strategic Priority #3: Community Well-Being and Equity

**We will prioritize creating a culture of holistic well-being for all students, faculty, and staff.**

### **Goal 3.2:**

Prioritize equitable academic success of all students as we continue to increase the diversity of the student body.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Finalize and implement student success recommendations for support structures, services, and programs to organize student support structures to best serve our changing student populations
- Assess and enhance graduate student support at the institutional level
- Strengthen institution-wide investment in the Core
- Ensure that test-optional admission is complemented by appropriate assessment and supports for all undergraduate students
- Identify incentives and support for faculty and academic units to analyze and address unrecognized bias and disparate educational outcomes in their curricula and pedagogies, including in the new University Core
- Review and revise curricula to remove barriers to equitable student success and time-to-degree
- Revise policies and practices related to faculty workload and evaluation to prioritize student success

## Strategic Priority #3: Community Well-Being and Equity

**We will prioritize creating a culture of holistic well-being for all students, faculty, and staff.**

### **Goal 3.3:**

Create a shared understanding of and responsibility for diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging among all faculty, staff, and administrators.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Establish shared definitions and expectations for DEI work across the academic enterprise
- Require DEI training for all administrators, faculty, and staff who review employee performance
- Invest in leadership development to ensure all academic leaders create cultures of belonging within their areas of influence
- Invest in University-level access to national employment databases/websites/job boards in order to recruit strong, diverse candidate pools
- Require evidence-based training and development for all search committee members
- Revise protocols for the evaluation and reward of faculty work in a manner that advances equity and community impact

## Strategic Priority #3: Community Well-Being and Equity

We will prioritize creating a culture of holistic well-being for all students, faculty, and staff.

### Goal 3.4:

Increase resources and support for graduate and professional students.

### Priority Actions:

- Align graduate assistantship stipends with market norms
- Expand support for international graduate and professional students
- Implement Student Well-being Task Force recommendations specific to graduate/professional students

## Strategic Priority #4: Access and Reach

**We will prioritize our obligation to lead the expansion of student access to Jesuit higher education – locally, nationally, and globally.**

### **Goal 4.1:**

Expand our commitments to provide Jesuit higher education to those historically under-represented at SLU, including those living at the margins locally, nationally, and internationally.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Monitor our decision regarding a test-optional approach to admissions
- Leverage new Upward Bound grants to enhance our St. Louis area Pre-College and Access Programs
- Expand our Prison Education Program to include a bachelor's degree, as well as funded pathways to A.A. and B.A./B.S. degree completion on SLU's St. Louis campus for Program alumni.
- Implement our partnership with Jesuit Worldwide Learning (to offer online bachelor's degrees for students living in war zones, refugee camps, and impoverished countries)

## Strategic Priority #4: Access and Reach

**We will prioritize our obligation to lead the expansion of student access to Jesuit higher education – locally, nationally, and globally.**

### **Goal 4.2:**

Invest in and leverage the strengths of the Madrid campus to advance SLU's Jesuit, Catholic higher education internationally.

### **Priority Actions**

- Build academic capacity for additional four-year undergraduate majors to be offered in Madrid
- Build operational capacity (including space acquisition) to support significantly greater enrollment on the Madrid campus
- Enhance faculty/staff exchange between our St. Louis and Madrid campuses
- Incentivize research collaborations between/among St. Louis and Madrid faculty
- Enhance student exchange between our St. Louis and Madrid campuses

## Strategic Priority #4: Access and Reach

**We will prioritize our obligation to lead the expansion of student access to Jesuit higher education – locally, nationally, and globally.**

### **Goal 4.3:**

Develop and/or expand innovative, impactful academic programs where pedagogically appropriate and aligned with our Catholic, Jesuit identity.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Create a mechanism and support structure for incentivizing and rewarding faculty-driven efforts for innovative academic program (re)development
- Expand distance education offerings in areas of strength, and when pedagogically appropriate
- Invest in equitable support services for distance learners
- Expand professional master's degree programs in areas of strength

## Strategic Priority #5: Institutional Planning

**We will prioritize institutional planning principles and processes that ensure alignment of resources and capacities, supporting growth that is ambitious but responsible.**

### **Goal 5.1:**

Establish parameters for program-specific and institutional growth that do not compromise our support of the success of all students.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Establish a representative standing committee on institutional size and scope charged to monitor and advance the holistic and systemic management of SLU's portfolio of academic programs and associated enrollments; student support programs; space/facilities; and educational and operational technologies.
- Finalize and begin implementation of the revised process by which academic program viability is monitored and managed cyclically (replacing the APRC).

## Strategic Priority #5: Institutional Planning

**We will prioritize institutional planning principles and processes that ensure alignment of resources and capacities, supporting growth that is ambitious but responsible.**

### **Goal 5.2:**

Develop strategic priorities and governance processes for technology investments across the Provost's portfolio.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Solicit and synthesize input from University community to identify appropriate strategic priorities for technology investments
- Articulate the priorities and principles that will guide future technology investments
- Conduct gap analyses to identify necessary areas for investment in technologies that advance teaching, research/scholarship, and student support
- Revise governance structures to support integrated technology prioritization and decision-making across Academic Affairs
- Use the articulated strategic priorities and principles for technology investments to make decisions

## Strategic Priority #5: Institutional Planning

**We will prioritize institutional planning principles and processes that ensure alignment of resources and capacities, supporting growth that is ambitious but responsible.**

### **Goal 5.3:**

Develop strategic priorities and governance processes for investments in, allocation of, and determinations of use of space across the Provost's portfolio.

### **Priority Actions:**

- Develop and institute a process for assessing, (re)allocating, and (re)designing Registrar-controlled teaching space in a manner that prioritizes pedagogy and student success
- Develop and institute a process for assessing, (re)allocating, and (re)designing research/scholarship space in a manner that fosters achievement of SLU's research aspirations
- Develop and institute a process for assessing, (re)allocating, and (re)designing other spaces (libraries, commuter/non-residential student academic workspaces, and non-educational spaces) that support student engagement and success
- Develop a housing master plan for both undergraduate and graduate/professional students

**Questions? Comments?**