Vision 2018: Dedication to Excellence, Commitment to Community

DePaul will take its place among the most exceptional urban universities in the United States, recognized for its unwavering commitment to student learning and success. Guided by its Catholic character and Vincentian values, it will deepen connections locally, nationally and internationally to develop in students the ability to act as responsible global citizens. DePaul will be known for the excellence of its academic offerings, its expert, passionate faculty, its distinctively diverse student body and its mix of theory with practice, particularly in search of solutions to the pressing issues of the day, including injustice and poverty.
Dear Friends,

Like a sculptor who sees the splendor that will emerge from a slab of marble, we hold in our minds a powerful image of the DePaul we aspire to become. Our new strategic plan is a collective work of the university community that articulates our promises to students, our plans to collaborate with Chicago and the values we treasure. We will devote our talents over the next six years to enhancing academic excellence, supporting educational innovation and ensuring that DePaul’s 25,000 students receive the highest-quality educational experience.

Our plan challenges students academically yet supports them as they manage critical transitions. It fosters multidisciplinary programs and the development of intercultural competencies so our students are prepared for success in our global world. We will continue to develop flexibility in delivery modes to meet changing student needs. Recognizing that learning takes place in a variety of environments, we will strengthen links between curricular and co-curricular programs and activities. All of these efforts—and many more—will advance our leadership in retaining and graduating our diverse student population.

To accomplish this we will support faculty research, scholarship and creative activities that enrich teaching excellence, reward curricular improvement and pedagogical innovation, and better integrate part-time faculty into the academic life of the university.

I invite you to join the important conversations in your colleges and administrative units to shape the ways our vision will move from pages in a plan to the reality our students experience daily. Not only can we imagine the DePaul we aspire to create, but we have the power and the tools to build it.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.
President

Vision 2018: Dedication to Excellence, Commitment to Community

DePaul will take its place among the most exceptional urban universities in the United States, recognized for its unwavering commitment to student learning and success. Guided by its Catholic character and Vincentian values, it will deepen connections locally, nationally and internationally to develop in students the ability to act as responsible global citizens. DePaul will be known for the excellence of its academic offerings, its expert, passionate faculty, its distinctively diverse student body and its mix of theory with practice, particularly in search of solutions to the pressing issues of the day, including injustice and poverty.
GOAL 1

ENHANCE ACADEMIC QUALITY AND SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION.

Offering rigorous, respected academic programs, we will prepare our students for success in their chosen fields and careers, equipping them to make a difference in the world. The university will provide all students an academically challenging environment, consistently high-quality course offerings and teaching excellence. DePaul is committed to the development of our faculty, ensuring they have the resources and capabilities to deliver an exemplary education; to systems of institutional self-examination, assessment and benchmarking; optimal use of technology in support of teaching and learning; and continuing curricular innovation and program development to prepare students for an evolving, global society.

Objective 1a

Focus the entire university community on student learning and success.

- Strengthen the student academic experience.
  - Ensure faculty accountability in creating and maintaining an academically challenging environment, consistently high-quality course offerings and teaching excellence.
  - Adopt revised undergraduate university learning goals and outcomes to reflect national best practice.
  - Strengthen graduate and professional programs through a focus on assessment of program objectives and student outcomes.
  - Enhance and expand learning support services.
  - Leverage flexibility in library services and delivery modes to meet changing student needs in information literacy.
  - Improve the effectiveness of academic and career advising.
- Expand and strengthen programs that focus on critical student transitions, including the first year for freshmen and transfer students, beginning or reentering college for adult students and entrance to major.
- Increase university retention and graduation rates while addressing gaps in degree completion across racial and ethnic groups.
- Strengthen the connections between curricular and co-curricular programs.
- Expand support for high-quality, easy-to-navigate student services, including those that address student wellness and mental health, and special support services and accommodations.

Objective 1b

Build and retain an outstanding, diverse faculty, empowering faculty to realize their potential as teacher-scholars.

- Enhance faculty development as teachers.
  - Encourage and reward teaching excellence, curricular improvement and pedagogical innovation.
  - Expand the tools and formal processes to assist faculty in the continuous development and improvement of their teaching skills.
  - Recognize and support the role of research, scholarship and creative activity.
  - Sustain internal support and improve university effectiveness in attracting external support for this work.
- Develop programs to better support part-time faculty.

Objective 1c

Develop distinctive, high-quality academic programs.

- Strengthen all academic programs by ensuring a robust culture of assessment for quality improvement.
  - Develop and apply methods and criteria to assess curricular approaches and evaluate teaching effectiveness.
  - Support collaboration among and between faculty and encourage the development of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary partnerships and programs.
  - Develop new educational offerings to address the learning needs of current and future generations:
    - Direct each college and school to develop distinctive, recognized programs that fuel enrollment growth and/or college reputation.
    - Leverage flexibility in offerings and delivery modes to meet changing student needs and demands.
    - Invest in targeted growth, especially in high-demand programs in professional and pre-professional curricula.
    - Elevate DePaul’s market position and prominence in the health sciences.
    - Develop opportunities for learning focused on sustainability.
  - Expand curricular engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition.
  - Increase curricular opportunities for students to develop global perspectives and intercultural competencies.

Objective 1d

Enhance the visibility and profile of the university.

- Advance DePaul’s academic reputation, promote the strength and accomplishments of the schools and colleges, the excellence of our faculty, and raise the perception of quality associated with the university’s brand. Leverage national recognition of service learning and athletics.
DEEPEN THE UNIVERSITY’S DISTINCTIVE CONNECTION TO THE GLOBAL CITY OF CHICAGO.

Of and for the city of Chicago, DePaul has always been a university with porous borders, deeply connected to the city it considers home. Our students’ education is enriched by our work with our city partners: the city provides both backdrop and content for students’ curricular and co-curricular activity, and informs their intellectual and personal development. The city also provides a window to the world through its international immigrant communities and global partnerships. We will continue to engage our neighbors, forging deep and enduring partnerships to help sustain community, improve civic life and enhance the quality of our urban environment. We will invest in facilities and grounds, infrastructure and technology to enhance the educational experience, develop greater opportunities for interaction among faculty, staff and students, and foster the creation of a vibrant university community.

Objective 2a

Leveraging the global diversity of Chicago, infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research and service missions of the university.

- Build a faculty development initiative focused on globalization, curricular innovation and preparedness to teach in a global classroom.
- Enlarge our network of strategic partner institutions across different regions of the world to develop deep and sustained collaborations.
- Expand opportunities for all students, with particular attention to low-income students, to access transformational experiences, including study abroad.

Objective 2b

Deepen DePaul’s connection with Chicago, enriching students’ educational experiences.

- Increase internship and professional networking opportunities for all students, including graduate and professional students.
- In appropriate programs, engage students in problem-based, applied research, advocacy, and learning that addresses urban issues, promotes civic involvement and improves the quality of life for Chicago’s citizens.
- Strengthen partnerships with the city and the region, expanding our influence as an urban partner.
- Achieve recognition as the city’s higher education anchor institution and the premier institution for Chicago civic engagement.

Objective 2c

Develop facilities, technology and the infrastructure to support the highest-quality educational experience for students, and enhance the communities in which we live and work.

- Complete the performing arts facilities, finishing the Fullerton fine arts corridor.
- Refine the Loop Campus master plan, focusing efforts to create an integrated campus and a strengthened downtown identity and public image. Selectively expand academic space in the Loop, and develop a plan for systematic renovations.
- Continue strategic additions to academic facilities on the Lincoln Park Campus.
- Seek opportunities to bring men’s basketball back into the city.
- Leverage technology to enhance learning, increase efficiency and improve support services.
- Ensure our residential housing capacity aligns with our evolving student profile.
- Reduce the university’s carbon footprint within a practical and appropriate framework.
- Showcase best practices in sustainable operations and administrative processes.
STRENGTHEN OUR CATHOLIC AND VINCENTIAN IDENTITY.

Recognizing the importance of deepening our Catholic and Vincentian identity for the DePaul of the future, we are committed to protect and nurture these elements as marks of our distinctiveness, guiding how we do business and the ways we prepare our students to contribute to society. We will further institutionalize our mission to ensure that it is more intentional and resonant throughout the institution, in curricular and co-curricular learning, in student life and culture, in institutional practices and decisions, and in the quality and character of the workplace.

Objective 3a

Elevate our distinctive Catholic and Vincentian identity across the university.

- Expand and deepen engagement of all students with DePaul’s Catholic and Vincentian mission.
- Establish desired mission outcomes for all DePaul students.
- Develop targeted initiatives to transmit a stronger understanding of and engagement with DePaul’s Catholic and Vincentian identity among graduate, online and adult students.
- Develop robust assessment of all of these efforts to guide future strategic decisions.
- Expand curricular and co-curricular opportunities for interfaith/interreligious engagement and learning.
- Provide incentives and opportunities for faculty and staff to understand and appreciate the Catholic intellectual tradition and Vincentian heritage.
- Extend and strengthen faculty expertise in poverty research, focusing particularly on effective approaches to the alleviation of poverty.

Objective 3b

Strengthen external partnerships congruent with the university’s valued Catholic and Vincentian character.

- Apply DePaul’s intellectual resources to support the work of the church (e.g., Chicago Catholic Schools, Catholic Theological Union, the worldwide Vincentian family and other mission-resonant organizations).
- Solidify DePaul’s role as the international leader in Vincentian studies and scholarship.

FOSTER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

We will invest university resources and employ processes to build a more diverse and globally aware university community sustained by an inclusive, supportive and just campus climate. We understand that greater diversity of race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, faith, place of origin, life experience, political perspective and economic condition deepens the educational experience of every student and enriches the worklife of every faculty and staff member. The collective experience and talent of our faculty and staff, students and alumni, ensures the continued strength and vitality of the university. We share in the commitment to protect and strengthen our university environment to allow every member of our community to contribute to and learn from each other.

Objective 4a

Strengthen campus-wide diversity.

- Recruit and retain a diverse faculty, staff and administration, with special attention given to increasing the representation of under-represented populations.
- Develop mentoring systems.
- Provide support for career development, retention and success.
- Strengthen the postsecondary pipeline of under-represented scholars.
- Sustain the diversity of the student body.
- Expand international and multicultural learning opportunities that effectively prepare our students to be successful, innovative leaders in a diverse global society.
- Provide programs and support services to ensure that all students, faculty and staff feel welcome and are able to succeed.

Objective 4b

Build a vibrant university community.

- Improve communication, reduce barriers and enhance opportunities for collaboration among members of the university community.
- Strengthen the sense of community, affinity and institutional pride among all DePaul constituencies–students, alumni, staff, faculty and friends.
- Create new opportunities and strengthen existing university-wide traditions to celebrate and promote our collective identity.
- Affirm alumni as important participants in the university community, enlist their support of strategic objectives and ensure their enduring relationship with the university.
**GOAL 5**

**ENSURE A BUSINESS MODEL THAT BUILDS THE UNIVERSITY’S CONTINUED STRENGTH AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE.**

We will vigorously pursue a business strategy that effectively manages our resources to ensure the continued health and vitality of the university for generations to come. We will focus the university community on maximizing the value of a DePaul education, especially as manifested in student learning success and career outcomes. Continuing to invest in the university’s improvement, we will develop new programs, especially market-responsive academic programs, to meet the needs of our current and future students. DePaul is committed to remaining financially accessible and affordable to a diverse student population through pursuit of integrated tuition pricing and financial aid strategies coupled with vigilant, efficient management of our fiscal resources. Generating sufficient revenue for operations and strategic objectives, we will continue to develop the physical, financial and operational capabilities to support our academic excellence.

**Objective 5a**

**Sustain our financial vitality.**

- Maintain the affordability of a DePaul education.
- Focus enrollment strategies and fuel strategic, targeted growth.
  - Ensure continued competitiveness in achieving and balancing undergraduate and graduate enrollment goals, including quality, diversity, affordability and net revenue outcomes.
  - Develop new market-responsive programs.
  - Offer new modes of delivery and increase the flexibility of course and program offerings.
- Pursue an agile business model that ensures growth in net tuition revenue over the duration of the plan, provides sufficient resources for strategic investments and maintains financial strength.
- Fund appropriate levels of institutional financial aid to ensure the desired student profile and continued mission. Develop strategic aid programs for targeted graduate and professional populations.
- Continue to develop philanthropic support for ongoing operations, new initiatives and endowment growth.

**Objective 5b**

**Invest in our staff.**

- Recruit, develop and promote a highly qualified staff committed to our institutional values of cooperation and exceptional service.
- Effectively fund support functions throughout the university to ensure a high level of service to students and academic units.

**Objective 5c**

**Adhere to principles of sustainable growth and financial discipline.**

Remain vigilantly attentive to the following principles of sustainable growth and financial discipline to allow for DePaul’s continued success within a challenging economic environment.

- Maintain a commitment to sustainable annual growth in net tuition revenue.
- Ensure realization of annual growth in net tuition revenue.
- Maintain an effective mix and balance of high-margin and subsidized academic programs to ensure aggregate gross margin performance.
- Maintain a student mix that balances academic priorities, mission-related objectives and ongoing financial vitality.
- Strategically invest in new academic program development to capitalize on marketplace opportunities and broaden overall revenue mix.
- Grow unrestricted fundraising revenues to realize endowment growth and expand scholarship opportunities for students.
- Generate increasing operating surpluses, exercising effective cost controls.
  - Manage faculty and staff headcount commensurate with academic program and enrollment growth and as required for new initiatives, increasing regulatory compliance and other strategic requirements within overall parameters of net revenue growth and favorable operating margins.
  - Provide competitive salaries and benefits to attract, retain and motivate highly qualified faculty and staff within the overall parameters of net revenue growth and operating margins.
  - Constrain growth in overhead and operating costs to less than the increases in net tuition revenue.
- Maintain our current level of financial strength, creditworthiness and bond ratings.
  - Maintain sufficient fiscal flexibility to respond to a rapidly changing environment.
  - Provide adequate levels of working capital to fund daily operational cash requirements.
  - Maintain a disciplined approach to capital expenditures without issuance of new debt in the short term, utilizing institutional reserves as deemed strategically appropriate.
  - Maintain the financial ratio of available funds to expenses at 0.8 by the end of the plan.