



**Transformative Education:
A Strategic Framework for Fordham University**

**University Discussion Document
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Introduction

Marking the 175th year since its founding, Fordham University seeks to live out ever more fully its mission: to discover and communicate knowledge in the service of justice, faith, and social transformation. Fordham carries out this charge amidst the diversity and bustle of one of the world's great cities, a place where the nation and the world, the traditional and the technological, the religious and the commercial, the scientific and the cultural, all meet.

Fordham's New York City campuses are distinctive and complementary. Rose Hill, the University's earliest location, is a bucolic, traditional college campus situated in the Bronx, adjacent to the New York Botanical Garden and the Bronx Zoo. It is the home of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, an undergraduate liberal arts college, a continuing education division, and an undergraduate division of the Gabelli School of Business. The Manhattan campus, abutting Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, houses an undergraduate liberal arts college, a continuing education division, graduate and undergraduate divisions of the Gabelli School of Business, the School of Law, and the Graduate Schools of Education and Social Service. It comprises several high-rise buildings surrounding a small green—the quintessential urban campus. In addition, Fordham has two sites in Westchester County: a building in West Harrison occupied by several schools that serve professional students and non-traditional undergraduates, as well as the Louis Calder Center Biological Field Station in Armonk. Overseas, Fordham has sites in London, Pretoria, and Beijing.

Fordham provides transformational education and pursues innovative research in the pursuit of goals that are both perennial and of our moment: social justice, intercultural and interreligious understanding, ethical reflection, economic development, scientific discovery, and economic well-being for all.

Fordham's Distinguishing Strengths

Among its many strengths, three distinctive features of Fordham's identity occupy the center of our planning process: our commitment to student-centeredness, our Jesuit heritage, and our New York City location.

Our Student-Centeredness

Fordham is unabashedly humanistic, committed to the equal dignity of all people. We place great emphasis on forming the character of our students, on grounding education in questions of ethics and justice, on attending rigorously to the care and development of each student as a whole person. Therefore, Fordham is inescapably dedicated to a philosophy of education that sees learning as far more than career preparation. Our foundational humanism demands of us openness to new forms of knowledge and zest for engaging new and different cultures.

These dimensions of the empowering education that students receive at Fordham prepare them to meet successfully the challenges of today and anticipate those of tomorrow. By placing students at the center of all our enterprises—whether curricular or co-curricular; academic, athletic, or spiritual—we seek to educate women and men who are capable of changing the world. A Fordham education does not convey only the mastery of knowledge, the thoughtful use of different modes of inquiry, and the development of disciplined habits of mind. It also seeks to instill in our students a restlessness of heart, a talent for discernment, and a willingness not to settle for half-truths and received wisdom.

Our Jesuit Heritage

A proud member of a family of institutions that stretches back more than 450 years, Fordham lives out its mission amidst the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual diversity of the twenty-first century. We understand our heritage to be simultaneously grounded in the Roman Catholic faith and inclusive of all, regardless of religious commitment.

Since their founding, the Jesuits have been committed to the discovery of new knowledge about every aspect of the world. They have judged no academic discipline, professional pursuit, or group of people to be unworthy of attention, and they have embraced the world as they have found it, believing that God is in all things. Today, their commitment and curiosity are manifest in the breadth and depth of Fordham's academic programs, in a growing number of interdisciplinary and inter-professional pursuits, and in our engagement with our New York City communities. Promoting awareness of the connections between seemingly disparate areas of thought and living, Fordham prepares students to be actively engaged in a rapidly changing world and to be nimble in responding to new and unexpected circumstances. At the same time, research that advances the frontiers of knowledge in areas where Fordham has particular strength must become more central to our identity as a thought-leader and a global center for innovation.

Our New York City Location

Fordham's main campuses are located in the heart of the most international city in the United States, the only one among the world's ten largest megacities. New York City is a place where finance, media, culture, design, law, medicine, education, and increasingly technology come together on a scale found nowhere else. New York is where the American Dream, the promise and hope of the Statue of Liberty, the relentless energy of commerce, the incredible power of scientific innovation, and the creative genius of the arts are uniquely intertwined. Fordham is wonderfully advantaged by the riches of the great city in which we are located. Our teaching, research, and service are all enhanced by our metropolitan location, and our students, faculty, and staff are stimulated by the pace, diversity, and energy of New York.

At the same time, New York provides Fordham with a primary context for our mission of placing learning and wisdom at the service of a more just world. New York is an unparalleled location in which to realize the opportunities the U.S. seeks to offer and to study the problems afflicting urban areas nationally and globally. Drawing upon our New York location for inspiration and placing ourselves in a relationship of mutuality with our urban neighbors—whether leaders in commerce, government, the media, and the arts, or

those who are most disenfranchised and marginalized—Fordham is dedicated to helping all who live and work in our city to meet the challenges of their circumstances and to build lives of purpose, impact, and integrity.

Fordham’s Commitment and the Context for Planning

Today, Fordham is determined to draw upon these three distinguishing strengths, and others, to provide transformative teaching, research, and service through six overarching strategic objectives:

- Infusing teaching and learning with the values of liberal education, with an eye toward questions of ethics and justice;
- Deepening our commitment to and engagement with New York City and the metropolitan region;
- Establishing Fordham as a highly competitive research institution in strategically defined areas;
- Broadening global engagement through thought-leadership about the world’s most critical challenges;
- Promoting diversity, inclusion, and accessibility; and
- Becoming a more strategic and nimble institution.

Fordham is setting out on this planning process at a crucial moment of inflection and disruption. We live in a world community that is increasingly interdependent, yet one that is simultaneously experiencing profound change. New technologies have increased our interconnectedness and have allowed us access to vast quantities of information, but they also challenge our conventional notions about learning, thinking, dialogue, privacy and authority. U.S. colleges and universities are faced with growing skepticism about the value of higher education. Amidst these growing concerns, it is more important than ever for Fordham to demonstrate both its commitment and success in preparing our students for meaningful lives, effective leadership and service to others.

Strategic Priorities

I. Innovative Jesuit Teaching and Learning

Fordham education challenges each student to develop a deeper understanding of self and to discern her or his vocation in personal as well as professional terms. We seek to connect our mission, with its grounding in the Jesuit tradition and in the values of liberal education, with the challenges and expectations of the rapidly evolving world around us. Therefore, we re-commit ourselves to the preparation of students in ways that lead them not only to gainful and productive employment but also to lives of purpose, meaning, ethics, leadership, and service.

A. Reaffirm Our Engagement with the Liberal Arts and Sciences

1. Develop new academic programs, many of them interdisciplinary and inter-professional, which enable students to master a body of knowledge while examining it critically through the lenses of ethics and social justice.
2. Review and strengthen existing undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs to ensure that they employ contemporary models of teaching and learning that foster inspired discernment, depth of thought, and clarity of perspective.
3. Develop perennially valuable skills in effective communication, including critical reading, analytical thinking, clear writing, and persuasive speech.
4. Link classroom teaching and learning to practice and to practical engagement with the needs of the twenty-first century through internships, service-learning, collaborative research, and enhanced career planning services.

B. Reimagine Student-Centered Teaching and Learning

1. Establish a University-wide resource for faculty development to design, advance, and assess new approaches to teaching and learning that meet the needs of twenty-first century students.
2. Design and thoughtfully deploy innovative instructional technologies to enhance teaching and learning approaches that can be adapted to the particular needs of different students, disciplines, and courses.
3. Design and implement academic calendars and course delivery methods that better align academic programs with the needs and interests of students, and strive to achieve an optimal educational balance among online, hybrid, and traditional pedagogies.

C. Enhance the Learning and Living Environment

1. Create and deploy a structured model of student formation and development based on active collaboration among the schools and colleges, student affairs, co-curricular activities, athletics, and campus ministry.
2. Advance design and planning for a new campus center (or a combined campus center and recreation center) on the Rose Hill campus and create additional recreational space at the Lincoln Center campus to deepen the sense of community and better serve residential and commuter students, faculty, and staff.
3. Institute faculty and staff development programs that preserve Fordham's Jesuit identity and principles of education as the presence of members of the Society of Jesus on campus diminishes.

II. The Challenge and Inspiration of New York City

Fordham is immeasurably enriched by our location in New York City, the most vibrant, multicultural, multilingual, and international city in the United States. New York is a place where myriad professions, artistic endeavors, and scientific pursuits come together as nowhere else. The pace, diversity, and energy of the city enrich the quality of research, teaching, and service at Fordham. New York is a peerless laboratory for the engaged learning of our faculty and students.

A. Make the Lincoln Center Campus a Powerful Magnet for the Arts, Business, Culture, and Media

1. Develop strong partnerships with Fordham's next-door neighbor, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and other world-class cultural institutions nearby, to enrich undergraduate and graduate/professional course offerings and expand educational and community outreach.
2. Concentrate Fordham's exceptional academic resources in business, humanities, media, and the visual and performing arts to build a synergistic array of undergraduate and graduate/professional programs in partnership with leading New York City organizations.

B. Significantly Invest in Engaged Science Education at the Rose Hill Campus

1. Build inter-institutional strengths through the Bronx Science Consortium in selective areas of research and teaching that can also actively engage students with those outside Fordham.
2. Begin design of an interdisciplinary science building on the Rose Hill campus to strengthen and support experientially oriented learning, research, and scholarship of the highest quality.

C. Deepen Fordham’s Commitment to New York City and the Metropolitan Region

1. Establish targeted interdisciplinary research initiatives that will contribute new knowledge about the trends and challenges shaping contemporary urban life. Such initiatives might include, for example, urban development, healthcare and health disparities, communications, media and fashion.
2. Make it easier for students to take advantage of the diverse resources that New York provides—for career exploration, recreation, cultural appreciation, entertainment, civic engagement, socializing, intercultural exploration, and the like.
3. Expand opportunities for every undergraduate student to perform meaningful community service and service learning that enhance educational experience and contribute to the quality of life in local communities, particularly in those around each campus.
4. Enrich the quality of community life around the Rose Hill campus in ways that benefit both the neighborhood and the University.
5. Clarify and enhance the relationships of Fordham’s Armonk and West Harrison locations with their neighboring communities and the New York City campuses.

III. Strategically Focused Research

Research that advances the frontiers of knowledge in fields with substantial social impact will shape Fordham’s identity as a leading urban research university and distinguish us globally as a center for innovative solutions to society’s problems. Fordham’s mission statement must emphasize research as an institutional priority and make explicit our aspirations in that arena.

A. Establish Fordham as a Highly Competitive Research Institution in Strategically Defined Areas

1. Develop a strategy to advance Fordham research by identifying and investing in selected areas of existing or high-potential research strength.
2. Encourage and support innovative, interdisciplinary research that brings together faculty and students from multiple schools and departments to address the grand challenges of our time and place.
3. Invest in library, laboratory, and clinical resources—human, physical, and technological—necessary to support increased faculty and student engagement in research.

B. Promote Faculty-Student Research Collaboration

1. Develop innovative models that promote meaningful faculty-student collaboration, mentorship, and supervision at the graduate/professional and undergraduate levels.
2. Embrace graduate/professional and undergraduate student research and scholarship, ensuring that all students who participate are supported, have meaningful experiences, and are recognized for their accomplishments.

C. Significantly Increase Externally Funded Faculty Research

1. Establish an initiative fund for the recruitment of distinguished teaching scholars, including cluster appointments, in areas of research that are germane to our strategically defined priorities and that have the greatest potential to attract sponsored funding.
2. Develop faculty workload policies that in revenue positive or neutral ways reward research effectiveness, achievement, and collaboration with students while preserving teaching excellence.
3. Establish a mentoring program or principal investigator institute for junior faculty members to enhance their ability to win externally funded research grants.
4. Set annual targets for growth in faculty research and provide effective professional support in obtaining and administering grants and publishing results in peer-reviewed journals.

IV. Global Engagement

As the world becomes smaller, the result of ever-faster communications and interactions, Fordham is committed to help its students understand better the opportunities and implications of globalization and to gain a deeper appreciation of the world's cultures and peoples. Fordham takes seriously its responsibility to expand the frontiers of knowledge about the world and help create more just societies in which human dignity is enhanced and protected.

A. Establish Fordham as a Thought-Leader About the World's Most Critical Challenges

1. Build distinctive foci of teaching and research excellence on pressing world issues where Fordham can bring spiritual insights and marshal particular academic strengths from the humanities, social sciences and professions.
2. Drawing on the University's resources in the study of religious ideas and texts, languages and cultures, establish an institute that will address the centrality of faith in human culture and the global questions that emerge from this centrality, including religious conflict, security and stability, as well as terrorism and extremism.

3. Deepen Fordham's links with Jesuit universities around the world in order to bring our coordinated capabilities, interests, and resources to bear on a number of specific global challenges and to permit faculty and students to collaborate and study with colleagues at sister institutions.

B. Broaden Fordham's Global Perspective

1. Substantially increase the number and diversity of Fordham's international undergraduate students as well as the resources necessary for them to thrive on campus.
2. Develop strong global competencies among students through on-campus academic and co-curricular programming, study and living experiences abroad, a robust foreign language program and "internationalization at home" experiences.
3. Align and deepen the connections between Fordham's New York City base and its sites in London, Pretoria, and Beijing by clarifying the purpose, roles, relationships, and focus of each location abroad.
4. Enhance the range and quality of Fordham's affiliations with leading universities around the world in order to increase faculty and student exchange and develop additional inter-institutional academic programs and initiatives.

V. A Diverse and Inclusive Community

Fordham's vibrant community welcomes all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability/disability status, religion, and tradition. Fostering inclusion and understanding across the many human differences that often divide and marginalize, the Fordham community is united in its reverence for the human dignity of every person. We recognize that viable solutions to enduring problems emerge when people with diverse backgrounds and skills work together with mutual respect, toward common goals.

A. Promote Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

1. Identify and appoint leaders throughout the University—including a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer reporting to the President—to lead, support, and coordinate strategies that will create a diverse and inclusive campus climate.
2. Strengthen the focus of undergraduate and graduate/professional curricula and program offerings on the many dimensions of human diversity.
3. Enhance the cultural competency of faculty, staff, and students in order to anticipate and take account of changing societal demographics, mores, and attitudes.

B. Recruit and Retain Institutional Leaders, Faculty, Staff, and Students Who Reflect the Diversity of Society, Regionally and Nationally

1. Establish an opportunity-hire fund for the recruitment and retention of senior administrators and faculty from underrepresented populations.
2. Substantially increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of students from underrepresented and underserved populations and provide sufficient financial assistance to ensure that they can attend and thrive at Fordham.
3. Expand and better integrate existing opportunity programs, especially those that serve the geographical areas where Fordham is located.

VI. A Strategic and Nimble Institution

Fordham must anticipate and respond effectively to the rapidly changing circumstances of higher education and strengthen stewardship of its human, financial, and physical resources on behalf of students, faculty, and donors. The University is dedicated to continuously improving the quality of teaching and research and enriching campus life by strengthening its financial foundation, designing and adopting new methods for teaching and learning, anticipating changes in its environment, and becoming a more transparently managed institution.

A. Create a Sustainable Business Model

1. Prepare a sustainable long-range financial plan aligned with this Strategic Framework that includes targets for new income from sponsored research, current-use gifts, and endowment funds. Such a plan should seek to increase and diversify the University's operating income, minimize tuition increases, strengthen the quality and attractiveness of academic programs, improve operational efficiency, and streamline administrative processes and procedures.
2. Develop institutional criteria for the formal evaluation and possible restructuring of schools, colleges, academic programs, and administrative units in ways that improve curricular offerings, provide superior financial return on investment, and advance Fordham's institutional identity.
3. Identify and tap market segments that offer opportunity for growth in enrollment and revenue.
4. Strengthen the University's marketing, branding, and promotion to enhance recognition of academic program quality and achievements of Fordham alumni.
5. Reach broader, more diverse populations of students and increase tuition revenue by implementing new course delivery methods and revisions to the academic calendar—including a winter session, enhanced summer session, and short-term

courses where appropriate—that attract new applicants, improve utilization of the physical plant, and rationalize course scheduling.

6. Establish planning and scanning protocols to anticipate and address changing internal and external circumstances, take account of emerging and declining markets and encourage innovation and nimbleness.
7. Build a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and thoughtful risk-taking throughout the University.

B. Build a Strong, Dynamic Technology Infrastructure

1. Refine our technology platforms to make them more robust and flexible in supporting technology-enabled learning, research, institutional communications, and informed decision making.
2. Ensure that all departments and schools have adequate access to the technology support necessary to enhance collaboration among faculty, students, staff, and departments.
3. Design and implement electronic systems that will streamline administrative processes and move the University toward simpler, more efficient, and paperless operations.

C. Design and Implement a Transparent, Inclusive, Continuous Planning Process

1. Establish guidelines for the development and widespread sharing of strategic plans by each major academic and administrative unit, encourage collaborative planning by schools and departments, and ensure congruence with this Strategic Framework.
2. Implement continuous planning in ways that maximize transparency, enhance widespread engagement, and incentivize inter-unit cooperation.
3. Develop metrics and measure annual progress in achieving University and unit-level strategic objectives and take appropriate corrective action to address deficiencies and unforeseen complications.

The Fordham Planning Process

Beginning in spring 2015 and led by President Joseph M. McShane, S.J., Fordham initiated a transparent, inclusive, and continuous planning process to guide the University's growth and development. The President established a Continuous University Strategic Planning (CUSP) Committee to oversee and coordinate the planning process. Consisting of twenty-two faculty members, deans, and administrators and advised by AKA|Strategy, CUSP has met regularly since September 2015. It sought and benefited extensively from campus community feedback and the insights of campus experts in areas such as research, internationalization, diversity and inclusion, and student learning.

The goal of our planning is to make Fordham more flexible, agile, and responsive to the changing environment in which it finds itself. It is no longer feasible, let alone wise, to plan in a static fashion for a decade or more at a time. Instead, Fordham seeks through the CUSP process to develop a Strategic Framework—a document that articulates a clear vision for the future, specifies the University's core values, identifies a small number of institution-wide priorities, and delineates a set of goals.

The CUSP priorities and goals serve as a scaffold for local planning by individual schools, colleges, and administrative units that will move the University forward in accord with the Framework. Local planning will be led by the provost, deans and vice presidents in their respective areas of responsibility. An integral part of local planning is the development of action plans, metrics to monitor progress, and the practice of continuous strategic thinking. That requires regular, rigorous scanning of the external and internal environment which in turn prompts timely and appropriate plan adjustments based on the findings.

This draft Framework is being distributed to all members of the University community and discussed at a variety of town-hall meetings and focus groups. A link for feedback is also posted on the University web site. In light of feedback received CUSP will author a penultimate draft to be shared with the community and Trustees in mid-April. A final version will be submitted to the President for review and subsequently to the Board of Trustees for its consideration and adoption at the September Board of Trustees meeting.