



ROOTED & RISING



the MISSION of SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

The Mission of Saint Louis University is the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.



We fulfill our mission through teaching, research, healthcare, and service. Inspired by the Catholic, Jesuit tradition, SLU forms women and men for others, advances knowledge, and works collaboratively with individuals and communities to promote healing, human dignity, and the common good. SLU has a special and longstanding commitment to the people of the city and region of St. Louis.

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2026-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN /// SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On Becoming a Radically Student-Centered Jesuit Research University

This strategic plan for 2026–2030 calls on Saint Louis University to pursue a single, defining ambition: **to become a radically student-centered Jesuit research university.**

For a university committed to *cura personalis* and the courageous pursuit of truth, this is not a departure from who we are. It is a call to become more fully who we are meant to be; it is a design principle, and in an important sense, a homecoming.

Being student-centered does not mean treating students as customers. We are educators. Our responsibility is to help students discover who and what they can become and to hold them to the standards of excellence, discipline, integrity, and responsibility that such growth requires. Genuine care both cherishes and challenges. At times, caring well for a student means asking more of them, not less: encouraging persistence when something is difficult, insisting on intellectual rigor, expecting responsible choices, and helping them learn from failure rather than protecting them from every disappointment.

That understanding of formation lies at the heart of our Jesuit tradition. Our students should leave SLU intellectually serious, ethically grounded, capable of wise judgment, and prepared for lives of meaning, accomplishment, generous service, and joy. And because we are a research university, students should encounter the creation of knowledge as part of that formation. Our greatest distinction will come from the mutually reinforcing excellence of our teaching and scholarship.

We must act with urgency. The years ahead will require us to make choices, simplify what has become unnecessarily complex, concentrate resources where they can have the greatest impact, and hold ourselves accountable for results rather than intentions.

But my call for urgency should not be confused with anxiety. We have a compelling mission, talented people, remarkable students, and the institutional capacity to act. We are fully capable of bringing those strengths together with greater focus and purpose.

This plan will ask something of every part of SLU and, ultimately, of each of us. Becoming radically student-centered will require changes in systems and structures, and it will also depend on countless individual acts of teaching, mentoring, service, judgment, and care. If we approach that work with courage and creativity, centered on what is distinctive about Saint Louis University, I believe we can become the university envisioned in these pages — and thrive.

Thank you for your commitment to SLU's future.



Edward Feser, Ph.D.
President

OUR VISION AND STRATEGY

Saint Louis University's defining ambition for the years ahead is to become a **radically student-centered Jesuit research university.**

This is our vision of the University we seek to become. It is rooted in our Catholic, Jesuit mission and in *cura personalis*, care for the whole person. A radically student-centered SLU will both cherish and challenge students: forming them to seek truth, exercise freedom responsibly, experience the wonder and joy of discovery, prepare for lives of meaningful work and accomplishment, and place their talents in service to others and the common good. Exceptional research and scholarship are integral to that vision. Students who work alongside faculty at the frontiers of knowledge form habits the classroom introduces and active research deepens: intellectual seriousness, wise judgment, and the discipline of pursuing truth.

Radical student-centeredness is both an end and a means.

It is an **end** because it describes more fully the kind of Jesuit research university SLU aspires to be: one in which care for the whole person is not merely an ideal, but something students experience consistently through their education, relationships, formation, and lifelong connection to the University.

It is also a **means**: the design principle that will guide how we respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead. To be radically student-centered is to begin with what students need to flourish and then organize the University around it: our academic programs and structures, curricula, cocurricular and extracurricular programming, student support, research and scholarship, technology, resource allocation, and daily decisions. It means challenging students more purposefully, supporting them more effectively, and making their path to success more coherent.

This choice is also a strategic one. Our opportunity is to bring SLU's distinctive strengths together with greater focus so that the value of a SLU education is unmistakable in the experience and outcomes of our students. The conditions making that choice especially urgent are described in the following section.

Over the next four years, we will translate this vision and strategy into action through four major initiatives:

- + **Build an Agile Student-Centered Academic Enterprise**
- + **Deliver a Distinctive Experience and Advantage for SLU Graduates**
- + **Focus and Invest in Research and Scholarship for Distinction**
- + **Expand Enrollment Pathways and Access**

These initiatives are deliberately selective. Together, they translate radical student-centeredness from aspiration into the way we work and the outcomes we achieve.

RADICAL

From the Latin *radix*, meaning “of or relating to the root”



To be radical, in this original sense, is to go to the root: to examine foundations, return to first principles, and begin there.

To be a radically student-centered Jesuit research university is to start with what students most need to flourish, and to design the University around it: our strategy, systems, culture, and daily decisions.

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WHY THIS, AND WHY NOW

Saint Louis University approaches 2030 as American higher education is experiencing a period of profound change. The traditional-age student population is shrinking, competition for students is intensifying, international enrollment is volatile, federal research funding and priorities are uncertain, and college athletics are increasingly expensive and structurally unstable. At the same time, public scrutiny of the affordability and value of higher education has grown, while artificial intelligence and other rapidly advancing technologies are changing how people learn, work, teach, and conduct research.

These pressures are reshaping who enrolls, what students choose to study, how they pay, what they expect from a university, and what the public is willing to support. These forces are also increasing the importance of human judgment and ethical discernment as technological change accelerates.

SLU's recent experience reflects these broader pressures. Enrollment and net tuition revenue have declined, SLU's applicant pool has softened, retention and graduation rates have slipped modestly, the research funding environment has become more constrained and unpredictable, and budget pressures have intensified over successive years. None of these trends is catastrophic; together, they are clarifying. They tell us where competition is most acute, where the value of a SLU education must become more distinctive and clearer, and where consequential choices about programs, investments, structures, and ways of working can no longer be deferred.

SLU also enters this period with significant strengths on which to build:

- + A Catholic, Jesuit mission rooted in the pursuit of truth, care for the whole person, and service to humanity, expressed in a University Core and cocurricular programs that ground students in a liberal arts tradition of critical thought and discernment;
- + A comprehensive academic and health sciences platform;
- + Growing research strength affirmed by R1 status;
- + St. Louis and Madrid as distinctive settings for education, research, service, and partnership;
- + A loyal, global alumni community;
- + Proud and successful Division I athletics, with demonstrated strengths in student support, formation, belonging, visibility, and institutional affinity; and
- + A significant endowment paired with low debt.

The challenge, then, is not simply to withstand the pressures facing higher education. Nor is it to become more like every other university competing for the same students, faculty, funding, and recognition. Our opportunity is to become more distinctly and consistently ourselves.

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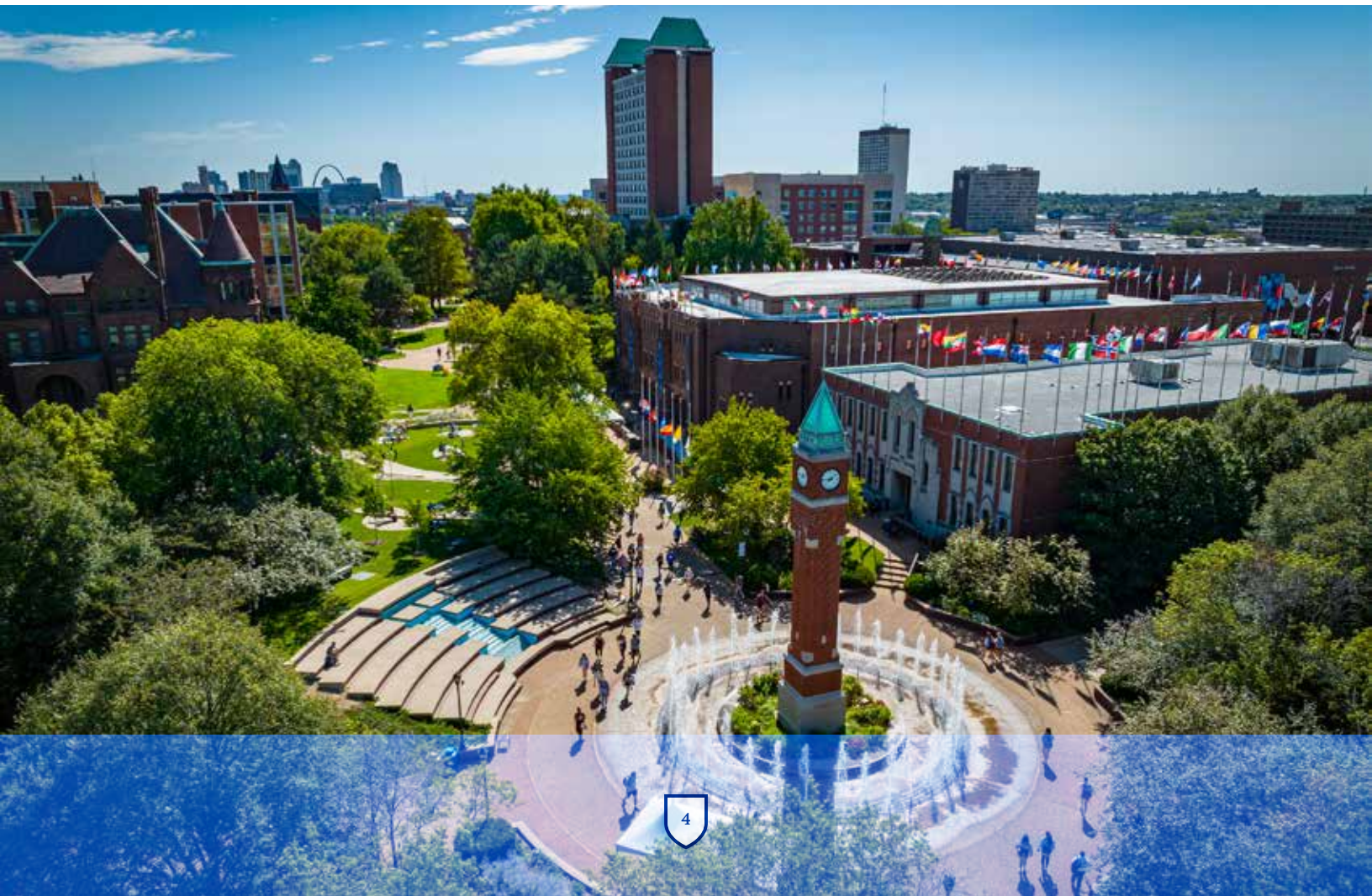
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That is why radical student-centeredness is not simply an aspiration. It is not a tagline. It is a deliberate strategic response to this moment. SLU's Jesuit tradition already calls us to care for the whole person; to form students intellectually, ethically, and spiritually; and to create knowledge in service to humanity. Our task now is to make those commitments more fully experienced by students and more impactful in the way the University operates.

Doing so requires more than excellent individual programs or acts of personal care. It requires us to organize the University around student flourishing: simplifying structures and processes that create unnecessary barriers; ensuring that academic offerings remain excellent, relevant, and sustainable; connecting formation more intentionally with career preparation and lifelong accompaniment; engaging students more deeply in research and discovery; using AI and other technologies wisely; and concentrating resources where SLU can achieve genuine distinction.

In this sense, the pressures facing higher education and the strengths SLU already possesses point in the same direction. The more rapidly higher education changes, the more valuable is a university that combines personal and spiritual formation, intellectual rigor, discovery, professional preparation, and clear sense of purpose. SLU is unusually well positioned to become such a university, but only if we deploy our strengths with intentionality.

The four initiatives that follow translate that strategic choice into action.



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INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

We will pursue these initiatives at every level — university, campus, college, and department — transforming our ways of working, defining clear progress metrics, and holding ourselves accountable for results.

INITIATIVE

1

BUILD AN AGILE STUDENT- CENTERED ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE

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INITIATIVE 1

BUILD AN AGILE STUDENT-CENTERED ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE

We will reshape SLU's academic enterprise: our program portfolio, our organizational structure, and the processes for creating, improving, and concluding programs. Our aim is an enterprise that is simpler for prospective and current students to understand and navigate, consistently stronger in academic quality and outcomes, more responsive to emerging opportunities for growth, and financially sustainable over time. We will concentrate our programs in areas where SLU's mission and strengths in teaching and research can produce genuine distinction, create academic units with the scale and specialized administrative support needed to thrive, and reduce unnecessary complexity and duplication. We will take up this work in a deliberate order: decisions

about what SLU teaches and researches will come first, and decisions about how the University is organized will follow from them.

This work is not limited to restructuring what already exists. We will invest in offerings that demonstrate clear educational value and sustainable demand; connect the liberal arts even more intentionally with professional, STEM, health, graduate, and lifelong education; continue to develop and improve the University Core; and strengthen shared curricular foundations at the graduate level.

The health sciences will be a priority application of this work because of their importance to SLU's identity and future. Few universities of SLU's size bring together such a broad range of health-related disciplines, a medical school,

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS:

Person-Centered, AI Fluent

Rapidly evolving technology is reshaping professional demands – and creating new potential to serve the health and healing of communities.

SLU's new Master of Science of Artificial Intelligence in Medicine program was developed to prepare Jesuit-educated healthcare professionals to lead the ethical use of new technologies in real-world clinical environments. Students learn how to thoughtfully discern the application of AI in healthcare settings and to participate in multidisciplinary teams shaping the future of medical practice. Grounded in SLU's Jesuit mission, the program emphasizes compassionate care, ethical leadership, social responsibility and improving patient outcomes.

The program welcomed its first students in fall 2026. Faculty are working to build pathways from undergraduate programs to the MS-AIM and additional interdisciplinary initiatives that bridge the health professions and artificial intelligence-related expertise.

Koyal Garg, Ph.D., professor of biomedical engineering, is currently collaborating with colleagues to propose a Bachelor of Science in Nursing to MS-AIM pathway. "By equipping graduates with both the foundational skills of a registered nurse and the advanced expertise of an AI specialist, the institution will meet the growing demand for leaders who can bridge the gap between complex technological systems and patient-centered care."



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a full complement of professional health programs, and a major academic-clinical partnership. Demand in these fields continues to grow as the need for caregivers expands and technology transforms the practice of care without replacing its essential human dimensions. Together, these assets and this demand give SLU an opportunity to define health sciences excellence at a radically student-centered Jesuit research university — one that prepares students for work grounded in human judgment, presence, and trust, while advancing our calling to care for the whole person, body and soul.

Our health sciences assets will reach their full potential only if we organize them around shared priorities rather than disciplinary silos. Over the next four years, guided by a shared organizational, academic, and physical master plan, we will build a more integrated health sciences enterprise that draws strength from the liberal arts core. That work will create clearer pathways for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and lifelong learners; expand interprofessional education and research; deepen clinical partnerships, including our partnership with SSM Health; support workforce development; and connect teaching, research, and clinical education more directly to the needs of St. Louis. Success will mean stronger collaboration across the health professions and an integrated platform for clinical

and community partnerships that visibly serves patients and the region.

These health sciences commitments illustrate a broader principle at work throughout the initiative. Focusing our work and simplifying our organization will help protect our capacity to provide distinctively Jesuit intellectual formation. A university divided into too many programs and units, with administrative support spread too thinly, cannot sustain a strong liberal arts foundation, faculty roles that integrate teaching and research responsibilities, or high-quality graduate instruction and mentoring over the long term. A simpler, better-supported organization can, because it gives faculty and programs the scale and coordination that both program-specific and shared curricula require. Success will mean fewer and stronger academic units; degree paths students can understand and complete without unnecessary detours; a sustained capacity to deliver the University Core and other shared curricula; and portfolio decisions made on a regular cycle rather than only when financial pressures force them.

ACTION 1.1

Complete a university-wide academic portfolio review and implement the resulting decisions. Build on work already complete or underway, including ongoing demand and market analyses and the findings of prior program reviews. Assess every undergraduate, graduate, and professional program against mission alignment, academic quality and student outcomes, demand, and financial sustainability, and determine where SLU will invest, sustain, consolidate, or conclude.

ACTION 1.2

Redesign SLU's academic organization to deliver the portfolio determined in Action 1.1: reduce the number of academic units and the administrative complexity and overhead they carry, create academic units with the scale and specialized administrative support they need to thrive, and make degree paths simpler for students to understand and navigate. Prioritize health sciences as a particularly important area of application, guided by a shared organizational, academic, and physical master plan.

ACTION 1.3

Establish a continuous academic portfolio management capability with transparent decision criteria; shared data on demand, cost, quality, and student outcomes; and simpler processes for creating, evolving, consolidating, and concluding programs. Make investment in emerging areas and conclusion of programs whose demand and performance no longer warrant continued support routine parts of academic planning.

INITIATIVE

2

DELIVER A
DISTINCTIVE
EXPERIENCE
AND
ADVANTAGE
FOR SLU
GRADUATES

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INITIATIVE 2

DELIVER A DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCE AND ADVANTAGE FOR SLU GRADUATES

Radical student-centeredness requires a culture in which faculty and staff take personal responsibility for student success. It also requires the fundamental redesign of the systems, policies, and practices through which SLU fulfills its promise to students.

We will redesign the student experience around what students need to persist, thrive, and graduate prepared for lives of meaning and accomplishment. Guided by data and evidence, we will better align advising, academic support, financial assistance, health and well-being services, technology, and efforts to foster belonging. We will reduce unnecessary barriers and fragmentation, strengthen the human relationships that make SLU distinctive, use AI and other technologies wisely to anticipate student needs, and establish clear accountability for outcomes. We will not dilute academic expectations. Instead, we will remove the obstacles that stand between students and the quality education SLU promises.

SLU already possesses a strong ethos of care rooted in our Jesuit values, and the University Core prepares SLU undergraduates to become intellectually flexible, creative, reflective, and critical thinkers in the Jesuit tradition. Our task is to make that care and that formation more consistent across the University:

identifying, testing, and expanding the practices that most effectively support student success and whole-person development; recognizing and rewarding faculty and staff who model those practices; and attending more deliberately to the formation and development of graduate students.

We will also learn from effective practices already at work within SLU. Athletics provides one of the University's most intensive models of student support. The Honors Program supplements each student's primary advising relationship with specialized advising and culminates in a mentored capstone project. The Micah Program sustains a four-year community built around service, small interdisciplinary courses, and guided reflection. The resources and intensity of these programs cannot simply be replicated for every student, but many of their strengths are matters of intentional design: support begins early, expectations are clear, relationships are purposeful, reflection is structured rather than incidental, and someone notices quickly when a student begins to struggle. Our task is to extend these design principles to every student.

The result will be *cura personalis* made visible in both practice and outcomes: support that students can readily find and use; fewer administrative barriers between students and the help they need; stronger academic,

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS:

At the Core, a SLU Education

Ensuring the best experience for every SLU student will mean coordinating and aligning our strengths across the institution. The Undergraduate Core Curriculum, now in its fifth year, provides a model for university-wide curricular and cocurricular innovation, assessment, and continuous improvement.

SLU developed the Core to offer students a distinctive, shared intellectual experience that spans disciplines, colleges and schools, and campuses. The process required a wholesale reevaluation of the way a SLU

education was delivered, with faculty, staff, and students from St. Louis and Madrid weighing in and working toward its success.

The Core "united the SLU community, as its design is based on an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to a liberal arts education," said Anne McCabe, Ph.D., Department of English, SLU-Madrid. "From the outset, it has deeply involved faculty, staff and students across programs, departments, schools and campuses, including strong engagement with the Madrid Campus."



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personal, accessibility, international, and graduate services; and clearer responsibility for student success across schools, colleges, programs, and student populations. We will measure progress through improvements in academic performance, well-being, persistence, sense of belonging, graduation rates, and post-graduate success.

Helping students persist to graduation is essential, but not sufficient. The SLU experience must also give graduates a distinctive advantage as they enter the next stage of their lives.

At SLU, personal formation, practical experience, and career preparation will reinforce one another from the moment students arrive. Students will begin career exploration early and build relationships with employers, faculty, and alumni. They will learn through internships, research, clinical work, entrepreneurship, service, community-based learning, and

other experiential opportunities. Foundational preparation in AI will be embedded across majors and fields so that every graduate can use emerging technologies capably, critically, ethically, and responsibly.

Through these experiences, students will learn to connect what they study with who they are becoming and how they can contribute to the world. Career readiness will never stand apart from personal formation. Every SLU graduate will leave ethically grounded, prepared to engage people across differences in beliefs and experience, and confident in using AI and other tools in service of the greater good.

That is the distinctive SLU advantage: competence and character formed together, preparing graduates not only for successful careers but for lives of meaning, accomplishment, service, and joy.

ACTION 2.1

Re-engineer SLU's student engagement and support ecosystem across the full student lifecycle — from first contact and recruitment through matriculation, academic progression, career placement, and alumni engagement. Review and adapt the support models developed in Athletics, the Honors Program, learning communities such as the Micah Program, and other areas, so that academic, personal, accessibility, international, and graduate support is easy for every student to find and use. Optimize the underlying systems, processes, and communications, and track results with rigorous data and clear metrics.

ACTION 2.2

Define a formation-centered framework for AI — a common set of learning outcomes grounding AI fluency in ethical discernment and human judgment — and embed it in every undergraduate and graduate program, reinforced through experiential learning.

ACTION 2.3

Design and implement a cocurricular formation experience that integrates traditions, campus life, community engagement, and Billiken Athletics — making belonging, joy, and spiritual development visible features of every student's time at SLU, not incidental byproducts.

ACTION 2.4

Build the career pathways, preparation, and partnerships that launch every student into meaningful work and lifelong connection with SLU, integrating career exploration, personal discernment, professional development, experiential learning, and discipline-specific expertise throughout the student's curricular and cocurricular journey, and sustaining that connection through a durable employer, alumni, and community partnership network.

ACTION 2.5

Adopt a faculty talent strategy for SLU's student-centered R1 model — a clear statement of what SLU expects, supports, and rewards across research, teaching, and student mentorship — and build it into hiring and position authorization, onboarding, faculty development, annual review, and, through faculty governance, promotion and tenure guidelines.

INITIATIVE

3

FOCUS AND INVEST
IN RESEARCH AND
SCHOLARSHIP FOR
DISTINCTION

INITIATIVE 3

FOCUS AND INVEST IN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP FOR DISTINCTION

For nearly five centuries, Jesuits have advanced human understanding across science, the humanities, and the social sciences, guided by the conviction that the pursuit of truth is both intrinsically valuable and essential to the service of humanity. That conviction continues to animate research and scholarship at SLU. Fundamental and curiosity-driven inquiry, applied research, creative work, and community-engaged scholarship all contribute to the expansion of knowledge. Our Jesuit mission also calls us to consider how that knowledge can advance human dignity, respond to human and societal needs, and serve the common good.

SLU's recognition as an R1 research university provides a platform for the next stage of our development as a nationally and globally significant research institution. To realize that opportunity, we must become more focused in our ambitions

while creating a stronger environment in which excellent research and scholarship can flourish across the University. We will strengthen research infrastructure, support collaboration across disciplines, and make it easier for faculty, staff, and students to pursue consequential work.

At the enterprise level, SLU will establish a small number of broad, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research pillars that can become signature strengths for the University. Some may be organized around major human and societal challenges that require contributions from many fields; others may build on distinctive areas of knowledge or institutional capability in which SLU is especially well positioned to achieve excellence. We will select the pillars through broad engagement with the University community, weighing current and emerging strengths, mission alignment, opportunities for impact, potential for external funding and partnership, connections to educational distinction and growth, and the ability to earn national and international recognition.

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS: Student Research on the International Space Station

By expanding opportunities for students at every level to engage in research, SLU encourages students to explore intellectually and experience the joy of discovery – like the current students who will send a science experiment to the International Space Station in summer 2027.

“SLU’s selection as one of 22 institutions nationwide to participate in this competition means our students won’t just study space science — they’ll design an experiment bound for the International Space Station, running in microgravity for four to six weeks,” said Jenna Gorlewitz, Ph.D., associate dean of research and innovation in SLU’s School of Science and Engineering and chair of the aerospace and mechanical engineering department. “That kind of opportunity is rare, and it reflects our commitment to hands-on experiences at the boundaries of science and engineering.”

“Opportunities like this ground technical and scientific discovery in innovation, impact, and purpose — and showcase the power of interdisciplinary student teams asking big questions in pursuit of a deeper understanding of truth,” she said.



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These pillars will not define the full range of research and scholarship at SLU. Excellent work will continue to emerge across disciplines, including areas outside the designated priorities, and new strengths may develop over time. The pillars will instead serve as focal points for coordinated enterprise investment — building the critical mass, visibility, collaboration, and sustained support necessary to produce significant impact, attract external funding and philanthropy, and establish areas of national distinction. Doctoral and graduate education will be strengthened selectively in areas where SLU can achieve the depth, quality, and research intensity necessary for distinction.

Students at every level will benefit from a stronger research enterprise. Through direct participation in research and scholarship, they will learn from accomplished faculty mentors, develop intellectual judgment, encounter the uncertainty and exhilaration of discovery, and see how knowledge can be placed in service to others. Our locations in St. Louis and Madrid will provide distinctive settings for partnership and impact, while SLU's research ambitions and contributions will remain national and global in reach. Success will mean a defined set of signature pillars drawing sustained investment and external funding, research infrastructure that makes excellent work easier to pursue, and more students at every level engaged in discovery alongside faculty.

ACTION 3.1

Define SLU's signature research pillars: up to four multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary areas in which SLU can be internationally competitive — and invest in their growth and development (faculty, facilities, graduate education, and other support). Strengthen doctoral and graduate education selectively in fields aligned with the signature pillars: concentrate support where SLU can achieve the depth, quality, and research intensity required for distinction, and align graduate admissions, funding, and mentoring practices accordingly.

ACTION 3.2

Make research and discovery a defining part of the undergraduate learning experience: building a student-centered culture of inquiry, substantially increasing undergraduate research experiences, and resourcing, incentivizing, and rewarding faculty who excel as undergraduate research mentors.

ACTION 3.3

Grow the external investment base for research: philanthropic support, sponsored funding, and strategic research partnerships — concentrated on the signature pillars and the infrastructure they require.

INITIATIVE

4

EXPAND ENROLLMENT
PATHWAYS AND ACCESS

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INITIATIVE 4

EXPAND ENROLLMENT PATHWAYS AND ACCESS

How SLU grows matters as much as whether we grow. We will pursue targeted growth in key U.S. markets where SLU's Jesuit identity and student-centered approach are a competitive advantage, widen access to students who would flourish here, build clearer pathways for transfer and degree-completion students, serve more adult and nontraditional learners, and tell SLU's story more effectively so that our mission, value, academic strengths, and student-centeredness are widely understood. Like most independent universities, SLU relies heavily on tuition revenue to fund its mission, which makes our ability to grow and expand pathways to a SLU degree fundamental to everything else in this plan. Throughout, we will align enrollment growth with academic programs, student support, workforce needs, and SLU's Jesuit mission. Success will mean not only enrolling more students from more backgrounds and markets, but also enabling more of them to persist, graduate, and thrive.

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS:

A Strategic Slam Dunk

Saint Louis men's basketball 2025-26 season was one for the record books — and a playbook for broadening the University's reach.

Saint Louis' identity as a high performing, values driven program, combined with the emergence of Coach Josh Schertz and student-athlete-centered storytelling, positioned SLU as a respected, exciting, and aspirational brand.

As the team gained momentum, making the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2019, the season served as a powerful visibility accelerator, generating national attention for the University that would have been difficult to replicate through paid marketing alone.

During the NCAA tournament, the country wasn't just watching games — they were searching for SLU. Play drove measurable lifts in Admissions web traffic and brand curiosity.

The 2025-26 season garnered a 138% year-over-year increase in print and online news coverage compared to the previous

season; the vast majority of exposure happened in the weeks leading into and including the NCAA tournament, with reach increasing 742% from Feb. 21 to March 31, 2026.

Engagement and coverage extended well beyond St. Louis: Nearly two thirds of print and online mentions appeared in nonlocal markets, strengthening awareness in key recruitment and reputation growth regions.

SLU maximized the moment, coordinating across Athletics, Marketing and Communications, Admissions, Development, and Student Development, and demonstrating the ability to act nimbly and strategically in moments of opportunity.

The upshot? According to Amy Bollinger, interim vice president for Marketing and Communications: "The Billikens created a foundation for sustained awareness of SLU's story, not a one-time spike — positioning Athletics as a repeatable driver of visibility and value supporting long-term enrollment, reputation, and fundraising goals."



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ACTION 4.1

Implement an integrated enrollment strategy that concentrates undergraduate and graduate recruitment in priority markets, such as Texas and the broader Southwest, where SLU's Catholic, Jesuit identity resonates; matches recruitment to programs with growing demand and the capacity to support students well; and aligns pricing and aid with yield and retention goals. Ground the strategy in shared data on demand, yield, and student outcomes, and feed that intelligence into the portfolio review in Action 1.1 and ongoing portfolio management capability in Action 1.3.

ACTION 4.2

Increase transfer student enrollment and success by providing clearer pathways for transfer students, faster and more transparent transfer credit articulation, and coordinated academic and student support systems.

ACTION 4.3

Build SLU's capability to serve learners we have not traditionally served: adults with prior credit and no degree, working professionals, and continuing-education students — through credit for prior learning, flexible and online delivery, and advising, financial aid, and support designed for these students. Launch in a defined set of programs where SLU has clear demand and distinctive strength, and scale where quality and results warrant.

ACTION 4.4

Rebuild SLU's institutional marketing and storytelling capability around a clear, consistent narrative of mission, academic and research strength, health sciences, athletics, and graduate outcomes, deployed first in priority recruitment markets and measured by awareness, inquiry, and yield.





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FOUNDATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Our four initiatives will succeed only if we strengthen the foundations that support them: changing how we work, simplifying our organization, reducing unnecessary complexity and cost, modernizing systems and processes, improving data and decision-making, fully leveraging the University's distinctive assets, and building a culture in which every student and employee can thrive.

More specifically:

We will reform and align budgeting and capital planning practices, incentives, leadership expectations, and accountability to support plan priorities.

+

We will strengthen internal collaboration in fundraising and development, setting clear expectations and providing guidance and support for leadership in the academic units and Athletics, committing to increased donor stewardship, and directing resources raised toward priorities most essential to our future.

+

We will shape and use technology in ways that serve human dignity and the common good, treating artificial intelligence not only as something students must understand, but as a capability that can improve how we teach, learn, discover, and operate when used ethically and intentionally.

+

We will set measurable goals for belonging among students and employees, implement inclusive practices, and regularly assess progress.

We will leverage Billiken Athletics as an enterprise-wide strategic asset — modeling radical student-centeredness in practice and sharing what we learn across the University; enriching the student experience and campus spirit; amplifying SLU's national visibility; strengthening connections among alumni, the St. Louis community, and the University; and building philanthropic momentum that benefits both Athletics and the broader University.

+

We will support and celebrate the faculty and staff whose work makes student-centeredness real, providing competitive compensation, appropriate and sustainable workloads, professional development, and, where feasible, career mobility. Delivering on those commitments requires a stronger financial position, which this plan is designed to build by sharpening SLU's competitive advantage, expanding enrollment, and creating a more sustainable operating structure and scale.

+

We will hold ourselves accountable for outcomes across schools, colleges, programs, and student populations, in both St. Louis and Madrid.

Together, these commitments will help us build a radically student-centered Jesuit research university that lives its mission in ways that are measurable, accountable, and experienced by every person we welcome and every community we serve.

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PHASING THE WORK

The plan begins in academic year 2026–27 and concludes June 30, 2030. Implementation will be led by Executive Vice President and Provost Kathy Johnson, and each action will have a named executive sponsor accountable for an implementation plan, clear milestones, and measurable results. Progress will be reviewed annually, with a comprehensive assessment at the plan’s midpoint, and we will adjust our approach as we learn what works and as conditions change.

The table below shows the phase of each action in each year of the plan: design and decision, implementation, and steady operation.

ACTION	ACADEMIC YEAR 26-27	ACADEMIC YEAR 27-28	ACADEMIC YEAR 28-29	ACADEMIC YEAR 29-30
INITIATIVE 1 – BUILD AN AGILE STUDENT-CENTERED ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE				
1.1 Academic portfolio review	Decide	Implement	Operating	Operating
1.2 Academic structure redesign	Decide	Implement	Operating	Routine
1.3 Portfolio management capability	Build	First cycle	Routine	Routine
INITIATIVE 2 – DELIVER A DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCE AND ADVANTAGE FOR SLU GRADUATES				
2.1 Student support ecosystem	Design	Implement	Implement	Operating
2.2 Formation-centered AI	Define	Embed	Embed	Operating
2.3 Cocurricular formation experience	Design	Implement	Implement	Operating
2.4 Career pathways	Design	Implement	Operating	Operating
2.5 Faculty talent strategy	Design	Implement	Implement	Operating
INITIATIVE 3 – FOCUS AND INVEST IN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP FOR DISTINCTION				
3.1 Signature research pillars	Select	Invest	Invest	Operating
3.2 Undergraduate research experience	Design	Expand	Expand	Operating
3.3 External investment base for research		Design	Build	Operating
INITIATIVE 4 – EXPAND ENROLLMENT PATHWAYS AND ACCESS				
4.1 Integrated enrollment strategy	Design	Implement	Implement	Operating
4.2 Transfer enrollment and success	Design	Implement	Operating	Operating
4.3 Serving new learner populations		Design	Launch	Scale
4.4 Marketing and storytelling capability	Design	Deploy	Deploy	Operating

DESIGN AND DECIDE IMPLEMENT OPERATING AND SUSTAINED

Rooted and Rising

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TOPLINE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

We will develop a comprehensive set of indicators to track progress on the plan's four initiatives.

The measures listed below are our topline metrics: a focused set of enterprise-level indicators that will provide a clear view of our progress toward the plan's most important outcomes.





Rooted and Rising

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BEYOND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan is selective by design. Rather than cataloging every major project already underway, it names the most critical initiatives the University must pursue over the next four years, considering today's challenges and opportunities in higher education.

The work listed below continues in parallel.
It is important and consistent with SLU's mission, vision, and strategy.

IN IMPLEMENTATION										IN DEVELOPMENT										ONGOING INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES									
Academic Strategic Plan, including Teaching Effectiveness Project										Athletics Strategic Plan										Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation									
+										+										+									
Mission Priority Examen Recommendations										Research Infrastructure Roadmap										SLU-Madrid Strategic Growth									
+										+																			
Business Services Optimization										Academic and Research Campus Master Plan																			
+										+																			
Enterprise-Wide Belonging										Student Housing Master Plan																			
+										+																			
Enterprise Data Migration										Marketing and Communications Assessment and Reform																			

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

How What We Heard and Learned Shaped This Document

This strategic plan is concise by design, but it reflects an expansive process of inquiry and engagement led by a Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Faculty, staff, students, trustees, University leaders, and community stakeholders all contributed to the work. Thank you to all those who attended convenings — which drew more than 600 community members — responded to surveys, participated in focus groups, and joined interviews and conversations.

Though we heard many voices — and they did not always speak in unison — several themes emerged consistently across groups:

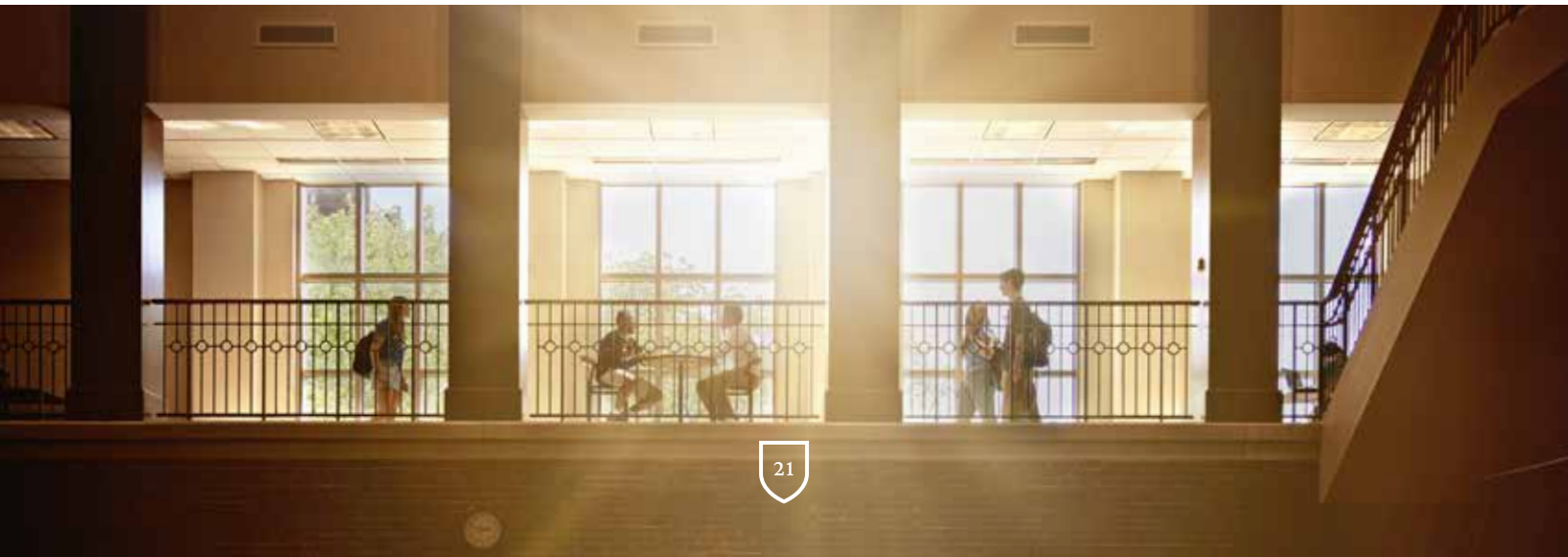
- **SLU's community shares a deep commitment to our Jesuit mission.** Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and trustees see that mission animating our work to educate students, advance knowledge, and serve humanity in St. Louis, Madrid, and around the world. They also recognize distinctive strengths on which SLU can build for greater impact.
- **There is also broad recognition that we are not always organized to realize those strengths and aspirations fully.** Structures, systems, and processes can create barriers to supporting our students, advancing excellent research and scholarship, and working effectively across the University. Reaching our potential will require greater strategic focus and a willingness to change how we work.

These themes, along with many more specific insights gathered throughout the process, helped us map the landscape, diagnose the opportunities and challenges we face, and shape the vision and strategy, initiatives, and actions in this plan.

Acknowledgements

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee undertook significant work on a demanding timeline. Its findings and recommendations contributed both to this strategic plan and to other University initiatives already underway.

Special thanks are owed to strategic planning team chairs Chris Rollins, Steven Sanchez, Ellen Barnidge, Jennifer Giancola, and Anthony Breitbach, and to Virginia Herbers for guiding the SLU community through an Ignatian process of communal discernment during four major convenings. In addition, SLU student leaders organized advisory groups that ensured student perspectives informed each aspect of the plan's development. Consultants from CiTTA Partnership challenged our thinking and helped us synthesize the insights gathered through this process into this draft, with support from SLU team members.





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