

Strengthening American Democracy
ALL- IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Action Plan
Saint Francis University (PA)
May 23, 2022

Introduction:

Saint Francis University (SFU) has a longstanding tradition of encouraging students to participate in the electoral processes. The SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law (CSG&L), with the assistance of the Department of History and Political Science and the Pre-Law Club, conducts campus-wide voter registration drives two times per year, one prior to the November general elections and one prior to the spring primaries. SFU attempts to help young voters get started and to encourage them to form habits of active and informed citizenship that will carry over into the future.

Some contextual background information about SFU is provided in the next section.

SFU: Founded on Catholic Franciscan Values:

In an age of complexity, the simplicity of the message of St. Francis of Assisi has more appeal than ever before: Catholic Faith. Humility. Generosity. Reverence. Service. Respect. Prayer. Joy. Love. These guiding principles of the Franciscans are the values we embrace at Saint Francis University.

SFU Vision Statement:

Saint Francis University is a Catholic and Franciscan university that provides high quality education and innovative learning experiences so students become that someone that God calls them to be.

SFU Mission Statement:

As the oldest Franciscan institution of higher learning in the United States, Saint Francis University draws inspiration from our Catholic tradition and expresses the lived example of Saint Francis of Assisi in the modern world. Saint Francis University promotes an inclusive learning community and a lifelong path to virtue, truth, and compassion. Within a culture that seeks understanding through innovation and collaboration, we champion both the inherent dignity of the individual person and the common good.

SFU Goals of Franciscan Higher Education:

These goals are the latest expression of Franciscan principles embraced by the University community. They reflect subtle, yet powerful, refinements (aggiornamento) of the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education originally drafted in 1991 by Fr. Christian R. Oravac, T.O.R. Franciscan Character.

Core idea: Realizing the presence of God in every student; the faculty and staff strive to demonstrate through word and work the love of God as they facilitate the spiritual and intellectual formation of our student body.

Franciscan Character: Valuing the University's Franciscan heritage and joining the mission of the Franciscans of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis of Penance, the University strives to communicate the ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi in the modern day through its mission of education. Saint Francis called all people to a life of metanoia - a life of constant transformation of mind and heart in the Lord. The University Community joins in pursuing the life of grace as we journey together to our eternal home. Realizing the presence of God in every student, the faculty and staff strive to demonstrate through word and work the love of God as they facilitate the spiritual and intellectual formation of our student body.

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Humble and Generous Attitude Towards Learning:

Living with an awareness that God, the source of all good, gifts us with talents of mind and heart, we as members of the Saint Francis University Community, receive and share these gifts humbly. We recognize that the gift of learning calls us not to self-advancement but to a generous gift of self for the benefit of others. We strive for excellence without arrogance and generosity in sharing our intellectual gifts, rejecting the power and prestige of knowledge as we seek to serve our brothers and sisters. As a community of learners, we encourage a free and open exchange of ideas as we seek truth together. We wish to follow the encouragement of Saint Francis that in the exercise of learning we should never extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion which such learning should foster.

Core idea: Following Saint Francis, who did what God had given him to do, the University invites all of its members to spiritual growth, regardless of their background.

Community of Faith and Prayer:

Seeking God, the fulfillment of all desire, the Saint Francis University Community most fully expresses its identity as a Catholic and Franciscan University when it follows the Lord Jesus Christ and lives out this relationship as a Community of Faith and Prayer. Following Saint Francis, who did what God had given him to do, the University invites all of its members to spiritual growth, regardless of their background. As a community of learners, we particularly seek to foster the spirit of prayer and devotion through our studies. At its heart, the University holds the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacramental life of the Church as the animating principle of all it does.

Core idea: Imitating Francis of Assisi, we recognize that the image and likeness of God dwells in every human person and is expressed in a particular way through their unique giftedness.

Respect for the Uniqueness of Individual Persons:

Imitating Francis of Assisi, we recognize that the image and likeness of God dwells in every human person and is expressed in a particular way through their unique giftedness. Inspired by Saint Francis, for whom even lepers became a source of consolation and joy, the University affirms the goodness of all human life. While no one is free of the reality of sin and suffering, the University's members learn to receive and practice mercy through one another. Therefore, the University commits itself to fostering the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical health of the entire University Community.

Core idea: ...we strive to love Christ who is particularly present in the least of our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the disenfranchised.

Service to the Poor and Needy:

Seeing Saint Francis, who loved the poor, crucified Christ and served him in his members, we strive to love Christ who is particularly present in the least of our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the disenfranchised. Refusing to see people as objects to be used and controlled, the University Community exercises its many gifts and talents in serving the poor and needy both at home and abroad. It is by doing so that the University realizes the joy of fulfilling its opportunity and obligation to relieve the suffering of Jesus, present in our brothers and sisters.

Core idea: Living as brothers and sisters to one another and all creation, we form, by God's design, a Community that transcends particular nations and cultures.

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Solidarity and Reconciliation:

Living as brothers and sisters to one another and all creation, we form, by God's design, a Community that transcends particular nations and cultures. In the many communities across the world in which they

will serve, the University forms its students to take up the ministry of reconciling the world to God both through their professional work and the example of their lives.

Core idea: Flowing from the abundant Goodness of God and our identity as sons and daughters of God, we live as brother and sister to one another and all creation.

Reverence for All Life and Care for Creation:

Flowing from the abundant Goodness of God and our identity as sons and daughters of God, we live as brother and sister to one another and all creation. This shared life leads us to reverence for all human life, to treat all persons in accord with their inherent dignity, to work together for the common good, and to care for our common home. In imitation of Francis, humble imitator of Christ the Servant, our faith moves us to action, helping to bind the wounds of those who suffer and bearing one another's burdens

Core idea: Joyfully imitating St. Francis, we affirm that God draws close to us in whatever state and circumstances we have been given.

Spirit of Simplicity and Joy:

Recognizing that Jesus, the Son of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped at but, instead, emptied himself and was born in the likeness of people, Saint Francis considered nothing and no one beneath him as he sought to live in solidarity with his Savior. Saint Francis celebrated the love of God present to him at all times and in all situations. Joyfully imitating him, we affirm that God draws close to us in whatever state and circumstances we have been given. In gratitude, we affirm that all that we have is a gift, and seek to conform our lives to that of our Creator.

The current SFU General Education Program (“Ethical Citizenship for the 21st Century”) went into effect in 2017. The relationship of our citizenship-education and voter registration efforts was described in our 2020 Action Plan. A description of SFU’s current General Education Program follows below.

**CURRENT General Education Program (2017-2022): “Ethical Citizenship for the 21st Century”:
Mission**

The General Education program, as an integral component in the achievement of the Mission of Saint Francis University, provides a means for the University to honor many of its most important commitments. Ever mindful of the rapidly changing world around us and the need for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry to address complex problems, the General Education program is dedicated to providing students with the values, skills, and knowledge necessary to meet future challenges. True to the liberal arts roots and Franciscan heritage of the University, the program encourages students to examine ethical issues, demonstrate global awareness, become actively involved in community service, and prepare for life-long learning of new skills and knowledge. The General Education program contributes to the development of the whole person, allowing individuals to achieve more rewarding and purposeful lives.

Approved 05/22/06

Program Description

General Education encompasses the learning Saint Francis University wants for its students generally, regardless of academic major or professional ambition. At Saint Francis University, general education is a multi-year program that weaves together core curriculum courses plus other program components including first-year experiences such as the Summer Orientation and Academic Registration (SOAR) program, a summer reading program, the First-Year Seminar, and the First-Year Cornerstone Franciscan Course, co-curricular offerings such as the college-wide Community Enrichment Series (CES) and other

curricular requirements such as the Writing Competency Examination and an upper-level Keystone Seminar to create a connected, coherent academic experience that provides a foundation for life-long learning.

Goals and Objectives:

As approved by the SFU Faculty Senate, May 2017

GOAL 1: Understand moral and ethical questions.

Objective 1a: Identify, examine and defend a solution to an ethical dilemma.

Objective 1b: Examine how Franciscanism addresses moral and ethical questions.

GOAL 2: Demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Objective 2a: Explore and articulate multiple perspectives on race, ethnicity, social class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, national origin, verbal behavior, age, and religion.

Objective 2b: Examine and explain the ethical and societal implications of specific diversity perspectives.

GOAL 3: Build the foundations for commitment to lifelong learning, personal well-being, and community service.

Objective 3a: Foster curiosity, skepticism, initiative, and desire for deeper learning.

Objective 3b: Develop a commitment to personal wellness.

Objective 3c: Share skills and abilities for the betterment of the community.

GOAL 4: Develop effective communication skills.

Objective 4a: State, develop, and support a clear thesis in a communication context.

Objective 4b: Adapt language, communication style, and media for an intended audience and purpose.

GOAL 5: Demonstrate proficiency in quantitative literacy and scientific reasoning.

Objective 5a: Interpret and communicate mathematical and statistical arguments.

Objective 5b: Solve mathematical and statistical problems applicable to civic and professional contexts.

Objective 5c: Understand and apply major scientific methods, theories, and principles.

GOAL 6: Develop critical and creative skills, abilities, and reasoning.

Objective 6a: Analyze evidence, statements, and alternative interpretations and use these to synthesize multiple points of view in the creation of an argument.

Objective 6b: Critically evaluate sources and source information using discipline-related standards in order to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information.

Objective 6c: Demonstrate an understanding of at least one form of artistic expression.

GOAL 7: Conduct research using discipline-appropriate materials and methods.

Objective 7a: Articulate specific research questions.

Objective 7b: Identify and access information necessary to answer research questions.

Objective 7c: Communicate research results in an effective and ethical manner.

GOAL 8: Understand the demands of active citizenship.

Objective 8a: Identify relevant theories and solutions to contemporary domestic and international social, economic, and political issues.

Objective 8b: Work collaboratively with others to promote social justice, being aware of the roles played by power, privilege, and subordination.

Objective 8c: Evaluate the significance of historical events and documents within the United States and worldwide.

Program Requirements:

**General Education Program
Ethical Citizenship for the 21st Century**

Every student must complete a diversity course or experience as defined in the list at the end of this document. Such courses may fulfill general education, major, or collateral requirements as well as fulfilling the diversity requirement. *

General Education requirements include:

CORE 103—Community Enrichment Series

CORE 104—Community Enrichment Series

CORE 113—First-Year Seminar

EXAM 301—Writing Competency Examination

or

Completion of ENGL 199 with a grade of C or better.

WRIT 102—Research Writing

LIT 104 or any of the following:

LIT 201,202, 204, 207,270

RLST 105—Franciscan Goals for Today

PHIL 205—Discovering Philosophy: Reasoning and Responsibility

One additional 3-credit RLST or PHIL course

Any 3-credit HIST course at the 100 or 200 level

One of the following science courses:

- BIOL 103 – Environmental Studies
- BIOL 104 – Human Heredity
- BIOL 105 – Human Biology
- CHEM 105 – Contemporary Chemistry

- PHYS 101 - Physical Sciences
- PHYS 102 - Descriptive Astronomy
- SCI 101 - Science for Active Citizenship
- SCI 201 - Intro Traditional and Renewable Energy Technologies

or

Any natural science, computer science, or engineering course that has an associated lab, if the lab is also completed.

MATH 101—General Mathematics

or

Any MATH course numbered 105 or higher

One additional 3 or 4-credit course in math, statistics, computer science, engineering, or any of the natural sciences

One 3-credit Fine Arts course (FNAR, ART, MUS, THTR)

One 3-credit language course at the 102 level or above (ASL, FREN, GERM, ITAL, LANG, LATN, SPAN)

Two 3-credit courses (6 credits) from two different disciplines from the following list: (The requirement is not new; the list has changed slightly.)

ECON 101—Principles of Economics

PLSC—Any PLSC course at the 100 or 200 level

PSYC 101—Introduction to Psychology

Any SOC course at the 100 or 200 level

One additional course (3 credits) in any of the social science disciplines, i.e. ECON, PLSC, PSYC, SOC. EDUC 150 will fulfill this requirement for Education majors.

CORE 407

or

An approved major-specific upper-level 3-credit seminar

TOTAL CREDITS: 48

***Diversity Requirement**

A study abroad opportunity approved by the General Education Committee

ANY WORLD LANGUAGE or ASL COURSE AT THE 200 LEVEL OR ABOVE

ART 202: Art History II

ART 317: Modern Art

BIOL 105: Human Biology

BIOL 208: Animal Behavior

BIOL 301: Genetics

BIOL 332: Field Biology

BUS 101: Wall Street 101: Business in a Global Society

CHEM 105: Contemporary Chemistry

COMM 105: Mass Media and Society/Media Literacy

COMM 115: Photojournalism

COMM 230: Group Communication

COMM 401: Media Law

ECON/FIN 402: International Trade and Finance

EDUC 250: Family/Community Relations in Early Childhood Education

EDUC 261: Linguistic Diversity in Classroom
LIT 330: Literature and the Environment
LIT 383—America's Wars
LIT 386: Minority Literature
LIT 454: Literature and Disability
WRIT 280/ES 330 Adventure in Literature and Writing
ENVE 414: Hazardous Materials Engineering
ENVE 421: Energy Conversion Engineering
ENVE 423: Appropriate Technologies for Humanitarianism and Environmental Service
EXPH 312: Exercise across the Lifespan
HIST 336: Topics in Latin American History
HIST 337: Topics in Middle Eastern History
HIST 338: The Far East on the World Stage
HIST 339: Topics in African History
HIST 345: The Body in History
HIST 350: Race and Ethnicity in the US
HIST 375: Comparative Economic History
HIST 403: The Origins of WWII
HIST 405: Disaster! Environmental and Social Crisis in World History
HIST 406: Water Power: Water Conflict and Control in the Transatlantic Context
HIST 410: Toil and Trouble: Witchcraft and Magic in Transatlantic Context
HIST 420: Mediterranean World
HIST 424: The Vietnam War
HIST 440: Cold War America
HIST 445: The Black Death: Renaissance Society, Culture and Politics
HIST 478: Muslim Kings with Non-Muslim Subjects
LANG 103: Language and Culture
MGMT 201: Human Resource Management
MGMT 206: International Management
MGMT 307: Great Britain and the European Union in the Global Economy
MKTG 206: Global Marketing Strategy
MUS 041-024: Applied Hand Drumming
NURS: 311: Human Nutrition
PHIL 307: Environmental Ethics
PHIL 309: Moral Philosophy
PHIL 312: Health Care Ethics
PHIL 320: Philosophy of Human Nature
PHIL 330: Death, Dying, and the Near Death Experience
PHIL 350: Sports and Ethics
PHIL/RLST 308: Peace, Justice, and Human Relations
PLSC 104: Global Citizenship
PLSC 313: Ethics and Public Policy
PNGE 311: Environmental Petroleum Engineering
PSYC 304: Social Psychology
PSYC 322: Psychology of Women and Gender
PSYC 323: Cultural Psychology
PUBH 101: Introduction to Public Health
PUBH 230: Comparative Health Care Systems
RLST 301: Religion and Sports in America
RLST 306: Religions of the World
RLST 309: Religion in America and West Central Pennsylvania

RLST 310: Human Sexuality and Christian Marriage
RLST 311: Religious Ethics for a New Millennium
RLST 320: Contemporary Islam
SOC/SCWK 202: Introduction to Women in Society
SOC/SCWK 402: Cultural Diversity
SRES 300: Gender and Language
SRES 301: Social Critical Theory
SRES 400: Global Feminisms
SPAN 212: Latin American Culture Studies (taught in English)

Community Enrichment Series (CES):

CRITERIA for CES EVENTS

The Community Enrichment Series consists of programs and events intended to supplement curricular learning through co-curricular offerings. Thus, CES events should be substantive in terms of topic, quality, and length.

As indicated on the CES application form, any CES event should meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The program addresses one of the academic disciplines included in the General Education Program.
2. The program includes content that addresses diversity and global awareness.
3. The program provokes students to confront challenging ideas about society and culture.
4. The program is oriented to the spiritual and emotional development of students.
5. The program involves a significant amount of active learning (discussion, group interaction, etc.)
6. The program helps students develop academic and professional skills and knowledge appropriate for first-year students.

CES events should be designed to last at least 50 minutes, and students will be expected to be present for the entire time.

POLICY

The Community Enrichment Series is part of the First Year Program for students at Saint Francis University. Students fulfill this requirement by registering for CORE 103 in the fall semester and CORE 104 in the spring semester. Students may not take both CORE 103/104 in the same semester.

Both CORE 103 and CORE 104 require attendance at six CES events. Students must attend six events in the fall and six events must be attended in the spring. Any events fewer than six attended during a semester will not carry over to subsequent semesters.

Students receive a passing grade for each section of CORE 103/104 through documented attendance at six different events listed in a semester's on-line Community Enrichment Series calendar. Students must obtain a CES slip before an event, attend the entire event, and hand in the slip to the CES attendance person at the end of the event (or document their attendance at a CES via whatever method is in use at the event). Students are not allowed to turn in attendance slips directly to the General Education Office. Only attendance documented at the event itself will count towards CES credit.

Once students have completed their CES requirement for a given semester, they will receive a letter from the General Education Office indicating they have fulfilled their attendance requirement.

POLICIES FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students transferring in fewer than 14 credits of college-level course-work are required to complete two semesters of CES.

Students transferring in between 14 and 27 credits of college-level course-work, excluding AP and CLEP credits, are required to complete one semester of CES.

Students transferring in 28 or more credits of college-level course-work, excluding AP and CLEP credits, are exempt from the CES requirement.

CES SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

All Saint Francis University community members are welcome to attend any of the Community Enrichment Series (CES) programs. Many professors incorporate CES programs into their courses in order to enrich the classroom experience and integrate learning in and out of the classroom.

First-year students are required to participate in the Community Enrichment Series, Core 103-104, on a Pass/Fail basis in partial fulfillment of their General Education requirement for graduation. In order to receive a passing grade at mid-term, students must attend a total of three programs. To receive a passing final grade, students must attend a total of six different programs by the end of the semester.

Because a goal of the General Education Program is to encourage you to broaden your horizons and expose you to new ideas, we hope you will sample several of the categories listed below and perhaps even make one of your choices a program you would normally be least likely to attend.

Events listed in red are offered multiple times over the course of the semester, but students may only earn one CES credit for attending these events. You may earn only ONE CES credit for Museum.

The current SFU General Education Program (“Ethical Citizenship for the 21st Century”) is being revised. A description of the proposed General Education/Core Curriculum Program follows below. Note that “Civic Responsibility and Citizenship” are featured prominently. As such, our ongoing civic-education and voter registration efforts will assume ever greater importance. On May 12, 2022, a paradigm outlining the proposed core curriculum was approved, with 83% of the faculty voting in favor. Specifics and details will be “fleshed out” during the 2022-2023 academic year, with implementation targeted for fall of 2023.

PROPOSED General Education Program Core Re-Envision Task Force Report: Recommendations for Core Curriculum

Background for Current General Education Review and Revision

Changes at the university level in 2018-2020 set the stage for core curriculum re-envisioning at Saint Francis University. A significant restructuring of academic departments and schools occurred in 2018, with the number of schools decreasing from four to three through consolidation of natural sciences and humanities and shifting of social sciences. Academic program reviews were implemented university-wide, resulting in many departments taking action to refresh and strengthen their programs. In 2021, the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education and the university mission statement were updated. As part of the restructuring and renewal at the university level, the existing General Education curriculum was tweaked with the understanding that a full-scale revision would take place in the near future.

In Fall 2020, the administrative decision was made to proceed with a full General Education revision, and in December 2020 a task force was formed with the goal of re-envisioning the program. The charge for the revision came from Father Malachi van Tassell, University President, and Dr. Karan

Powell, Vice President for Academic Affairs. A number of reasons for a full-scale revision were identified by Fr. Malachi, including relevance of the program for the needs of a modern learner, concerns about a large number of credits in the program, and need for competitiveness in the marketplace. Fr. Malachi recognized that today's student must be prepared for a workplace of the future that is ever changing, requiring flexibility and innovation. Finally, the need for the core to highlight civil discourse and understanding of the uniqueness and value of every individual as evidenced by national and global issues was acknowledged.

A guiding principle was that to have a successful General Education revision, faculty must buy into the plan and believe in its value. It was determined that the core revision would be led and implemented by faculty. A task force to lead the revision was appointed under Fr. Malachi's guidance. Many departments from across all three schools were represented on the task force, and its members were charged to bring back ideas and feedback from their colleagues. . . .

Task Force Process

The task force gathered for its inaugural meeting in November 2020 via the virtual platform Zoom. Fr. Malachi van Tassell, University President, opened the meeting by talking about the need for re-envisioning the general education program and his charge to the group. Dr. Karan Powell, Vice President for Academic Affairs, followed with remarks. Dr. Jessica Lieb Cammarata, task force chair, shared a proposed timeline for the revision. The group planned to have regular meetings upon return to campus for the Spring 2021 semester.

At the inaugural meeting, Father Malachi encouraged the task force to consider what it means to be a Saint Francis University graduate with a focus on the role that general education plays in this identity. The task force was asked to consider what outcomes are sought from the General Education curriculum and what distinguishes a Saint Francis education from other universities. Fr. Malachi emphasized that, "A St. Francis University degree helps the student *get* the job. The liberal arts core helps him or her to *keep* the job."

Father Malachi asked the task force to design a "relevant, timely, and meaningful liberal arts core curriculum," one that inspires students and their parents to choose Saint Francis University. The task force was encouraged not to feel confined by current course offerings, faculty, or structures. Rather, they were charged to think boldly and differently.

Father Malachi provided the following points for consideration during the re-envisioning:

- Families are choosing Saint Francis because of common values and morals. The core curriculum should reflect our Franciscan and Catholic values.
- The core curriculum should contribute to personal formation of the student, including growth in virtue and building of personal character.
- Students should engage the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Students should engage the Franciscan intellectual tradition.
- The core should include some courses / tracks common to all students.
- Students should enter society as informed good citizens.

As the task force began meeting in spring 2021, it educated itself through an article repository housed in a shared drive, a review of the survey and benchmarking information gathered in the 2018 minor revision, and new benchmarking of peer and competitor schools. Several members of the task force had also attended general education conferences in recent years and shared information learned from presenters.

The task force used the following guiding principles to steer conversation:

1. To identify what it means to be an SFU student, including the impact of Franciscan presence and our identity as a Franciscan university
2. To make the core something that helps to identify the value and uniqueness of an SFU degree, increasing the draw of the university.
3. To consider the necessity of every credit and make sure there is flexibility for students to pursue a high credit major, double major or minor, as well as for transfer students. The GE program and related graduation requirements should be properly proportionate to the number of required units for the entire undergraduate curriculum.
4. To provide real world preparation, including transferable skills and knowledge.
5. To consider inclusion and impact of internships/community engaged courses/study abroad/long term projects and other high impact practices.
6. To establish clear learning outcomes for which assessment pieces are identified.
7. To have a core that is easy to navigate while providing high quality learning experiences.
8. To have the effect of amplifying the creativity and energy of faculty, instilling curiosity in students, and enhancing their joy of learning.
9. To consider the findings from a benchmarking of peer and competitor institutions and stakeholder surveys.
10. To identify the impact of integrating general education with the courses within the major, allowing students to synthesize their learning.

The initial aim of the task force was to establish new mission and vision statements as well as goals and objectives for the core curriculum. The group was encouraged to start from scratch rather than to revise the existing general education program language. Inspiration from our Franciscan and Catholic identity and alignment with the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education served as early guidance for the mission, vision, and goals. Initially the task force had explored ways to align the core curricular goals directly with the Franciscan Goals, but found that some aspects of the core could not be communicated using this direct alignment. Therefore, the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education served as one of the driving influences in the creation of the core curricular goals.

A second consideration was that students and their families seek a transformative university experience that positively impacts future well-being, career, and life. The core curriculum should cultivate transferrable skills employers seek such as research abilities, communication, and leadership. In addition, the core should help to set students on the optimal path through their personal journey. It should equip students with the skills, flexibility, and attitudes needed to persist and thrive amid change and uncertainty.

A third consideration was the aim to inspire and empower students to build a better future. The Re-Envision Task Force began their work in the middle of a worldwide pandemic that sparked deep divisions over science and civic responsibility. Civil unrest manifested at the Black Lives Matter protests in Summer 2020 and at the January 6th, 2021 attack on the Capitol. Global crises such as the invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 caused ripples of fear and devastation. Catastrophic weather events across the nation served as a reminder of the accelerating effects of climate change. Many students will arrive to college having been socially and emotionally impacted by recent events and uncertain about the future. The task force felt it was imperative to develop a core curriculum that helps Saint Francis graduates to recognize a better world is possible and that they have the ability to directly contribute to that vision through their workplace and community, as well as globally. Reflective of the theme to “become that someone,” the mission, vision, and goals were centered around the development of our students into citizens who can strive for betterment of the world in which they live.

Once the goals were finalized by the task force, they were distributed to the faculty for comment. All suggestions received were taken into consideration by the committee and changes were made based on feedback. The updated goals were then sent to Father Matthew Simons for suggestions on how to best

echo the language used in the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education.

Revised Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission

Our Become That Someone Core Curriculum guides all Saint Francis University students to develop character, excel in their fields, build communities, and act as globally engaged citizens. Through our Franciscan tradition, the curriculum cultivates a life of constant renewal of mind, heart, and soul fostering the spiritual, physical, and intellectual formation of the student.

Vision

Our Become That Someone Core Curriculum inspires Saint Francis University students to recognize that a better world is possible and provides the tools and foundation to build this better world by addressing the challenges faced by humanity.

Goal #1: Excel and Lead in Your Field

- a. Develop research, quantitative, and analytical abilities
 - b. Build effective communication skills
 - c. Respond to situations in work and life with innovation, flexibility, and problem solving
 - d. Integrate Franciscan values and ethical frameworks into one's personal leadership style
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Goal #2: Build Character and Community

- a. Demonstrate an appreciation of Franciscan values, Catholic Social Teaching, and other religious perspectives, to enhance one's self and enrich the community for the common good of all
 - b. Demonstrate commitment to holistic self-care, including spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial well-being
 - c. Analyze and navigate economic, social, and political systems essential to building and strengthening community
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Goal #3: Form a Better World

- a. Become an informed, open-minded citizen who respects the importance of inclusion and accepts the inherent value and individuality of every person
- b. Embody a spirit of global solidarity, essential for peace and prosperity, for people and the planet
- c. Practice civic responsibility to address global challenges collaboratively and ethically

Summary of Goal 1:

Through the Core Curriculum, students should be prepared to excel wherever their careers may lead them. While their major courses will deliver the skills needed to succeed, the core courses will provide the abilities that will allow students to thrive in their workplace environment, adapt to change, and lead with integrity and character. The core will teach students the fundamentals for communication skills in all forms, the abilities to use data effectively, the tools to adapt when problems arise or changes are made, and the foundation to make sound ethical decisions. The Core Curriculum will go beyond preparing students to excel in their careers; students will be empowered with the ability to think and act in ways consistent with our Mission and Franciscan values.

Summary of Goal 2:

The Core Curriculum will help students to build character and community. Students will be prepared to care for their well-being in all dimensions, and in turn be able to use their talents and gifts to strengthen and improve their communities. Research by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam demonstrates that America's social fabric has been fragmenting over the last fifty years. This fragmentation, to a significant extent, explains the difficulty in tackling the great challenges that face our world today such as climate change, the persistence of hunger and poverty, and the Covid 19 pandemic. Our task force sought to provide our students with the tools necessary for the rebuilding of the world around them. By developing an understanding of economic, political, and social systems, students will be able to identify forces that drive people apart and the institution building that needs to be undertaken to reverse the atomization of society. Students will gain an appreciation of Franciscan values, central to which is care and service to

others, and the ability to apply them for the common good. They will leave Saint Francis University with a commitment and ability to rebuild our societies and to be stewards for their communities.

Summary of Goal 3:

The Core Curriculum will prepare Saint Francis graduates to build a better world. Threats to world peace, climate change, hunger, and poverty are among the many problems affecting people across the globe. On November 11, 2021 as the Re-Envision Task Force entered critical conversations on curricular issues, Pope Francis tweeted “It is time to develop a new form of universal solidarity that is grounded in fraternity, love, and mutual understanding: one that values people over profit, one that seeks new ways to understand development and progress.” This vision has informed our efforts as we reimagine General Education at Saint Francis University. Students will develop an appreciation for the uniqueness and inherent value of all people, learning to see the world from multiple frames of reference. They will demonstrate knowledge of historical, social, and geopolitical factors that shape global perspective and human diversity. Students will look beyond their community and find new ways to work together for the common good of all people in every country, embodying a spirit of global solidarity. Inspired by the Franciscan values they have learned, students will know a better world is possible and that actions on a local level can have a global impact.

Core Curriculum Alignment with the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education

A priority of the task force was to ensure the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education were being addressed in the Core Curriculum Goals. The following shows the eight goals of FHE with the Core Curriculum goals to which they align.

1. **Franciscan Character (1d, 2a, 3a)**
2. **Humble and Generous Attitude Towards Learning (1c)**
3. **Community of Faith and Prayer (2a)**
4. **Respect for the Uniqueness of Individual Persons (2a, 3a)**
5. **Service to the Poor and Needy (1d, 2c, 3b and 3c)**
6. **Solidarity and Reconciliation (2c, 3b, 3c)**
7. **Reverence for All Life and Care of Creation (3a)**
8. **Spirit of Simplicity and Joy (2b)**

Goal #1: Excel and Lead in Your Field

- 1a. Develop research, quantitative, and analytical abilities
 - 1b. Build effective communication skills
 - 1c. Respond to situations in work and life with innovation, flexibility, and problem solving
 - 1d. Integrate Franciscan values and ethical frameworks into one’s personal leadership style
-

Goal #2: Build Character and Community

- 2a. Demonstrate an appreciation of Franciscan values, Catholic Social Teaching, and other religious perspectives, to enhance one’s self and enrich the community for the common good of all
 - 2b. Demonstrate commitment to holistic self-care, including spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial well-being
 - 2c. Analyze and navigate economic, social, and political systems essential to building and strengthening community
-

Goal #3: Form a Better World

- 3a. Become an informed, open-minded citizen who respects the importance of inclusion and accepts the inherent value and individuality of every person
- 3b. Embody a spirit of global solidarity, essential for peace and prosperity, for people and the planet
- 3c. Practice civic responsibility to address global challenges collaboratively and ethically

Designing the Curriculum

After the mission, vision, and goals were finalized, the task force began building a curriculum. Over the summer months, weekly Zoom meetings were held to brainstorm assessment pieces and coursework or co-curricular activities which would demonstrate that students were meeting the goals and objectives. The group was encouraged to think broadly and creatively.

In addition to brainstorming, the group took into consideration the AAC&U Key Components of Liberal Education. From this document, the Essential Learning Outcomes section suggests students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

A) Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts—focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring.

B) Intellectual and practical skills, including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork, and problem solving—practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.

C) Personal and social responsibility, including civic knowledge and engagement (local and global), intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning—anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.

D) Integrative and applied learning, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies—demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

Also considered when designing the curriculum were the AAC&U High Impact Practices, which include:

- Capstone courses and projects
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Common intellectual experiences
- Diversity/global learning
- ePortfolios
- First-year seminars and experiences
- Internships
- Learning communities
- Service learning, community-based learning
- Undergraduate research
- Writing-intensive courses

According to AAC&U, high impact practice needs include integrative knowledge, analytic inquiry, critical thinking, engagement with diverse perspectives, ethical reasoning, quantitative reasoning and communicative skill in all forms, ideas and arguments from different frames of reference, applied learning, integrative experiences, and civic and global learning.

After the mission, vision, and goals were finalized, a backward design approach was used to align outcomes and assessments in a curriculum map that guided and determined the courses best for the core curriculum. The backward design framework from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in **Understanding by Design** is a process that considers the desired results first before planning the courses or learning experience. Student learning outcomes were written for each of the three goals and organized in a curriculum map table. The second stage of backward design involved consideration of assessments. The key assessment pieces for each outcome were identified and added to the curriculum map. After all outcomes and key assessments were mapped into rows, assessments with commonalities were aligned in columns. Once columns were finalized, courses were identified that would be a good fit for the skills and

knowledge being assessed. These courses became the basis of the new general education curriculum. The brainstormed lists were consolidated and edited to identify and form assessments. In fall 2021, a subgroup from the task force was formed to review the lists of assessments and choose several key assessments for each goal. Assessments were identified as introductory level, reinforcing level, or mastery level to reinforce a scaffolded approach and grouped together, creating the columns which were later identified as courses. Once the curriculum map was completed, it was sent back to the entire task force for comments and ideas.

Once the curriculum/courses were established, the task force began to look at how to group the courses into a logical sequence emphasizing and communicating the purpose of the core curriculum. Many models of peer and competitor programs were examined to generate ideas and understand how to best convey our personalized signature core. The model chosen is clear, simple, and meaningful. It is composed of three categories: Foundations, Connections, and Integration.

The classes chosen for the core curriculum were divided into three main categories to help clarify their purpose and progression: foundations, connections, and integrations. This model was found in several variations when examining the programs of peer institutions and was a good fit for the clear message to be conveyed.

Foundations: Foundations courses are the nucleus of the core curriculum. They help students to develop the skills that will be threaded throughout the curriculum, preparing them with the basic elements needed for success in college courses and beyond. Foundational courses include transferrable skills such as written and oral communication, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking. They also include an introduction to Franciscan values and service to others, helping students to build a foundation and preparing them to make a difference in their careers, communities, and the world.

Connections: Connections courses allow students to build on their knowledge and skills, strengthening the foundation while building the next educational level through exploration of different disciplines. They encourage a breadth of knowledge while further developing habits of mind, methods of inquiry, and ways of understanding through different frames of reference and traditions of each discipline. Each course in the connections category has been carefully selected to help achieve the objectives behind the core curricular goals. Courses in this category provide students with an opportunity to apply their skills, knowledge, and diverse ways of thinking to problems and issues challenging us today and in the future.

Integrations: Integrations courses encourage application of the knowledge and skills gained throughout the core curriculum to one's future career and life. They help to contextualize all that has been learned in the college curriculum. They encourage students to consider diversity and social justice, democracy, global awareness, and civic engagement. Students may engage in opportunities to develop stewardship, leadership, or advocacy while guided by Franciscan values and the problem-solving skills they have learned. Integrations courses include research, community engagement, experiential learning, internships, and problem-based learning.

Common themes throughout all three levels of the core:

- A. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** should serve as common themes reflected in many of the core courses. These topics are seen as essential components of the core and should be discussed at multiple points throughout the curriculum rather than compartmentalized in a separate course.
- B. **Transformative Development** is a new approach to the wellness concept. Physical, spiritual, emotional, and financial literacy will be addressed. Students will start with modules (between SOAR and orientation) and a summer reading book to introduce these topics. The topics will then be reinforced in CES events taken over multiple years, in small projects/reflections in CORE 1, 2, and 3, and in FTAE 105.

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Civic Responsibility and Citizenship (CR)

Summary and Rationale

The General Education Review Committee's November 2018 final report concluded that civics education should play a more prominent role in General Education. There continues to be a strong interest in creating a course focused on civic responsibility and citizenship in the new Gen Ed curriculum. Recent surveys, conversations with the Board of Trustees, and task force meetings relayed the consistent message that we need to make civic responsibility and citizenship part of the core.

Political Science already *offers* some courses that directly, deliberately, and intentionally address civic responsibility ("CR") and citizenship. We can, however, respond to the perceived need for the inclusion of courses focused on civic responsibility and citizenship by more explicitly identifying courses that address this need and by providing a process for identifying additional social science courses that address this need as well.

Any course with a Civic Responsibility and Citizenship (CR) designation will fulfill "higher education's responsibilities both to democracy and the global community" and higher education's "obligation to prepare graduates for knowledgeable and responsible participation in a democratic society" by fostering learning experiences in which, "students must demonstrate integration of their knowledge and skills by engaging with and responding to civic, social, environmental and economic challenges at local, national and global levels." ([Lumina Foundation](#)).

Any course with a CR designation "further recognizes that graduates face a social, economic and information world that knows no borders, that is buffeted by environmental changes, and that requires both the knowledge and the experiences that will enable them to become genuinely interactive and productive." ([Lumina Foundation](#)). The development of CR proficiencies "rely principally on the types of cognitive activities (describing, examining, elucidating, justifying) that are within the direct purview of institutions of higher education..." ([Lumina Foundation](#)).

General Education Course Objective(s)

Goal #1: Excel and Lead in Your Field

- a. Develop research, analytical, and problem-solving abilities
- b. Build effective communication skills

Goal #3: Form a Better World

- a. Become informed, open-minded citizens who acknowledge the importance of inclusion and respect the value and individuality of every person.
- c. Practice civic responsibility to collaboratively and ethically address global challenges

CR Learning Proficiencies

A course with a CR designation must aim to develop some or all the following proficiencies, identified by the [Lumina Foundation](#) as essential to civic and global learning:

- "Explains diverse positions, including those representing different cultural, economic and geographic interests, on a contested public issue, and evaluates the issue in light of both those interests and evidence drawn from journalism and scholarship."
- "Develops and justifies a position on a public issue and relates this position to alternate views held by the public or within the policy environment."
- "Collaborates with others in developing and implementing an approach to a civic issue, evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the process, and, where applicable, describes the result."
- "Identifies a significant issue affecting countries, continents or cultures, presents quantitative evidence of that challenge through tables and graphs, and evaluates the activities of either non-governmental organizations or cooperative inter-governmental initiatives in addressing that issue."

A Civic Education and Responsibility Course Should:

- Be taken in the 1st or 2nd year of study. In certain circumstances, due to the nature of the student's major, it may be taken in the third year of study.
- Include a pedagogy such that students from any major can enroll in the course.
- Promote active learning, allowing substantial time for student discussion, presentations, debates, or other student-centered formats.
- Include a required critical thinking assignment(s) of a level of difficulty appropriate for first- or second-year students. See below for details
- Include substantial required assignments in reading, writing, or other equivalent instructional related learning activities.

Required Critical Thinking Assignment(s)

To achieve the learning outcomes described above, all courses with CR designation must require students to engage in a significant assignment or a range of assignments (paper, presentation, panel discussions, role-playing simulations, formal/informal debate, and/or project) in which students apply critical thinking skills to the evaluation of competing ideas, perspectives, theories, approaches, and/or policies regarding **an issue of civic importance**. The assignment(s) should be designed to assist students in the development of and use of some combination or all the following critical thinking skills:

- Identify the basic components of an argument (claim or thesis, reasons, evidence).
 - See the pages on the following university websites for short discussions of the basics of argument structures.
 - [University of Nevada at Las Vegas](#)
 - [University of Pittsburgh](#)
- Identify the empirical, theoretical, and/or moral basis of an argument.
- Identify and evaluate implicit or explicit cause-and-effect relationships presented in an argument.
- Identify logical flaws or fallacies in an argument.
 - For a discussion of some common logical fallacies see the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)
- Distinguish between fact and opinion in an argument.
- Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant data and evidence in an argument.
- Distinguish between reliable, authoritative sources and unreliable, non-authoritative sources of information in an argument.
- This should not be considered an exclusive list.

Faculty are encouraged to consult *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom* by McGraw-Hill, to development assignments and assessment techniques. A PDF copy of the document can be found on the General Education resources page.

The critical-thinking assignment(s) should count for a substantial portion of the final grade.

Defining “Civics” Education

In addition to the aforementioned Lumina Foundation site, various web sites provide definitions of “civics,” “citizenship education,” and “civic responsibility.” There is considerable overlap among them. The following site provides a succinct and straightforward definition that is consistent with others: <https://www.civics-online.org/civics-education/key-reasons-why-students-should-learn-about-civics/>. The website includes the following statements:

“A truly democratic society relies on its citizens to be informed and ready to act. What good is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people if the people themselves have no idea of what their role as citizens entails or to what civic rights as citizens they are entitled? Preparing people to become knowledgeable and proactive

members of a democratic society requires that they receive proper instruction in civics. Civics education should be included as part of any ... curriculum for these four important reasons.”

“1) Fundamentals of Government -- ...civics education teaches ... about the very basics of how ... government works....”

“2) Ownership as Citizens -- Civics education also teaches students that ... they can rightfully lay claim to the government as lawful citizens.... [and] that it is the voice of the citizenry, not that of ... elected politicians, that ultimately matters when it comes to shaping the government....”

“3) Proactive and Knowledgeable Voting -- ... voting is an important duty of every citizen.... Civics education ... gives students the knowledge they need to make informed decisions ..., separate fact from fiction, [and] become educated and proactive voters;”

“4) Limitations of Government -- Civics education ... teach[es] that the government has limitations and that every citizen has constitutional rights that cannot be taken away or violated....”

“A democratic society relies on its people to fulfill their duties as citizens. When they are given a proper civics education, people know what is expected of them and to what limitations the government is bound.... (Copyright © 2022 civics-online.org)”

Education for civic responsibility (CR) requires particular attention to pressing *issues of civic importance*.

Defining “Issues of Civic Importance”

Issues of civic importance are major public policy and foreign policy issues that have a wide-spread impact on the larger national community and are often controversial, provoking passionate advocacy from multiple stakeholders. It is the controversial nature of civic issues that require a disciplined and thoughtful approach to promoting student discussion and debate in an atmosphere that produces mutual understanding, respect, and empathy and that also encourages students to discover common ground or, at minimum, to agree to disagree with respect and civility.

Assessment

The Office of General Education will periodically request that CR instructors participate in assessment exercises designed to help establish baselines for appropriate levels of mastery of these objectives.

Application Process for Obtaining CR Designation for a Course

1. All proposals for obtaining a CR designation for a course must be approved by the general education committee.
 - a. Proposals will require a course syllabus and completion of a checklist to be sure that Gen Ed objectives are being addressed.
2. Course artifacts which reflect the Gen Ed objectives must be given to the general education director by the course instructor yearly to have the course reapproved in subsequent years.
3. Any proposals for obtaining a CR designation for a course to be listed in the next schedule of classes must be approved well in advance of scheduling deadlines.

Approval Checklist and Instructor Expectations

Your name: _____

For approval as a CR-designated course, instructors should submit both this checklist and a syllabus for the course to the General Education committee. Depending on the depth of description in the syllabus, other materials, such as assignment descriptions, may be necessary to approve the course. The following checklist can guide course development.

To complete the list, please pull (from your syllabus or additional materials) a title or very brief description of how each item is addressed in the course and include that information in the checklist (see the items in italics). Submit to the director of the General Education program.

Included in your submission:

- ≤ This checklist, complete with examples of each item and with signatures
- ≤ Your syllabus for the course
- ≤ Additional assignments as needed, such as those referred to in the examples below

Syllabus and additional materials addressing General Education goals like the following:

- ≤ Goal 1.A: Develop research, analytical, and problem-solving abilities.
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ Goal 1.B: Build effective communication skills
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ Goal 3.A: Become informed, open-minded citizens who acknowledge the importance of inclusion and respect the value and individuality of every person.
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ Goal 3.C: Practice civic responsibility to collaboratively and ethically address global challenges
 - o (your item here)

Syllabus and additional materials addressing one or more of the CR proficiencies:

- ≤ “Explains diverse positions, including those representing different cultural, economic and geographic interests, on a contested public issue, and evaluates the issue in light of both those interests and evidence drawn from journalism and scholarship.”
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ “Develops and justifies a position on a public issue and relates this position to alternate views held by the public or within the policy environment.”
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ “Collaborates with others in developing and implementing an approach to a civic issue, evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the process, and, where applicable, describes the result.”
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ “Identifies a significant issue affecting countries, continents or cultures, presents quantitative evidence of that challenge through tables and graphs, and evaluates the activities of either non-governmental organizations or cooperative inter-governmental initiatives in addressing that issue.”
 - o (your item here)

Description of critical thinking assignment(s):

- ≤ Critical thinking assignment 1
 - o Example: “argument analysis”
 - o (your item here)
- ≤ Critical thinking assignment 2

- o Example: “position paper”
- o (your item here)

≤ Critical thinking assignment *n*

- o Example: “panel presentation”
- o (your item here)

Implementation

The General Education Program will establish a Civic Responsibility and Citizenship category as part of the new General Education Program. A menu of course offerings from Political Science and possibly other social science disciplines will be established for this category. Courses included in the menu must meet the criteria above and be approved by General Education. Students will choose 3 credits (1 course) from the menu during their first or second year to complete the Civic Responsibility and Citizenship requirement. It is anticipated that the course menu will be relatively stable so as to facilitate course and section scheduling to meet student demand.

Executive Summary:

SFU submitted its authorization form and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge on July 14, 2017. The President and Provost of the University both supported our participation in the program. Since then, we have continued to conduct fall and spring voter registration drives. The fall voter registration drives begin during Constitution Days in September. We formally launch our fall campus-wide voter registration drives on National Voter Registration Day in September. A steering committee assists with the planning and implementation of related programming. Dr. Joseph Melusky, Professor of Political Science and Director of the SFU CSG&L coordinates registration drives, recruits various faculty, staff, and student stakeholders to serve on the steering committee, and prepares the first draft of our action plans.

Goal, Duration, Implementation, and Resources: The goal of this plan is to increase voter registration and participation by members of the SFU community by 10% over the immediately preceding comparable election (e.g., 2020 presidential election year compared to 2016; 2022 midterm election year compared to 2018). This plan is designed to remain in effect for two years, but revisions will be made as needed on an annual basis. The plan will be implemented under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Melusky, Director of the SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law (CSG&L), assisted by members of the Steering Committee and faculty in the Department of History and Political science. The CSG&L has a modest annual budget. Funds from this source will support our voter-engagement activities.

Leadership:

Dr. Melusky will continue to coordinate voter registration and related activities. He serves as chairperson of the steering committee and will seek members’ advice regarding future planning and effective student outreach. He will also seek the committee’s help in executing resulting plans.

In 2020, the steering committee (working group) consisted of the following members: Bobby Anderson (former Director, Center for Student Engagement and Leadership Development), Dr. Denise Damico (Chairperson, Department of History and Political Science), Lisa Georgiana (Director, Center for Community Engagement), Emily Vargo (Director, Policy Research and Academic Programs, Shields School of Business, Knee Center for the Study of Occupational Regulation), Dr. Pete Skoner (Associate VPAA and Dean of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics -- STEAM), Allana Wilson (Vice President of Government Affairs and Public Relations, Shields School of Business, Knee Center for the Study of Occupational Regulation), Rob Young (Assistant Vice President for Government Relations), and two graduate students (now alumni), Randall Frye and Marcus Mihelcic.

Two additional undergraduate students, Spencer McElheny (President of the College Republicans) and Michael Miller (President of the College Democrats) helped coordinate our 2019 Voter Registration Fair.

Succession Plan: Since our last Action Plan was submitted, several committee members have left SFU or have assumed different positions. New members will be recruited in 2022. Invitations will be extended to the Dean of Student and Academic Success, the Director of the Center for Academic Success, the Senior Associate Athletic Director for Student Athlete Leadership and Development, the Director of the Center for Student Engagement and Development, and student officers of relevant clubs including the Pre-Law Club and the History Club. Additional invitation may be extended as well.

Community Outreach: Directors of Cambria County and Blair County Voter Registration Offices will be invited to campus to talk with students about voter registration rules and procedures. Video tutorials explaining voting equipment in area counties will be utilized.

Commitment:

Very Reverend Malachi Van Tassell T.O.R., Ph.D., SFU President, and Dr. Wayne Powel, Provost, both supported the decision to join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in July of 2017. Additional commitment is reflected by the SFU General Education Program's explicit dedication to promoting "Citizenship for the 21st Century." The proposed revised Gen Ed program includes courses that promote civic responsibility and citizenship (e.g., American National Government, United States History, etc.). The Community Enrichment Series provides another vehicle through which lectures, panel discussions, debates, guest speakers, films, and so on can be used to address ongoing political developments and related topics.

Additional Visibility:

Voter registration information will continue to be widely distributed to all users via SFU email. The Department of History and Political Science Department's Facebook page, campus email, signs and posters, classroom announcements, and the campus newspaper will be used to publicize fall and spring voter registration drives and "Voter Registration Fairs." Wallet cards containing information about voter registration will be spread around campus in high traffic areas and lounges. During the 5/26/20 ALL IN webinar on "Voter Engagement Resources," I noticed that Lincoln University of Missouri has students stand near voter registration tables with duct tape over their mouths holding signs saying, "No voice, no vote!" This strikes me as an easy and effective way to draw attention. I'll talk with my students about this, but we might "borrow" this idea. Thank you, Lincoln University!

Landscape:

Current programming seeks to enhance civic learning and to promote engaged citizenship through democratic participation. As mentioned, the current and proposed SFU General Education programs include courses that specifically and explicitly address topics involving the theoretical and philosophical foundations of the American political system, foundational documents (e.g., The Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the *Federalist Papers*, landmark Supreme Court decisions, etc.), separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, campaigns and elections, voting and voters, turnout and information levels, the Electoral College, apportionment and districting, and much additional relevant information. See, for example, American National Government, U.S. History 1 and 2, to cite just a few directly relevant courses.

In addition, panel presentations and plenary sessions are offered frequently on topics related to political campaigns. For example, every four years the SFU Ethics Institute sponsors a panel on "Ethical Issues in the Presidential Election." The General Education program offers Community Enrichment Series (CES) credit for students who attend.

SFU is also known for its sponsorship of Mock National Conventions. Students staged the first mock convention in 1960. These events have become campus and community traditions, with mock conventions being staged every four years for the party that does not currently occupy the White House. As such, the 2016 mock convention was a Republican one. Students role play, serving as campaign managers, members of various committees (Platform Committee, Media Committee, Rules and Credentials Committee, etc.), and as delegates. Featured speakers included former PA Governor Tom Corbett, Chairman of the PA Republican State Committee Robert A. Gleason, Jr., former U.S. Representative Bud Shuster (R-PA), a state senator, a former state representative, and several county commissioners. Student “delegates” (including students from area high schools and some returning SFU alumni) nominated John Kasich for the presidency and Paul Ryan for the vice presidency. In 2020, SFU was planning to sponsor a Mock Democratic Convention. All arrangements were in place for a mock convention to be held on March 14, 2020. Speakers were secured including a former member of the U.S. Congress, a former PA Lt. Gov. (and Acting Governor), commissioners from surrounding counties, chairpersons of area Democratic Committees, and more. Convention co-chairs were identified. Campaign managers were working on behalf of their candidates. The Platform Committee was completing its work. All states had delegation chairs and they were recruiting students to serve as delegates. Students from area high schools were planning to serve as delegates for about ten states. State and candidate signs were made. Large American flags were hung around the student center. Voter registration materials were placed at every table. And then the COVID-19 pandemic happened. To our great disappointment, the 2020 Mock Democratic Convention had to be canceled. We immediately “pivoted.” We conducted a campus-wide mock Democratic presidential primary election via Google. Joe Biden defeated Bernie Sanders for the Democratic nomination. In classes, we conducted mock impeachment hearings. Students read excerpts from the Mueller Report and articles of impeachment that had been considered by the House of Representatives in 2019. Students approved one article of impeachment against President Trump (but he was not removed by the Senate). Finally, we conducted a mock general election and Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump for the presidency. We played the hand we were dealt and tried to draw attention to the 2020 campaign season in these ways. It would have been easier to stimulate student interest in political processes had we been able to stage our 2020 Mock Democratic Convention, but we did what we could under challenging circumstances. We plan to hold our next mock convention in 2024. This time, it will be a mock Republican convention.

To cite just one additional example, every September the CSG&L, with the help of the Pre-Law Club and the History and Political Science Department, offers “Constitution Day(s)” programming. Coordinated SFU Constitution Days Programs (September 17-21, 2021) including distribution of pocket Constitutions, on--the-go surveys and quizzes, interactive exhibits, guest speakers and panels, and the start of our fall voter registration drive. Dr. Mark Gentry kicked off the celebration with a CES event, “The State of Democracy in the World,” on September 15, International Day of Democracy. On Constitution Day, Friday, September 17, Pre-Law Club and History Club sponsored a booth in the Padua lounge area, at which passers-by were encouraged to take a survey, “Which Founding Father Would You Vote For?” This year, the winning Founding Father was James Madison, with 30% of quiz-takers learning that he would be the Founding Father for whom they would vote. Students also took a quiz, “Are You Smart Enough to Be an American Citizen?” (<https://forms.gle/ggPHpepQg8WFFMgc6>). The quiz contains actual questions from the civics portion of the U.S. Naturalization Test. During a naturalization interview, up to 10 questions are asked from a list of 100 questions. A candidate must answer six of 10 questions to pass the civics portion of the Naturalization Test. In 2021, 141 out of the 191 respondents who took the quiz knew the correct answers to at least six of the questions. The mean score was 6.6 out of 10, meaning the SFU community remains “smart enough to be an American citizen.” Constitution Days continued on Tuesday, September 21, as I moderated our annual panel, “To Run a Constitution: Interns’ Stories from the Field.” Featured interns included Drew Crusciel, 2021 Eppard Scholar and Congressional Intern, Miranda Snyder, who interned with U.S. Rep. John Joyce (R, PA-13), and Justin Buterbaugh, who interned with the Indiana County District Attorney’s Office. Former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie’s visit and the

2021 Robert and Thelma Gleason Lecture on American Government and Politics also took place on Tuesday, September 21. Governor Christie spoke on the topic, “Is Bipartisanship or Working Across the Aisle Still Possible or Is American Governance Broken” If It’s Broken, What Can a President Do to Fix It?” A Question-and-Answer Forum with Gov. Christie and a meeting with student leaders preceded his lecture. Later that evening, interested students participated in a virtual law school fair online. We concluded our Constitution Day celebration on Tuesday, September 28, National Voter Registration Day, with a Voter Registration Booth in the Padua lounge area. Throughout Constitution Days, we distributed a total of nearly 300 pocket Constitutions to SFU students, faculty, and staff, and to Social Studies teachers in area school districts.

As indicated above, our campus voter registration drives (one in the fall and one in the spring) begin with a campus-wide e-mail announcement to all students, faculty, and staff. The announcement includes an informational attachment that provides dates, deadlines, addresses and links for those who want to register to vote (locally, elsewhere in Pennsylvania, or back home in another state) or to request absentee ballots. The attachment also includes information about casting a more informed vote (how to match your issue positions with those of candidates, how to fact-check claims made by candidates, etc.). Follow-up e-mail messages are sent to faculty asking them to encourage students to read the original message and to register to vote. Hard copies of registration materials are also made available to interested parties. Our fall 2021 voter registration drive was announced during Constitution Days in September. The drive “launches” on National Voter Registration Day in September. Prior to COVID-19, we sponsored “Voter Registration Fairs” on National Voter Registration Day. Students from the SFU College Republican Club and the College Democrats Club worked side-by-side in assisting students with registering to vote, requesting absentee ballots, and related matters. More recently, we have conducted some of these activities virtually. We anticipate returning to “live” voter registration fairs when circumstances permit. Copies of sample documents announcing and announcements that were sent to **all** members of the SFU community follow. Included are the fall 2021 and spring 2022 Voter Registration “General Information” documents.

DOCUMENT 1

VOTER REGISTRATION & VOTING – GENERAL INFORMATION (FALL 2021)

- In Pennsylvania, you can register to vote online, in person, or by mail using the VotePA website: <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>. This Pennsylvania Department of State web site contains information about voting systems in every Pennsylvania county. It includes information about voter registration procedures, absentee ballots, acceptable forms of voter ID, finding polling places, and checking on the status of voter registration. If you have questions, this is the site for you!
- To register to vote online, go to <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>.
- The **deadline to register** to vote in the November 2, 2021 general election is **Monday, October 18, 2021**. If you are registering by mail, your registration form must be *received* in the county voter registration office by **October 18, 2021**.
- You can also use the electronic (or a hard-copy) voter registration form if you want to change your party, name, or address.
- You can register to vote in your home county or in the county where you are going to school. The residency requirement in Pennsylvania is 30 days. As such, SFU students can register to vote in Cambria County.
- If you use a hard copy of a voter registration form or an absentee-ballot application, you will have to mail the form to your county voter registration office. These addresses are on the form.
- When you go to the polling place to vote on Election Day, be sure to bring an acceptable form of ID. The ID should include your photo and name. If you are a first-time voter at a polling place, you will be required to show an acceptable ID or your voter registration card.

- If you will be unable to vote in person on Election Day, you have two options in Pennsylvania for mail ballots: absentee ballots or mail-in ballot. 1) If you request an **absentee ballot**, you are required to list a reason for your ballot (e.g., away for college, work, vacation, or military service). 2) If you are not an absentee voter, you can apply for a **mail-in ballot**. You can request this ballot without a reason.
- If you need an absentee ballot or a mail-in ballot, go to:
<https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.
- **To apply for an absentee or mail-in ballot, your application must be received by your county election office by 5:00 p.m. on October 26, 2021.**
- All **voted** absentee or mail-in **ballots must be received by your county election office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 2, 2021 – postmarks are not enough.** Names, addresses, and phone numbers for your county election office can be found at
<https://www.votespa.com/Resources/Pages/Contact-Your-Election-Officials.aspx>.
- The following web sites may be of interest to you:
 - If you are not from Pennsylvania but you want to register to vote back home, here are three websites that can help you to register and find information for your home state: Rock the Vote (<https://www.rockthevote.org/>), TurboVote (<https://turbovote.org/>) and All In to Vote (<https://allintovote.org/>).
 - <https://www.lwv.org/> (League of Women Voters' national Web site offers voter-related information for all states.)
 - <https://www.isidewith.com/> (Take the survey and match your issue positions with those of the parties and candidates.)
 - <https://www.politifact.com/> (Site devoted to fact-checking assertions from candidates, their staffs, their TV ads, and YouTube videos. The site is run by Bill Adair, Washington bureau chief for the St. Petersburg Times.)
 - <https://www.factcheck.org/> (Site attempts to hold politicians accountable with Annenberg fact checks.)

Information provided by the SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law, Department of History & Political Science, and the Pre-Law and History Clubs.

DOCUMENT 2

VOTER REGISTRATION & VOTING – GENERAL INFORMATION (SPRING 2022)

- In Pennsylvania, you can register to vote online, in person, or by mail using the VotePA website: <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>. This Pennsylvania Department of State web site contains information about voting systems in every Pennsylvania county. It includes information about voter registration procedures, absentee ballots, acceptable forms of voter ID, finding polling places, and checking on the status of voter registration. If you have questions, this is the site for you!
- To register to vote online, go to
<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>.
- The **deadline to register** to vote in the May 17, 2022 primary general election is **Monday, May 2, 2022**.
- You can register to vote online, by mail, in person, or at PennDot.
- You can also use an electronic (or hard-copy) voter registration form if you want to change your party, name, or address.
- You can register to vote in your home county or in the county where you are going to school. The residency requirement in Pennsylvania is 30 days. As such, SFU students can register to vote in Cambria County.
- If you use a hard copy of a voter registration form or an absentee-ballot application, you will have to mail the form to your county voter registration office. These addresses are on the form.

- When you go to the polling place to vote on Election Day, be sure to bring an acceptable form of ID. The ID should include your photo and name. If you are a first-time voter at a polling place, you will be required to show an acceptable ID or your voter registration card.
- If you will be unable to vote in person on Election Day, you have two options in Pennsylvania for mail ballots: absentee ballots or mail-in ballots. 1) If you request an **absentee ballot**, you are required to list a reason for your ballot (e.g., away for college, work, vacation, or military service). 2) If you are not an absentee voter, you can apply for a **mail-in ballot**. You can request this ballot without a reason.
- If you need an absentee ballot or a mail-in ballot, go to:
<https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.
- **To apply for an absentee or mail-in ballot, your application must be received by your county election office by 5:00 p.m. on May 10, 2022.**
- All **voted** absentee or mail-in ballots **must be received by your county election office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, May 17, 2022 – postmarks are not enough.** Names, addresses, and phone numbers for your county election office can be found at
<https://www.votespa.com/Resources/Pages/Contact-Your-Election-Officials.aspx>.
- The following web sites may be of interest to you:
 - If you are not from Pennsylvania but you want to register to vote back home, here are three websites that can help you to register and find information for your home state: Rock the Vote (<https://www.rockthevote.org/>), TurboVote (<https://turbovote.org/>) and All In to Vote (<https://allintovote.org/>).
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ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE):

- Pennsylvania currently permits residents to register to vote online, by mail, or in person. As of September of 2019, Pennsylvania residents can also request absentee ballots online. In 2020, PA introduced mail-in voting with no excuse required. Mail-in ballots can also be requested online. Nearly 18 times as many Pennsylvanians requested mail-in ballots as in 2016. Almost two million PA voters requested mail-in ballots for the June 2 primary! Such procedures make it easier for people to register to vote. One small administrative downside is that online registration and ballot requests make it is somewhat difficult for us to measure how successful our voter registration efforts are. We can no longer count the number of registration forms that we distributed and use this number as an estimate of how many students registered to vote. Many, probably most, now register to vote online. Nevertheless, we will continue to remind students, faculty, and staff about registration procedures and deadlines and we will continue to make relevant materials available to them.
- **NSLVE Data:** The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report from Tufts University (“Student Voting Rates for Saint Francis University 2020 NSLVE Campus Report”) was released in 2021. The Report included the following highlights:

- The SFU "Voting Rate" (percentage of eligible SFU students who voted on Election Day) increased from 51.6% in 2016 to 65.9% in 2020 (+14.3%).
- The SFU "Registration Rate" (percent of our voting-eligible students who registered to vote) increased from 75.3% in 2016 to 82.1% in 2020 (+6.8%).
- The "Voting Rate of Registered Students" (percent of our registered students who voted on Election Day) increased from 68.5% in 2016 to 80.3% in 2020 (+11.8%).
- Voting rates for SFU Asian (+25%), Black (+9%), and White (+14%) students increased from 2016 to 2020.
- Voting rates for SFU students by age group increased for all age groups (18-21 increased from 47% in 2016 to 64% in 2020 = +17%; 22-24 increased from 55% in 2016 to 68% in 2020 = +13%; 25-29 increased from 53% in 2016 to 64% in 2020 = +11%; 30-39 increased from 60% in 2016 to 68% in 2020 = +8%; 40-49 increased from 69% in 2016 to 78% in 2020 = +9%; 50 and above increased from 72% in 2016 to 74% in 2020 = +2%).
- Voting rates for female SFU students increased from 53% in 2016 to 75% in 2020 (+22%).
- Voting rates for male SFU students increased from 49% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 (+21%).
- Voting rates for undergraduates increased from 48% in 2016 to 65% in 2020 (+16%).
- Voting rates for graduate students increased from 58% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 (+12%).
- Voting rates for full-time students increased from 47% in 2016 to 65% in 2020 (+18%).
- Voting rates for part-time students increased from 67% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 (+3%).

NSLVE Campus Reports also reveal that turnout rates are higher among graduate students than among undergraduates. This finding is consistent with data indicating that turnout rates are higher for older individuals than for younger ones. While we will continue to target our traditional undergraduate students, we will not take our graduate students for granted. To that end, we will share electronically our "register and vote" materials with graduate students as well as undergraduates.

At the 2021 ALL IN Challenge Awards Ceremony held to recognize colleges and universities committed to increasing college student voting rates, Saint Francis University was awarded a "Silver Seal" for achieving a student rate between 60 and 69%. As noted above, SFU's student voting rate increased from 51.6% in 2016 to 65.9% in 2020 (+14.3%).

SFU was included in *Washington Monthly's* "2021 Best Colleges for Student Voting Honor Role" <https://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/september-october-2021/americas-best-colleges-for-student-voting-3/>.

GOALS:

- Increase student registration rates by 10% from 2012 to 2024 (as measured by NSLVE report).
- Increase student voting rates by 10% from 2012 to 2024 (as measured by NSLVE report).
- By September of 2022, get a commitment from the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science, the Dean, and the Associate VPAA to support our continued use of institutional web sites to distribute voter registration information and materials.
- By September of 2022, get a commitment from the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science, the Dean, and the Associate VPAA to support our continued use of institutional social media to distribute voter registration information and materials.
- By September of 2022, get a commitment from the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science to support our continued use of hallway television monitors near the CSG&L to display live news coverage and commentary regarding important political developments (e.g., presidential inaugural address, Supreme Court confirmation hearings, impeachment hearings, etc.).
- During the fall and spring voter registration drives, continue to incorporate TurboVote into voter-registration materials. Students who are not from Pennsylvania can use this web site to obtain information about registering to vote in other states.

- Print 1,000 additional “How to Register to Vote” wallet cards for distribution to incoming students at first-year SOAR orientation programs. (Order completion date: May 2022; Completion date for distribution of cards: September 2022)
- In 2022, posters describing voting by mail in Pennsylvania were obtained for the Pennsylvania Department of State. These posters were displayed prominently around campus. We will continue to obtain and display such materials in the future.
- Continue to administer questions drawn from the National Citizenship Exam to students in introductory classes every semester and continue to administer these surveys at other relevant campus events like Constitution Days. We pose the question, “Are you smart enough to be an American citizen?” So far, the answer has been “yes” on a consistent basis. We want to help make sure it stays that way. (Completion date: September 2022; also administer survey in selected classes during the spring 2023 semester)
- Build on the success of our previous Voter Registration Fairs. Continue to sponsor a Voter Registration Fair on National Voter Registration Day. Encourage College Republicans and College Democrats to participate. (Completion date: September 2022)

STRATEGY:

Dr. Joseph Melusky will continue to coordinate voter registration efforts. Voter registration drives will continue to be conducted two times each year, once in the fall prior to the general election and once in the spring prior to the primaries. The fall registration drive will commence during Constitution Day(s) activities. A Voter Registration Fair will be held on National Voter Registration Day. Voter registration materials will be distributed to incoming SFU students at fall SOAR sessions and at orientation meetings. The Steering Committee will assist with efforts, including planning, implementation and publicity.

REPORTING:

The Action Plan will be shared initially with the President, the Dean of STEAM (School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), and the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

Our **vision** is to develop and support student leaders who have a strong commitment to democracy. We seek to provide a sound conceptual foundation that they will be able to build upon as citizens. They will continue to engage in the civic life of their communities through collaborative and creative approaches to problem solving.

For quite some time, voter registration drives have been a part of our identity, a part of what we do at SFU. We do a lot. We were gratified to receive “Silver Seal” recognition for our efforts. We plan to do more and we intend to do it as effectively as possible. We regard this Action Plan as a work in progress. We expect it will evolve as we move forward.

