



# Designing DePaul



---

Thank you to the DePaul faculty, students, staff, alumni, and board of trustees who participated in 50 design sessions and breathed life into these pages. Your participation ensured that this document was made for DePaul, by DePaul. Thank you to nearly 100 community members who offered valuable feedback during the review period. Your contributions, whether in words or ideas, have greatly influenced this work. This document stands as a testament to the power of collaboration.

---

*Designing DePaul*  
First edition October 2023

DePaul University  
Chicago, IL 60604  
[www.DePaul.edu](http://www.DePaul.edu)

Copyright © 2023 by DePaul University  
Cover © 2023 by HERO Agency

Editing services by Hannah Skaggs  
Creative direction and design by HERO Agency at Beyond Academics  
Published by: DePaul University, Chicago, IL 60604

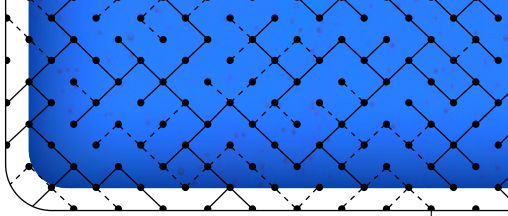
All rights reserved. For use of any part of this publication, whether reproduced, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or stored in a retrieval system, without the prior consent of the publisher, is an infringement of copyright law and is forbidden.

Although the publisher and the authors have made every effort to ensure that the information in this book was correct at press time and while this publication is designed to provide accurate information in regard to the subject matter covered, the publisher and the author assume no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions, or any other inconsistencies herein and hereby disclaim any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause.

This publication is meant as a source of valuable information for the reader, however it is not meant as a substitute for direct expert assistance. If such a level of assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

First Printing  
Printed in the United States of America  
10987654321



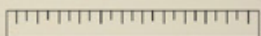


# Table of Contents

<b>Prologue</b>	<b>4-21</b>
<hr/>	
<b>1. Institutional Effectiveness &amp; Vincentian Pragmatism</b>	<b>22-37</b>
<hr/>	
<b>2. Program Distinction &amp; Expansion</b>	<b>38-55</b>
<hr/>	
<b>3. Geographic &amp; Community Expansion</b>	<b>56-69</b>
<hr/>	
<b>4. Digital Presence</b>	<b>70-83</b>
<hr/>	
<b>5. Philanthropic Engagement</b>	<b>84-95</b>
<hr/>	
<b>6. University-Wide Initiatives</b>	<b>96-99</b>



[DESIGNING  
DEPAUL]



Les hamble pour  
MICH DEPAUL  
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12

Prologue

# Prologue

In early 2023, the DePaul community came together to imagine the expansive possibilities that lay ahead of us as one of the nation's largest Catholic universities and an institution that has been at the forefront of education, research, and service since 1898.

Together, we took stock of the Covid pandemic's impacts on individuals and communities, and especially on the rising generations of students. We also noted that long-standing disagreements about the costs and benefits of higher education have intensified. Compelled by our shared Catholic Vincentian values, we resolved to prove the power of a DePaul education in addressing new and urgent global problems.

Defining our role in this new world involved hosting close to 50 collaborative listening sessions with 3,000+ community members, including faculty, students, staff, leadership, trustees, alumni, parents, and community partners. We reminded ourselves of our Vincentian mission and our commitment to equity, sustainability, and nonviolence. During these inclusive "Designing DePaul" sessions, the following five principles informed an overwhelming majority of conversations.

- 1 Community: **We are best when we are in community with each other**—a lesson learned during the Covid pandemic.
- 2 Mission: **We must be unwavering in our commitment to our Catholic Vincentian mission** to prepare people to serve the most marginalized in our world—ensuring that everyone who engages with DePaul is equipped and motivated to serve the marginalized in every walk of life, throughout their lives.
- 3 Values: We must uphold a **demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, sustainability, radical hospitality, and a servant heart.**
- 4 Financial principles: We must maintain a firm commitment to operating on **sound financial principles that position us to impactfully invest** in the DePaul mission.
- 5 Innovation: To meet the needs of a post-pandemic world, we must collectively participate in relevant, innovative, and inspiring programming—**creating new opportunities for our students and community.**

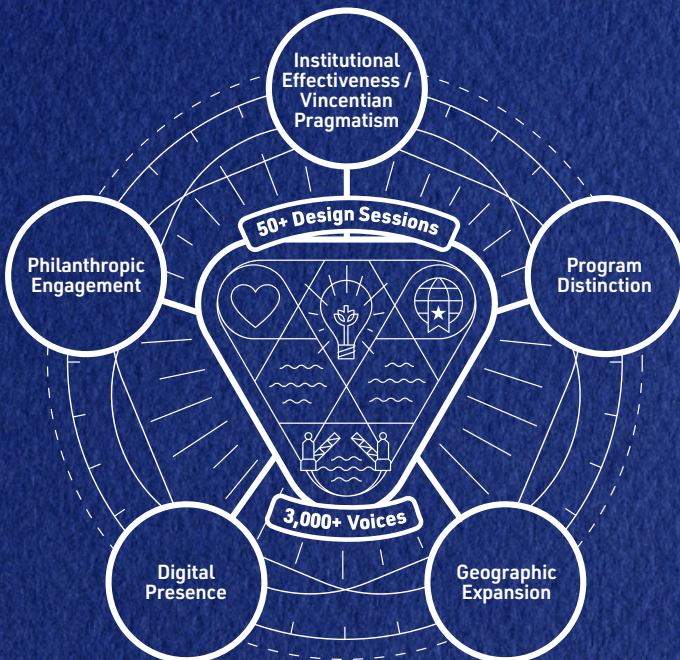
## Our Journey

Based on these five foundational principles, the community identified five key themes that would position us for global impact and relevance. We decided to embrace a student- and mission-centric approach to **institutional effectiveness and Vincentian Pragmatism, expand our programs of distinction, improve our community outreach, strengthen our digital presence, and unleash philanthropy** through intentional connection.

These themes open up robust and focused opportunities for our university. Through an inclusive process, our community members carefully reviewed our institution's assets and openly critiqued our day-to-day work—then produced visions for how we can become exceptional in our focus areas and in the execution of our mission.

This working document captures shared community aspirations, opportunities to bring our most creative dreams to life, and some early university-wide projects that will position DePaul to have a monumental impact on the world.

## Designing DePaul Focus Areas





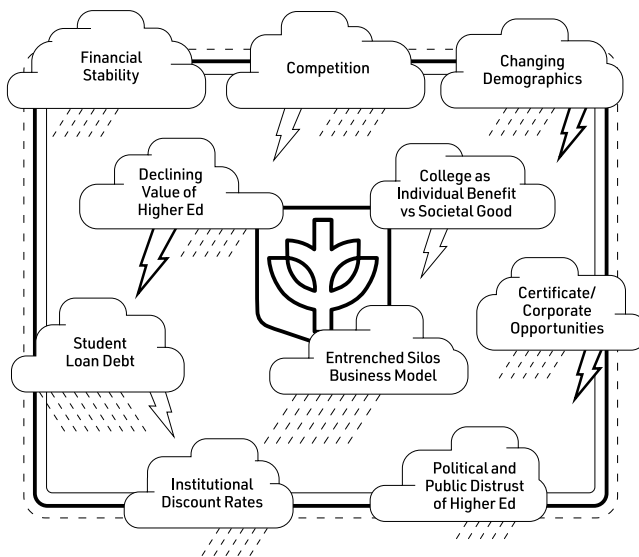
## Designing DePaul Focus Areas

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to all colleges, schools, and administrative units as they craft their strategic plans. Designing DePaul does provide some university-wide initiatives that we will pursue. A single centralized approach would only limit a complex institution like DePaul. Instead, this document provides community-driven aspirations that experts across the institution can use as they design or adapt strategic plans tailored to their college, school, or administrative unit.

We also want to empower the experts across our university to create specific strategies to live out these goals. We hope this document inspires every academic and administrative unit as they design their strategic plans knowing that peers across the institution are doing the same, working toward a shared vision.

## Our Moment

External forces pose a real threat to our work. It is important to recognize and consider them as we continue designing DePaul for the future. The declining value of a college degree in the minds of the public, the decrease in high school graduates, and the high levels of debt that students and families are taking on all work against our effort to educate future students at DePaul.



The  
External  
Forces

**We will continue to confront two significant external realities in the years to come:**

**1. The impact of the Covid pandemic on our greater community:**

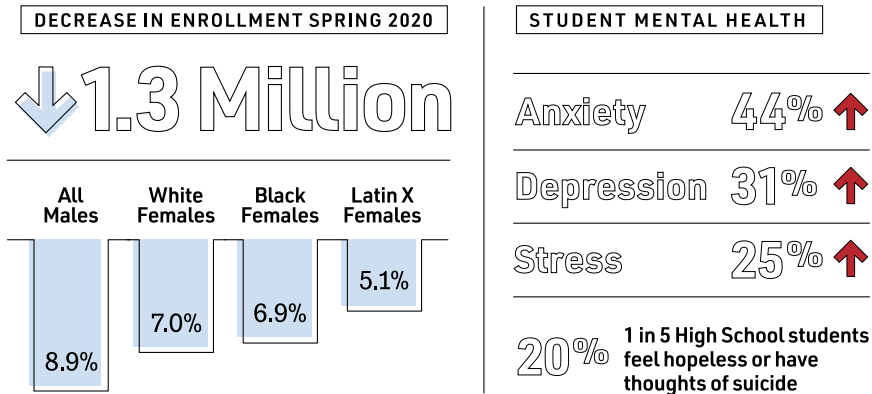
The pandemic had a devastating impact on an entire generation of students, as well as on our faculty, alumni, and community at large. The pressures on colleges and universities from the long-tail effects of the pandemic go far beyond academics: many of our families are still recovering financially, while our students, faculty, and staff are still dealing with the impact of isolation, anxiety, and learning loss.

These consequences shape the way we deliver our education. We must continue to solve problems—both visible and hidden—to help our people heal from the devastating effects of the pandemic.

---

**THE NATIONAL IMPACT OF THE COVID PANDEMIC ON AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

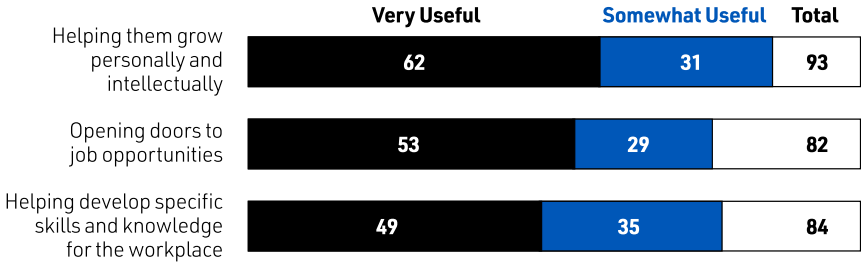
---



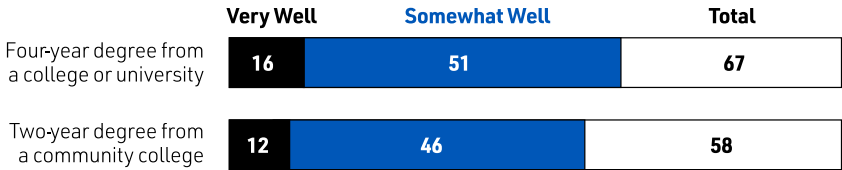
SOURCE: U.S. DEPT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS | SPRING 2021

**2. Growing criticism of higher education and the liberal arts:** The value of a liberal arts education—one that equips students to be well-rounded citizens capable of engaging with the questions of our time—is also facing great opposition today. Some in the marketplace are arguing for short-term, skills-based training as the new model for education while ignoring the enduring impact of a well-rounded education that fosters critical thinking, empathy, and adaptability.

**RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATE SENTIMENT**



**US ADULT SENTIMENT**



SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER | 2019

The fact that today’s corporations, nonprofits, and policymakers are trying to solve interdisciplinary problems is a validation of DePaul’s continued effort to foster interdisciplinarity. However, there is clearly a disconnect between our unique approach to providing education and the value others are assigning it. It is our responsibility to ask ourselves how we will present the interdisciplinary nature of a liberal arts education as the solution to contemporary global problems.

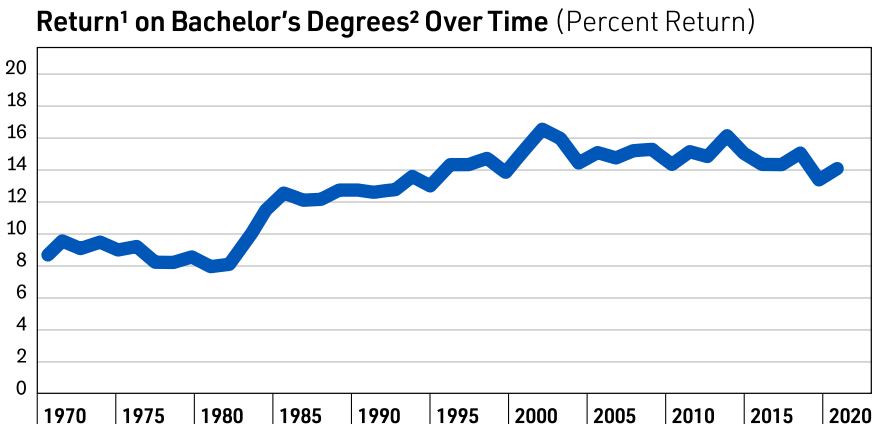
Although it is true that numbers of liberal arts and sciences majors have declined in recent years, enrollment in these subject areas has not declined at DePaul, where the value of a broad education that engages the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences is understood.



**As Pew Research data shows, although 93% of college graduates say their college education was somewhat to very useful for getting a well-paying job, only 16% of surveyed adults feel college prepares young people for a well-paying job in today’s economy. This disparity demonstrates an urgent need to reeducate the population about the value of a liberal arts education.**

The financial value of a college degree is still clear. In 2020, the average college graduate aged 23–34 with just a bachelor’s degree earned about \$59,600, compared to \$36,600 for the average worker with only a high school diploma.

This means a typical college graduate earns a premium of well over \$23,000, or over 60 percent.



1. Return calculated using the internal rate of return, which is the discount rate that makes the net present value of all cash flows from a particular investment equal to zero.

2. Rate of return estimates pertain to those who complete a college degree; the estimates do not account for the risks associated with not completing the degree and dropping out of college.

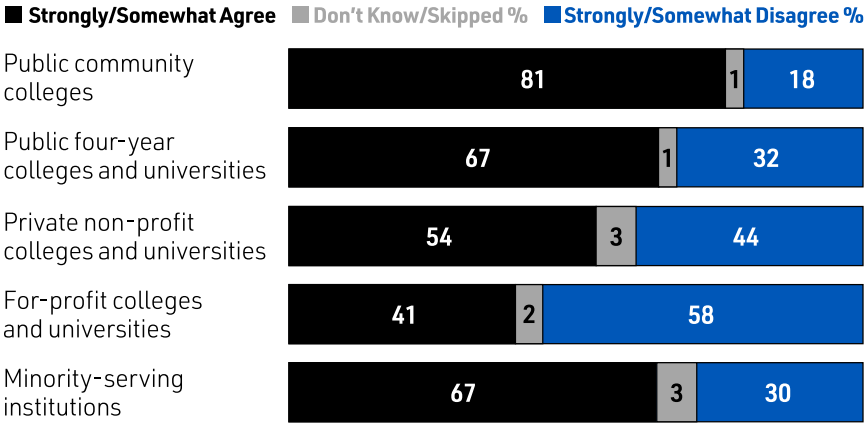
SOURCE: NEW YORK FEDERAL RESERVE BANK, IPEDS, CENSUS | 2021

DePaul is poised to model the value of a liberal arts education. Our unique approach to connecting all our academic work to the world’s struggles ensures that our students are prepared upon graduation. Our faculty is already bringing forward innovative ideas to better embed these critical fields of study in all our degrees. Let us reiterate the profound importance of studying liberal arts and sciences in fostering a deeper understanding of the most pressing issues of our day. As a leader in values-based education, DePaul can prove the value of such an education in a modern, relevant context that both individuals and industry understand.

Adding to these two challenges are issues ranging from changing demographics to our students’ debt load, increased competition from EdTech learning platforms, and a “race to the bottom” as institutions

discount tuition and student loan debt continues to rise. DePaul's Catholic Vincentian mission uniquely equips us to collaboratively solve these challenges.

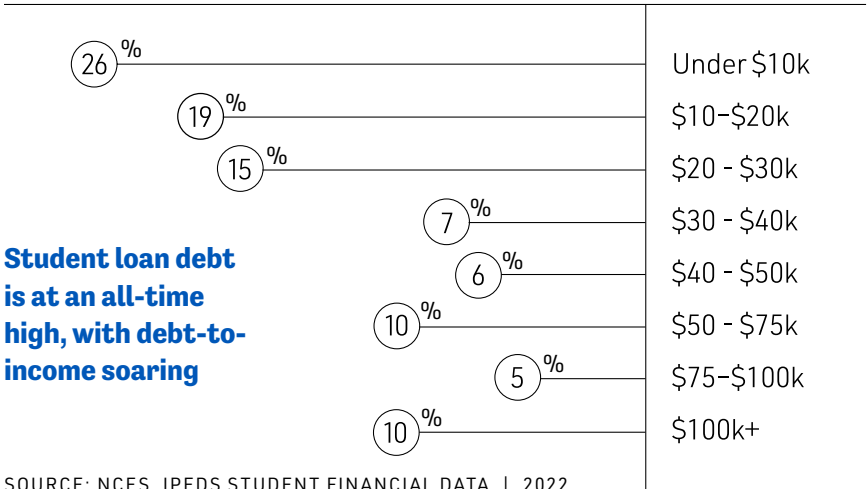
**Percent of students who agree or disagree that the following institutions of higher education are worth the cost / 2022, n=1,517**

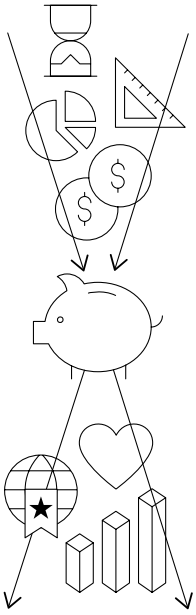


**Over 1/3 of students believe higher education is not worth the cost**

SOURCE: NEW AMERICA | 2022

**Average Total Student Loan Debt Is Over \$32K**





**We can no longer budget-cut ourselves to prominence. We must shift our attention to strategies that prioritize investment and growth.**

## Our Moment—DePaul’s Reality

In preparation for the journey of designing our future, we respectfully pause to reflect on the reality that we have made some painful (yet existentially important) decisions in the last year together. Throughout the last academic year, we recognized a need to address a \$56 million gap between what we wanted and the resources we had available. Resolving that gap was among the most difficult decisions we have made—and it is a price we never want to have to pay again. These reductions were never meant to be a strategy to achieve greatness, grow in relevance, or even become the model for higher education. They were reactions to the reality of the moment. Getting through the process was an immense collective accomplishment, and we now have a firm footing from which to move forward.

In October 2022, the Board of Trustees approved the retirement of the return to principal practice to our endowment, agreeing that those funds could instead be considered for the Reinvest in DePaul Fund. We are now charged to bring exceptional ideas to the board for consideration. The listening sessions confirmed the community’s desire to work together to create the ideas that establish this new direction for DePaul.

## Pulling Insight from Our Legacy Strategic Plan

Valuable insight can be gained from our legacy strategic plan, *Grounded in Mission* (2018). Given how much the world has changed since the plan was prepared, all of our administrative units, schools, and colleges are welcome to reimagine the plan's strategies and approaches to ensure they are contemporary and relevant. For example, when we penned the words "ensuring a welcoming, engaging, diverse, and inclusive campus environment" in that plan, we had not yet experienced the widespread adoption of generative AI or the ability to bolster and leverage our institution's digital presence.

Today, new technologies are permeating the market, inspiring questions like "How can we take advantage of the latest breakthroughs in exponential technologies to deliver an online experience that is immersive, engaging, inclusive, and highly personalized?"

The same legacy strategic plan of 2018 also called for us to "expand access to a portfolio of high-quality, affordable academic programs that meet student, workforce, and societal needs." This allows us to ask questions such as "How can we take what is excellent about our institution and position it to have the highest impact in this new world?"

We also committed to "*excelling in preparing all students for global citizenship and success.*" Based on that foundation, the Designing DePaul process will raise important questions about how we deliver that promise in meaningful and modern ways.

## Alignment Check

The voice of our founder, St. Vincent, rings loud and clear through the Designing DePaul process. Although he lived in a very different time, the problems he felt called to solve were just as significant. As the contemporary stewards of his teachings and legacy, we gain insight, inspiration, and guidance to address modern needs.

St. Vincent de Paul spent his life answering one haunting question: “What must be done?” He compared the world he saw around him to his ideal vision, often feeling a keen sense of dissatisfaction, just as we do, with the status quo. As St. Vincent looked around, he saw countless men, women, infants, children, and elders living at the margins. He saw people who were hungry, homeless, and victims of war. He saw children who were orphaned and elderly people who were alone. He saw people who did not receive adequate health care, education, employment, or economic opportunities. He saw people whose daily lives bore the full weight of poverty. He saw the marginalized and powerless. He recognized these people as his brothers and sisters, looking into their eyes with great respect and love and considering their lives with great compassion. He realized he needed to act.

The incredible body of acts that followed was fueled by his passion to be a problem solver, transformation catalyst, and community builder.

As we reimagine what our dramatically changed world needs from us today, may the approach of St. Vincent de Paul be the center line we keep returning to—even when we are tempted to take shortcuts, get sidelined, or be distracted from the mission.





# The Underlying Values of the Modern Vincentian University

---

Create Academic Curiosity & Excellence

---

Generate Experiences That Promote Diversity, Equity,  
& Inclusion in Our Community

---

Live with a Servant Heart

---

Balance Action & Impact with Financial Stability

---

Lead Our Work with the Vincentian Charism of Care for the Poor, Care for  
Our Environment, & Nonviolent Action

---

Practice Radical Hospitality

## The Outcome

Guided by our aspiration and fueled by the unbounded creativity, innovation, and passion of over 3,000 community voices, the Designing DePaul process identified five focus areas that can collectively transform our institution, community, and world. These focus areas—and the work done to date in each—are outlined in the following chapters.

# 1

### **Chapter 1: Institutional Effectiveness & Vincentian**

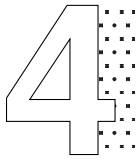
**Pragmatism:** Guided by our Vincentian values and driven by a stance against budget-cutting our way to success, our community is compelled to take innovative action. This chapter captures the community's desire to reduce the achievement gap for students of color, implement Black equity initiatives, become a Hispanic-serving institution, pursue disability justice, engage religious diversity, support our LGBTQ community, update university-wide safety and security approaches, create and modify college and administrative unit strategic plans, launch education sessions and data releases on university finances, and enter a new university-wide budgeting and forecasting process.

# 2

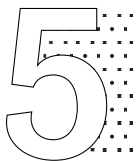
**Chapter 2: Program Distinction & Expansion:** Here we find ways to enhance our already-stellar interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation to present a model for supporting and extending these efforts to the entire DePaul community. This includes a comprehensive review of the goals and needs of existing academic programs as well as all non-credit options at the university, a continued analysis of tenure density and salary competitiveness, a finalized university-wide analysis of new programs for our future, and the launch of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research and its related institutes.

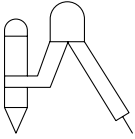

**Chapter 3: Geographic & Community Expansion:** We intend to continue growing meaningful community partnerships. To that end, we aim to reaffirm our position as Chicago's convenor and problem solver while doing the hard work of revitalizing our reputation as the preferred choice for Chicago public school students. But we don't want to stop there. The goal is to extend our mission internationally, exploring possibilities in countries where there is a strong match between local needs and DePaul's abilities and mission.



**Chapter 4: A Modern Digital Community:** We desire to design and launch an immersive, inclusive, engaging, and personalized online experience that replaces one-way messaging with a two-way dialogue while building a globally connected community. This initiative will reduce barriers, streamline content creation and sharing, and ensure that community members and stakeholders external to DePaul feel like they are part of us.



**Chapter 5: Philanthropic Engagement:** We envision new strategies to improve our connections and partnerships in Chicago and to broaden the resulting impact within the community. To do this, our community must commit to connecting our academic work and faculty initiatives directly to capacities in the Advancement and External Relations division.



---

## What Happens When We Succeed?

By rising to the occasion, we can be powerful agents of innovation and change for the benefit of those we serve. The five Designing DePaul focus areas bring us newfound strategic clarity, helping us more effectively deliver on our mission moving forward.

The five focus areas provide us with the framework to build our plans. The symbiotic nature of these focus areas could ultimately lead DePaul to become a national model for quality in higher education. Furthermore, by keeping liberal education at the core of the university, we will facilitate financial sustainability and individual morale while fully living out our mission to support the liberal arts.

In this season of fresh ideation, collaboration, and innovation, let us remain optimistic about the future, for it is in our hands to shape. As we embark on this new academic year, let us carry with us the determination to be the beacons of light and the drivers of change that our society so desperately needs. May we face the challenges with courage; embrace the opportunities with enthusiasm; and nurture a world where education, compassion, and progress go hand in hand.

# DEI / MISSION / FINANCIAL STABILITY

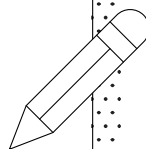
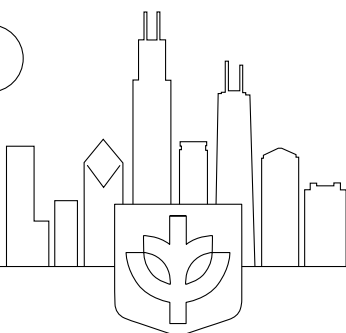
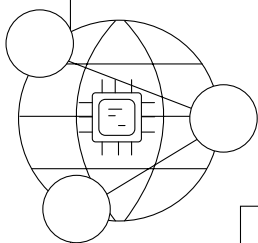
**Taking a student-centric approach to education promoting rigor, the liberal arts, and engagement with our communities**

**Connecting mission to action through interdisciplinary programs, translational research, and community engagement**

**Extending the Vincentian family locally and internationally**

**Creating a digital community that facilitates inclusive two-way dialogue between people both inside and outside the institution**

**Connecting our faculty projects, interests, and initiatives across the institution directly to advancement**



**Becoming a national model of quality in higher education**

## The Anatomy of the Upcoming Chapters

Each chapter of this document contains six main sections:

1. Introduction
2. Critiques from the Listening Sessions
3. Suggestions from the Listening Sessions
4. Seizing the Moment
5. When We Succeed
6. University-Wide Initiatives

As you will find in each chapter of this manuscript, our community has identified areas of progressive change and improvement within each focus area. This is part of the ongoing evolution of the work our community has been engaged in for decades. Those community insights, critiques, and potential solutions are found in the sections entitled **“Critiques from the Listening Sessions”** and **“Suggestions from the Listening Sessions.”**

Within each focus area, the community also came together to boldly envision a quantum leap forward—something that could serve as a vanguard moment for that focus area. This part of the vision is uniquely DePaul and depends on the distinct elements of our culture, community, and charism. Others may aspire to a similar vision, but our mission positions us to design and deliver as no one else can. Our vision is found in the section **“Seizing the Moment.”**

The **“When We Succeed”** section allows us to stop and dream of the outcomes our hard work could inspire, while **“University-Wide Initiatives”** lists upcoming plans to advance the focus area.

We look forward to community contributions to each section in the coming months as specific strategies are developed and validated.







CHAPTER 1

# Institutional Effectiveness & Vincentian Pragmatism



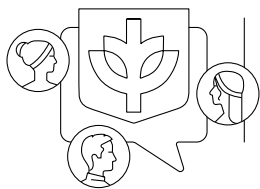


## Introduction

At some universities, pursuing institutional effectiveness is a financial exercise. At DePaul, it's a mission-critical endeavor—guided by our Catholic Vincentian mission, which compels us to lead with innovation. We recognize that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is not only a moral imperative but also a catalyst for progress. Our unwavering commitment to DEI extends to the recruitment, retention, and success of students, faculty, and staff and to the creation and promotion of a welcoming and inclusive campus environment where all members of our community find a true sense of belonging.

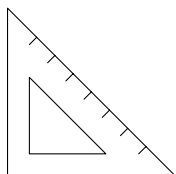
Looking ahead, we aim to better implement Black equity initiatives and to become a Hispanic-serving institution. We also commit to being a place where LGBTQ students feel comfortable, disabled students are supported, and every student enrolled at the university is able to achieve their educational aspirations with us. But our focus doesn't just stop at enrollment, continuation and completion rates—it extends to university-wide security approaches so that our students, staff, and faculty feel safe at all times during their journey with us.

Administratively, we aspire to modify existing college and administrative unit level strategic plans and to create new ones where they haven't existed before. We also aim to improve communication and transparency around university finances by hosting financial education sessions, releasing financial data, and launching a new one-year university-wide budgeting process and a five-year forecasting process.



# Thoughts from the Listening Sessions

In convening on the topic of institutional effectiveness, the community enthusiastically discussed ways we can improve. **The statements below were captured directly from those listening sessions and represent the voices of DePaul.**

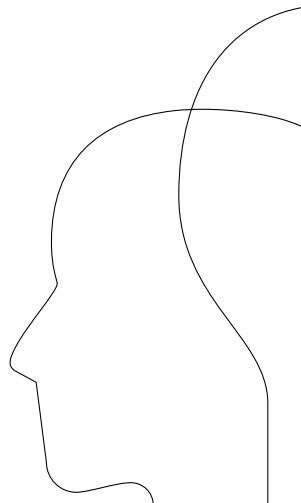


## COMMUNICATION

"Students want to be able to get information in a way that is convenient for them. They also want to receive coordinated and accurate information in a timely manner—and they don't like to use email. DePaul should explore better methods of communication—especially mobile-friendly options."

## ADVISING

"Students often feel like they don't have enough time with their advisors—especially when they need them most. They don't always feel like they are getting the help they need. DePaul needs to evaluate how we can better serve students—especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds."



## RETENTION

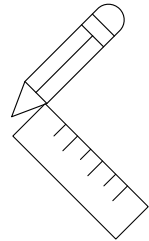
"In a post-Covid pandemic world, students are dropping out at high rates that we should not be comfortable with, and DePaul needs to find ways to identify at-risk students and engage with them proactively. The achievement gap between African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian students is something we can improve with this."

## ADVISING

"Student needs have grown past 'How do I register for classes?' It's now housing insecurity, food insecurity, and mental health. Advisors today are triaging life issues. Roles have expanded because student needs have expanded—and we need to think about ways to support both students and the advisors serving them."

## REDUCING SILOS

"Siloing can be a major problem at DePaul. Different departments often work in isolation, and this can make it difficult for students, faculty, and staff to connect. We are stronger and more effective together, so we need to find ways to break down silos."



## CONNECTING RESOURCES

"DePaul needs to make sure we are better connecting our resources that students, teachers, and staff need. Faculty and staff are eager to work across disciplines and departments, but many of our policies and practices prevent this from occurring. We need to identify and reduce the friction points so we can make information access and connection easier."

## Community Insight : Six Reasons a Student Does Not Continue at DePaul

- ✓ Financial Challenges
- ✓ Academic Performance
- ✓ Lack of Belonging
- ✓ Health Concerns
- ✓ Unclear Career Outcomes
- ✓ High-Friction Systems and Policies



## Suggestions from the Listening Sessions

The community identified problem areas that can be addressed by the following strategies:

### 1. Connect to Data

There is a need to better track and use student data to identify needs early and address them promptly.

### 2. Update Friction-Filled Policies

Our existing policies can significantly affect student retention, interdisciplinary education, and morale. Some policies in particular may hinder students' ability to resolve academic and financial issues.

### 3. Restate Ownership

There are numerous programs and activities to support students academically and emotionally, but it's unclear who should take ownership of them.

### 4. Engage Student Voices

The landscape of student needs has evolved, as have our responsibilities as a university. We need to listen to and reach out to the students who are most in need of support but are often the hardest to engage.

### 5. Value Expertise

Ensure that faculty and staff expertise is recognized as we design the DePaul future.



# Seizing the Moment

## Scaling “Underground DePaul”

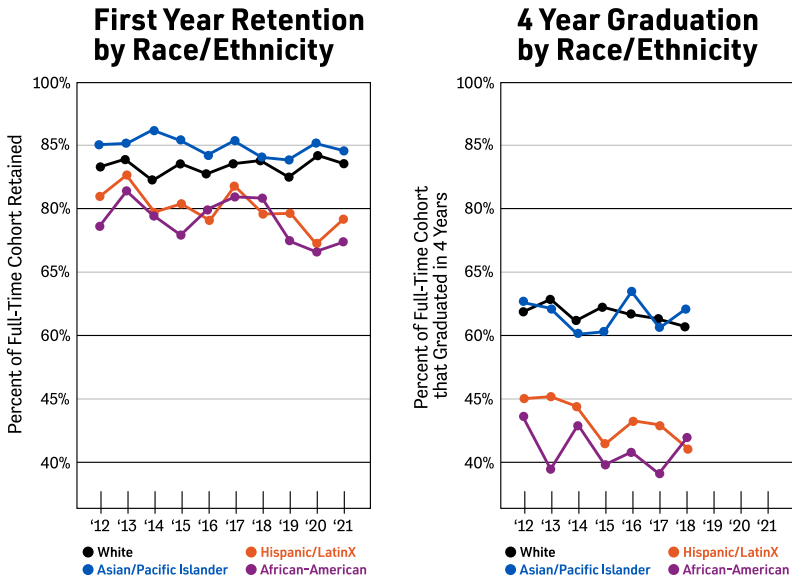
During our listening sessions, the community uncovered part of the secret to our success—and endearingly coined it “Underground DePaul.” This term refers to an informal network of faculty, staff, and other student support resources who have organically come together to ensure the best possible student outcomes. The exact details of how and when this network formed are yet to be discovered, but the outcomes of their work are measurable. The network has parlayed its institutional knowledge, influence, and experience to reduce friction and even speed up beneficial outcomes for students. To date, however, the ad hoc and underground nature of the effort has kept it from achieving its true potential.



**Beginning this fall, the community set a goal to understand this cross-institutional network of student-centric collaborators, recognize the innovators who are part of it, and find ways to expand the network so more students can benefit. By transferring Underground DePaul from a best-kept secret to an institution-wide framework, we aim to unleash its full potential.**

# Closing the Achievement Gap for Students of Color

DePaul University outperforms state and national averages for student retention and completion. However, we strive for even better. Our Catholic Vincentian mission drives us to find ways to reduce the performance gap and ensure every willing student—especially those of color and those in historically disadvantaged groups like LGBTQ and students with disabilities—are able to thrive at our institution.



SOURCE: IRMA DEPAUL UNIVERSITY | 2022

The community envisions designing and launching a series of high-impact programs to give students the support and resources they need at various points along their student journey. Additionally, the community has conceptualized a series of administrative and safety initiatives to ensure a holistic result for the institution and those it serves.

Pages 31–35 outline some of the early thinking from the community. Over the 2023–24 academic year, various administrative, college, and unit groups will form strategic plans to take on and expand the relevant initiatives listed here as well as to bring form and structure to their implementation.



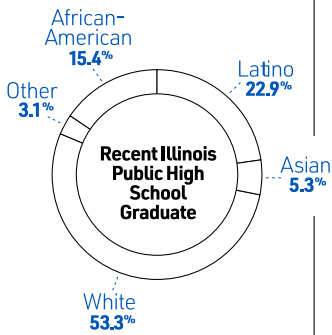
## **PRIORITIZE INITIATIVES THAT BRIDGE DEMOGRAPHIC GAPS**

- Once the high-impact programs have been identified, there must be a strategy to ensure students are aware of their availability and the various options they offer. We recognize that a lack of awareness acutely affects students from underrepresented backgrounds, including first-generation college students. It hinders their access to essential support and resources, limiting their academic journey and overall success.
- With targeted, inclusive outreach efforts and campaigns, we can effectively engage and support students from underrepresented backgrounds, ensuring they receive the vital assistance they need to thrive academically.

## **BECOME A HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION**

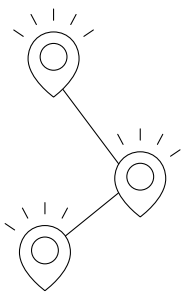
In keeping with our mission to serve students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, we are embarking on a series of initiatives:

- Establish our intent to be a Hispanic-serving institution by posting a statement on the website.
- Invest in bilingual and multilingual marketing, support, and digital presence.
- Engage Chicago Public Schools and Catholic schools with high concentrations of Latinx/e students.
- Develop a collaborative and comprehensive Latinx/e recruitment plan that would enhance DePaul's efforts to become a Hispanic-serving institution.
- Establish relationships with community-based organizations and churches with high concentrations of Latinx/e students.
- Establish connections to Latinx/e families and parents through community engagement and partnerships.
- Work on feeder transfer community colleges.
- Hire bilingual recruiters and advisors.
- Form focus groups with current Latinx/e students to identify needs and explore how we can meet them.
- Audit current programs.



## Illinois Data

*Underrepresented students make up 47% of the state's high school graduating class, with Latinx/e students comprising the largest underrepresented group (22.9%), followed by African Americans (15.4%).*



Although this is not an exhaustive list of initiatives, our commitment to seeing these goals through positions us to serve this community in new and engaging ways, with an expected outcome of 25% Hispanic enrollment—the qualifying standard for a Hispanic-serving institution.

## BLACK EQUITY INITIATIVES

Roughly two years ago, our colleagues formed the Black Equity Initiative. This group has laid out many changes and additions to our work at DePaul to more directly support the lives of our Black students on campus. The work begins with recruitment: we will intentionally pursue ways to broaden the pipeline of students entering DePaul. The goal is to reduce the friction of enrollment for prospective students through strategies ranging from expanding community college articulation programs and high school outreach to streamlining bureaucratic procedures and processes.

Through the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, we will formalize plans to adopt as many of the recommendations from the Black Equity Initiative as possible.

## DISABILITY JUSTICE & INCLUSION

Our community is fully aligned regarding the urgent need to better understand the challenges faced by disabled students and to create plans to eradicate those problems one by one. We aim to design programs that ensure the inclusion of disabled individuals in institution-wide programming and reduce barriers that disabled individuals face. Working groups will help innovate solutions in this area.

## **SCHOOL / COLLEGE / ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The Designing DePaul sessions gave us clear direction for many university-wide initiatives that will now be prioritized. This process is also meant to inspire the creation of new strategic plans or the modification of existing ones for all departments, schools and colleges.

It is important that we empower our schools, colleges, and administrative divisions to articulate their own visions—and even more essential that our faculty and staff participate actively in strategic planning. By replacing the typical top-down, one-size-fits-all approach with one rooted in community and collaboration, we can ensure our future priorities reflect each unique DePaul unit.

## **UNIVERSITY PUBLIC SAFETY**

Public safety continues to be front and center for all universities. As an urban institution, we are tasked with an even higher calling to ensure the safety of all our constituents. Although we have implemented many successful initiatives, there are always opportunities to explore even more modern approaches. We will continue to partner with internal public safety innovators, as well as with external resources, to ensure our people feel safe both on and off campus. This year, we will host a safety summit and create a working group that focuses on providing the safest environment possible for our community.

## **STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE**

In keeping with our mission to care for those who have been marginalized or under-resourced in society, we committed to reducing worry and stress for students without health coverage. This year, we are introducing a new student health insurance program that will give in-need students coverage in the event of a health issue.

Throughout much of this academic year, the interested groups around campus will help clarify processes and procedures for implementation. Interested students will be able to enroll in the program starting in the fall of 2024.

## **ONE-YEAR UNIVERSITY BUDGET PROCESS**

This year, we will continue on with changes to our one-year budget planning. The new approach, built on a foundation of transparency, will include new online training sessions focusing on the major elements of university finance. Additionally, we will launch a website that provides a direct window into the data used to plan DePaul's financial reality.

## **FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST**

To further aid faculty and staff with planning for the future, we will provide our community with a five-year revenue forecast. This will provide visibility into how our interventions are expected to affect our financial reality. It will also allow us to collectively prioritize certain initiatives and to understand when we are ahead of or behind schedule. Additionally, we can determine our priorities for hiring, building in desired merit increases and planning for tuition and other income-generating activities. This tool will enable the entire university to understand how decisions today will affect our lives five years down the road.

## **FOSTERING COLLABORATION & SEAMLESS COMMUNICATION ACROSS OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY**

At DePaul, various programs and activities have originated within Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the different colleges and schools. As a result, some programs may overlap or lack clear ownership. Clarifying ownership and responsibility of programs—and ensuring there is healthy and cross-institutional collaboration regardless of ownership—is a worthwhile endeavor that the community feels must be tackled in the months to come.

Earlier this year, we formed a cross-functional set of subgroups to start discussing ways to better serve our students—especially those who data shows are in need of additional support.

While convening and collaborating on ways to improve outcomes, the groups made a breakthrough discovery. The areas of career advising, retention, and academic advising—although very separate in their delivery—are much more interconnected for the student than meets the eye. Participants found that it was hard to have a conversation about career advising without talking about retention or even academic advising, and vice versa. This fairly intuitive reality has sparked some

insightful questions about how separate these services should be in a student-centric world.

## **IDENTIFYING THE PROGRAMS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Notable programs such as pre-orientation academic advising, first-year academic success, transfer peer mentors, and success coaching have all had a positive impact on our students. But there are likely more. To ensure the high-impact programs are supported well, we aim to do two things.

- Identify the appropriate organizational structure for these programs and determine the most effective ways to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Identify vertical silos that may be getting in the way and find ways to remove them.

## **IMPLEMENTING PROACTIVE SYSTEMS TO IDENTIFY & SUPPORT STUDENTS IN NEED, WHEN THEY NEED IT MOST**

The reality for our students has changed dramatically since the pandemic, and we cannot assume that pre-pandemic strategies will still work for them. We must modernize our approach and turn to data to know who needs help, before they need it.

### **The following are some ideas to expand on:**

- Harness real-time data that sits in our institutional systems to gain comprehensive insights into student behaviors, engagement levels, and performance metrics. Leverage AI-powered predictive analytics that will proactively detect patterns and trends—thereby allowing for early intervention when students face challenges.
- Leverage our new digital community to facilitate seamless communication among faculty, staff, and students, enabling swift collaboration to address concerns and provide timely assistance.

## When We Succeed

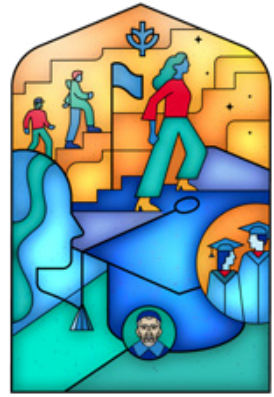
Everyone who works at DePaul is united by a shared desire to see students succeed. We long to feel the goosebumps at each graduation and each alumni and student celebration when the fruits of our hard work are recognized.

As we embark on improving our fundamental practices while taking a giant leap forward in finding ways to increase student engagement, retention, and completion, we can imagine a day when we realize all of the following dreams:

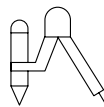
- Every student we accept into the institution has a personalized journey mapped out for them. They feel a sense of belonging from the day they enter the institution throughout their lifelong learning journey.
- We have installed tools to proactively identify students at risk of being marginalized or left behind while at DePaul and have developed successful and scalable interventions that put them back on the path to success.
- The achievement gaps between BIPOC students at DePaul are eliminated.
- Far beyond beating state and national averages, we have set a new standard of continuation and completion that the rest of the world is following.
- Increases in retention are having a significant impact on the net revenue of the university. This is one way to add to our revenue without having to put more pressure on the recruitment of new students.
- Because we have built a reputation of releasing professionals into the world whose DePaul education has prepared them well, DePaul is asked to present on the global higher education stage how student success is defined and delivered.
- Academic program collaboration, research, and community engagement programs from around the university become the norm—and inspire our faculty and staff.

## Institutional Effectiveness & Vincentian Pragmatism

### UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

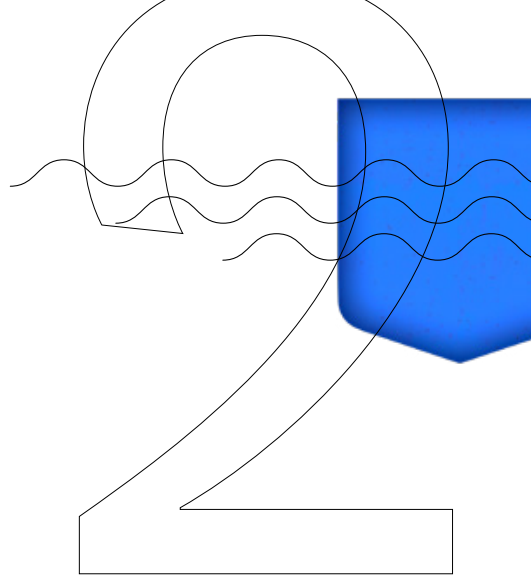


- ❖ Modify or create school / college / administrative unit strategic plans
- ❖ Eliminate the achievement gap (retention and graduation) between Latinx/e, Black, white, indigenous, and Asian students in 10 years
- ❖ Update and implement a university-wide safety and security approach
- ❖ Implement student health insurance options for students in need
- ❖ Launch a comprehensive strategy to become a Hispanic-serving institution in five years
- ❖ Launch a strategy to implement Black equity initiatives
- ❖ Launch and complete a new one-year university budgeting process
- ❖ Launch and complete a new five-year financial forecast
- ❖ Launch a series of university-wide education sessions and data releases on DePaul finances









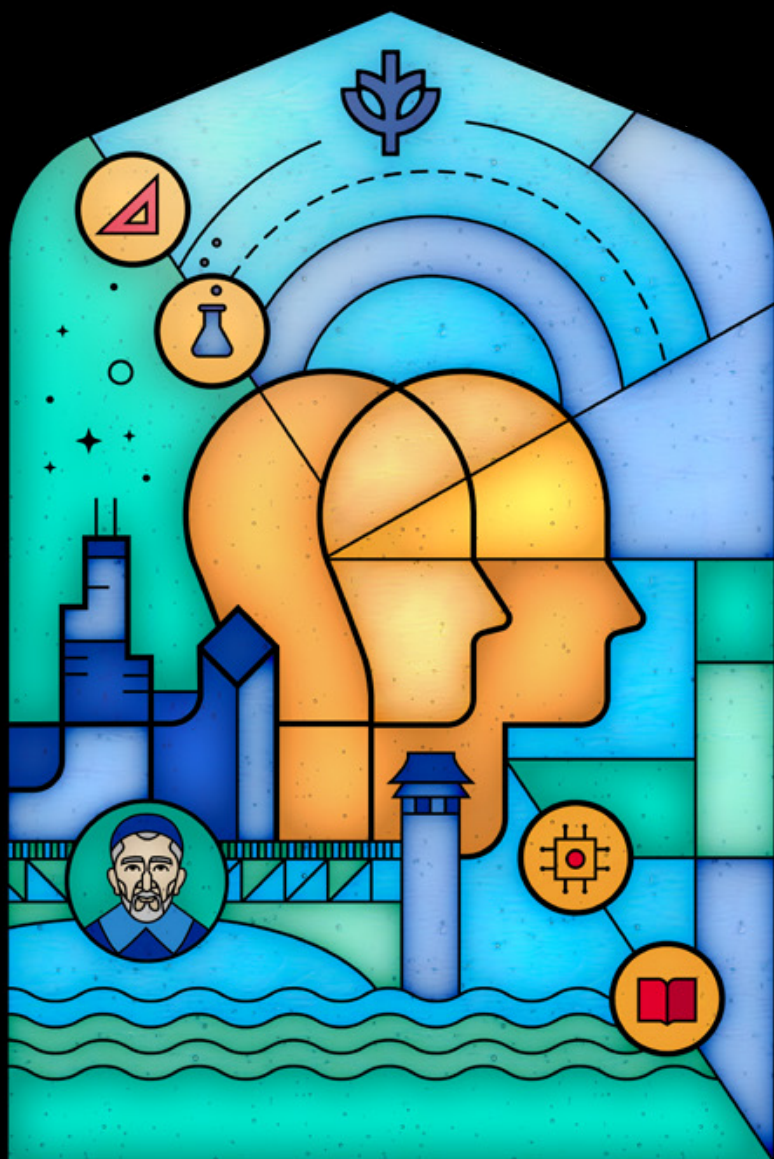
---

CHAPTER 2

---

# Distinction & Expansion

Building on a Culture  
of Interdisciplinarity  
and Translational  
Research



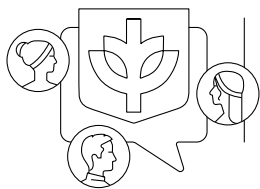


## Introduction

Over the past 125 years, DePaul University has established itself as an institution where interdisciplinary work drives impactful outcomes. Fueled by our mission and the leadership and creativity of our faculty, we are uniquely positioned to seize the current moment.

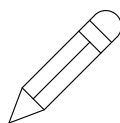
We are now tasked with designing a future that uses our past successes to meet contemporary needs. To that end, we must **foster new connections and collaborations among faculty and students, create a framework for program distinction that drives focused innovation, and engage our internal and external communities** to tackle urgent needs in poverty, sustainability, and artificial intelligence.

We acknowledge and celebrate DePaul's history of excellence in interdisciplinary research and collaboration. Moving forward, we're compelled to convene with like-minded institutions around the world—unlocking the benefits of increased collaboration and seeing the compounding effect of our work.



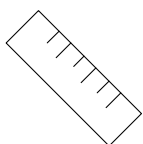
# Thoughts from the Listening Sessions

In light of our institution's history of excellence in academics and research, the listening sessions surrounding program distinction and expansion offered energetic feedback on how we can go even further. Below are some examples of the direct feedback from faculty that's helping to shape our future.



## PARTNERSHIP

"There is a need to strengthen DePaul's partnerships with external organizations, like businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies."

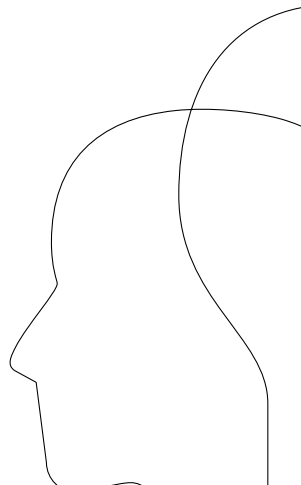


## RELEVANCE

"We should look into ways to make DePaul's programs more relevant to the needs of the global community in a post-pandemic world."

## MISSION

"We need to capitalize on tying education back to the DePaul mission and giving students value beyond their degrees."

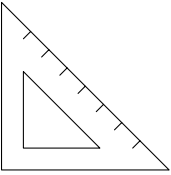


### SERVING STUDENTS

"There are opportunities to improve how we support international students—not just financially but also when it comes to job placement after graduation. If we can develop more scalable ways to serve international students, we can invite more to study at DePaul."

### DEI

"We should find ways to show a greater connection between what we teach and the mission. It's about closing gaps in inequities or supporting unrepresented community members. We don't want it to start and end with just increasing our student population or securing internships and jobs."



### FUNDING IDEAS

"It is important to try new things quickly and collaboratively. We need a place to advance ideas with funding and give them specific milestones/goals. We also need to make an allowance for risk."

### FUNDING IDEAS

"We need to work on getting better at finding sources for program funding."



## Suggestions from the Listening Sessions

### IMPROVE ACCESS FOR STUDENTS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

It was clear during our sessions this spring that building and expanding academic programs of distinction requires a great deal of resources—both financial and human. Moving forward, we must ensure these academic programs reach and serve students and partners as efficiently as possible.

The community proposed four actionable steps.

#### Revise

Revise internal policies and procedures to overcome competition among programs and colleges.

#### Reduce

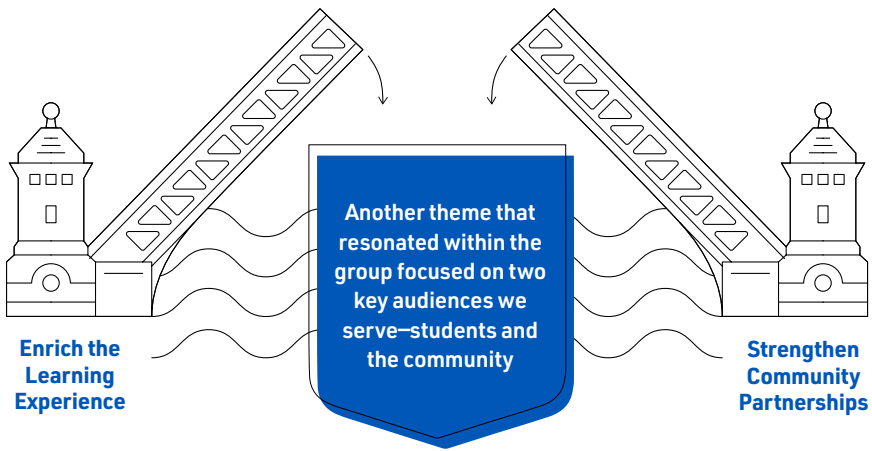
Reduce friction points and silos to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and leverage existing resources, expertise, and networks more effectively.

#### Address

Address the funding allocation system to foster collaboration over competition while investing in sustaining liberal arts education.

#### Evaluate

Benchmark better to more fairly compare programs. Reassess revenue tracking and incentivize collaboration between programs.



**Enrich the Learning Experience**

Fostering collaborative efforts and establishing connections among disciplines is crucial for enhancing students' learning experiences. To achieve this, we must address the logistical challenges of interdisciplinary learning. Reimagining general education requirements to accommodate students' interests, even if those interests lie outside their primary field of study, will broaden their educational horizons and promote a well-rounded education. This will require us to create flexibility within degree requirements, revise our advising systems, and create better structures to support collaborative cross-college teaching.

**Strengthen Community Partnerships**

By strategically revising internal policies and procedures, we can forge robust off-campus partnerships that foster collaboration and bring together academia, industry, and the community. These partnerships hold great potential for research collaboration, internships, experiential learning, and community engagement, amplifying the university's reputation and influence.

To achieve this, the community must prioritize programs unique to DePaul and actively seek out companies that align with the university's mission of driving positive transformation. Moreover, providing employees with dedicated time for interdisciplinary work and community engagement can enhance visibility and foster trust in Chicago's diverse communities. Establishing university centers or programs that align with the university's mission, addressing inequities, and supporting underrepresented communities will enable DePaul to make a meaningful and lasting impact that extends beyond student enrollment and job-focused outcomes.



# Seizing the Moment

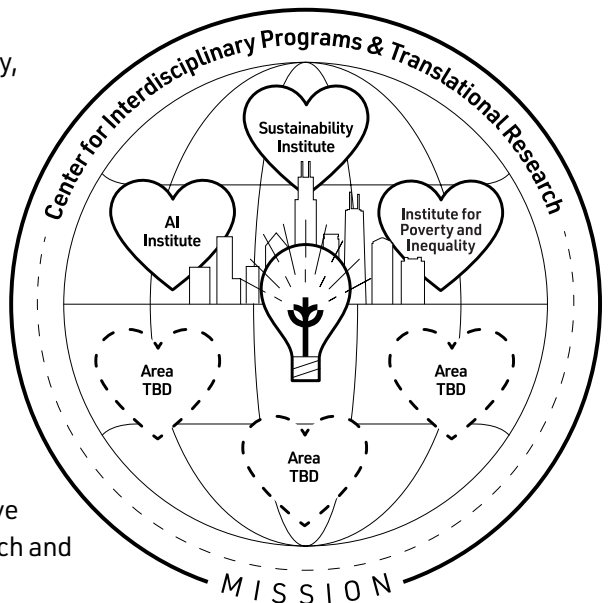
A key part of the city of Chicago's ethos is how we come together—and DePaul certainly shares in that ethos. Fueled by our mission and a passion for interdisciplinary work, we look to better engage the community in the process of transforming our city and world.

Our community seeks to enhance our approach to interdisciplinary research through the following efforts:

1. Exploring and creating new models for collaboration and communication—both internally and with the community at large.
2. Expanding existing capabilities so that our faculty, students, staff, and alumni have the best tools and resources to advance the best ideas.
3. Reimagining and demonstrating how higher education is delivered in the modern age.

## The Hub: The Center for Interdisciplinary & Translational Research at DePaul

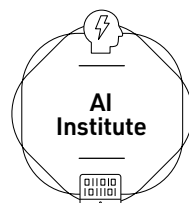
The community envisions a facility at DePaul where faculty, community, students, and funding partners can convene to identify problems, innovate, gain validation for the best solutions, and find all the tools and resources they need to successfully bring those innovations to market. The center will be open to all interdisciplinary work at the institution and will offer an equitable, inclusive approach to advancing research and development.





Through a formal application process, interdisciplinary teams will be invited to submit ideas they want to explore and advance at the Hub. Although the center will select interdisciplinary projects from across the institution, certain areas of work will likely gain substantial focus from our faculty and community. As an example, early momentum is already building around interdisciplinary work to solve problems in poverty, sustainability, and the responsible use of AI. Each substantial focus area will allow for the formation of an institute within the Hub—so that community partners and funding sources interested in that specific area can focus their attention on that institute and find multiple interdisciplinary teams working on a variety of projects.

We envision a range of activities taking place at the Hub at any given time, from open workshops and community-wide networking events to collaborative working spaces where faculty, students, alumni, and community members can meet and ideate together. Meanwhile, the Hub will also be home to funded projects, both small and large.



### **In summary, the Hub will provide a place for**

1. ideas to be incubated by interdisciplinary teams
2. community and funding partners to interact with our faculty and their working groups
3. great ideas to find validation and refinement
4. the best ideas to be positioned for the next step of the process

## **Validating, Refining, & Equipping the Best Ideas**

Our faculty called for an equitable and inclusive way for ideas to find support, momentum, and funding based solely on their quality and efficacy. The Hub will embed that belief in its core operating values so that innovations thrive and advance on their own merits—and not third-party agendas. Some of these ideas will find their way into published

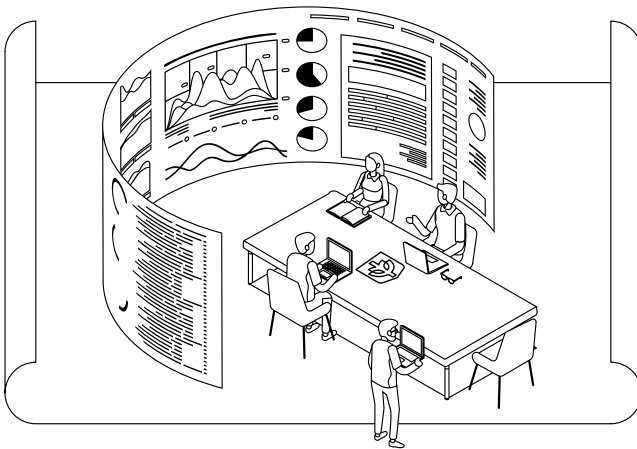
papers. Others may be validated and advanced through corporate partner-funded research or commercialization. However, we anticipate that a majority of these ideas will need an “in-house” place to be validated, refined, and positioned for deployment. To provide that environment, we plan to open *SPARK*—the Catholic Vincentian mission accelerator inside the Hub.

### About *SPARK* (Strategic Partnerships for Advancing Research & Knowledge)

Once a mission-aligned innovation has been conceptualized by one of our interdisciplinary teams, and the team feels that idea is ready for validation through community feedback, financial support, or even commercialization, it will enter *SPARK*. Incorporating *SPARK* will eliminate both internal and external biases, enhance the accuracy of research outcomes, and bridge social divides.

*SPARK* provides:

1. Support in visualizing various scenarios and outcomes of the idea using technology
2. A place for empirically based civil discourse surrounding the viability and efficacy of the idea



# SPARK

3. Active engagement with community members, focus groups, and potential funding partners to gather important feedback throughout the ongoing development process.

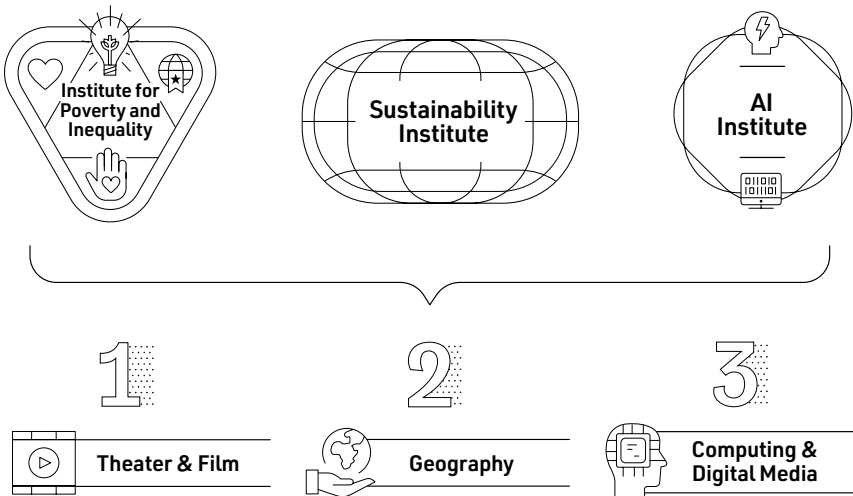
4. Alignment with policymakers, global brands, NGOs, and NPOs for further validation and activation as needed.

The Catholic Vincentian charisms will play a critical role in SPARK—serving as a guiding light while pointing our researchers, community, and funding partners to a “true north” of what is worthy of pursuit. Although many institutions around the globe are involved in research, development, and solutions to contemporary problems, SPARK will ensure the ones we pursue are always tied to our unique mission and calling.

Opening the Hub for early ideation, collaboration, and innovation and providing *SPARK* as an accelerator for the best and most viable ideas will be a quantum leap toward achieving the community’s goals of **greater internal and external collaboration**, an *inclusive pathway for the advancement of ideas*, and an **effective way for great ideas to find funding and activation**.

## Examples of Interdisciplinary Work in Progress

Among numerous examples of interdisciplinary work taking place across the institution, here are just three that will be fostered at the Hub and eventually at *SPARK*.



Here are just a few early adopters who are driving programs forward within our institutes:

### **1. The DePaul Artificial Intelligence Institute (DAII)**

Professor Bamshad Mobasher, chair of the Artificial Intelligence Program Committee in the School of Computing, has presented a proposal for DAII. The proposal states, "The mission of the DePaul AI Institute will be to advance interdisciplinary AI research, educational programs, policy, and practice to improve the human condition. The AI institute will capitalize on the research and creative activities of DePaul faculty from across many colleges and programs, as well as collaboration from industry and academic partners from outside DePaul, to promote interdisciplinary research and educational programs centered around the promises and the challenges presented by AI."

From advanced computational research in AI to practical uses of AI in studying data related to poverty and sustainability, the institute envisions exploring a wide gamut of applications. It also hopes to host the inaugural DePaul AI Summit during its first year of operations. The proposal continues, "The goal of the summit is to identify key partners for specific projects and activities, and eventually lead to a strategic plan and a corresponding organizational framework to support the institute."

### **2. The Geography Faculty**

Professor Alec Brownlow and the geography faculty have prepared their vision for how GIS can be used to help all three institutes do breakthrough work. In just the area of sustainability, the department has developed substantial curricular offerings that will prepare students and equip faculty to be highly effective contributors and problem solvers. Sample offerings include the following:

- GEO 200 – Sustainable Urban Development
- GEO 205 – Race, Justice, and the Urban Environment
- GEO 215 – International Development & Regional Inequality
- GEO 243/343 – Earth Observation I/II
- GEO 330/430 – Sustainable Urban Transportation
- GEO 344/(444) – GIS III: Spatial Analysis for Sustainability
- GEO 346/446 – GIS Analysis of Environmental & Public Health
- GEO 442 – GIS for Sustainable Urban Development

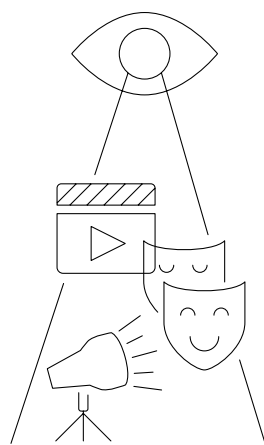
Students and faculty engaged in this coursework can overlay their insights and learnings with GIS capabilities. When they apply their knowledge to contemporary problems, the outcomes can be significant.

Potential community partners could include DePaul's own Institute for Global Homelessness, We Sow We Grow, Roots for Life, and Black McDonald's Owners of America.

From interactive story maps and professional findings reports that empower partners to raise awareness for their cause to joint initiatives that engage policymakers and large funding sources in backing research or solutions developed at the institute, the vision is bold, comprehensive, and ever-expanding.

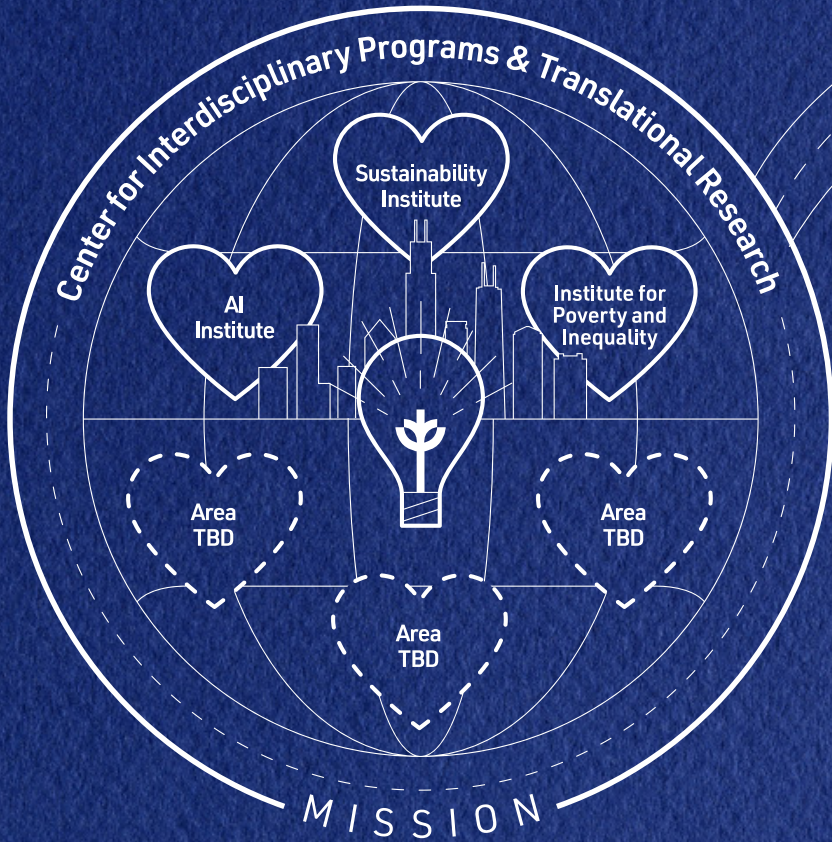
### 3. Theater and Film

Based on a rich history of interdisciplinary work, the School for Cinematic Art and the Theatre School are collaborating yet again on a short film based on the classic play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. This student-led, faculty-advised project takes a contemporary approach to the themes of unrequited love, gender and sexuality, and identity, portraying honest and raw depictions of intimacy, relationships, and discomfort.

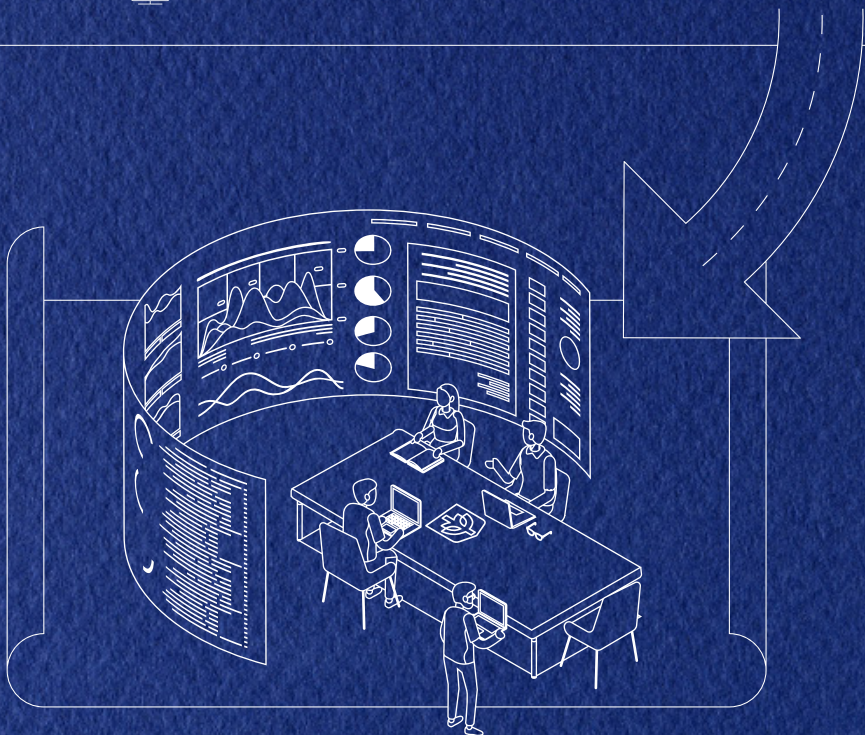
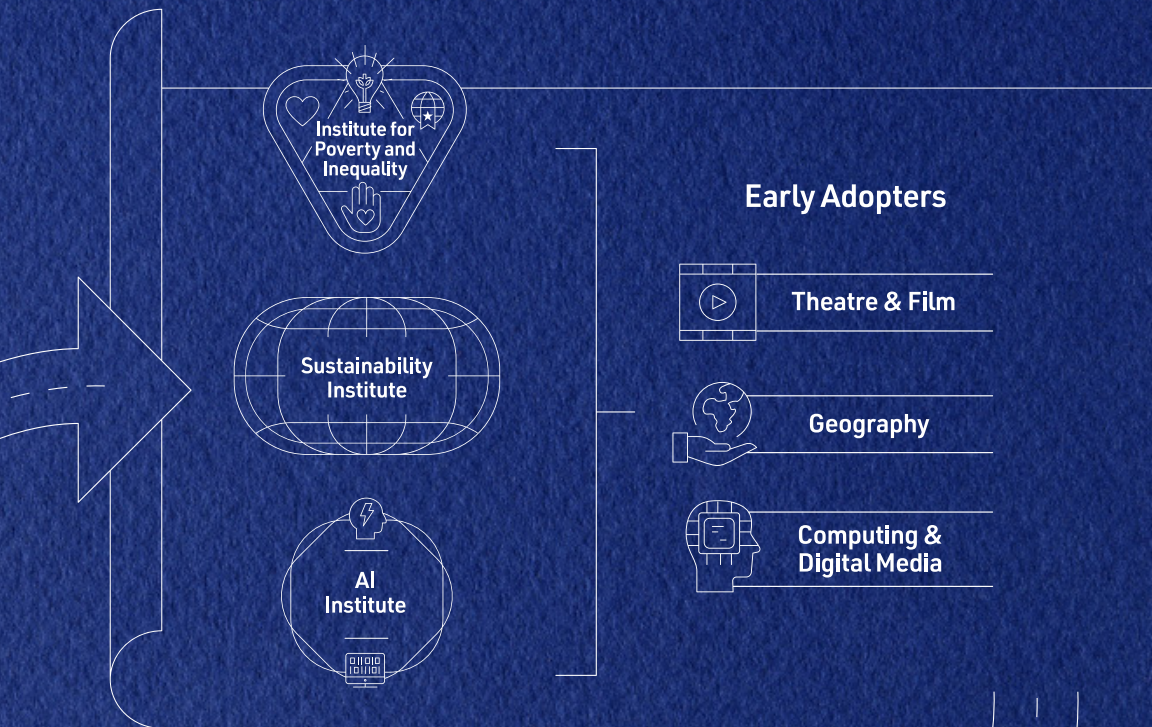


**These examples of interdisciplinary work bring together the best ideas from multiple schools, creating social impact in partnership with the community.**

# The Hub



The Model for Interdisciplinary  
and Translational Research



**SPARK** Strategic Partnerships for  
Advancing Research & Knowledge

## When We Succeed

Imagine, for a moment, an urban community in Chicago where a supermarket could be a catalyst for revitalization. Despite clear financial opportunities in the community's rebirth, developers have been deterred by zoning requirements, impact studies, and other bureaucratic obstacles.

Enter *SPARK*, DePaul's convening capability that engages our multidisciplinary faculty and students, as well as community, public, and private interests, to shape their aspirations. Within *SPARK*, the community can analyze historical migration trends, showcasing the community's past and projecting a positive future. Through data visualization, we reveal the direct link between property vacancy and increased crime rates. *SPARK* anticipates the zoning board's inquiries and develops models predicting the development's impact on crime, environmental sustainability, traffic, community health, real estate valuations, and overall quality of life. The platform also illustrates the benefits of the project itself, offering multiple scope options.

*SPARK* breathes life into stagnating transformative ventures, fulfilling our mission and empowering communities.

The relationship between the Interdisciplinary Programs & Translational Research Center and *SPARK* cannot be understated. *SPARK*'s convening power helps ensure the work taking place at the Interdisciplinary Programs & Translational Research Center is closely tied to the community's most urgent needs. *SPARK*'s role also helps eliminate internal and external bias, improves accuracy of research outcomes, and bridges societal divides.

Each constituent group participating in this dynamic environment also gains specific benefits. Students receive interdisciplinary undergraduate research opportunities, connect with problems they want to solve in the world, and enter society with a better understanding of how to apply theoretical knowledge.

Faculty receive more opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, produce truly interdisciplinary research, and further live the Catholic Vincentian mission of helping others.



Partners ranging from those in the community to those in industry and government gain firsthand access to new perspectives, unlock data-driven insights into complex problems, improve the chances of a positive and direct impact, and are equipped to deploy resources more efficiently for the benefit of humankind.

---

## Program Distinction & Expansion

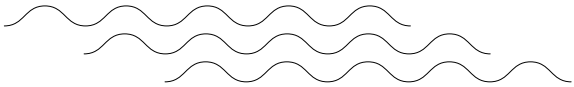
---

### UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

---

- ❖ Conduct a comprehensive review of goals/ needs for existing academic programs
- ❖ Conduct a comprehensive review of all non-credit options at the university
- ❖ Finalize university-wide analysis of new programs for our future
- ❖ Create the Institute for Poverty and Inequality and, sustainability, and artificial intelligence institutes
- ❖ Launch *SPARK* (Strategic Partnerships for Advancing Research & Knowledge)
- ❖ Create The Hub: The Center for Interdisciplinary & Translational Research at DePaul







---

CHAPTER 3

---

# Geographic & Community Expansion

Extending Our  
Catholic Vincentian  
Community Globally





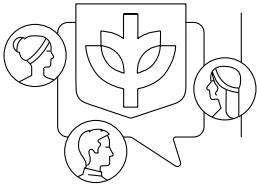


## Introduction

Imagine for a moment that St. Vincent de Paul kept his work limited to his small town of Pouy, or even to a small arrondissement of Paris, where he lived. What if he never looked past what he could accomplish on his own or considered the power of engaging others to do the work with him? What if he never had the vision to break past geographical boundaries and serve as many as possible?

Our community is fortunate to have a mission rooted in action and not bound by geography. The issues we are engaging in areas like poverty and sustainability are everywhere. Although our heart and focus will always be our beloved city of Chicago, our work here positions us to make similar outcomes available to an ailing world.

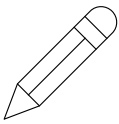
By strengthening existing connections and forging new alliances, our community has an unprecedented opportunity to democratize our impact around the globe—because the globe is calling for help. Focused resources, new support, and a robust partnership framework will be keys to doing so.



# Thoughts from the Listening Sessions

As with the previous listening sessions, participants brought energy and fresh vision to where DePaul can go in the future. Much of the conversation centered around aligning community partners with our mission, while finding ways to deepen and expand our impact both here in Chicago and around the world. These are the direct voices of DePaul.

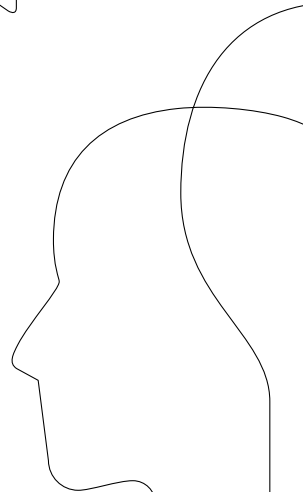
## GLOBAL EXPANSION



"DePaul should be more proactive in identifying and pursuing emerging markets and other opportunities to market ourselves to those in need abroad."

## LOCAL IMPACT

"We've done so many great things with Chicago Public Schools. We need to do more."

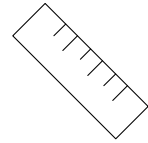


**LOCAL IMPACT**

"We need to better support faculty in developing programs that can impact Chicago schools."

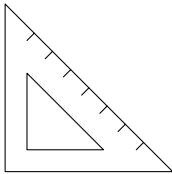
**GLOBAL EXPANSION**

"We need to support our current international students better, but what about us taking DePaul to other countries?"



**LOCAL IMPACT**

We need to make it easier to promote and share programs we are doing in the community.



**LOCAL IMPACT**

"DePaul needs to look at current policies and procedures that make it hard and frustrating to get things done with partners."



## Suggestions from the Listening Sessions

Our foundational obligation to reconnect with Chicago in a post-pandemic world challenges us to look at our city through a fresh lens. So much has changed as a result of the pandemic. Our community now has a renewed opportunity to identify and solve contemporary problems hand in hand with our community partners. We also sense an obligation to take on a global vision, expand the Catholic Vincentian community, and bring our impact to places around the world.

St. Vincent de Paul constantly looked at his environment and asked, “Where do I need to go?” Despite being fully immersed in serving his local community, he was always on the lookout for other localities where he could recruit volunteers, donors, and partners to engage in the work with him. Our community feels fully aligned with his approach as we redouble our efforts in Chicago while looking up and out to see who else can join the Catholic Vincentian community in the years to come.

If we consider under-resourced markets as a mission area expansion and feel it is our duty to offer a high-quality liberal arts education as a means of battling generational poverty, we are confident DePaul can come together to make what we do available both locally and internationally.

To position ourselves for these outcomes, our community feels it is important that we support, promote, and strengthen current programs and partnerships while revising policies, procedures, and processes to grow new ones.

**Despite being fully immersed in serving his local community, he had a heart for other localities and would recruit volunteers, donors, and partners to engage in the work with him there.**





# Seizing the Moment

Our city of Chicago is truly a global city—and a gateway to the rest of the world. Locally, we intend to find new ways to increase our impact in the city and internationally. We want to consider opportunities in countries where there is a high (and unmet) demand for a quality liberal arts education rooted in Catholic values and Vincentian charisms.

## Finding New Ways to Engage Our City

The DePaul community identified some actionable steps we can take to improve our impact in Chicago:

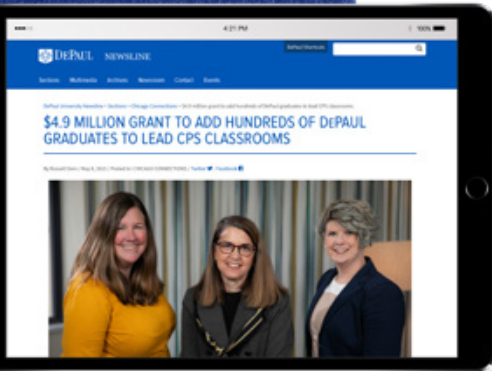
- Provide faculty with a clear, documented framework outlining the steps to establish partnerships outside of DePaul. Designate dedicated resources and point people who can provide guidance and support throughout the partnership creation process.

## The Social Capital Map: Identifying Our Global Connectivity & Influence



## DEEPENING OUR IMPACT IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Address the lack of institutional support, infrastructure, systems, and processes for creating partnerships and expanding into local or global markets. This includes tapping into our alumni network and their networks to grow our local and international impact.

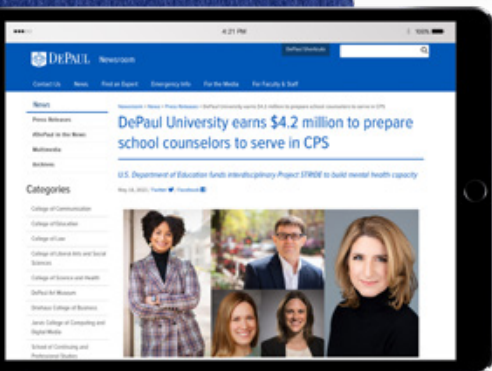


- Evaluate existing partnerships at DePaul to identify and document best practices. This knowledge will inform the exploration of potential partnerships and enable better forecasting of financial implications; returns on investment; and impacts on enrollment, academic programming, and support services.



- Develop three to five priorities that the university aims to address and communicate to the community, such as forced migration. Align priorities with existing programs or initiatives and define success criteria using working groups consisting of community members, both local and abroad.

### EXAMPLE: CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

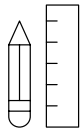


Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has been a great partner to our institution for decades. Working hand in hand with them, we continue to prove the power of investing in the local community while growing enrollment at DePaul. CPS is one of many great local community partnerships that are flourishing yet calling for fresh ways of engagement.

## Engaging Our World

Among several countries in DePaul's consideration, India is a market that fits who we are and what we offer at our university. According to IMARC Group, the Indian higher education market is expected to have exhibited a compounded annual growth rate of 9.9% between 2021 and 2023.

That said, the subcontinent does not have the capability to handle that demand while delivering a quality learning experience. This likely means hundreds of thousands of young learners will be marginalized or even excluded from higher education.

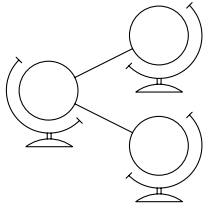


**In the months to come, we will work together to validate this idea, better understand the market's needs, and identify what we as an institution must do to be a much-needed solution.**

---

Our community has already identified high-level obstacles and opportunities to work through, from financial aid limitations and visa considerations to internships and job placement for international students. DePaul also strives to equip students right here in Chicago with intercultural competencies that enable them to thrive as global citizens in a global market.

The data on the obstacles ahead is not cause for pause or retreat. It simply demonstrates the need for focused attention and support for these learners as we build strategies to recruit, educate, and place them in the marketplace.



## Attracting the International Learner

Financial Aid and Scholarships

1

Academic and Employment Support

2

Visa and Immigration Assistance

3

Cultural Integration and Support

4

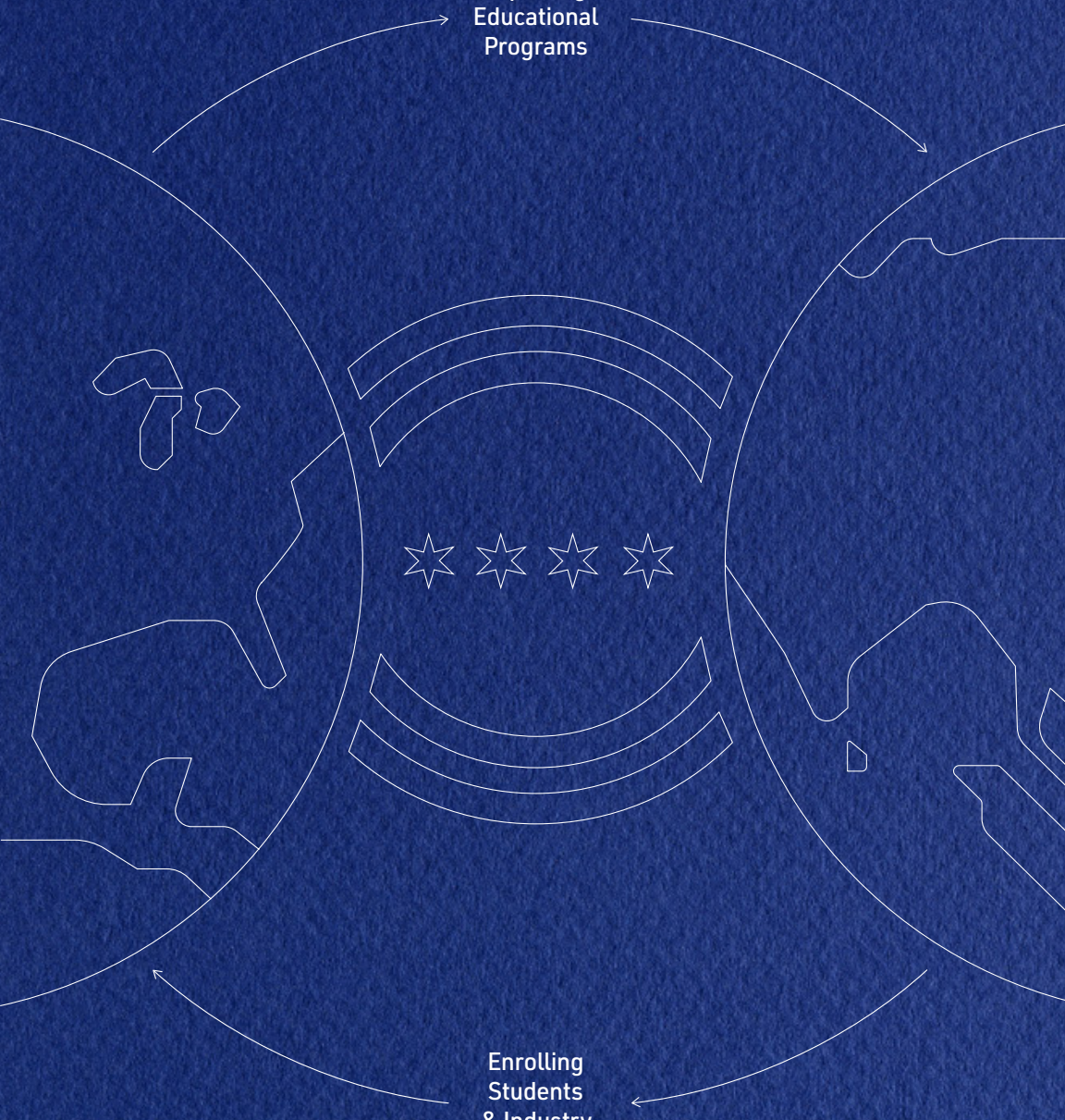
Alumni Engagement

5

It is our belief as a DePaul community that, with a special focus on international growth, support for our global community, and a learner-centric strategy, we can cultivate a space where international students—on our domestic campuses and abroad—can thrive. Moreover, by preparing our students as global citizens, expanding our international reach, and strengthening partnerships, we can enrich our educational offerings, promote cross-cultural understanding, and prepare our graduates to flourish in an interconnected world.

**Together, we embrace the spirit of collaboration and envision a future where our university stands as a beacon of global learning and cross-cultural understanding.**

Exporting  
Educational  
Programs



Enrolling  
Students  
& Industry  
Partnerships

## When We Succeed

Stop for a moment and picture the possibilities. Fast-forward two to three years from now. We've convened, collaborated, invented, and strategized, and coming out of that process, a series of well-designed approaches have been deployed into the market. As an outcome of that, we are experiencing these benefits:

---

**1. Our Mission, Lived Out:** Through our local efforts in Chicago and our international work, and through fresh approaches to help underserved educational markets, we have gained the satisfaction of making a profound difference in the world.

---

**2. Global Inclusion:** Our community has worked together to reduce barriers and friction for international learners hungry for a DePaul education. We are doing some early thinking on India, but other markets around the world are opening up pathways into our institution as well. Our community feels somewhat overwhelmed—yet excited—about meeting that need. Meanwhile, students in Chicago Public Schools have found a welcome route into our institution thanks to new partnerships that make diversity and inclusion even greater realities.

---

**3. Enhanced Partnership:** DePaul no longer has partnerships for the sake of having them—instead, collaborators on both sides, led by our accomplished faculty, have come together to create, ideate, and solve. New white papers—now being circulated around the globe, thanks to DePaul's new digital community—conceptualize what we're working on with these partners.

---

**4. Increased Philanthropy:** Word of our community's working partnerships is reaching the eyes and ears of organizations around the world—and they are asking how they can contribute, including monetarily, to those efforts.

**5. Financial Independence:** Our community knows what it feels like to be constrained by financial limitations, and we look forward to the day when our work is so large in scope and impact that funds to deliver it are flowing to us from sources eager to meet our needs.

---

**As we forge ahead on this exciting journey, let us remember that every partnership and connection has the potential to spark transformative change. With our collective efforts, we can shape a future where geographic expansion is not merely an aspiration but a vibrant reality—a testament to the boundless possibilities when we unite on a mission and remove distractions in the way.**

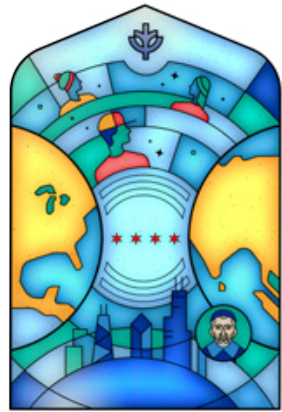
## Geographic & Community Expansion

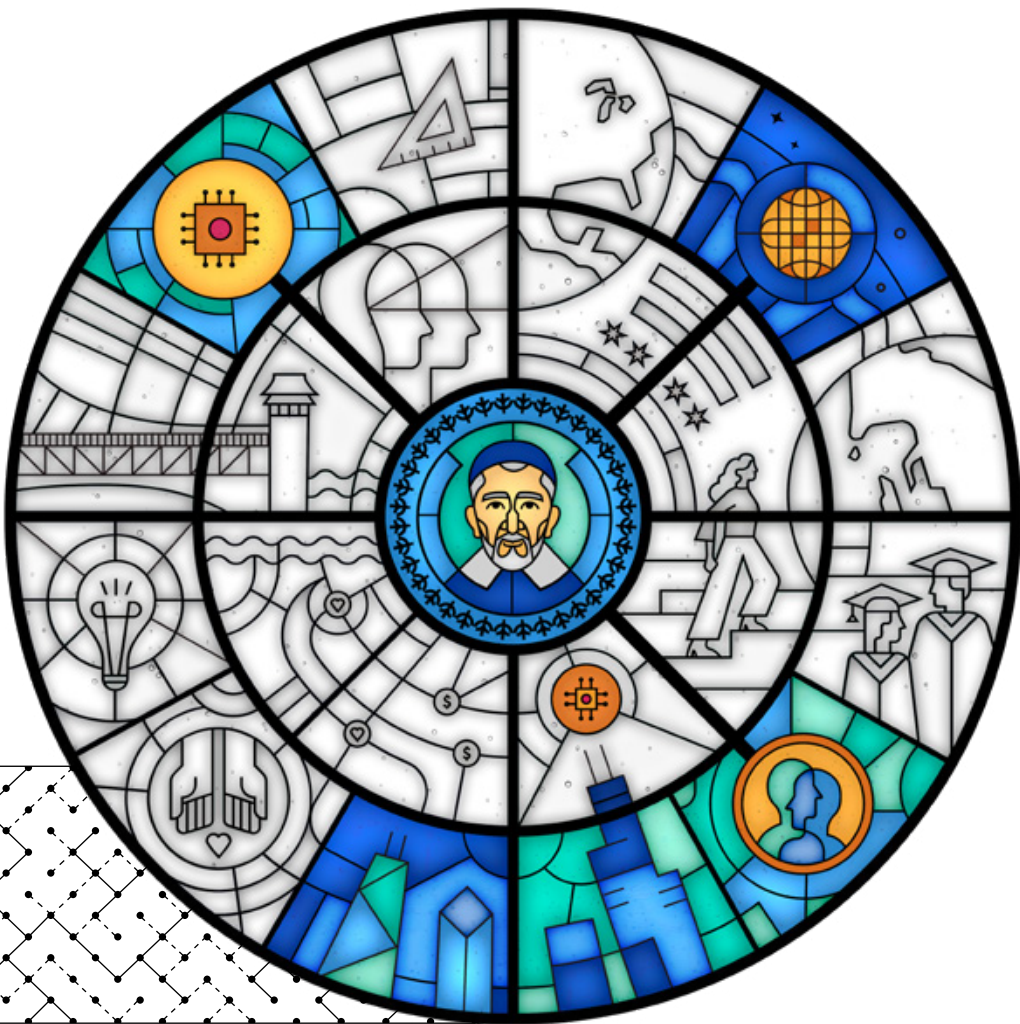
---

### UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

---

- ✦ Expand the social capital map of DePaul to study our connectivity in Chicago and worldwide
- ✦ Document where DePaul graduates work and volunteer—and connect with these lifelong Blue Demons
- ✦ Create a team for global expansion into countries where there is a strong match between local needs and DePaul’s abilities and mission
- ✦ Identify strategies to increase our impact and boost outcomes at Chicago Public Schools









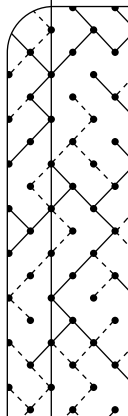
---

CHAPTER 4

---

# Digital Presence

Connecting Our  
Community in the  
Digital Age



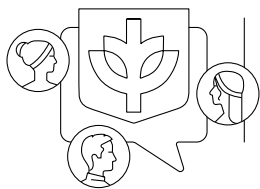




## Introduction

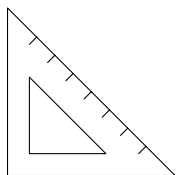
We now live in a world where digital presence is typically the first and most sustained mode of engagement and communication with its constituents.

At DePaul University, we recognize the need to use this medium for more—from offering two-way dialogue between internal and external stakeholders to providing evidence that what we do is indeed changing the world. To that end, our community has cast a vision to modernize our digital presence in a way that fosters purposeful community, catalyzes interdisciplinary work, engages community partners, highlights the authentic voices of DePaul, and allows us to deliver on our mission as effectively as possible.



# Thoughts from the Listening Sessions

Most of the community input and feedback during the listening sessions focused on DePaul's web presence, uncovering the need for a comprehensive look at our entire digital footprint—including social media and other points of engagement. This process led to a much bigger vision for a global community—one where two-way dialogue and sharing takes place. Here are some of the voices of DePaul that helped shape our shared vision.



## REMOVING BARRIERS

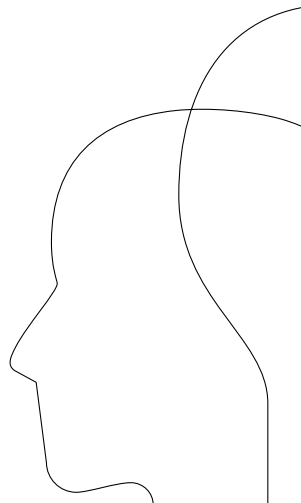
"There is a need for better coordination between departments on messaging so that information isn't siloed."

## SHOWCASING IMPACT

"The website should be more data-driven to showcase the impact of the university's programs."

## REMOVING BARRIERS

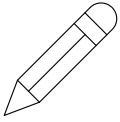
"Our site needs better integrations with other archives and third-party sites to improve the update process and link to external information."



**SHARING DEPAUL'S BEST**

"Students, staff, and faculty should be able to create content for the website."

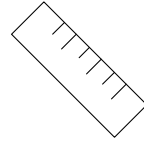
**SHARING DEPAUL'S BEST**



"We need to make creating and sharing content as easy as posting on Instagram or sending an email."

**REMOVING BARRIERS**

"How can we make our site easy to search and navigate, so important info isn't buried?"

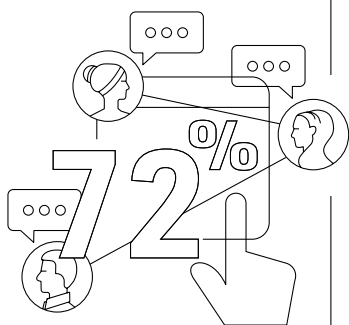


**SHOWCASING IMPACT**

"We need a better and more accessible way to showcase the campus and the experiences within."

**REMOVING BARRIERS**

"We must use more modern technologies to enhance relationships and allow the outside world to engage with us. That's where the ideas for us to advance will come from."



*A 2022 study by the Pew Research Center found that 72% of US adults use online forums or discussion groups to collaborate, learn, and connect.*



## Suggestions from the Listening Sessions

### REMOVING OBSTACLES TO SHARING

Listening session attendees provided justification for simplifying real-time content-sharing without centralized editing. Below is some of their guidance:

- 
1. Diversify the stories we share through our digital community to better connect to the work, expertise, and impact of what we do around campus.

---

  2. Show—don't just describe—who we are as a community.

---

  3. Showcase our collective identity and individual programs.

---

  4. Create two-way dialogue and strategize with our communities.

5. Foster a sense of belonging and strengthen the overarching narrative of our new digital community.

---

6. Lead with academic program outcomes, showcasing their impact on the community and workforce while highlighting the practical value of the education we provide.

---

7. Reduce the administrative burden of participating in our digital presence.

---

8. Lighten the workload required to get the message out. Today there are too many barriers, and it's too much extra work.

---

Faculty and staff wanted to find ways to better highlight interdisciplinary opportunities, collaborative experiences, and the university's mission and values. By presenting a broader perspective, they felt we will encourage exploration and demonstrate our holistic approach to education.

**These modifications would contribute to a more cohesive, impactful, and values-driven representation of the university's programs, research, and mission. This desire fueled ideation about how our community could seize the moment.**



---

# Seizing the Moment

---

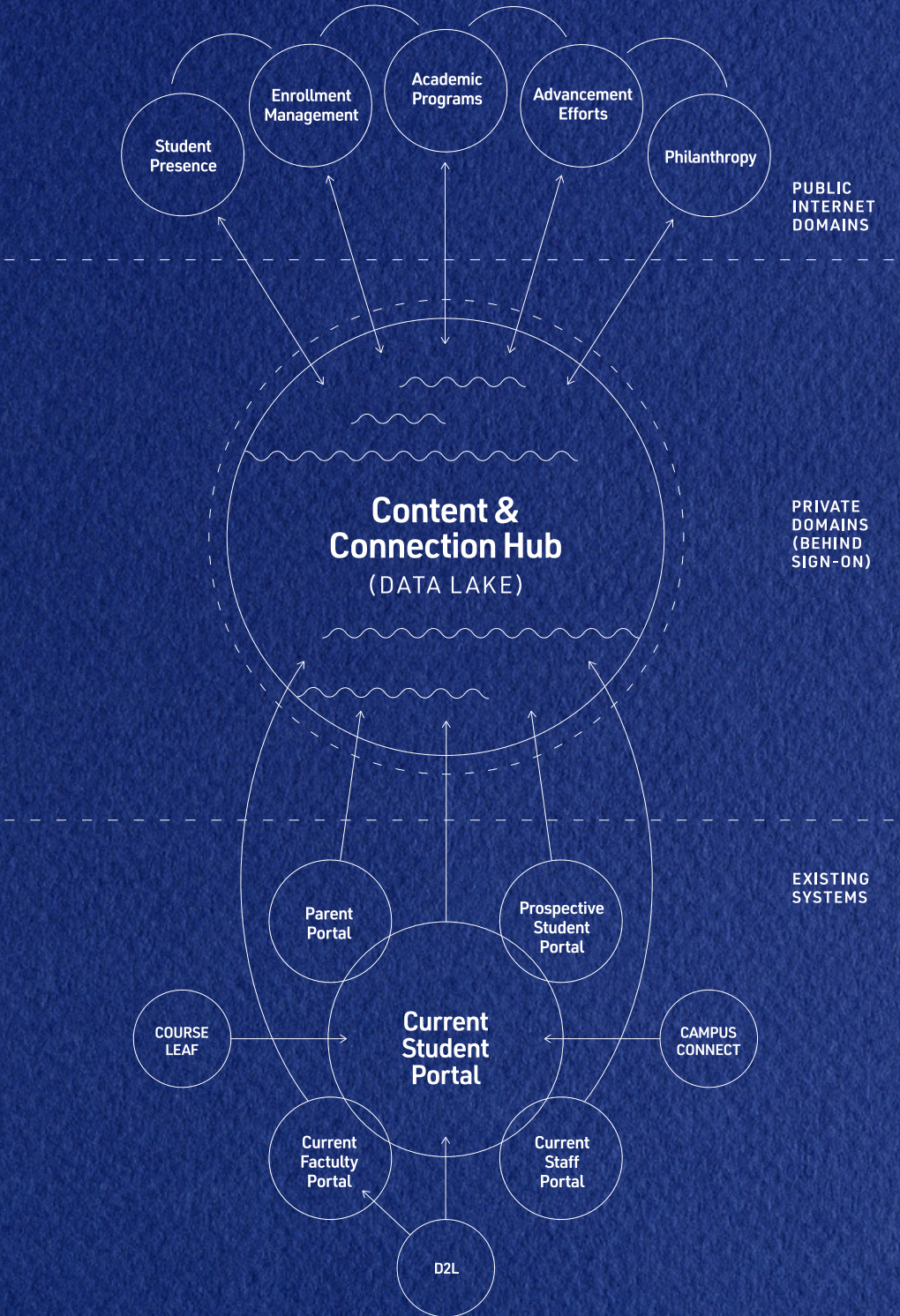
As we considered what was truly possible in today's technology age, our vision for DePaul's Digital Community went far beyond better communication, collaboration, and content creation.

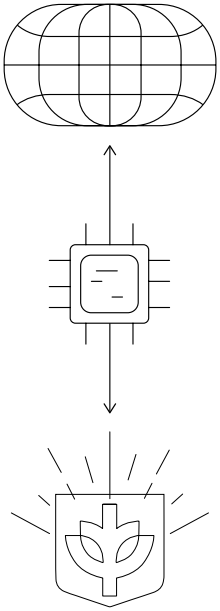
**We envision a digital presence with capabilities that allow all five focus areas from Designing DePaul to thrive:**

- Individuals and departments can create and share their own content directly with end-users—and to build communities within the community
- Our people can easily access a central repository of readily available digital assets shared across the institution
- Community members can contribute their thoughts, ideas, and artifacts—even if they are external to DePaul—so that there is a two-way dialogue between internal and external stakeholders
- An individual exploring DePaul can get a real-time picture of what is going on in their area of interest—and engage with individuals involved in that area
- Our best idea generators and their work can be displayed in a way that energizes community members, potential partners, and donors to join in the work with them
- A bilateral exchange of information and ideas can occur between community members



# Digital Presence: A Functional Diagram





**...bringing  
DePaul to  
the world,  
and the  
world to  
DePaul.**

### **AN AI-POWERED PEOPLE-MATCHING CONCIERGE**

DePaul envisions the opportunity to build the ***Collaboratorium***—a concept created by our own faculty. Through the power of matching algorithms and AI, the system will recommend and facilitate connections between faculty members engaged in different, yet extremely complementary areas of study. We expect this use of technology to have a highly catalytic impact on interdisciplinary work, program distinction, philanthropic engagement, and the student experience.

### **A TWO-WAY DIALOGUE**

A generational leap ahead from static photographs or even prerecorded virtual tours, we envision a ***digital twin*** of the on-campus experience for an online visitor. A student in Nigeria or Cambodia should be able to visit our digital campus, enter collaborative spaces, listen to live lectures, and even interact with available community members involved in that area. A researcher in Durham, England, should be able to share ideas and artifacts and seamlessly spur and engage in a two-way conversation with one of our researchers on a topic of mutual interest.

A representative of a family office overseeing significant wealth should be able to dive deep into—and even interact with—the latest work we are doing in the area of their giving criteria so that they are compelled to join us in the work.

## Enabling Our Shared Vision with Technology

Achieving all that our community is setting out to do starts with connecting vast amounts of user-generated data behind the scenes in a data lake. The information we want to share about ourselves and our work, capabilities, needs, and interests, as well as updates on the latest happenings we feel the community would benefit from, should all be able to be pushed into the data lake. That means each of us will need a way to intuitively tag and contribute to this dynamic repository that feels as easy as sending a text message or saving a Word document.

Next, AI and machine learning will have to be taught to responsibly find, correlate, and serve up relevant information to an interested human. This connection engine's mission will be to seamlessly access information and facilitate personalized experiences. If it is done with Catholic Vincentian charism and our mission at the core, it will be like no other digital experience in higher education.

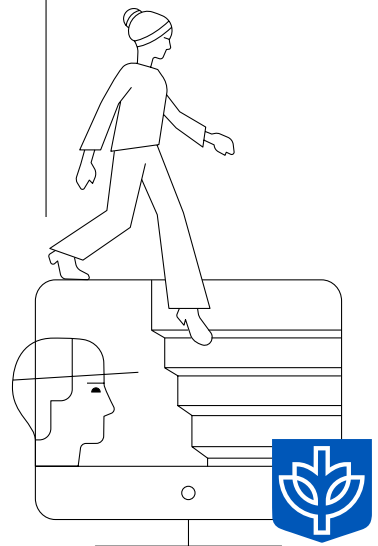
With the connection engine sitting above a robust data lake that houses all of our digital artifacts, all that will be missing is a user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) that deliver the intuitive, welcoming experience that is uniquely DePaul.

Our community intends to find the best-of-breed experts in all three areas to architect and engineer this platform for us. We fully expect our distinct faculty and students who are well schooled in these areas to be key contributors to the design, development, and ongoing improvement of the platform. Many of you will likely volunteer to help guide and shape the outcomes the technologists will deliver.

**“We should build a digital ‘twin’ of the on-campus experience for an online visitor.”**



DESIGNING  
DEPAUL  
PARTICIPANT

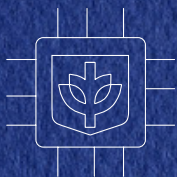


## When We Succeed

When it is ready to go live, **our new digital community will be by DePaul and for DePaul, along with its global audience.**

Only when we deliver an exceptional digital community will the world know what (and who) we have to offer. Only when those with great financial resources and the calling to solve real-world problems find out about DePaul's interdisciplinary innovations will they bring those resources to bear on our work. Only when a prospective student finds themselves immersed in DePaul culture, values, and care—whether 5 or 5,000 miles away—will we win them into our family. Only when the faculty and staff of DePaul get to know each other and their work in real time will we unleash the true potential of DePaul's mission.

Based on these energetic conversations within the community, we have embarked on a series of activities that will continue through the academic year, and the entire DePaul community is invited to contribute.

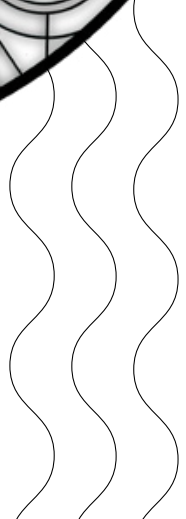
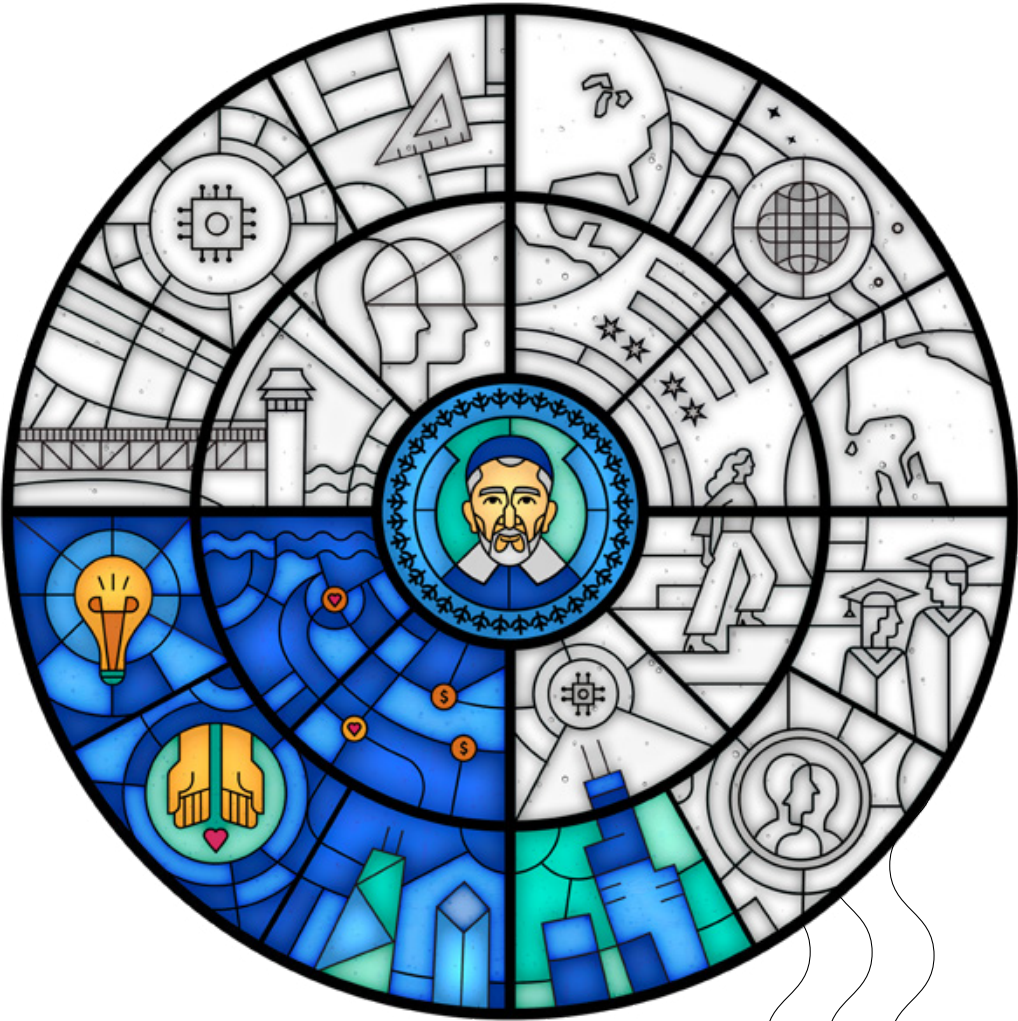


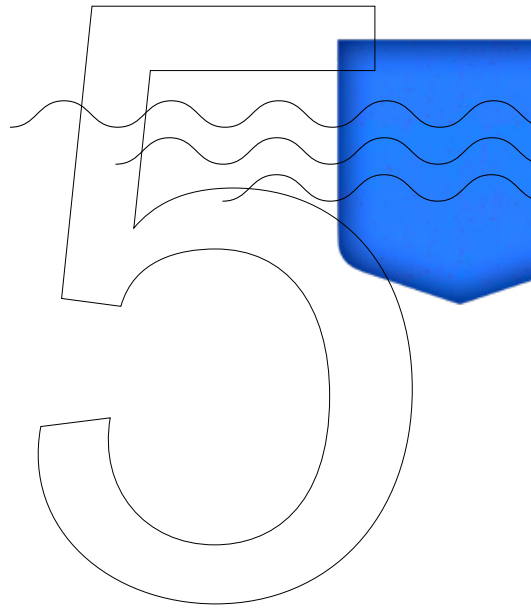
## Digital Presence

### UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

- ✦ Engage the university community in the design and implementation of a new digital presence for DePaul







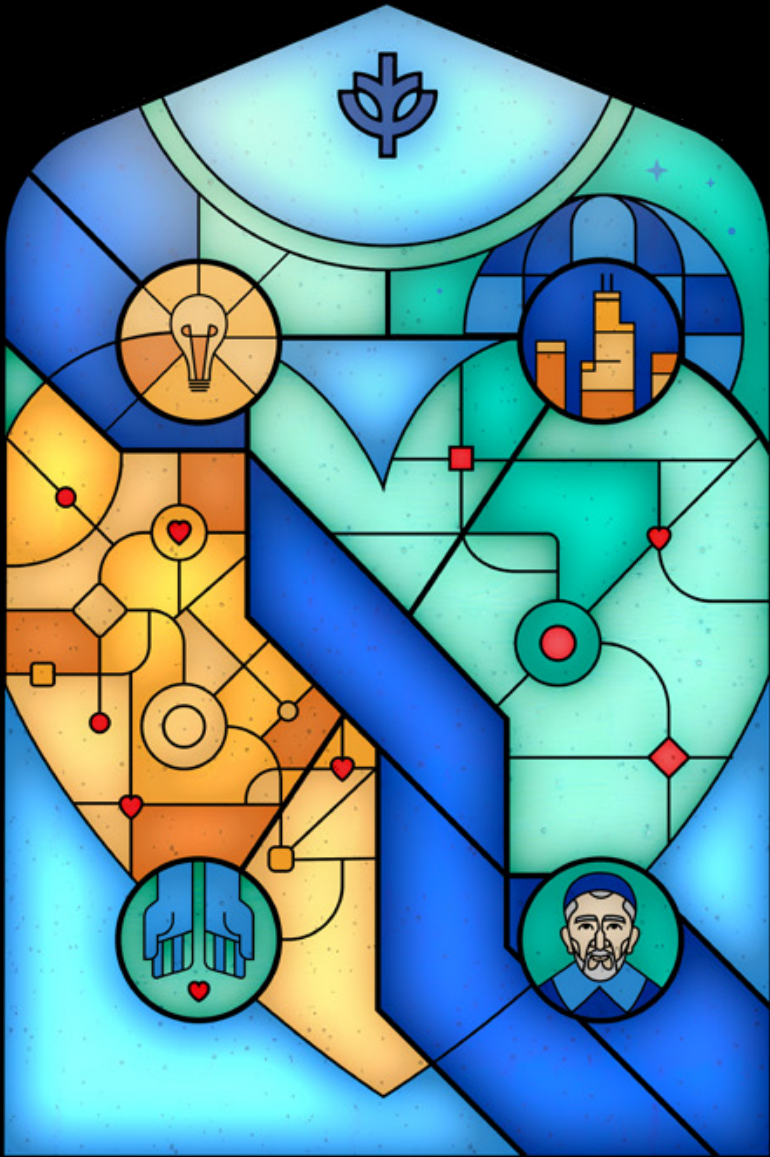
---

CHAPTER 5

---

# Philanthropic Engagement

Connecting Our  
Ideas to the World





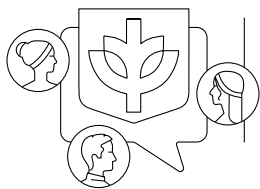


## Introduction

One realization from our listening sessions was that our community's thought leaders and faculty do not have the access or connections they need to get their projects funded, and they may not know how to engage philanthropy to move their solutions forward. This likely means that dozens, if not hundreds, of great innovations lie latent for lack of a pathway. **Given that current reality, we must reimagine our approach to advancement to unleash the talent that exists throughout our university.**

Our faculty has the expertise, passion, and clarity to be problem solvers in areas like poverty, sustainability, and artificial intelligence.

We also believe the aspirational goals we have set as a community to tackle these challenges—if connected more effectively to donors—will capture donors' hearts and minds, compelling them to join us in our work. As their giving bolsters our operating budget and equips us to do more, these giving partners will get the benefit of moving from success to significance—much like those who joined St. Vincent de Paul did in funding his work over a century ago.

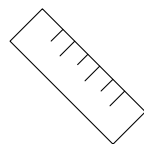


# Thoughts from the Listening Sessions

Our faculty was instrumental in providing guidance and input in positioning our philanthropic efforts and connections more effectively. Together, their individual and collective voices pointed out the need for more equity and inclusion in how our community goes about philanthropy, and how ideas are funded and advanced. Here are just a few of the many voices of DePaul that are shaping our vision for the future.

## COLLABORATION

"We need to create a more integrated strategy between advancement, alumni, and corporate/foundation relations. This would involve better communication and coordination between these different groups, as well as a shared understanding of the goals of fundraising."

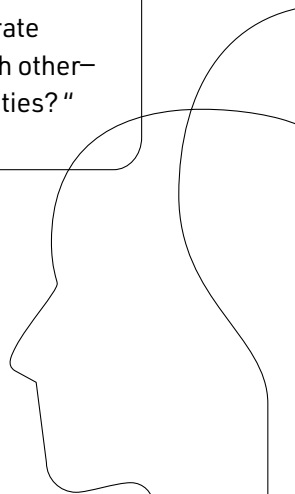


## RESPONSE TIME

"How can we streamline the way that we collaborate with each other so we can quickly respond to each other—especially in interdisciplinary research opportunities?"

## FUNDING

"We need a way to align our focus on projects that have a clear impact on students and the community. This would make it easier to generate excitement and support for fundraising efforts."



### FUNDING

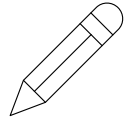
"How can we create more opportunities for donors to get involved with DePaul, beyond just making financial contributions? How can they be part of our process, so they feel like a bigger part of the mission with us?"

### DATA & ANALYTICS

"Can we use better data and analytics to track the effectiveness of fundraising efforts? This would help to identify areas of improvement."

### STRONGER CONNECTION

"Faculty needs a better way for ideas to get to partners and donors. Today, there's no consistent way to make that happen without having to jump through too many hoops."



### KEEPING DONORS INFORMED

"We need better ways of outreach to reach donors where they are, and better ways for them to continue to stay up to date."



## Suggestions from the Listening Sessions

In addition to tapping into the power of the DePaul network—on campus and around the globe—and finding ways to direct funds toward the most important elements of our work (scholarships, research, and student outcomes), the community dove deep into the need for improvement in two key areas.

### **1. FOSTERING A CULTURE OF PHILANTHROPY IN ALL WE DO**

Our community desires to recommit to the culture—a part of the DNA of our institution since its inception—with a refreshed mindset toward philanthropy. For students, this means introducing the concept of philanthropy early in their academic journey, fostering a sense of responsibility and engagement with the university’s mission. Faculty and staff are also actively involved, serving as role models and mentors, guiding students in their philanthropic endeavors, and contributing their own expertise and resources.

### **2. REVISING STRUCTURES & PRACTICES**

DePaul embraces this opportunity with a curious mindset, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of our philanthropic priorities and how they connect with potential donors. By improving our communication structures, the community feels that we can effectively engage and align our individual and departmental stories with the stories of those who have the potential to make a significant impact.



# Seizing the Moment

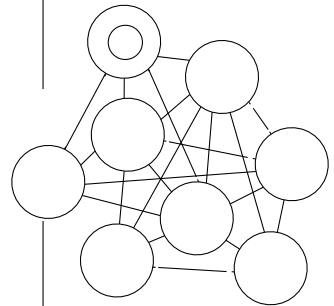
Given the feedback from the community about needing a better line of sight to funding and a more equitable approach to getting ideas to philanthropy, we are reengineering our approach to advancement—starting with connecting our idea generators to our advancement team in a more direct way.

## NEW SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Starting this fall, each dean will be assigned a series of experts from within our advancement office to help support the fundraising initiatives of each academic unit. The support group will engage on a regular basis so our advancement experts can learn each school's aspirations, initiatives, and plans—as well as innovate ways to connect those ideas to DePaul's philanthropic priorities. These ideas will then enter the university-wide feasibility study to establish the terms of the next comprehensive campaign.

We believe this effort will unleash our true capabilities while providing donors with exciting endeavors to get behind.

**Each support group will focus on finding the idea generators within that college and supporting their efforts.**



- **Six- to eight-person fundraising team**
- **Regular meet-ups**
- **Inclusive, team-based ideation**
- **Equitable to all colleges and schools**

## RAISING ACTIVITY LEVELS IN ADVANCEMENT

To engage more prospective donors with the ideas that emerge from support groups across DePaul, our Advancement and External Relations division will proactively increase outreach and engagement levels with current and new donors.

### When We Succeed

Donations to higher education institutions rose by 12.5 percent last fiscal year to a total of \$59.5 billion, marking the largest increase in over two decades. Philanthropic gifts fuel interdisciplinary innovation and community impact, funding the creation of unique and groundbreaking initiatives, centers, and programs.

**The work ahead will position DePaul to participate at this level of philanthropic engagement. These are just a few examples of what the future could hold for us:**

- A significant contribution of \$30 million to Baylor College of Medicine is set to propel its expansion efforts, enabling the institution to enhance research and clinical facilities while advancing medical education and patient care.
- The expansion of the United Negro College Fund's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, made possible by a generous contribution from philanthropist Robert F. Smith, aims to empower students from historically Black colleges and universities to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors through increased resources, mentorship opportunities, and access to networks.

## Voluntary Support of Higher Education by Source, 2021 (Dollars in Billions)



SOURCE: COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION | 2021

- A philanthropic gift to the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies Europe campus seeks to foster global leadership and interdisciplinary education by enhancing campus facilities, expanding scholarships, and promoting academic initiatives to address critical global challenges.

These examples—although quite distinct from the work we will embark on in poverty, sustainability, and artificial intelligence—represent what is possible when we bring our best ideas forward.

**There is a powerful synergy and network effect that we believe will accelerate beneficial outcomes while reducing the friction any one focus area would experience on its own.**

**We have a solid foundation of support with a vast network of over 205,000 alumni who are deeply connected and committed to giving back.**

Add in a large new audience of foundations, family offices, individuals, and corporations who care about the same causes we do, and it's easy to imagine a time in the near future when their contributions make so much more possible:

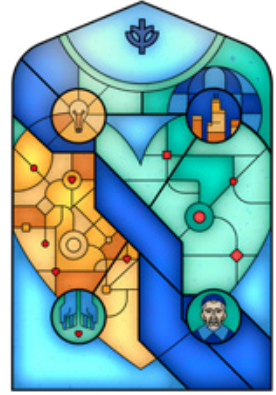
- Our colleges and units see a **clear path to finding potential funding streams** for their passions.
- Our faculty see a **clear path to making their ideas a reality.**
- **Ideas gain momentum** as they work their way through interdisciplinary and translational research collaboration.
- The support group at each college and school grows in effectiveness as it better understands the brilliant minds within each department and **finds donors to back innovative ideas.**
- As the Interdisciplinary and Translational Research Institutes develop big ideas and attract significant financial support, we strengthen DePaul's financial position. This gives us **more resources to invest in our programs**, which strengthens the university mission.
- DePaul is **recognized as an institution of global impact** in our commitment areas.



## Philanthropic Engagement

### UNIVERSITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

- ❖ Implement new fundraising strategies for each school and college
- ❖ Restructure the Advancement and External Relations division to better support each new chapter of our colleges and schools and connect them to the comprehensive campaign
- ❖ Launch a focused campaign for interdisciplinary/ translational research activities
- ❖ Launch a focused campaign for athletics
- ❖ Implement a university-wide funding feasibility study







CHAPTER 6

# Designing DePaul

University-Wide  
Initiatives



Keep up with the latest developments in Designing DePaul by visiting [designing.depaul.edu](https://designing.depaul.edu)

## **Institutional Effectiveness & Vincentian Pragmatism**

- ❖ Implement a university-wide fundraising feasibility study to launch a new comprehensive campaign
- ❖ Close the achievement gap (retention and graduation) between Latinx/e, Black, white, and Asian students in 10 years
- ❖ Update and implement a university-wide safety and security approach.
- ❖ Implement student health insurance options
- ❖ Launch a comprehensive strategy to become a Hispanic-serving institution in five years
- ❖ Launch a strategy to implement Black equity initiatives
- ❖ Launch and complete a new one-year university budgeting process
- ❖ Launch and complete a new five-year financial forecast
- ❖ Launch the series of university-wide education sessions and data releases on DePaul finances

## Program Distinction & Expansion

- ❖ Conduct a comprehensive review of goals/needs for existing academic programs
- ❖ Conduct a comprehensive review of all non-credit options at the university
- ❖ Finalize university-wide analysis of new programs for our future
- ❖ Create the Institute for Poverty and Inequality and, sustainability, and artificial intelligence institutes
- ❖ Launch *SPARK* (Strategic Partnerships for Advancing Research & Knowledge)
- ❖ Create The Hub: The Center for Interdisciplinary & Translational Research at DePaul

## Geographic & Community Expansion

- ❖ Generate a social capital map of DePaul alumni in Chicago
- ❖ Create review teams for global expansion into countries where there is a strong match between local needs and DePaul's abilities and mission
- ❖ Identify strategies to increase our impact and improve outcomes at Chicago Public Schools

## Digital Presence

- ❖ Engage our university community in the design and implementation of a new digital presence for DePaul

## Philanthropic Engagement

- ❖ Implement new fundraising strategies for each school, college, and outreach unit, connecting each element to lead the new, comprehensive campaign
- ❖ Restructure the Advancement and External Relations division in support of new school, college, and outreach unit initiatives
- ❖ Launch a focused campaign for interdisciplinary/translational research activities
- ❖ Launch a focused campaign for athletics

at DePaul  
with



The World



