
FORDHAM



175 Years of Service

A Strategic Framework for Fordham's Future: *Bothered Excellence*

"If you have been at Fordham for any time at all, you know that I am tireless—some would say relentless—in advocating for the University's mission, in urging our students, and indeed all of you, to be men and women for others. I have said, many times, that I hope our graduates leave the campus bothered. Bothered by injustice. Bothered by poverty. Bothered by suffering."

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President
Letter to the Fordham Community | December 2014

Approved, Board of Trustees
September 29, 2016

In Fall 2015, Fordham initiated a three-year project to develop a Continuous University Strategic Planning process that would guide the University in the years ahead. During the “foundational” 2015-2016 academic year, Fordham (a) completed a Strategic Framework setting high-level University priorities and goals and (b) articulated principles to guide local strategic planning among the academic and administrative units.

In year two (2016-2017), the local planning units will undertake focused strategic planning processes to delineate their goals and specify the initiatives they will undertake to accomplish them—all guided by and aligned with the University Framework.

Year two will also begin a transition to a new approach to planning and budgeting that by year three (2017-2018) will fully integrate local and University-level strategic planning, and better align resource allocation with institutional priorities.



September 29, 2016

Dear Members of the Fordham Community,

This strategic framework represents a huge step forward for our University. It is the product of a unified, integrated, and transparent approach to strategic planning—reflecting a true partnership among all members of the Fordham community. While the years ahead will be challenging for all institutions of higher learning, this is the roadmap Fordham needs to generate imaginative thinking, risktaking, and new forms of internal and external collaboration—particularly in the ways we contribute to and learn from our home of New York City. I applaud the members of the Continuous University Strategic Planning Committee for their efforts.

I am personally heartened that this framework embodies the questioning and questing heart that distinguishes Jesuit, Catholic higher education. Indeed, the fact that “Continuous” is the first word in the name of the authoring committee is very much in keeping with that distinctly Jesuit habit of mind: forever hungry; always pursuing inquiry of a transcendent nature; continually seeking knowledge, wisdom, service, and God.

I call this exuberant restlessness of mind and soul “bothered excellence,” and I believe it can be both Fordham’s distinctive advantage *and* our gift to the world. Deeply rooted in the Jesuit tradition, and in constant dialogue with the world’s greatest city, this strategic framework challenges Fordham to be “the essential University” in advancing the human cause: a world in which dignity is enhanced and protected, and we are all pointed toward the merciful love of the God who wills that all have life—and have it to the full.

Joseph M. McShane, S.J.

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INTRODUCTION

The right questions have transcendent power. They become the catalysts that move the world.

But at this crucial moment in the human story—a time of unprecedented change and often-contentious interdependence—who will ask those well-formed, urgent questions? Who will have the courage to demand: Why this narrative and these “givens”? Why these structures and boundaries? Why this research sample, this protocol, or this algorithm?

This strategic framework is rooted in the belief that few institutions are better positioned for this moment—for asking these hard questions—than Fordham University. Together, the Fordham community is imagining how to prepare, and, when necessary, reinvent the University to ensure we remain on the frontlines of civic discourse—fulfilling our essential commitment to transformative teaching, research, and service.

Like all institutions of higher education today, Fordham faces some formidable external and internal challenges. But we also possess a significant advantage: our people. Our scholars and our students strive to be people of restless hearts and bountiful, discerning curiosity—they possess a “bothered excellence” that rejects complacency in every aspect of life, never settles for half-truths, and seeks to serve the good of the world. Those who possess this quality are equipped to lead the difficult, urgent conversations, whenever human dignity is ignored, imperiled, or diminished.

We start from a strong foundation. Our dialogic approach to knowledge; our zest for complexity, peripheries, frontiers and openness to new and different cultures; our world-embracing faith and our healthy skepticism; our insistence that excellence and mastery must be in service to the human family—these constitute our indelible Jesuit character—and they are the traits we seek to instill in all our students, whatever their beliefs or faith.

But what makes Fordham truly different among the 4,100 institutions of higher learning in America is that we are the Jesuit University *in and of New York City*. As inheritors of a tradition that began in 1458, we at Fordham stand on the shoulders of fearless humanist-explorers and great intellectual adventurers—the world’s first anthropologists, linguists and lexicographers, ethnographers, sociologists, and social entrepreneurs.

New York is the capital of the world, where social, economic, political and cultural forces converge and clash as nowhere else. The limitless opportunities to do good and do well in New York fire the imagination of our students. And thanks to our reputation and deep connections throughout every sector, we can offer them an unparalleled proving ground for their passions and professional aspirations.

But even more importantly, New York is a place tailor-made for people who *seek the magis*—who go beyond their comfort zones and routines to be more and do more for the world. Breathtaking in its complexity and restlessness, New York is a landscape where

frontiers are never settled. And with its invigorating, endearing, and occasionally maddening sense of exceptionalism, New York will never let Fordham be complacent or self-satisfied. Our engagement with the city is rigorous, imaginative, and continually evolving; we could ask for no better sparring partner for our minds and our hearts.

This ongoing interplay between our mission and our environment defines Fordham's institutional character and gives every idea we generate a distinctive signature: knowledge and insight not just for the development of the individual student or scholar but *for the sake of the whole human family*. Many of our current and emerging areas of scholarly and program excellence already address the most pressing concerns, challenges, and civic mandates of our times:

- Exposing the root causes of rampant inequality and stalled social mobility;
- Upholding human dignity amid rapid global urbanization;
- Fostering ethical decision-making in every sector;
- Illuminating the role of faith and religion in a secularized and polarized society;
- Reestablishing the centrality of the arts and humanities in the public conversation;
- Addressing the legal, ethical, and policy implications of Big Data and cybersecurity;
- Developing innovative responses to humanitarian crises in an age of non-stop geopolitical upheaval, and
- Reconciling the sciences and humanities, ensuring that breakthroughs—and the people responsible for them—are first and foremost in service to saving humanity from despair.

So while it is easy for some to retreat into narrow, myopic specialization, at Fordham, we expect our more than 15,000 students, at every level of study across all of our ten schools, to connect with and confront the world beyond our campus: to make intellectual leaps over conventional academic boundaries, to synthesize disparate knowledge into solutions with real-world impact, and to understand the driving force of faith in all human affairs. From the first-year student whose major is “undecided” to the 2L in our law school to the doctoral candidate in clinical psychology, no one is exempt from this expectation.

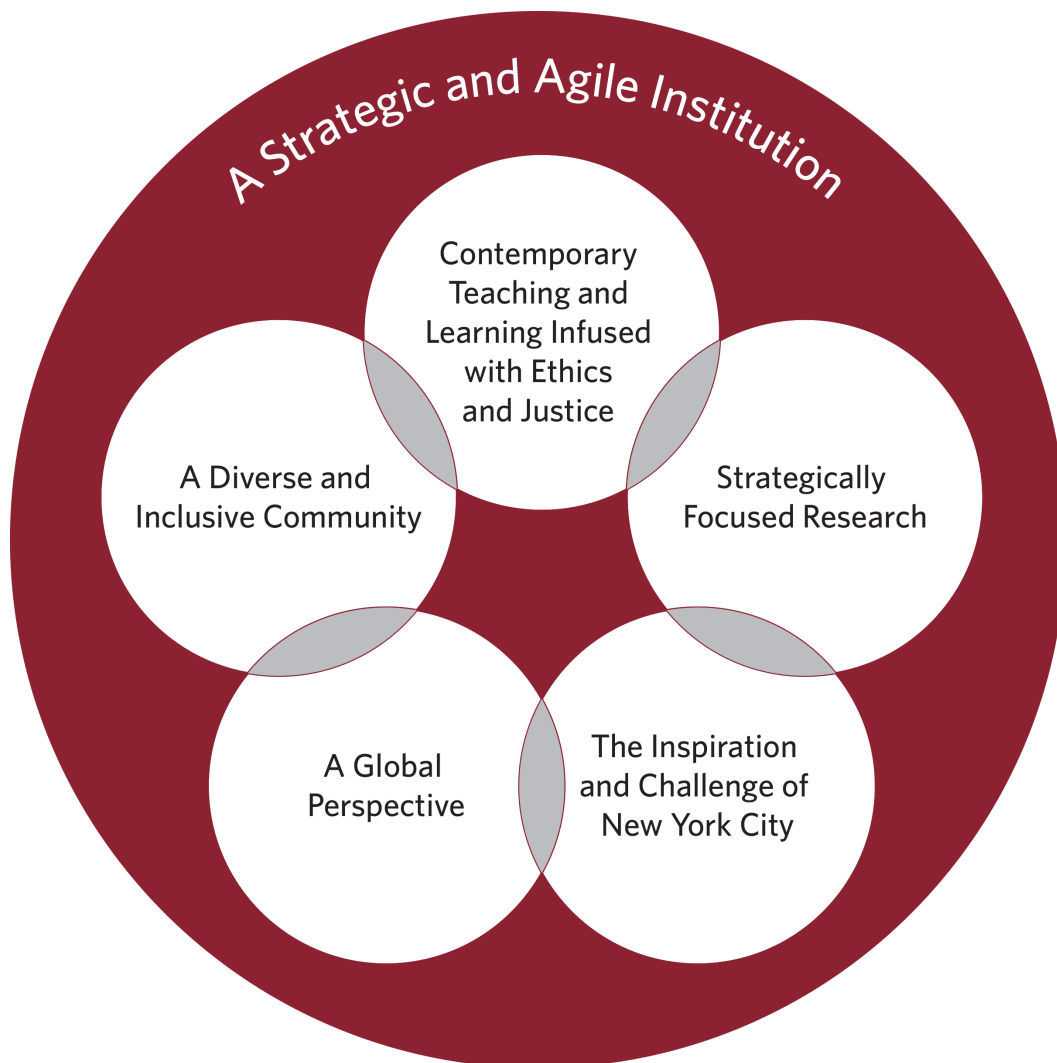
It is a tall order. But because our students know that we are committed to attending rigorously to the care and development of each one of them as a whole person, they feel equal to the task. Wherever their professional passions take them, they have the habits of mind and empathy to ask “Why?” This habit is their competitive advantage, and distinguishes them throughout their lives as men and women for others.

The paragraphs above speak of the questions that Fordham asks of the world. But this strategic framework asks several key questions *of Fordham*, which the University must respond to first:

- How do we **marry the demands of pursuing wisdom and learning in the 21st century with our passion for ethics and the service of justice and faith?** And how can we ensure that students and society fully understand the importance and relevance of these pursuits?
- How do we **embrace, support, and promote more fully our role as a highly competitive research institution**—particularly in terms of innovative and interdisciplinary initiatives that directly address critical societal problems and needs?
- How do we **deepen our engagement with New York City**: both in the communities that surround our campuses and in businesses and centers of creative activity throughout the metropolitan region?
- How do we **broaden our global engagement and ensure that we have the resources to make the whole world our arena for exploration?**
- How do we build on our history as a school of immigrants and our longstanding leadership in holistic, student-centered education to **promote greater diversity and inclusion?**
- How do we **become more strategic and agile**, so we can secure our financial future, act with foresight, and move quickly when opportunity presents itself?

Fordham's founder described the University as "a dangerous and daring undertaking." With this plan, we seek to renew our commitment to bringing our knowledge, discoveries, and talents to bear in New York City, where all the world's cultural challenges and opportunities are manifest in one chaotic, exuberant place. Let's begin answering the most profound questions our community can address: How can Fordham be even more dangerous and daring on behalf of the world? Where can the pursuit of bothered excellence take us?

Strategic Priorities



This Strategic Framework advances six interconnected strategic priorities, supported by goals and objectives that suggest particular initiatives and actions to advance them. The five priorities, represented as interlocking circles, identify areas in which Fordham seeks to achieve its mission more effectively. The sixth—represented in the full circle—provides the institutional underpinnings necessary to achieve the other five priorities. For ease of reference in the following pages, the items appear in numbered sequence. Nonetheless, as the diagram indicates, they are of equal weight, and all are interconnected.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

I. Contemporary Teaching and Learning Infused with Ethics and Justice

We live in a time when there is a growing insistence that education be narrowly focused on career preparation. Concurrently, the new digital learning ecosystem and the free, unfiltered flow of information are calling into question established ways of teaching and intellectual authority. This is our opportunity to show the world the value of an unabashedly humanistic education for digital natives. By imaginatively retooling our pedagogy for new ways of learning, and by helping students understand the broad range of meaningful professional futures open to them, we serve our mission of promoting holistic development, preparing students for gainful and productive employment, and ultimately producing the most important outcome of all: thoughtful, active citizens who are capable of changing the world.

A. Inspire Personal and Social Transformation through Liberal Education

1. Create new academic programs, many of them interdisciplinary and inter-professional, that enable students to master a body of knowledge while examining it critically through the lenses of ethics, social justice, respect for human dignity, and the sustainability of the world in which we live.
2. Employ contemporary models of teaching and learning that strengthen responsiveness of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs to the learning needs of contemporary students.
3. Develop our students' perennially valuable skills in effective communication, including critical reading, analytical thinking, clear writing, and persuasive speech.
4. Create innovative models of doctoral education that deliver the competencies and skills that our most advanced students need to succeed in a variety of career pathways, within and outside of academia.
5. Move resolutely toward the construction of state of the art science facilities and infrastructure at Rose Hill to strengthen collaborative and experiential teaching, learning, and research of the highest quality in STEM areas and serve students and faculty on all campuses.

B. Reimagine Student-Centered Teaching and Learning

1. Provide national and international leadership in rethinking how the needs of the twenty-first century and of contemporary learners are met by the traditions of Jesuit pedagogy and liberal education. To do so, we will establish a University-wide resource for teaching and learning able to support faculty of all career stages, ranks, and fields of inquiry.

2. Recruit, develop, and retain faculty members who are committed to ongoing experimentation, adaptation, and improvement in their perspectives and methods regarding teaching and learning.
3. Promote digital literacy and prepare globally aware digital citizens by designing and deploying innovative instructional technologies adapted to the particular needs of different students, disciplines, and courses.
4. Design and implement academic calendars and course delivery methods that better align academic programs with the needs and interests of students, and strive to achieve an optimal educational balance among online, hybrid, and traditional pedagogies.

C. . Promote Holistic Personal Development

1. Promote the integrated, holistic wellness of students by designing and implementing a distinctive, integrated, and collaborative model for student growth and formation that reflects the deepest concerns of Jesuit education, including the service of faith and promotion of justice, and that includes learning outcomes specific to each stage in a student's development.
2. Deepen the sense of community commitment and spirit among all members of the University by providing a range of activities, including varsity, club, and intramural athletic competitions, arts performances, and recreational opportunities.
3. Create new spaces and reimagine existing facilities to foster the exchange of ideas, collaborative learning, a sense of community, and individual wellness; including, but not limited to, the design and planning of a new campus center (or a combined campus center and recreation center) on the Rose Hill campus and additional recreational space at the Lincoln Center campus.
4. Institute faculty and staff development programs that support the mission and identity of Fordham as a Jesuit, Catholic university in a context of genuine collegiality and in the face of declining numbers of Jesuits.

II. Strategically Focused Research

Building our research enterprise and raising its profile worldwide will require us to make carefully considered choices—we can't do everything and do it well. This does not mean compromising the expansive curiosity that is our Jesuit legacy. Indeed, Fordham has great potential to leverage current strengths and build on its growing excellence in interdisciplinary scholarship and inter-professional pursuits. But continuing on this path will require us to make partnerships with other organizations the norm rather than the exception, and to be more resourceful in bringing faculty and students together at the crossroads of disciplines.

A. Establish Fordham as a Competitive Research Institution in Strategically Defined Areas

1. Identify and invest in selected areas of current and future strength in research and scholarship.
2. Establish targeted interdisciplinary research initiatives that will contribute new knowledge about the trends and challenges shaping contemporary urban life, as well as about their roots and causes. Such initiatives might focus, for example, on economic development, healthcare and health disparities, sustainability, cybersecurity, humanitarianism, globalization of business and finance, immigration, communications, media, and fashion.
3. Establish an initiative fund for the recruitment of distinguished teaching scholars, including cluster appointments, in areas of research that are germane to our strategically defined priorities and that have the greatest potential to attract external funding.

B. Promote Faculty-Student Research Collaboration

1. Develop innovative models that promote meaningful faculty-student collaboration, mentorship, and supervision at the graduate/professional and undergraduate levels.
2. Actively support graduate/professional and undergraduate student research and scholarship, ensuring that all students, as well as the faculty who participate, are supported, have meaningful experiences, and are recognized for their accomplishments.

C. Significantly Enhance Research Resources

1. Invest in the necessary library, laboratory, and clinical resources—human, physical, and technological—to support increased faculty and student engagement in research and scholarship.
2. Develop faculty workload policies that in revenue-positive or revenue-neutral ways reward research effectiveness, achievement, and collaboration with students, while preserving commitment to teaching.
3. Establish a mentoring program or principal investigator institute for junior faculty members to enhance their ability to secure externally funded research grants.
4. Set annual targets for growth in externally funded faculty research and provide effective professional support in obtaining and administering grants and publishing results in peer-reviewed journals.

III. The Inspiration and Challenge of New York City

Fordham's main campuses are located in the heart of the most international city in the United States, the only U.S. metropolis among the world's ten largest megacities. We believe there is no better place on earth to learn and grow. But our location must stand for something more than proximity to opportunity, no matter how rich and exciting those opportunities may be. Fordham must embed itself even deeper in the fabric of New York, define and promote its relationships with the city in distinctive ways, and be the voice of expertise and empathy for the growing number of disenfranchised residents. Our clear-eyed appraisals of New York's present challenges and compassionate solutions for its future are urgently needed.

A. Deepen Student Engagement with New York City and the Metropolitan Region

1. Enhance avenues to connect teaching, learning, and student development with world-class New York City opportunities for internships, service learning, career development, collaborative research, and civic engagement, as well as for intercultural exploration, recreation, cultural life, and entertainment.
2. Expand opportunities for every student to perform meaningful community service and service learning that enrich their educational experience and contribute to the quality of life in our neighboring communities.

B. Learn from and Contribute to the Development of Our Surrounding Neighborhoods

1. Harness Fordham's exceptional academic resources in business, law, humanities, and communications and media to build a synergistic array of undergraduate and graduate/professional programs at the Lincoln Center campus in partnership with leading New York City organizations.
2. Strengthen Fordham's unique New York City location by creating at the Lincoln Center campus a welcoming center of activity, to include an arts and multimedia complex, designed to invite and strengthen our connection to the immediate neighborhood and our extended alumni community.
3. Foster the quality of community life around all Fordham campuses and sites in collaboration with community members and leaders, pursuing opportunities in research, teaching, and service that benefit both the surrounding neighborhoods and the University.
4. Build inter-institutional strengths and foster community development through the Bronx Science Consortium, advancing selective areas of research and teaching that engage Fordham students and promote access to STEM education in the Bronx community.

IV. A Global Perspective

Fordham has always been actively engaged in the world. We have campuses on three continents. Nationally, only about 14 percent of students study abroad; at Fordham, 36 percent of undergraduates take advantage of our 125 study abroad programs in 52 countries. Four thousand Fordham students engage in community service around the globe every year. But as impressive as these and other efforts are, we need to ensure that they add up to something greater. Through better coordination and integration of our global efforts and by more effectively leveraging the network of Jesuit colleges and universities in 112 countries, we can offer all our students the best possible preparation for becoming mindful, caring citizens of the world.

A. Establish Fordham as a Thought-Leader About Global Critical Challenges

1. Promote distinctive foci of teaching and research excellence on pressing world issues where Fordham can bring spiritual insights and marshal particular academic strengths from the humanities, social sciences and professions.
2. Position Fordham as an institution known internationally for its expertise regarding the centrality of faith in human culture and the emerging questions of global religious conflict, security and stability, terrorism and extremism—grounded in the University's longstanding strengths in the study of religious ideas and texts, languages, and cultures.
3. Develop Fordham partnerships with other universities, especially the network of Jesuit colleges and universities in 112 countries, in order to bring our coordinated capabilities, interests, and resources to bear on a number of specific global challenges.

B. Extend Fordham's Global Engagement

1. Substantially increase the number and diversity of Fordham's international undergraduate students as well as the resources necessary for them to thrive on campus.
2. Incorporate global perspectives into all academic curricula to prepare undergraduate, graduate, and professional students as thoughtful citizens of the world.
3. Develop strong global competencies among students, faculty, and staff through co-curricular programming, service learning, study and living experiences abroad, a robust foreign language program, and "internationalization at home" experiences.
4. Foster partnerships to permit faculty and students to collaborate and study with colleagues at other institutions around the world, as well as to develop additional inter-institutional academic programs.

5. Ensure alignment between Fordham's sites in London, Pretoria, and Beijing and the University's strategic goals.

V. A Diverse and Inclusive Community

We take great pride in Fordham's student-centeredness, our Jesuit legacy of engagement across cultures, and our rich history of welcoming immigrants. But these commitments and traditions are also a mandate: our efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive community must go beyond improving a statistical snapshot. We must be attentive to authentic, pluralistic dialogue and engagement. By doing so, we affirm that difference is a gift, and ensure that people of all faiths, beliefs and personal commitments can find a home here.

A. Promote Diversity and Inclusion

1. Appoint a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer reporting to the President and identify leaders throughout the University to lead, support, and coordinate strategies that will create a more diverse and inclusive campus climate.
2. Strengthen the focus of undergraduate and graduate/professional curricula and program offerings on the many dimensions of human diversity.
3. Enhance the cultural competency of faculty, staff, and students in order to anticipate and take account of changing societal demographics, mores, and attitudes.

B. Retain, Develop and Recruit Institutional Leaders, Faculty, Staff, and Students Who Reflect the Regional and National Diversity of Society,

1. Establish institutional policies for the retention and recruitment of faculty and senior administrators from diverse and underrepresented populations.
2. Substantially increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of students from underrepresented and underserved populations and provide sufficient financial assistance to ensure that they can attend and thrive at Fordham.
3. Expand and better integrate existing opportunity programs, especially those that serve the geographical areas where Fordham is located.

VI. A Strategic and Agile Institution

Higher education, like every other enterprise in our society, faces new levels of skepticism and scrutiny and growing calls for accountability and transparency. While Fordham does not have to answer to a legislature in the way that many of our public sector peers do, we must prove on daily basis that we possess keen foresight and that we are good stewards of our families' and donors' hopes and expectations. Finding new efficiencies, diversifying revenue sources, and expanding our philanthropic circle are all within our reach—if we embrace a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship and thoughtful risk-taking.

A. Create a Sustainable Business Model

1. Prepare a sustainable long-range financial plan aligned with this Strategic Framework that minimizes tuition increases and includes targets for new income from sponsored research, current-use gifts, endowment funds, and capital campaigns.
2. Reach broader, more diverse populations of students and increase tuition revenue by implementing new course delivery methods and revisions to the academic calendar—including a winter session, enhanced summer session, and short-term courses where appropriate—that attract new applicants, improve utilization of the physical plant, and rationalize course scheduling.
3. Strengthen the University’s marketing, branding, communication and promotion.
4. Evaluate and possibly restructure schools, colleges, academic programs, administrative units, and staff deployment to align with the University’s mission, facilitate collaborative curricular offerings, create financial opportunities, and advance institutional identity.
5. Develop and implement operational policies and programs that promote environmental sustainability and the good stewardship of Fordham’s resources.
6. Build a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and thoughtful risk-taking throughout the University.

B. Build a Strong, Dynamic Technology Infrastructure

1. Invest in the University’s infrastructure to ensure robust and flexible support for technology-enabled learning, research, institutional communications, and informed decision making.
2. Ensure that all departments and schools have adequate access to the technology support necessary to enhance collaboration among faculty, students, staff, and departments.
3. Design and implement electronic systems that will streamline administrative processes, strengthen connections across schools and units, and move the University toward simpler, more efficient, and paperless operations.

C. Design and Implement a Transparent, Inclusive, Continuous Planning Process

1. Establish guidelines for the development and widespread sharing of strategic plans by each major academic and administrative unit, provide mechanisms for collaborative planning by schools and departments, and ensure congruence with this Strategic Framework.

2. Implement continuous planning in ways that maximize transparency, enhance widespread engagement, and incentivize inter-unit cooperation.
3. Develop metrics and measure annual progress in achieving University and unit-level strategic objectives and take appropriate corrective action to address deficiencies and unforeseen complications.

CONCLUSION

Joining the Cause of Bothered Excellence

We make our home in the city where the world's future is being worked out and dreamed into reality. We will not and cannot be bystanders; that is not who we are. But the questions that we formulate as members of the Fordham community must matter.

Some of these questions will spur our faculty and students to push the frontiers of knowledge outward. Others will spur us to criticize the globalization and glamorization of superficiality. But we must ensure that every question stands as testimony to our pursuit of bothered excellence. Doing so will mark us as a university that is necessary for the creation of a more just world.

By bringing this framework to reality, we secure Fordham's future and much more. We come together in insisting that distrust, distraction, and disposability will not become the defining characteristics of our times. We are ready to do the hard work that proves there is a better way forward—one led by people of competence, conscience, compassion, and commitment to the service of the human family.