

# *Saint Francis University*

## *Strategic Plan 2006*

*Submitted by: The Saint Francis University Community*

*A Mind for Excellence ...*

*A Spirit for Peace and Justice ...*

*A Heart for Service ...*



*Remember that when you leave this earth you can take with you nothing that you  
have received – only what you have given:  
A full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.*

*St. Francis of Assisi*

## Mission Statement

***A Mind for Excellence:*** Saint Francis University offers higher education in an environment guided by Catholic values and teachings, and inspired by the example of our patron, Saint Francis of Assisi. The oldest Franciscan institution of higher learning in the United States, Saint Francis University is an inclusive learning community that welcomes all people.

***A Spirit for Peace and Justice:*** University programs and activities foster such Franciscan values as a humble and generous attitude toward learning, respect for diversity and the uniqueness of individual persons, understanding of ethical issues, and reverence for all life. With a spirit of simplicity and joy, we provide opportunities for the University community to think critically and analytically, communicate effectively, and integrate theory and practice.

***A Heart for Service:*** Saint Francis University offers undergraduate programs in the liberal arts tradition, graduate and professional programs of study that emphasize personal and professional ethics, and continuing education opportunities for personal and career enhancement. We seek to inspire in all members of the University community a love of lifelong learning and a commitment to share their gifts and skills generously with others in a rapidly changing world.

## Core Values and Guiding Principles

### ***Goals of Franciscan Higher Education***

- \* *A humble and generous attitude toward learning*
- \* *Reverence for all life and for the goodness of all humanity*
- \* *A global vision*
- \* *Service to the poor and needy*
- \* *Respect for the uniqueness of individual persons*
- \* *A community of faith and prayer*
- \* *The spirit of simplicity and joy*
- \* *Franciscan presence*

***Educational Philosophy:*** Saint Francis University is committed to transmitting the knowledge, culture, and values of the past, not as historical curiosities, but as vital factors in facing the realities of life in the 21st century. The University confronts students with the full force of developments taking place in all aspects of modern life, challenging them to draw on the experiences of their predecessors while helping them to chart a realistic course for the future—their own and that of society.

## Vision

Saint Francis University is a Catholic university of choice for undergraduate and graduate students, nationally recognized for its Franciscan mission and goals, its academic excellence and its vibrant student life co-curriculum. The University places particular emphasis on developing individuals who will lead or serve with character and values in their chosen professions and communities.

## **Strategic Theme 1**

### **A MIND FOR EXCELLENCE: A Distinctive Academic Experience**

Saint Francis University strives toward academic excellence through the integration of theory and practice with particular emphasis on service learning. This is accomplished through:

- ❖ dedicated, skilled faculty who caringly mentor their students, collaborate with them in research, and involve them in other challenging service-and career-related experiences;
- ❖ creative pedagogies that encourage students to reach their full potential, such as study abroad, service learning experiences, and interdisciplinary courses;
- ❖ a general education program that supports student learning of values, skills, and knowledge through curricular/co-curricular links and service-learning;
- ❖ a comprehensive array of undergraduate programs in the liberal arts tradition in business, natural sciences, humanities, health sciences, education, social sciences, mathematics, computer sciences; and
- ❖ undergraduate and graduate professional education that develops Saint Francis students into knowledgeable, skilled practitioners.

The total academic experience prepares Saint Francis University students to excel in their fields and initiate positive change in the world as responsible citizens committed to ethical leadership and service to others.

### **Strategic Theme 1 Goals**

- 1.1 Assess student mastery of all General Education and academic department/program objectives to enhance the quality of student learning, guide advising and tutoring initiatives, and prepare students for careers and for graduate and professional study.
- 1.2 Develop an effective strategy for prioritizing revisions to curricular and co-curricular offerings, instructional strategies, and administrative structures and policies based on their potential to enhance student learning.
- 1.3 Expand the integration of Franciscan Values with knowledge and skills by infusing our study-abroad and internship opportunities with intercultural service and leadership experiences.
- 1.4 Mentor students in active learning experiences that emphasize community outreach, application of theory, professional networking, and technological skills.

## **Strategic Theme 2**

### **A VIBRANT COMMUNITY: Sharing in the Joy of Saint Francis**

Saint Francis University's unique combination of small size, pastoral setting, and caring faculty and staff enables a meaningful integration of academics with student and community life. This is accomplished through:

- ❖ appreciating students, faculty, staff, alumni and other constituencies by applying the University's mission, vision, and Franciscan values to all aspects of its culture;
- ❖ developing the individual person by providing opportunities for students, faculty and staff to serve, lead and grow through academic, spiritual, cultural, athletic, and recreational offerings that are engaging, enjoyable, and educational;
- ❖ creating community by developing programs, services and infrastructure for the campus and surrounding area encompassing intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional needs; and
- ❖ building relationships by seeking partners and collaborators to nurture and expand the University's mission, vision, and strategic goals.

At Saint Francis University, a vibrant, values-based culture celebrates living and learning and fosters the development of the whole person.

### **Strategic Theme 2 Goals**

- 2.1 Establish a paradigm for intentional and integrated learning outside of the classroom that promotes a vibrant, learner-centered community environment.
- 2.2 Establish partnerships, relationships and growth opportunities through connections with surrounding communities, businesses and individuals.
- 2.3 Enrich the campus environment by recruiting and welcoming faculty, staff, and students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and by developing programs and infrastructure that respond to the needs of the campus community.
- 2.4 Implement a distinctive approach to servant leadership by establishing a structure and process in which faculty, staff, students, alumni and external partners participate.

## **Strategic Theme 3**

### **A SPIRIT FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE; A Heart for Service**

The Saint Francis University community intentionally embodies the spirit of our patron, St. Francis of Assisi, by touching lives; healing bodies and souls; enriching minds; protecting and restoring the environment; and building better communities. On a day-to-day basis, we strive to answer the question, “What would Francis do?” by:

- ❖ fostering a Franciscan presence and a commitment to service;
- ❖ welcoming and embracing all people in a spirit of peace;
- ❖ providing community outreach programs and activities that educate and serve;
- ❖ promoting an awareness of and developing strategies for environmentally innovative practices and policies;
- ❖ addressing socio-economic conditions regionally and globally; and
- ❖ integrating the skills, knowledge, and values bases that inform questions of ethical responsibilities and social justice.

Service transforms the servant; therefore, members of the Saint Francis community leave a meaningful social imprint by living lives of compassion and charity.

### **Strategic Theme 3 Goals**

- 3.1 Welcome and embrace all people through community outreach, spiritual development, and educational activities that strive to promote respect for individual differences.
- 3.2 Address socioeconomic conditions by implementing service-oriented solutions and by initiating positive changes related to social justice issues.
- 3.3 Engage students in Franciscan value experiences that will inspire them to spread Franciscan values globally.
- 3.4 Implement solutions to preserve, repair, and promote community-wide respect for the natural environment.
- 3.5 Ensure that all members of the Saint Francis University are treated justly and equitably.

## **Strategic Theme 4**

### **A CONNECTED COMMUNITY: High-Tech, High-Touch**

Saint Francis University offers caring, personal relationships and cutting-edge technologies as shown through:

- ❖ availability of mobile computing and state-of-the-art technology/facilities used to enhance instruction and student learning, improve the quality of campus services, and increase underserved population access to services;
- ❖ opportunities for students to develop various technology-related practical skills and the ability to critically and ethically evaluate their application;
- ❖ a supportive learning environment fostered by faculty, technical experts, and scholarly resources accessible to students through multiple avenues; and
- ❖ opportunities for students to develop confidence in communication and research skills, comfort with the rapid pace of change, and empathy for people.

The Saint Francis University experience prepares students to use their technical skills in an ethical, discerning manner to differentiate themselves from other job applicants in an increasingly competitive and demanding marketplace.

### **Strategic Theme 4 Goals**

- 4.1 Improve communication and access to vital information, bringing together all members of the community.
- 4.2 Implement technology that enhances instruction and student learning, provides user-friendly secure access to vital information and services, and realistically keeps up with new innovations.
- 4.3 Enhance information literacy skills and integrate technological expertise with student, faculty and staff educational needs to facilitate adaptation to the rapid pace of technological change.
- 4.4 Maximize community outreach and research benefits provided to rural and underserved areas by utilizing advanced technology and coordinating mutually beneficial internal and external collaborations.