Introduction

Whether in the sciences, the arts, business, law, or the humanities, graduate education at Fordham shares a distinctive signature: a belief in the transformative power of inquiry for its own sake; an impatience with conventional academic boundaries and frameworks; an insistence that change, whatever form it takes, must move humanity forward.

In the Arts and Sciences, we are proud to carry on the Jesuit legacy of fearless humanist-explorers, forever in dialogue with the world, sparking chain reactions of wonder, discovery, and progress—all in the name of a more just, inclusive society. Since its founding in 1916 and guided by its Catholic and Jesuit traditions, GSAS aspires to prepare students for teaching and leadership in a global society, by welcoming learners from diverse religious, economic, and cultural backgrounds into full participation in a scholarly endeavor. It is truly graduate education for the global good.

This draft framework document reflects desk research and data analyses undertaken by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) and its Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). These analyses are built on extensive dialogue and feedback with members of the GSAS Council; GSAS students, faculty, and administrative staff; and individual stakeholders within and outside the GSAS community. The framework charts future pathways that will advance our school’s strengths, confront its weaknesses, mitigate its challenges, and capitalize on its opportunities. It delineates consensus strategic planning priorities and related planning objectives, guided by and aligned with University-wide Continuous Strategic planning efforts. These priorities reflect core GSAS mission principles, including fostering the cultivation of knowledge, wisdom, and a deeper understanding of the human condition.

GSAS’ commitment to graduate education for the global good is constituted by five strategic priorities: advancing knowledge creation that shapes the global conversation; promoting student research, scholarship, and professional development; investing in diversity, access, and inclusion; fostering catalytic partnerships; and enriching the community through internationalization. These priorities are undergirded by a common operational ethos based on adaptability, effective communication and information management, and sound infrastructure and human resources.

I. Advancing knowledge creation that shapes the global conversation

Advancing knowledge creation that shapes the global conversation lies at the core of the more than 40 advanced degree and certificate programs that GSAS currently offers, whether it be in new and emerging fields like cybersecurity, humanitarian studies, and public media; or disciplines with deep historical foundations, such as philosophy, psychology, and theology. Today’s advanced graduates also inhabit a world that is increasingly interconnected, and where realizing one’s full potential necessitates
engaging in and shaping global and local dialogue simultaneously and seamlessly, to better the lives of those around them. GSAS is committed to the following planning objectives to further and achieve this strategic priority:

- **Seed the development of innovative, market and student driven academic master’s programs** that engage students both inside and outside the classroom, and capitalize on Fordham’s NYC location as a global city. These could include the development of niche programs that meet specific needs in the emergent workforce sectors, as well as interdisciplinary programs that encourage knowledge creation and curation across disciplinary boundaries.

- **Build on the strengths of existing GSAS academic programs by invigorating new connections between them, continuing to support faculty development at all stages, and rethinking the siloing of graduate education to allow for more cross-program learning and engagement.**

- **Explore the development of new doctoral programs in disciplines with demonstrated global perspective and dimensions, and to promote grant-funded research and recruit and retain top-notch faculty.**

- **Diversify program delivery to expand the opportunities for and outreach to new communities to participate in learning and knowledge creation. Experiment with executive-style graduate programs, micro-credentialing, online and hybrid course development and delivery, and new partnerships with institutions both nationally and globally.**

- **Explore non-traditional or alternative skills- and competency-focused programming that can be offered to current students, alumni, and others - through a mix of short-term and more longer-term initiatives. These alternatives include “stacking credentials”, combined/interdisciplinary degrees, innovative BA/MA and BS/MS programs, and “boot camps” to prepare graduates with specific employment skills.**

- **Reimagine the 21st century Humanities PhD by investing in new learning models and curricular frameworks, fuller commitment to public scholarship, investment in new pedagogies, examining the benefits of common learning experiences, and strengthening responsible and responsive mentoring.**

**II. Promoting student research, scholarship, and professional development**

Our Master’s and PhD students are entering a world where new types of skills and competencies are expected by employers and peers, and where preparation for a range of career pathways must be mainstreamed across our school’s academic programs. In addition to specific theoretical and empirical training relevant to their disciplines and fields of study, cross-cultural fluency and emotional intelligence are highly-sought after competencies, along with strong analytical thinking, communications, leadership, and pedagogical skills. And, in many sectors, demonstrated experiential and applied learning are fast becoming a distinguishing factor when our graduates seek to enter their professions of choice.

Graduate students in the Arts and Sciences also face a number of challenges during their time here at Fordham that can affect their well-being as individuals, including maintaining work-life balance, financial
stress, and mental and physical health. And, with a growing international student population, the types of supports we offer to our students have diversified greatly and have prompted deeper collaboration with other units across the University.

The GSAS response to these challenges has resulted in the development of a series of programmatic initiatives, which we plan to continue and strengthen, and will require new forms of collaboration and commitment to advance this strategic priority:

- Continue our investment in GSAS Futures programming to broaden and deepen student involvement in career pathways development. Consider new models to grow this initiative, including student-led and student-informed planning of programming that is assessed continuously for impact and outcomes; and longer-term planning and scheduling of GSAS Futures events to provide time for students to plan how they participate in these initiatives throughout their time at Fordham.

- Implement the full (fall 2018) launch of the GSAS Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) initiative, a multi-module program designed to both highlight and strengthen the outstanding pedagogical training our doctoral students receive, and to deepen and develop those skills in order to distinguish our graduates on the academic job market.

- Identify sources of and experiment with new forms of financial aid (summer aid, needs-based aid) and models of aid (e.g. completion grants).

- Collaborate with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to initiate wellness programming for GSAS students.

- Build on the relationships established with critical support units across the University, including Career Services, the Office of International Services (OIS), Office of Disability Services (ODS), Office of Mission Integration and Planning; and the Office of Student Affairs.

- Complete efforts underway currently to establish a graduate student lounge, located in Dealy Hall.

- Analyze the impact of and possibly expand the GSAS financial commitment to the Student Support Grants (SSGs), which provide critical support for student research, scholarship, and alternative learning and professional development experiences.

- Leverage and improve the trajectory of a shortened time-to-degree (TTD) for GSAS students, especially across doctoral programs, particularly by continuing to rethink how accountability for “satisfactory academic progress” is structured and maintained throughout all stages of a student’s doctoral program, but particularly in conjunction with the dissertation prospectus development, research, and writing phases. This would include developing dual systems of accountability that emphasizes positive association with accountability as shaped in coordination with programs and departments.

- Ascertain how GSAS students experience New York City, and build out information and communications regarding the many opportunities students can avail themselves of in and around the city.
III. Investing in diversity, access, and inclusion

Taking diversity, access, and inclusion seriously requires integrative and multidimensional approaches that hold the greatest promise when carried out in close partnership and collaboration with key offices and units across the University. It also necessitates not only the strategic rethinking of existing resource allocation, but also to commit to identifying and procuring new resources. The University’s investment in a complement of material and human resources dedicated to strengthening Fordham through diversity and inclusion initiatives, including the appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer, while in a nascent phase, offers opportunities for GSAS to further its planning and achieve demonstrable results in this critical strategic priority area.

GSAS will advance ongoing and invest in new initiatives designed to foster a diverse and inclusive community, including through the following:

- Coordinate closely with the Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences Faculty and Interim Associate Vice President for Arts and Sciences Education to advance faculty hiring to realize diversity and inclusion goals that intersect with GSAS programs and departments.

- In partnership with the Provost’s Office, the Chief Diversity Officer, the Office of Research, and Arts and Sciences, distinguish Fordham’s and GSAS’ participation as a member of the AJCU Post-Doctoral Diversity Program (PDDP). GSAS has proposed to launch in FY2019 the inaugural George Ames Endowed Post-Doctoral Fellowship initiative, a competitive, two-year appointment with a highly-competitive remuneration package, access to additional research and pedagogy resources, and mentoring, professional development, and networking supports and opportunities.

- Mainstream holistic admissions policies and practices throughout the graduate admissions review and recommendations process, as carried out at the department and program levels. Identified by the Council of Graduate Schools and others as a vital component of mainstreaming diversity and inclusion, holistic or “whole file” admissions comprises broad-based and transparent review of applications based on cognitive and non-cognitive or “success-critical” attributes. Guidance on how to implement and manage holistic admissions is being finalized and will be monitored and assessed during the FY 2019 admission and enrollment cycle.

- Ensure the effectiveness of the newly-launched diversity module within GSAS’ Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) Program. Based on externally-facilitated and train the trainer components, this module is designed to equip participants to teach diverse student bodies and reflect on the ways in which diversity and inclusion contribute to and facilitate new forms of dialogue and learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

- Strengthen diversity across the GSAS student population through the establishment of new resource investments (e.g. focused marketing, financial aid; subsidized housing) and build-out of nascent initiatives from recruitment through to graduation (e.g. rethinking bridge course offerings; boot camps; specialized mentoring).
Focus on development and fundraising to enhance diversity and inclusion, in partnership with Development and University Relations (DAUR) and Alumni Relations to increase financial aid resources, establish scholarship funds, deepen alumni involvement in GSAS, and create needs-based in addition to merit-based financial aid resources that align with diversity, pedagogy, and academic/professional development goals.

IV. Fostering catalytic partnerships

Fordham and GSAS must continue to leverage both ongoing and new partnerships and collaborative ventures to advance many of the above-described priorities, and also as a meaningful priority in and of itself. GSAS does its best, most far-reaching work in solidarity with inter-institutional research teams and inter-school partnerships, cross-institutional faculty and student exchanges, and leadership of and participation in multi-organizational consortia. It is within such forums where catalytic energies converge, the frontiers of knowledge are forged, and artificial boundaries dissolve. Fordham’s reputation is strengthened by such engagement, and our location in New York City provides a unique appeal for such endeavors. Moreover, the mutual hospitality that characterizes GSAS partnerships infuses cross-cultural awareness and proficiency among members of the Fordham community; and allows us to showcase the immense talents of our students, faculty, and alumni to audiences around the world.

GSAS is proud of its accomplishments in this area and plans to continue to dedicate the necessary resources to extend its catalytic partnerships locally, nationally, and globally, through the following:

- Design innovative agreements with new institutional partners, including exploring new models of student exchange at both the Master’s and PhD levels; cotutelle arrangements for PhD candidates; and transfer articulation agreements with international partners for select programs.

- Expand the number of institutions with whom GSAS partners for advanced placement and modified admissions agreements with domestic and international institutions for select programs where partners that may lack a graduate program in an area where GSAS offers niche programs (e.g. Cybersecurity, Elections and Campaign Management, Humanitarian Studies, Public Media).

- Explore tailored dual-degree opportunities within GSAS and/or across schools, especially at the Master’s level, whereby students build their own dual Master’s curriculum in closely related disciplines for fields of study.

- Augment existing partnerships with institutions close to home that will complement professional development and experiential learning for GSAS students, and offer collaborative research opportunities for faculty (e.g. Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum; Bronx Zoo/Wildlife Conservation Society; NY Botanical Garden; American Museum of Natural History; American-Irish Historical Society; Northwell; International Rescue Committee; Jesuit Refugee Services; Catholic Relief Services; United Nations agencies and programmes).
V. Enriching the community through internationalization

Fordham’s unique geographical location within New York City has historically been a strong draw for global denizens. Indeed, the communities that constitute GSAS have changed markedly over time, and the demographics of this population have become increasingly internationalized. The faculty who form the curricular foundation of our programs hail from all over the world. And, the “classroom” is no longer confined to physical space at Rose Hill or Lincoln Center, but rather extends around the globe. The benefits of internationalization are many, and include enriching our community by infusing diverse perspectives and traditions into our learning and teaching; expanding our understanding of how others experience globalization dynamics we otherwise may take for granted; and deepening our awareness of that interconnectivity as something that makes us profoundly human.

The international initiatives GSAS undertakes in the coming years must be supported by structures and processes that meet the needs and expectations of these communities, and complement our school’s corollary strategic priorities. This will require extensive consultation and coordination, planning and monitoring, and new forms of resource commitment.

GSAS plans to build on the opportunities presented through internationalization in the following ways:

- Strengthen our school’s relationship with University support units such as the Office of International Initiatives, the Office of International Services, and the Institute of American Language and Culture, and to utilize more fully their staff expertise and resources to assist our international student population in acclimating to Fordham and living in New York City.

- Develop new policies and processes to facilitate GSAS student engagement in international learning experiences, both curricular and co-curricular.

- Utilize existing and new international partnerships to foster innovative research and faculty exchanges, including redesigning processes and supports to accommodate more effectively visiting scholars and students.

Operational Effectiveness

As a graduate school with more than 40 graduate and advanced certificate programs encompassing some two dozen disciplines and fields, and an increasingly diverse student body, there are significant challenges to achieving operational effectiveness. GSAS will continue to invest in all areas closely designed to strengthen operational effectiveness as the foundation upon which the above-described strategic planning priorities rests. These include program-specific and school-branding marketing and recruitment; mainstreaming data collection, monitoring, and analysis across sub-units within GSAS; continuous assessment of existing and the development of new policies that keep GSAS on the cutting edge of graduate education; collaboration with departments and programs on infrastructure; and sophisticated information management and exchange.

Recent investments in these areas have yielded proven results, strengthening our ability to compete successfully with peer and aspirant institutions; to be responsive and adaptive to student and faculty
needs; and to enhance further Fordham’s reputation nationally and internationally. As we forge ahead with strategic planning, the following objectives will be at the forefront:

- Adapt and grow GSAS program-specific and school branding marketing on the basis on evaluation and assessment to ensure strong return on investment.

- Sustained planning for GSAS human resource management that accommodates academic program and student body growth, particularly in the areas of academic program support, marketing, and admissions.

- Build out the final elements in the survey suite GSAS established in 2016-17 (incoming students, enrolled students, exiting students), by implementing alumni surveys that capture vital career placement data on our graduates. These data will also aid in strategic academic program planning and student professional development initiatives, and inform GSAS partnerships with relevant University support units (e.g. DAUR, Career Services, Student Affairs). It will also involve continued external collaboration with the Council of Graduate Schools on its Understanding Career Pathways project.

- Continuous monitoring of current GSAS policy effectiveness and investing in the development of responsive policy in the areas of holistic admissions; faculty-student mentoring; pregnancy and parenting; co-tutelles; auditing and credit-transfers; and academic freedom.

- Continued collaboration with the Lincoln Center (LC) Space Planning Committee to ensure GSAS program needs are represented in strategic planning for use of LC space; increasing classroom use efficiency rates and continuity in GSAS course planning.

- Improve overall GSAS information management and exchange with prospective students, faculty, students, and staff by harnessing technology (e.g. Slate; social media) and viewing all GSAS activities through the lens of communications.

Conclusions

Graduate Education for the Global Good is more than just a slogan. It is an ethos that has guided GSAS in its first 100 years, and will continue to shape the next century and beyond to fulfill our school’s responsibilities to students, faculty, and the communities we are called to serve locally and globally. Realizing this ethos also requires constant vigilance, dialogue, and advocacy, as broader environmental dynamics cause some to question the value of a graduate liberal arts education writ large. Through this strategic framework, GSAS commits to ensuring that the education our students cultivate and curate while at Fordham and GSAS, along with the training and mentoring offered by our highly-regarded faculty, will be pivotal to enabling us to embody fully our foundational Ignatian principles, including discernment and humility, and to facilitate the betterment of the human condition.