



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023

Preamble

Drawing on the inspiration of St. Ignatius and the founders of the Society of Jesus, the 36th General Congregation of Jesuits (2016) affirmed the enduring value of living and serving as a “**discerning community with open horizons**” (Decree 1, n.7). This vision inspires us at the Jesuit School of Theology as we craft a strategic plan for the next five years.

This collaborative process, which has engaged faculty, staff, students, alumni, and board members, has relied on the Ignatian tradition of **discernment**. We have asked the Holy Spirit to guide us in discovering where God is leading us as an academic and ministerial community, associated with both Santa Clara University and the Graduate Theological Union. We have looked honestly at our school’s strengths and weaknesses. We have identified opportunities and risks moving forward. We have read the “signs of the times” and interpreted them from our perspective as theologians and ministers and in light of our mission. We have listened to one another and our partners in teaching and ministry as a variety of needs were articulated. This discernment leads us now to make concrete choices about our future, with holy boldness and inspired imagination.

We are open to new horizons. Jesuit universities have always been at the frontier where the Church meets the world and the world meets the Church, interpreting one for the other. This position is especially true for schools of theology. In a letter to the theology faculty of the Catholic University in Argentina (UCA) in 2015, Pope Francis wrote:

“Teaching and studying theology means living on a frontier, one in which the Gospel meets the needs of the people to whom it should be proclaimed in an understandable and meaningful way. We must guard against a theology that is exhausted in academic dispute or one that looks at humanity from a glass castle. You learn so as to live: theology and holiness are inseparable.”

Francis’ words echo questions we often ask at JST: *“Theology for what? For whom?”*

Our visioning process was also informed by the Commencement address given to our graduates in May 2017 by Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego. In the address, Bishop McElroy, a JST alumnus and former board member, observed how Pope Francis has demonstrated a more vital interplay between pastoral theology and other disciplines in the Catholic theological tradition. Following Francis' vision, McElroy challenged JST to lead the way in showing how all branches of theology can "attend to the concrete reality of human life and human suffering in a much more substantial way in forming doctrine." In this way, pastoral realities and the lived experience of people in their noble striving would be primary sources of theological reflection and understanding Christian life. **Accompaniment** and **mercy** would be central to every form of theological inquiry and practice.

This understanding of theology deeply resonates with us at JST. Over twenty years ago, as a result of another strategic planning process, the faculty and administration committed their work as scholars, teachers, and ministers to **contextual theology**. This means that, at JST, we "do" theology always in dialogue with the different communities of which we are a part. We also bring the Christian tradition in dialogue with the present, engaging cultures and, when necessary, critiquing them. In this engagement, we listen to the hopes and fears, the aspirations and limitations, of those whom we work with and serve. We benefit from their wisdom. We strive to accompany others in their authentic development as human beings, particularly those who are poor and marginalized. In this accompaniment, we also grow in our vocations as scholars, teachers, and human beings living in faith, hope, and love.

Because we recognize the transformation effected by contextual theology, this plan will deepen our communal commitment to theology that lives on the frontiers. We take to heart and put into action General Congregation 36's call to labor for justice as an extension of God's mercy:

"We must enter into a deeper understanding of the mystery of evil in the world and the transforming power of the merciful gaze of God who labors to create of humanity one reconciled, peaceful family. With Christ, we are called to closeness with all of crucified humanity. With the poor, we can contribute to creating one human family through the struggle for justice" (Decree 1, n.31).

Significantly, the General Congregation stresses that "**reconciliation is always a work of justice**, a justice discerned and enacted in local communities and contexts" (Decree 1, n.21). The work of reconciliation, which leads to lasting peace, means bringing ourselves closer to God, restoring bonds of kinship with others, and healing our natural world. Our visioning and planning have challenged us to find ways to bridge unnecessary divides in the Church and in our world. The complex divisions, due to religious, economic, ideological, ethnic, racial, and social differences, will not easily be remedied. Yet, universities, especially theology centers, are uniquely suited to envision and enact reconciliation in our divided

world, modeling dialogue instead of confrontation. Addressing universities and other academic centers like JST, the General Congregation encouraged:

“Our educational apostolates at all levels ... should help form men and women committed to reconciliation and able to confront obstacles to reconciliation and propose solutions. The intellectual apostolate should be strengthened to help in the **transformation of our cultures and societies**” (Decree 1, n.34).

The mission of reconciling always involves promoting a more faith-filled and just world, especially when that world is increasingly fragmented. Standing on the frontier today, we strive to build bridges and restore bonds through **deep reflection, tireless advocacy, and steadfast commitment**. In doing so, we respond to Pope Francis’ summons to theology faculties:

Theology is an expression of a Church which is a “field hospital”, which lives her mission of salvation and healing in the world. Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus. **I encourage you to study how the various disciplines — dogma, morality, spirituality, law, and so on — may reflect the centrality of mercy**. Without mercy our theology, our law, our pastoral care run the risk of collapsing into bureaucratic narrow-mindedness or ideology, which by their nature seeks to domesticate the mystery (UCA Letter, 2015).

Inspired by the vision and call of Pope Francis and the Society of Jesus, and motivated by commitment to our academic disciplines, we now articulate our mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. We do so proudly as a school of Santa Clara University. We rely on our Santa Clara colleagues and the University’s resources to achieve our goals to offer a transformative theological education. Our work at JST is central to the University’s priorities. According to Goal 4 of the present University Strategic Plan, “Santa Clara University will become one of the nation’s leading universities advancing Catholic theological studies, education, and ministry.” To achieve this goal, the University articulates the following primary objective, which we at JST enthusiastically embrace with our school’s strategic plan: **“Establish Santa Clara University’s Jesuit School of Theology as one of the world’s foremost Catholic graduate schools for theological education and research rooted in and furthering of the Ignatian tradition.”**

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.



Kevin O’Brien, S.J.
Dean

Our Identity: Who We Are

The Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University is an international center of scholarly and ministerial formation, with a faculty and student body consisting of lay men and women, Jesuits, clergy, and members of other religious orders. We are rooted in the Catholic and Ignatian tradition and engage in ecumenical, interfaith, and intercultural dialogue through the Graduate Theological Union.

Our Mission: What We Do

The Jesuit School of Theology educates scholars and ministers to serve the Church and society by enlivening faith, promoting reconciliation, laboring for justice, and participating in God's mercy. We bring theology into dialogue with communities, with their particular histories and cultures, serving people and learning from them in a spirit of solidarity.

Our Vision: Where We Want to Go

The Jesuit School of Theology will offer an integrative, interdisciplinary theological education, blending intellectual and spiritual formation, to empower students and faculty to respond concretely to the hopes and needs of God's people.

Our Values: How We Learn and Serve Together

Depth: We commit ourselves to intellectual and spiritual depth in our scholarship, teaching, reflection, and service.

Accompaniment: We thoughtfully and reverently engage and listen to one another and the communities we serve, paying particular attention to people on the margins of Church and society.

Apostolic Audacity: With a generous spirit, we respond boldly and creatively as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, internalizing the Gospel summons to justice as we strive to meet the needs and challenges of our Church and world today.

Prophetic Dialogue: In a politically, racially, ethnically, and religiously divided world, we choose encounter, not confrontation, fostering dialogue among different religions and peoples, across academic disciplines, and with cultural, civic, and business communities.

Collaboration: Recognizing that theology and ministry are collaborative endeavors, we labor together as faculty, staff, and students, and as Jesuits, lay persons, clergy, and members of other religious orders.

Global Perspective: Serving a global Church, we value diversity of culture and thought and intentionally engage theologies and practices that arise in different cultural, ethnic, and religious contexts.

Generous Hospitality: We aspire to imitate the radical hospitality of the Gospel by welcoming people from all walks of life, especially those marginalized in our Church and society.

Discerning Community: Seeking the freedom to love and serve more authentically, we utilize Ignatian discernment to respond to the call of discipleship and adapt to meet changing needs and circumstances.

Joyful Witness: Desiring to reflect the joy of the Gospel, we delight in our intellectual inquiry, companionship, and service.

Culture of Care: Grateful for all that God has entrusted to us, we reverence human beings and our common home in the natural world and wisely steward our material resources.

Strategic Goals and Initiatives

In our planning, we resist the temptation simply to do more. Instead, we discern among many good ends. We commit ourselves to key goals that flow from our mission, enable us to achieve our vision, and, above all, respond to the most pressing needs that we as a theology center in the Catholic and Jesuit tradition can address effectively.

While not enumerating every activity at the Jesuit School of Theology, the following goals focus our attention and inform our decision making about how we spend our time and resources. They depend on a faculty that is interdisciplinary in approach, innovative in pedagogy, skilled in experiential and immersive learning, and attentive to cultural and religious contexts.

Goal 1: *Actively engage the public issues of our times by deepening our expertise in the culturally contextualized study of theology.*

- A. Establish protocols to teach social and cultural analysis across the curriculum
- B. Establish protocols to teach ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue across the curriculum
- C. Prepare faculty and students to engage in constructive public and ecclesial discourse related to social and economic issues that divide our Church and world
- D. Establish at Santa Clara a hub for Hispanic theological and ministerial formation that will serve the Church in the Western United States
- E. Assist professionals in the Bay area in their ethical and spiritual development by offering the resources of Ignatian spirituality and Catholic Social Thought

Goal 2: *Deepen students' academic and ministerial formation by incorporating concentrated experiential and interdisciplinary learning across the curriculum.*

- A. Expand curriculum-based immersion programs related to poverty, social exclusion, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue
- B. Implement one-credit skills-based courses linking academic and ministerial formation

- C. Establish a Global Theology Program with faculty and student collaborations and exchanges among the seven English-speaking theology centers sponsored by the Jesuits
- D. Develop additional degree offerings at the Masters level, including professional ministry degrees and interdisciplinary degrees in collaboration with academic units on the main campus

Goal 3: *Advance academic and ministerial excellence and innovation through robust financial planning, strategic investments in faculty and students, and expanded fundraising.*

- A. Establish the sustainable configuration of JST in terms of revenue, size of student body and faculty, and space needs
- B. Recruit a diverse student body, increasing the enrollment of women and members of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic communities
- C. Institute a faculty development plan tied to strategic initiatives and program goals
- D. Increase philanthropy to support faculty development, student scholarships, and innovative academic programs

Strategic Plan was approved by Board of Directors of the Jesuit School of Theology, on January 19, 2018.

Specific metrics and timetable accompany the plan.

Preamble, goals, and initiatives are informed by Pope Francis' Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, Veritatis Gaudium, 8 December 2017.