

VISION 2012: THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROPOSAL FOR
PRESIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION



MARCH 1, 2007

VISION 2012: THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Preamble

The first steps towards developing this Plan were taken in the spring of 2005. In an effort to re-examine and reflect upon the University's Mission Statement, the President appointed a Vision Committee whose task it ultimately became to create a Vision Statement for the institution's strategic planning effort. The candid and inclusive nature of that discussion became an aspiration for the process which has resulted in this Plan.

This document captures the seven overarching goals of Gonzaga's Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2012. These form the institutional framework for numerous initiatives by which the University's goals will be accomplished. The most "strategic," or forward-looking, of the initiatives are included in this Executive Summary; the operational initiatives, together with specific action plans, are in development and will be contained in a separate Strategic Operational Plan to which this Executive Summary refers.

Without the full participation of the entire university community, this Plan could not have been created – nor will it be successful. Indeed, the institutional plan is itself a product of numerous department and division planning processes. The primary goal of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee has been to listen carefully and incorporate the perspectives of all constituents. Another aspiration of the Committee has been to create Institutional Strategic Goals that all members of the community can take part in achieving. While every person is an individual, and each has a specific role, it will require the active participation of all to make such a Plan a reality.

This Plan affirms and underscores the importance of several fundamental realities, reflecting the community input received along the way. As a Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic university, we are first and foremost about students. Our purpose is to engage our students, in an academic context, with a view towards the significant part they will play in forming and shaping the future. This Plan affirms the essential role that faculty play in this endeavor, as well as the essential work of our non-faculty staff in supporting the enterprise. As a university, we see students as having a crucial part to play in their own progress and development. We seek ever to expose ourselves to new cultures and new ways of thinking, to better prepare our students to engage the world. The spirit that has informed the goal-development work is one that recognizes the fundamental value of our people and their different roles as being essential to accomplishing the work of the University. We hope to continue to engender a rich spirit of collaboration and interaction in the process of achieving these goals.

Gonzaga faces many challenges as well as opportunities. American higher education is being re-defined even as many families seek Universities, like ours, which see tremendous value in *cura personalis* – the care of the entire person. The students we educate and the manner in which we engage them is itself a critical strategic issue. How well we remain engaged with our former students, our alumni, is and will be a key distinguishing characteristic. Gonzaga University seeks to honor and exemplify the best in Jesuit education while remaining flexible and responsive in the face of change.

We are grateful to our many students, faculty, staff, alumni and benefactors. Together with you, Gonzaga is prepared to step forward into the future.

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Gonzaga University belongs to a long and distinguished tradition of humanistic, Catholic, and Jesuit education. We, the trustees and regents, faculty, administration and staff of Gonzaga, are committed to preserving and developing that tradition and communicating it to our students and alumni. As humanistic, we recognize the essential role of human creativity, intelligence, and initiative in the construction of society and culture. As Catholic, we affirm the heritage which has developed through two thousand years of Christian living, theological reflection, and authentic interpretation. As Jesuit, we are inspired by the vision of Christ at work in the world, transforming it by His love, and calling men and women to work with Him in loving service of the human community.

All these elements of our tradition come together within the sphere of free intellectual inquiry characteristic of a university. At Gonzaga, this inquiry is primarily focused on Western culture, within which our tradition has developed. We also believe that a knowledge of traditions and cultures different from our own draws us closer to the human family of which we are a part and makes us more aware of both the possibilities and limitations of our own heritage. Therefore, in addition to our primary emphasis on Western culture, we seek to provide for our students some opportunity to become familiar with a variety of human cultures.

In the light of our own tradition and the variety of human societies, we seek to understand the world we live in. It is a world of great technological progress, scientific complexity and competing ideologies. It offers great possibilities for cooperation and interdependence, but at the same time presents us with the fact of widespread poverty, hunger, injustice, and the prospect of degeneration and destruction. We seek to provide for our students some understanding of contemporary civilization; and we invite them to reflect with us on the problems and possibilities of a scientific age, the ideological differences that separate the peoples of the world, and the rights and responsibilities that come from commitment to a free society. In this way we hope to prepare our students for an enlightened dedication to the Christian ideals of justice and peace.

Our students cannot assimilate the tradition of which Gonzaga is a part nor the variety of human culture, nor can they understand the problems of the world, without the development and discipline of their imagination, intelligence, and moral judgment. Consequently, we are committed at Gonzaga to developing these faculties. And since what is assimilated needs to be communicated if it is to make a difference, we also seek to develop in our students the skills of effective writing and speaking. We believe that our students, while they are developing general knowledge and skills during their years at Gonzaga, should also attain more specialized competence in at least one discipline or profession. We hope that the integration of liberal humanistic learning and skills with a specialized competence will enable our graduates to enter creatively, intelligently, and with deep moral conviction into a variety of endeavors, and provide leadership in the arts, the professions, business, and public service. Through its academic and student life programs, the Gonzaga community encourages its students to develop certain personal qualities: self-knowledge, self-acceptance, a restless curiosity, a desire for truth, a mature concern for others, and a thirst for justice. Many of our students will find the basis for these qualities in a dynamic Christian faith. Gonzaga tries to provide opportunities for these students to express their faith in a deepening life of prayer, participation, in liturgical worship and fidelity to the teachings of the Gospel. Other students will proceed from a non-Christian religious background or from secular philosophic and moral principles.

We hope that all our graduates will live creative, productive, and moral lives, seeking to fulfill their own aspirations and at the same time, actively supporting the aspirations of others by a generous sharing of their gifts.

Strategic Plan Vision Statement (Approved by the Board of Trustees on December 9, 2005)

Deeply rooted in the centuries-old tradition of Jesuit education, Gonzaga University aspires to develop the whole person through contemplation, intellectual dialogue, and engagement within a vibrant Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic learning community. We exist to develop generations of leaders whose actions reflect a faith that promotes justice, the pursuit of truth, a dedication to service, and a commitment to ethics and the common good.

Preface

The Gonzaga ethos, in practice, can be seen as one of “overlapping commitments,” where we as a community agree on values and principles, some of us for religious reasons (whether Catholic or Christian or from other religious traditions), some of us for humanistic reasons, and some from our grounding in the Jesuit spirituality. We see these three terms as informing and bounding our ethos, creating a common field. While each of us may have a different location within this field, closer to one boundary than another, depending upon our grounding inspiration, all of us are presumed to operate within the same field.

The Mission of Gonzaga University is at once Jesuit, Catholic and humanistic. Our sense is that the Mission, and thereby the community, is better served when statements about these terms are also symmetrical. For example we require a Jesuit way of proceeding that supports and complements Catholicism, and a Catholic Church that supports Jesuit education; a humanism that is supportive of Catholicism but also a Catholicism that is supportive of humanistic values, and so forth.

References

The term “Jesuit” refers to a religious Order of men within the Catholic Church, who have committed their lives to the service of God in specific works. Through the profound influence of the Jesuit intellectual tradition and the vision of the Spiritual Exercises, the Constitutions, and documents of its General Congregations, Jesuits and their colleagues participate in the work of the Society of Jesus. In the context of the University, “Jesuit education” includes major themes: helping students to find their own calling from God through the creation of a discerning heart that can identify their true desires; the cultivation of a faith that promotes justice; and the formation of “persons for others”—students who graduate with a desire to give something back to their community. “Jesuit” also means helping students recognize and confront the realities of sin and suffering in the world—not only through study but through solidarity with the marginal in our society by direct hands on, face-to-face engagement. We should aspire to form committed Christians and engaged citizens allied in the building of a more humane and just society.

The term “Catholic” refers to a specific Church, which expresses itself through living the Gospel of Christ, and understands itself through time in its Councils and traditions.¹ The Jesuits and their colleagues carry

¹ The Catholic Church has most recently articulated its relationship to Catholic universities through the apostolic constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. In addition, the *Documents of Vatican II*, and the Social and other encyclicals, have shed great light on the need for, and the value and nature of, Catholic higher education.

out their Mission as a vocation within this Church. The Catholic Church provides the opportunity for the cultivation of a vibrant and mature faith life, and a means of reaching out to the world with a message of hope: a belief in the love of God. The Catholic Church includes a sacramental, moral, and intellectual tradition which seeks dialogue beyond itself to reach that horizon of hope and love. A significant way in which the University serves the Church is by providing a forum in which Catholicism can enter into critical (that is, intellectually reasoned and responsible) dialogue with other voices and other fields of knowledge. It has been said many times over these last several years, that the Catholic university is a significant “place where the Church does its thinking.”²

The term “humanistic” is understood to include the quest for self-knowledge and the formation of a virtuous character.³ We impart to our students a critical understanding and appreciation of our common human nature, the moral heritage of their culture and society, as well as some exposure and education in cultures and societies different from our own. We also impart to students a similarly critically informed understanding and appreciation for their own religious traditions and an exposure and education to other religious traditions prevalent in our global community. Humanistic, in its original meaning, “of the humanities,” is meant beyond academics to include the development of the whole person, helping students to integrate their lives into a harmonious whole and learning to prize and respect the flourishing of others, however different from themselves. This latter sense links “humanistic” to both “Catholic” and “Jesuit,” which have a concern for the faith that promotes not only individual, but social justice.

The integration of the three therefore requires an integration of faith, justice, ethics, service, and leadership for the common good into a vibrant learning environment.

² Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, former President, Notre Dame.

³ Within the Jesuit tradition, “humanism” is seen as distinct from “secular humanism” (see Preface).

STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goal One: To commit every area of the University to the reflective engagement of her Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic Mission ideals.

At its most fundamental level, it is the gospel vision of Jesus Christ that compels Gonzaga University to develop a strategic plan. The heart of the University is its Mission as a Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic institution. As such, organizational plans and activities need to be developed with an understanding of, and an awareness regarding, the Mission and the ways in which institutional activities support it. This goal underscores the significance of the Mission and the need to formalize the institution's commitment to Mission in its planning and operational efforts.

- Continue to affirm its commitment to the Christian gospel values found in the *Spiritual Exercises* as the grounding and motivating experience for the Society of Jesus and all who work in partnership with the Jesuits.
- In its hiring and promotion processes, the University will emphasize the significance of its Mission with an aim towards fostering participation in and commitment to its Jesuit, Catholic and humanistic identity.
- Continue the development of programs for faculty and staff to assist them in understanding and reflecting on the university's Mission Values – with a view towards engaging in a partnership for mission that will assist in hiring practices, program development, and reflection on its Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic identity.
- Seek to clearly and explicitly define the nature of Jesuit education as it goes about the work of evaluating existing programs and developing new ones on both the undergraduate and graduate level.
- Engage in a deliberate and reflective process regarding leadership succession planning that relates to the President and key executives and administrators – all with an eye towards sustainability of the Mission.
- Endeavor to encourage and sustain a vibrant Jesuit presence on the campus with an emphasis on faith, justice and reconciliation.

Goal Two: To educate and transform quality students in an enriched academic environment.

The second goal speaks to the centrality of education as the purpose for Gonzaga University's existence. Two key strengths of the Gonzaga educational experience are: (1) a 450-year Jesuit educational endowment, reflected in a strong liberal arts core curriculum, and (2) the high-quality personal interactions that occur between faculty and students. The primary objectives of this Goal include increased support for faculty excellence, development of additional interdisciplinary programs, and curricula which challenge students to rigorously prepare themselves to serve the global community of which they are a part.

- Continue the strong legacy of Gonzaga University as a place where students are formed through the integration of Academics, Student Life, and Jesuit Mission in a unique, personalized learning environment.
- Develop a clearly understood and widely supported enrollment plan that preserves the fundamental nature and Mission of the University, and fosters its financial well-being and strategic plan – with a concomitant review of resources to support the plan.
- Distinguish Gonzaga by the quality of its academic and co-curricular programs and the accomplishments of its faculty, students and alumni.
- Broaden the reach and scope of our educational experiences so that together our students and faculty can more fully engage the world and the challenges it faces.
- Develop a common understanding of the unique value, role, and voice of the faculty in the University and support them in this critical work.

Goal Three: To deepen the engagement of the entire university in the development of the whole person.

Gonzaga University, through a collaborative effort across functional areas, will promote an atmosphere in which the entire university community assumes ownership for nurturing and refining all aspects of student development – intellectual, emotional, spiritual, moral, and physical – in the Jesuit tradition.

- Develop new (and increase support for existing) programs that assist students in understanding, reflecting upon, and integrating the institution's mission values – particularly through the interaction of Trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumni.
- Develop and promote an environment of inclusiveness and community connectedness for all students: traditional and non-traditional, off-campus and residential, undergraduate and graduate, in-class and on-line.
- Invest time, energy and financial resources into leadership development for students by providing them with opportunities for skill development and practical application. Develop new paradigms of leadership accessible to all students which actively support the nexus of service and justice with the university's Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic identity.
- Maintain its fundamental character as community-oriented and rooted in a vibrant, on-campus residential program, making manifest our commitment to the development of a rich learning community.
- Affirm the invaluable role that our staff plays in supporting the University at all levels. By doing so, we aspire to develop a more collaborative culture for all who work here.

Goal Four: To increase diversity and affirm the value of human difference.

At Gonzaga University, the word **diversity** affirms our faith-inspired commitment to an inclusive community where human differences thrive within a campus community of equality, solidarity, and common human nature. We seek to nourish difference in an environment characterized by mutual respect and the sustainable creation of a campus climate that attracts and retains community members from diverse backgrounds. In this context, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, social class, religion, culture, sexual orientation, language and other human differences all contribute to the richness of our academic community life. These differences grace us individually as human beings and collectively as a Jesuit, Catholic and humanistic university striving to fulfill our mission.

We aspire to create a university environment that is welcoming and accessible to all students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

- Develop strategies necessary to identify and attract diverse faculty and staff candidates early in the recruiting process; retain personnel; and secure the resources necessary to increase the percentage of newly-hired staff and faculty from diverse populations.
- Increase the proportion of incoming undergraduate students who self-identify as students of color.
- Increase the AHANA student retention rate to be equal to the university-wide retention performance by developing retention and student satisfaction initiatives for under-represented student populations.
- Create a welcoming environment for persons with disabilities by providing access to all University programs and facilities of the University in an intentional, proactive manner.
- Provide opportunities for faculty and staff training focused on cultural awareness in the education-formation process and help faculty develop academic programs and enhance courses that are attractive to diverse populations.
- Provide students with educational opportunities that help them develop an understanding of diversity in all of its forms, including the richness that such diversity adds to the University community.

Goal Five: To develop men and women for a more just and humane global community.

The world-wide mission of the Society of Jesus is focusing increased energy and attention to areas of the world where those in greatest poverty and disease live, especially Africa. We are obligated, with more intentionality and activity, to engage with the people and natural resources of this shrinking Earth. Our intention is that our students will be exposed to the realities of a global community in the hope that they are better prepared to enter, succeed and provide ethical leadership wherever their professions may lead them. Gonzaga University will provide academic, cultural, and spiritual experiences that promote development of a global, cross-cultural perspective for students, faculty and staff. It will further do so, wherever possible, within the context of service.

- Expand student, faculty and staff participation in study-abroad programs with mission-related academic initiatives.
- Establish faculty and staff exchange programs with international higher educational institutions and provide support for visiting faculty positions as a strategy to bring ethnically and culturally diverse faculty to campus.
- Educate students, faculty and staff to think more inclusively and to become more interculturally competent in integrating ethical standards to global environments and cross-cultural situations.
- Continue to provide, facilitate, and expand local, regional, and international service and service-learning opportunities.

Goal Six: To secure the financial future of the University.

In order to secure the financial future, the University must manage and creatively increase its assets – human, physical, investment, image/reputation, and alumni/benefactors – in a way that provides the best educational outcome and experience for our students. It must successfully attract and retain students, faculty and staff dedicated to the institution and its mission. It must also creatively and effectively manage its costs in order to operate within the resources it has or acquires.

- Launch a fundraising campaign with the primary goals of (a) increasing the endowment and (b) assisting in funding the priorities identified in the University strategic plan – the specifics to be determined based upon critical priorities, benefactor interest, and financial ability.
- Design and implement funding strategies which will allow for the construction of a new University Student Center – one which will significantly contribute to the holistic formation of students.
- Revise the Campus Master Plan to reflect the development of an infrastructure that will appropriately support the needs of faculty and staff with regards to their professional activities.
- Identify and implement annual strategies that will lead to the successful attraction and retention of students, given demographic trends, mission ideals, and legacy needs, recognizing that this is accomplished within a framework of merit and need based aid from sustainable sources.
- Identify annual and multi-year strategies – and conduct a periodic review of the same – that improve the cost structures of the academic, student life, and support areas of the University through the use of technology and best practices. The University commits to practices that will improve educational and administrative delivery while optimizing expense.
- Recognizing the importance of a quality faculty, the University will increase funding from institutional sources, government funds, and foundation grants for the purposes of supporting faculty scholarship and research. The University will encourage the development of foundation support for non-faculty initiatives.
- Develop and implement an institutional marketing plan that assists in achieving the academic quality, enrollment, and fundraising goals of the strategic plan.

Goal Seven: To foster the tradition of lifelong relationships with alumni, our friends, and the broader community.

The University's heritage, as well as its future, is vested in those who have unique and significant connections to it. In new and more intentional ways, Gonzaga seeks to create life-long partnerships with its alumni and friends, developing opportunities for sustaining the critical connection between past, present, and future. We also seek to participate more fully in the various communities of which we are a part, reaching out to our neighbors and being involved with them at their places of being.

- Develop and deepen positive relationships with alumni and students through Alumni Chapters, programs, and events that will encourage their lifelong involvement with and commitment to the University.
- Position Gonzaga to be a recognizable higher education leader in local, regional, national and international arena.
- Develop community outreach programs that inform and involve the various publics – internal and external – and invite an active participation with Gonzaga.

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