



HOLY FAMILY  
UNIVERSITY  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2021-2026

---

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE &  
TRANSFORMING LIVES



## STRATEGIC PLAN PREAMBLE

Holy Family University, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, is grounded in the foundational ideal of *teneor votis*: “I am bound by my responsibilities,” an expression of the core, common sense of purpose shared by all members of our academic community. Reflecting the mission core values of family, respect, integrity, service and responsibility and learning and vision, the University seeks to advance a culture that “welcomes and cares for a diverse and interconnected family” as well as our home planet.<sup>1</sup> Charting a path forward through the development of our next strategic plan therefore requires that all members of the University community commit themselves to upholding and expanding our “Culture of Family,” and work to define and imagine its possibilities.

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, we do so in a world profoundly changed by a global pandemic and a heightened and critical awareness of the pervasiveness of racial injustice and inequity, both here and around the world. Virtually overnight, our campus faced the challenge of abandoning traditional approaches to higher education, transitioning to online learning, teleconferencing, e-business practices, and virtual celebrations of significant milestones. In addition, we were called to consider our responsibility in addressing injustices in our relationships with one another. The strength and resilience of the Holy Family community shone through during these turbulent months, as we adapted to our new circumstances while maintaining an unfailing commitment to academic excellence and student service. Reflection, analysis, and open communications within our community have been the ingredients to successfully meeting 2020’s challenges. Critically, these adaptive measures have also set the stage for the development of the University’s next strategic plan. As we look forward, we embrace a vision that both builds upon a strong institutional foundation and embraces new and innovative frontiers of growth and progress.

In today’s rapidly changing social world, Holy Family’s mission provides a blueprint for defining and achieving strategic initiatives that will build upon the University’s sound foundation and propel us forward into new areas of teaching, learning, student engagement and service. Within this context, the new strategic plan defines a course of institutional growth and progress to be achieved over the next five years. In light of Holy Family’s ongoing success as an educator of professionals with a bedrock commitment to the liberal arts, the plan proposes consideration of new academic degree initiatives, as well as a strengthening of the core curriculum and development of key programs across all schools and academic disciplines. These efforts will be enhanced through expanded use of online and remote instructional technologies, enabling the University both to better serve current students and expand our community to include new populations of distance learners. The plan also calls us

---

<sup>1</sup> *Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home*, Encyclical Letter by Pope Francis, 2015, in which he addresses aspects of an integral ecology including environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

to clearly define the student experience desired for all student populations. Taken as a whole, these proposed initiatives reflect the University's ongoing commitment to academic excellence, fiscal responsibility, and sustained enrollment growth.

Our commitment to sustaining and advancing our own community remains unwavering and, of equal importance, is the compelling necessity to engage with communities beyond our campuses. As a Catholic institution, we hold a deeply rooted commitment to the oneness of the human family. Our new strategic plan clearly states and centers our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity as a critical element of our institutional identity. As a part of this plan, we also identify opportunities for students and faculty to interact with cultures outside of their own experiences, and to use their talents and resources to build connections with, and act in service to, neighbors in our local community and beyond. In addition, our plan emphasizes an expanded effort to connect with those who once called Holy Family home, our alumni, and to build a stronger culture of philanthropy.

What follows is a strategic road map for achieving an ambitious vision by 2026. Developed through input from all members of the community, the plan presents a series of key strategic pillars and objectives that specify essential areas of growth and progress for the University. Meeting the goals defined within will strengthen Holy Family's identity and broaden our role as an institution of mission-focused education and service.

## MISSION STATEMENT

### LIFELONG RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS GOD, SOCIETY, AND SELF.

**H**oly Family University, a ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, offers education in the liberal arts and professions through graduate, undergraduate, and non-degree programs. As a Catholic University, Holy Family seeks direction and inspiration from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, affirms the values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and witnesses to the dignity of each person and the oneness of the human family. Holy Family University educates students to assume lifelong responsibilities towards God, society, and self.

## MISSION CORE VALUES

The following core values inform the University as it seeks to carry out its mission.

**FAMILY**—Holy Family University welcomes and cares for students, faculty, and staff as members of a diverse but interconnected family. A community united by a common mission, the University promotes an atmosphere of mutual concern and attention to the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of all those whom it serves.

**RESPECT**—Holy Family University affirms the dignity of the human person through openness to multiple points of view, personalized attention, and collaborative dialogue in the learning process and in the interaction among members of the University community. The University seeks to instill appreciation of and respect for differences so that its graduates can function successfully in multicultural contexts.

**INTEGRITY**—Intent upon forming persons of integrity who recognize the importance of lifelong learning, Holy Family University advocates free and conscientious pursuit of truth and the responsible use of knowledge. It bases education upon a foundation in the liberal arts that highlights the humanities and the natural and social sciences. In keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church, concern for moral values and social justice guides the University in designing programs and activities.

**SERVICE AND RESPONSIBILITY**—Holy Family University incorporates its motto, *teneor votis* (“I am bound by my responsibilities”), into curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs. Reflecting this motto, educational experiences at the University apply theory to practice and course content to serving human needs. The University educates individuals to become competent professionals and responsible citizens.

**LEARNING**—Holy Family University seeks to instill in its students a passion for truth and a commitment to seeking wisdom. It promotes values-based education, creative scholarship, informed and imaginative use of research and technology, and practical learning opportunities such as Experiential Learning programs. The University seeks to strengthen ethical, logical, and creative thinking; to develop effective communication skills; to nurture an aesthetic sense; and to deepen global, social, and historical awareness.

**VISION**—Holy Family University envisions learning as a dynamic and fruitful exchange between traditional sources of wisdom and contemporary developments in knowledge. Throughout the teaching and learning process the University seeks to embody Christian philosophical and theological perspectives. It offers an education grounded in a Judeo-Christian worldview that serves as a foundation upon which to address contemporary problems and to build a vision for the future.

## STRATEGIC VISION STATEMENT

(Adopted as part of *Family: A Value for Life – Strategic Plan 2016–2020*.)

Our institutional strategic plan calls us to be the University whose distinct character—a commitment to Family—animates the holistic educational programs we offer and the experiences our students, faculty, staff, and alumni share. By creating communities of love and hope, which celebrate the oneness of the human family, Holy Family University offers an enduring perspective to our students for leadership, work, and service in a diverse and ever-changing global society—the perspective of Family.

- *Engage our community through dedicated efforts in Mission Awareness and Mission Integration to understand and live by the principles of the perspective of Family and the values of respect, responsibility, service, integrity, learning, and vision, which flow from it.*
- *Assess our current programs, develop new academic programs, expand our delivery channels and develop our faculty to support and serve our growing student Family now and in the future by providing liberal arts, professionally oriented and experientially focused academic programs completely aligned with the needs of our student Family.*
- *Manifest a proactive receptiveness to our students' needs and fit our co-curricular programming, student support, and student services to all of the various populations that make up our student Family.*
- *Create an environment that sustains our Family of faculty, staff, students, and alumni with superior physical facilities and expert financial, fund-raising, administrative, and technological support.*

## STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

### REALIZE THE “CULTURE OF FAMILY”

At the heart of Holy Family’s mission and vision is our foundational commitment to Family, a commitment to embracing diversity, inclusion, and ensuring an equitable and just learning community and caring for our common home. As a University that deeply values diversity and interconnectedness, promotes mutual concern, and ensures a focus on the “whole person,”<sup>1</sup> we are challenged to be steadfast in what it means to support every member of our community as members of our family—students, alumni, faculty, staff, trustees, and our external communities.<sup>1</sup> In addition, we are challenged to acknowledge earth as our home and thus make a commitment to global ecology. Through Holy Family’s thoughtful, rigorous, and well-designed education, students prepare themselves for meaningful lives promoting the common good and to be positive forces in their families, their workplaces, and as citizens of their community, the nation, and the world.

**A. We will commit to diversity and social ecology in our learning environment.**

- *Re-envision the General Education curriculum to address considerations of diversity, inclusion, equity, and social justice and carry across the curriculum.*
- *Determine strategies to attract a more diverse student body, faculty, staff, and trustees racially, ethnically, geographically, and in religious preference.*
- *Provide an environment that supports the success and retention of a diverse student body, workforce, and Board of Trustees and lives out the commitment to embrace the dignity of every human being.*
- *Build an understanding of what diversity, inclusion, and equity means for HFU in the 21st century and how it can be advanced through HFU’s distinctive mission.*
- *Empower the Diversity and Inclusion Team to develop an educational program and other initiatives to address critical issues around “difference”—with considerations of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other differences.*

**B. We will engage the Holy Family University community in practices to improve environmental ecology.**

- *Establish a cross-functional task force to drive a commitment to sound environmental practices on campus and provide budgetary support.*

---

<sup>1</sup> This strategic plan refers to this as social ecology.

- *Ensure academic programs address environmental issues in courses and co-curricular activities, as appropriate, to recognize the importance of this area.*

**C. We will support a dynamic learning and work environment.**

- *Ensure that HFU’s policies and services are responsive to creating and maintaining a quality student, employee, and trustee experience; identify and proactively address areas for improvement.*
- *Engage all members of the HFU community around a “common experience” every year to promote intergenerational “family” dialogue among students, faculty, staff, and trustees around relevant issues.*

**D. We will incorporate the CSFN Charism and the Catholic Identity as foundational elements in a Holy Family University learning environment.**

- *Deepen the HFU community’s understanding of the CSFN charism and core values, especially its commitment to Family and the rich Catholic intellectual tradition and commitment to social justice; support faculty and staff in incorporating these elements into courses, where relevant. Use these teachings as a primary filter when making decisions around policy, campus aesthetics, and programming.*

## STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

### COMMIT TO EXCELLENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

*Excellence Through Innovation* compels us to adopt an innovative approach and mindset to create a distinctive Holy Family University experience. We will support and achieve a culture of excellence by a strategic investment of our resources to strengthen academic program offerings where we have a foothold and/or evidence of potential new growth and the development of faculty and staff competencies. To ensure the optimum environment for students, we will define and enhance the distinctive Holy Family University student experience that tends to the mind, body, and heart of each student. Supporting these facets will require attention to strengthening the Holy Family University business model and achievement of optimal student enrollment.

**A. We will optimize Holy Family University’s Academic Portfolio.**

- *Determine what is most essential in providing a liberal arts education and professional programs to educate students for societal needs in the 21st century.*
- *Position HFU as a leader in the region offering a variety of learning modalities to accommodate different student needs.*
- *Establish the Newtown campus as the health sciences campus and assess the feasibility of additional fields related to extended health care.*



- *Innovate HFU's current academic programs including finding new dimensions to be developed or optimized with a focus on interdisciplinary considerations and credentialing programs.*
  - *Develop a support system and pathway to prepare students to be competitive for national awards and recognition: Fulbright, Marshall, Rhodes, Truman, and others.*
  - *Develop and sustain the Center for Teaching and Learning as the central leader in ensuring professional and academic success for students at all levels and supporting faculty in enhancing classroom pedagogy and assessment; incorporate best practices into all undergraduate and graduate academic programs.*
- B. We will expand opportunities for the non-traditional learner.**
- *Design a distinctive HFU approach to fully integrate non-traditional students into the HFU culture through quality online learning.*
  - *Provide opportunities for assessment of prior learning.*
  - *Position HFU as a leading provider for continuing education for the professions.*
  - *Provide various degree pathways to individuals who seek training and licensing in the trades or in technical fields.*
- C. We will examine and assess new business models that serve current Holy Family University students and reach out to new populations of students.**
- *Create several models that streamline the educational program (curricular, co-, and extra-curricular) and deploy technology to appropriately achieve administrative and instructional efficiencies.*
  - *Evaluate the risks/rewards of different tuition and financial aid models to serve more students and generate higher net revenue.*
- D. We will identify, acquire, and integrate innovative technology for effective learning and efficient operations.**
- *Research and further develop a technology master plan and budget for the aspirational classroom design of the future, including on-site, online needs, and hybrid options.*
  - *Accelerate access to information to better serve our key stakeholders (students, faculty, and staff), by creating an HFU intranet and other related vehicles.*
  - *Expand faculty knowledge and skills to integrate appropriate technology to enhance teaching effectiveness.*
  - *Develop and implement a plan that ensures 24/7 technology support for HFU's students, faculty, and staff.*

**E. We will define, design, and build the Holy Family University distinctive student experience.**

- *Create, describe, and brand the “Holy Family Student Experience” that integrates the liberal arts, professional programs, and experiential opportunities. This experience should be grounded in “The Culture of Family,” exceed students’ expectation in what they can achieve and promote a holistic approach to education that focuses on learning, wellness and resiliency.*
- *Design and implement a programmatic effort to embed developmental elements into the undergraduate student lifecycle for residential and commuter students, including the First-Year College Success course, opportunities for leadership development, career development, service, athletic participation and Learning Communities, with the goal of enhancing student success.*
- *Enhance the educational experience by requiring every student to complete a credit-bearing experiential course related to their major program of study.*
- *Routinely assess students’ satisfaction with, and valuing of, their Holy Family experience. Evaluate student feedback, share results transparently, and adjust plans/strategies as appropriate to address critical needs and reinforce areas of success.*

### STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

#### ENGAGE BEYOND BOUNDARIES

This pillar captures our aspiration to do two critical things: expand our scope of influence and attract and retain diverse populations of students, faculty, staff, and trustees. In so doing, we will position Holy Family University as an actively engaged member of a global community through strategic partnerships, networking relationships, new market development, and bold new engagement opportunities for students, faculty and staff that emphasize regional, national and global responsibility.

**A. We will explore and pursue strategic relationships to advance the University.**

- *Seek potential strategic alliances, partnerships, or collaborative relationships with other institutions with similar missions, or a strategically defined network of institutions to capitalize on the individual and collective strengths of all members for mutual benefit.*
- *Build strong and mutually beneficial relationships with business and industry in the greater Philadelphia area through the creation of a Corporate Partnership Program.*

- B. We will provide a global Holy Family University experience for students and faculty.**
- *Identify opportunities for partnerships and exchanges with a university to enable study abroad opportunities in both directions for students and faculty.*
  - *Create opportunities for the presence of international students to expand cultural understanding for all students.*
  - *Promote and incentivize semester-long and 2–3-week study abroad experiences for credit.*
  - *Increase opportunities for exchange study domestically.*
- C. We will encourage, support and shape opportunities for Community Engagement.**
- *Create strong and enduring relationships with our local community, as an extension of “Family”, to provide enriching student service and community-based learning opportunities and tangible support and strength to our neighborhoods.*
  - *Redesign the Family Center as a source of significant outreach and service to the community with participation from students, faculty, and staff, and alumni.*
- D. We will implement comprehensive strategies to attract a more diverse student population at all academic levels, faculty, staff, and trustees.**
- *Diversify the student body through the identification of new markets and populations (ethnic, geographic, transfers); develop recruitment strategies and marketing tactics to achieve goals.*
  - *Leverage our campus as an attractive location to host sports and academic summer camps to serve the community and market programs.*
  - *Adopt best practices in employee and trustee recruitment to achieve diversity in all applicant pools and in identifying potential members for the Board.*

## STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

### STRENGTHEN RESOURCES TO FULFILL MISSION

We must take bold steps forward to retain and develop a strong faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees; diversify and expand income streams beyond revenue generated through tuition; and significantly enhance technology and campus facilities. Through plant and technology investments, the University conveys that it is a quality institution focused on the student of the future; this will create an aesthetic experience for students that will strengthen enrollment and contribute to marketing efforts. Strong and effective governance will be more important than ever to address the challenges Holy Family University and all universities will face as society rebounds from the COVID-19 crisis and addresses significant issues around racial justice and equity. Telling our authentic story grounded in the commitment to “Family” will support new and stronger fundraising, contribute to the growth of annual giving, enhance the attraction of new students, and focus on marketing strategy.

**A. We will brand the distinct and transformative aspects of a Holy Family University education to distinguish the “Culture of Family” through stronger alumni engagement, financial support, and recruitment of new students.**

- *Create new programs that cultivate all students to be supportive of the University while they are here and to be engaged and lifelong supporters of the University as alumni.*
- *Engender alumni pride in the University and foster lifelong loyalty, in part through foundational experiences that recognize and affirm alumni and provide opportunities to celebrate alumni accomplishments. Celebrate and communicate how the University is adding value to the degrees it already conferred.*
- *Identify and build upon opportunities that offer the best chance to bring students and alumni together for mutually satisfying outcomes that might include networking, mentoring, and other shared events for interaction, celebration, and collaboration.*
- *Establish an innovative outreach program to build the donor base at every level, re-engage disconnected alumni and increase trustee involvement as ambassadors and friend-raisers.*
- *Grow the University’s annual fund to a percentage of the University operating budget that is consistent with industry standards.*
- *Ensure the University becomes “campaign ready” so that the necessary resources to implement the strategic vision can be secured.*
- *Seek financial support for endowed professorships, deanships, and chairs to provide additional support for teaching and research.*

- B. We will strengthen and expand data driven decision-making and transparency.**
- *Build institutional capacity for collecting data needed for analysis and decision-making and use data strategically in all significant university decisions.*
  - *Build HFU capacity to employ data in creating a culture of continuous improvement.*
  - *Ensure data reliability and quality as well as use of standard definitions and calculation methods; enhance data visualization capacity for clarity and to promote transparency.*
- C. We will enhance faculty, staff, and trustee excellence.**
- *Annually allocate professional development funds sufficient to support faculty and staff in expanding their knowledge and skills in strategically identified areas.*
  - *Identify and support attendance in key leadership development programs for faculty and staff.*
  - *Invest in Board development to ensure best practices in governance and advancing trustees' knowledge of current higher education issues.*
  - *Increase commitment to faculty scholarship and accelerate faculty engagement of students in their research.*
  - *Establish a program to attract prominent scholars for short-term engagements at the university.*
- D. We will improve campus facilities to enhance the overall student experience, support academic programming, student life, enrollment, and community involvement.**
- *Develop a 5-year plan for implementing recommendations from the Master Plan with priority given to student-centered areas including the Dining Hall, lounges, and common areas.*
  - *Research and plan for the “classroom of the future” by establishing standards to be implemented for a variety of classroom types. Consider both on campus and online classroom needs.*
  - *Achieve the optimal level of technology needed for student learning and efficient business operations and allocate annual budget to ensure ongoing support.*
  - *Focus on “curb appeal” that conveys the strength of the University and reflects its Catholic heritage.*
  - *Identify ways to develop new sources of income from campus facilities through increased community access.*

- E. We will strengthen Holy Family University’s leadership through best-practice governance.**
- *Establish best practices for board committees and support the governance committee to strengthen the Board through future appointments, evaluations, and best practices.*
  - *Strengthen the ways in which Board will be engaged in strategic and innovative conversations in partnership with the administration to move the University forward.*
  - *Engage the faculty more fully in their governance structures to incentivize innovative thinking around curriculum, faculty service to the external community, and around major campus issues.*
  - *Involve students in an appropriate way to incorporate their voices on board and faculty committees.*
  - *Ensure that all governance bodies apply “lessons learned” from the recent global pandemic, the global response to racial injustice and inequity, and any future transformative dynamic in their deliberations around educational and administrative policies and practice.*
- F. We will support all the initiatives in this plan through a carefully designed marketing and communications plan.**
- *Re-imagine and implement a new public image of Holy Family University through the lens of our commitment to a Culture of Family as a point of differentiation and distinction.*
  - *Strategically market Holy Family University as a high-quality, affordably priced, relationship-driven institution that prepares students for meaningful lives and careers.*
  - *Promote the strengths and attributes of the faculty and their teaching, research, and expertise; our campus-community connections; our relationships with a strong alumni network through integrated messaging campaigns.*

*Approved by the Holy Family University Board of Trustees, October 20, 2020.*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sister Maureen McGarrity, Ex Officio

Jim Garvey, Co-Chair

Mike Markowitz, Co-Chair

Isabella Brandimarto, Student

Kim Caulfield, Assistant VP Corporate, Foundation & Government Relations

J. Barry Dickinson, Dean for the School of Business Administration

Mark Green, Director, Institutional Research & Assessment

Margaret Kelly, VP for Mission

Gene Kovalchick, VP for Information Technology/CIO

Bernadette Laukaitis, Head Women's Basketball Coach

Jennifer Luling, Associate VP for Human Resources

Stacy McDonald, Associate Professor/Chair, Institutional Review Board

Eric Nelson, VP for Finance and Administration/CFO

Abigail Wernicki, VP for Student Affairs



**Holy Family**  
UNIVERSITY

[holyfamily.edu](http://holyfamily.edu)