

Civic Action Plan

“If we could be a microcosm of what society should be like and figure out how to deal with problems ourselves, then we would have an experience of a real community and how to arrive at a solution for what is best for the whole community.” Fr. Steven Privett, USF Chancellor

Rationale

Located in the heart of the city it has served and engaged since its founding in 1855, the University of San Francisco is committed to the public purpose of higher education and the principles articulated in the Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors on the 30th anniversary of the founding of Campus Compact. Grounded in the Jesuit tradition of educating students for lives of enlightened leadership, engaged citizenship and service to others, USF educates students for engagement in communities around the world. It does this not only through formal and informal teaching in classrooms, community, and co-curricular settings, but also through the examples set by faculty whose teaching, research, and service reflect engagement for a more socially just world and by the institutional structures at USF that build connections between campus and community and among students with diverse identities and shared ideals.

The public purpose of higher education is reflected in USF’s core vision to educate “leaders who will fashion a more just and humane world.” The university’s mission is to “to promote learning in the Jesuit Catholic tradition. The university offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals, and the values and sensitivity necessary to be men and women for others.” The five points of the university’s strategic plan, USF 2028, reflect this vision and mission. In addition to promoting its Jesuit Catholic tradition and academic excellence, the university “contributes to and benefits from the energy, resources, diversity and opportunities” of San Francisco. It “prepares students for the complexities of a diverse and interdependent world through curricular and co-curricular offerings which capitalize on the differences within the city and the university.” It also “educates students to responsible global citizenship in an increasingly interdependent world.” Its institutional structures like the McCarthy Center, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Outreach, and University Ministry reflect a commitment to “a faith that does justice” and equity. USF has been a longstanding member of Campus Compact since 1990. Chancellor Privett has served on the board of California Compact since 2008. USF has hosted regional Compact meetings, its faculty members have participated in California Compact’s Fellows Program for Political Engagement, and its students have received Newman Civic Awards.

In this historical moment, USF’s commitment to civic action for social justice is even more necessary. DACA students worry about whether they will be able to complete their education in the United States. The Black Lives Matter movement challenges institutions of higher education to practice their commitment to racial justice and equality. The

election of Donald Trump has been accompanied by a rise in hate crimes including a wave of anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant actions. The rise of “fake news” as well as verbal attacks and slander against reporters, unsubstantiated charges of voter fraud, and efforts to depress voter participation are all designed to shake confidence in electoral democracy and civic engagement. At the same time, we have witnessed a heartening surge in people expressing their resistance to anti-democratic trends and socially unjust policies. Millions of women marched the first Sunday after Mr. Trump’s inauguration to stand for women’s rights as human rights. Similarly, thousands of persons showed up in airports to protest an executive order halting refugees and placing restrictions on travel to the United States based on country of origin. The activism of this current time is not only a reaction to immediate problems but also a response to long-standing, underlying injustices like racism, sexism, and economic inequality.

Given USF’s history as an anchor institution and its commitment to preparing graduates to be persons for others and given this moment in history when so much is demanded for the vitality of democracy, this civic action plan asks what more USF can do to build its capacity to support the public purpose of higher education, to meet the challenges of preparing everyone on campus to engage with diverse others in democratic dialogue, and to help bend the arc of civic engagement on a path towards social justice. It focuses not on new programs out in the community nor on external goals but rather on projects on campus and internal goals to strengthen democratic community, inclusive dialogue, and education for justice on its own campus. In so doing, the university prepares graduates to go out into the world and do the same. At this time, in our diverse community, USF stands ready to be a model of bringing together faculty, students, and staff to be leaders in inclusive civic action for equity and social justice.

Our History of Civic Action and What We Are Doing Now

The University of San Francisco’s history reflects these commitments. From the 1860’s onward, Jesuits from the University visited the sick and infirmed in their homes and in area hospitals, tended to the spiritual needs of soldiers in the Presidio and on Angel Island, and to English and non-English speaking prisoners in San Quentin. In 1962, faculty and students started the Student Western Addition Project (SWAP), which by 1968 was the largest student organization with over 250 members. The project worked with children, families, and senior citizens in the neighborhood adjacent to campus. According to a USF yearbook from that era, “Students are actually able to witness through their own involvement how the tenets of knowledge learned in the classroom become social reality in the community. In turn, the community itself responds to judge the effectiveness of the program and genuine interaction is the result.” During the late 1960s and early 1970s, SWAP leaders and students contributed to a spirit of informed activism on campus and off, creating a new campus group, Whites Against Racism, and leading boycotts at the local Safeway in support of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers.

Community engagement and activism by students and faculty at the height of the civil rights movement were precursors to the engagement and activism of today. Today,

USF's Engage San Francisco initiative is a key component in the university's ongoing commitment as an anchor institution to improve our city. Engage San Francisco responds to community identified needs in areas ranging from education and the arts to physical/psychological wellness and quality of life. It does so by bringing to bear the academic resources of the university's schools and college, especially student service-learning and faculty research. In the process, Engage San Francisco enhances the relationship between the university and the community, bringing both closer together and changing each for the better. Whether in the 1960's or today, USF's engagement with the city serves similar ends: challenging orthodoxies about what is worth knowing and how it is learned, building authentic and reciprocal relationships between campus and community, meeting community identified needs, and working for social justice.

USF students serve and learn not only in San Francisco, but throughout the Bay Area, across the nation, and indeed around the world. USF is one of only about two dozen institutions of higher education with a service learning graduation requirement for all undergraduate students, a requirement that has been in place since 2002. During the academic year, approximately 3,000 students are involved in 165 service learning courses taught by 80 faculty members. USF's Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good, founded in 2002, supports the quality and integrity of service learning at the university. It also offers internship programs in Sacramento and Washington, DC as well as a minor in public service and community engagement to prepare students for lives of ethical and committed public service.

University Ministry sponsors several Justice and Advocacy Programs: Centered on Ignatian Spirituality, the University Ministry advocacy program provides the opportunity for students to engage in various justice advocacies on issues affecting their local, national, and global community. University Ministry creates space for students to name (putting language to the experience), voice (speaking out), and build allies in their advocacy efforts. Our students are encouraged to participate in The Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice, which is one of the largest national gatherings of people inspired by the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. More than 1,600 people convene in Washington, DC each year to learn, network, reflect, pray, and develop skills to advocate for social justice.

University Ministry's Solidarity-In-Action programs collaborate with a variety of Bay Area nonprofit agencies to provide USF students with opportunities to engage in their local community. Through these programs, our students honor the Jesuit ideals of being people with and for others, and contemplatives in action. Students witness the daily struggle of people living on the margins of society and are encouraged, through reflection, to analyze and question the systems that perpetuate this suffering.

Tutoring Programs

University Ministry sponsors after-school tutoring programs by USF students at St. Anthony - Immaculate Conception Elementary School, St. Peter's Catholic School, and St. Charles Borromeo Elementary School.

Division 1 Athletics: By embracing the department's Four Pillars of Success -- Excel in the Classroom; Win at the Highest Levels of Competition; Engage in the Community;

and Become Leaders in the World – USF student-athletes are inspired to follow their hearts and conscience to become persons of integrity and ethics. USF student-athletes, coaches and staff involve themselves in various service projects throughout the year in order to gain a better sense of the community in which they live, make a difference in the lives of others and develop a passion for genuine goodness. It's through servant leadership that USF Athletics is committed to the development and care of each of its student-athlete by fostering an environment that honors the Jesuit ideals of being men and women for others.

In conjunction with Harper for Kids, USF student-athletes speak to children about developing character traits that will help them achieve their personal best in life. In partnership with St. Vincent de Paul Society and St. Anthony Foundation, two of San Francisco's leading non-profit organizations dedicated to feeding, sheltering and providing care for those in need, USF student-athletes treat the city's most vulnerable citizens with dignity, respect and kindness by preparing food, clearing tables and serving warm meals to the guests of these organizations on a monthly basis. In partnership with University Ministry, USF Athletics were active participants in October Outreach and April Action. USF men's and women's basketball team conduct a series of clinics at Memorial Gymnasium during the fall on behalf of E-Hoops, an inclusive basketball program that trains and develops both typical and special needs kids in athletics and as well as social skills. Student athletes organize a holiday food drive and a clothing drive at the end of the academic year.

The USF Center for Child and Family Development is committed to the academic, psychological, social, and spiritual development of children and families through teaching, research, and direct service programs in School-Based Family Counseling. Our purpose is to provide children and families (particularly under-served children and families) with a variety of culturally sensitive family counseling services. We are dedicated to the personal and social development of every child and adult who enters our doors.

CCFD's Mission Possible School Outreach Program is currently in 20 private and public schools in the San Francisco greater bay area, and is the largest School-Based Family Counseling Program in the United States. Principals universally praise the program and frequently cite stories of significant breakthroughs with children. Invariably they ask how they ever did without a School-Based Family Counselor. Many principals have requested additional days of service by the School-Based Family Counselor in their schools and many principals of the more financially sound schools have then hired their School-Based Family Counselors for permanent positions.

The Fromm Institute offers daytime courses for approximately 1,300 retired adults over 50 years of age. Founded by Alfred and Hanna Fromm in 1976, the Institute offers intellectual stimulation and introduces its members to a wide range of college level learning opportunities with full access to the facilities and services at USF. The Institute has a firm commitment to learning and believes that older students should be able to learn within a peer setting and be taught by emeritus professors of their own

age. The Institute presents its non-credit courses during three, eight-week sessions each year. Meeting once a week at either 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. and lasting ninety minutes, our courses span such areas as psychology, literature, philosophy, science, theology, history, art, music, politics and creative writing.

The University of San Francisco's Gellert Family Business Resource Center provides family-owned businesses with access to strategic and practical family business information, networking opportunities and family business research, education and scholarship. The Center conducts family business research, assessing how School of Management faculty can better aid in the success of these types of businesses, helping them to become anchor institutions in their neighborhoods for the common good. The Center also provides informational, referral and direct services to family-owned businesses including legal and language support in order to assure future success. Through luncheons, dinners and related events, the Center looks to connect family-owned businesses with one another and create a knowledge base that will aid in enhancing the "family side" of business.

Using Data to Inform Our Civic Action Plan

This civic action plan draws on data about service learning, community engaged learning, civic engagement, and social justice at the University of San Francisco. Civic action overlaps with all these areas, and the plan draws on what we know about how these interrelated areas inform motivations, goals, and outcomes for civic action. In addition, all of these areas relate to USF's history as an anchor institution in the city of San Francisco and to its Jesuit mission to prepare students to serve others.

Data come from numerous sources. These include existing artifacts documenting the history of civic engagement at USF and instruments assessing the perceived value and effectiveness of service learning. They also include data collected specifically for this plan such as observation records of student concerns after the fall election as well as focus group data from students, faculty, and community partners. To maximize participation of stakeholders, focus group data were collected at existing meetings rather than special sessions. These meetings included the Associated Students of the University of San Francisco, McCarthy Center Steering Committee, and Community Partner Seminar.

Data are quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data include statistics from USF's participation in national surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement, Faculty Study of Student Engagement, National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, and the Campus Compact Survey. Quantitative data also include information from USF-created instruments such as the McCarthy Center's biannual Community Partner Survey. Qualitative data include meeting notes and focus group comments.

Raw data were shared with existing campus groups like the Community Engaged Learning Task Force for analysis and were also analyzed by staff at the McCarthy Center.

Preliminary interpretations and analysis of data were shared with multiple stakeholders for face validity. Feedback from stakeholders led to further refinement of findings and next steps. From conversations about the data, we sought to understand what USF can do to continue to build its internal capacity to support the public purpose of higher education, to provide a transformative educational experience that prepares all campus constituents to engage with diverse others in democratic dialogue, and to confirm the arc of civic engagement, based on our mission and identity, on a path towards a more just, humane and sustainable society.

What We Found

From data collected for our designation as a community engaged institution by the Carnegie Foundation and from the Campus Compact member institution survey, we know that USF students are learning from service and other forms of community engagement in San Francisco as well as throughout the Bay Area, nation, and world. USF is one of only a few institutions of higher education with a service learning graduation requirement for all undergraduate students, a requirement that has been in place since 2002. During the academic year, approximately 3,000 students are involved in 165 formally designated service learning courses, taught by 80 faculty members. On average, students spend 5 hours per week in the community for their service learning courses. These numbers do not capture all the community-engaged courses and extracurricular activities at USF. Undergraduates are enrolled in courses that include community engagement but are not designated as service learning courses. In addition, many courses across USF's graduate programs in education, nursing and health professions, law, and business are engaged in meaningful ways with the community but are not centrally tracked. Throughout the university, community engagement addresses a wide array of societal issues and strengthens our educational model.

We know that USF provides strong infrastructure for service learning and community engagement through, for example, the McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Outreach (DECO), the Cultural Centers, University Ministry, Athletics, and Student Life. Student involvement in service learning is greater than the national average. We also know that USF needs more formal opportunities to assess learning from service and community engagement as well as the quality of partnerships between USF and the community and outcomes for community members resulting from the university's community engagement.

According to data from the National Survey of Student Engagement, USF seniors report being more engaged in volunteer work and community-based projects than either USF first-time students or students at comparison institutions (both other Jesuit institutions and other universities sharing the same Carnegie classification). In addition, USF seniors report more gains in envisioning a just and sustainable society and social justice issues compared to USF first-time students and our comparison institutions. In many cases, there are no differences in students at baseline. In other words first-time students at USF look a lot like first-time students at our comparison institutions. The fact that our seniors

indicate greater community engagement and social justice understanding indicates that USF is playing a transformative role in our students' development.

From the Faculty Study of Student Engagement, we know that instructors at USF believe the institution increased its emphasis on the following between 2012 and 2016: resolution of disagreements, resolution of conflicts, inclusion, community well-being. Faculty most strongly perceived USF emphasizing community well-being and least emphasizing resolving disagreements. Faculty perceive USF students having the most opportunities to engage with people who are different in terms of race and ethnicity and the fewest opportunities to engage with people with differing political views, perhaps reflecting the racial and ethnic diversity on campus and the relative lack of political diversity. Faculty members see USF providing increasing opportunities for students to engage in events and activities presenting different societal perspectives, and faculty encourage students to attend.

From the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, we know in the 2012 presidential election, 69.6% of students registered, and 69.7% of those voted, for an overall institutional voting rate of 48.5% of students overall compared to the national average in that election of 46.9%. The percentage of students voting in 2014 midterm election was 20%, less than one percentage point above the national average for all institutions. Voting data do account for international students and those under 18.

The McCarthy Center's biannual survey of community partners indicates that community partners have positive attitudes towards working with our students, that students meet real needs, and that they expand the community partner's capacity. They see students generally prepared in terms of professionalism, cultural humility, and motivation to engage. Most are usually satisfied with students' work. Perceptions of working with faculty are less positive and generally tend to trend downwards. Partners believe there is room for improvement in faculty support for student commitment, consistency in receiving service learning students, and providing a role to community partners in assessment of student learning. Because the survey has only a 15% response rate, we caution from generalizing too much from these data.

Various qualitative data from students, faculty, and community partners paint a similar description of USF's strengths and provide specific suggestions for what the university could do to strengthen partnerships between campus and community. Because the number of persons contributing to the qualitative data is small, these data lend themselves better to asking questions than making generalizations.

Qualitative data from the community partner survey and from comments collected at on-campus events indicate that community partners appreciate the quality of students, the commitment of the university and its openness to working with the community on a wide range of issues. Community partners find resonance with USF's mission and values. They also look for ways to deepen their partnership with the university. They suggest more opportunities for faculty professional development on community engagement, more orientations for students about the local community, more networking opportunities

with university stakeholders, greater USF presence at community events, and financial support from USF for community partners' role in service learning. Community partners shared that they are ready to work with faculty to develop projects, can provide expertise, and seek recognition for their role in students' education. Community partners welcome the university coming to them.

Qualitative data from faculty was collected at McCarthy Center Steering Committee meetings, University Council for Jesuit Mission meetings, and networking events with community partners. These data indicate an appreciation for the pervasiveness of engagement across the institution and, as with community partners, a connection between service learning, community engagement and USF's mission and values. Faculty noted that the university has many assets to share with the community - from its physical space to its multilingual students, faculty, and staff. They noted areas where USF could do more: providing honest and deep conversation with people skilled at facilitating these conversations about race, especially institutionalized racism and how it manifests itself at USF, better preparing students for engagement with the community, calling upon community partner knowledge more intentionally, providing community partners with access to university resources, and providing additional financial support (e.g., mini-grants) for partnerships with community.

Qualitative data from students was provided by the McCarthy Center's Advocates for Community Engagement, the Associated Students of USF, Black Student Union, Graduate Student Council, Public Service and Community Engagement Capstone students, and students participating in the January 2017 teach in on the U.S. Presidential election. Many ideas emerged from these data along with much enthusiasm to see them through to implementation. To create a more inclusive, equitable, and just community on campus, students want more forums to talk with each other and tell their stories, forums focused on social justice issues, and town hall forums for dialogues with administrative leaders on campus. They want faculty to bring more events from the world into their courses. They also want to see more students from diverse backgrounds recruited locally and more faculty from diverse backgrounds to reflect the diversity among students. They want financial aid to support diversity in the face of rising tuition and more faculty from diverse backgrounds that reflects the diversity of students. They believe faculty need more professional development to address issues of diversity and social justice. Students raised numerous ideas for change on campus from establishing a food pantry for students and bringing back the "check your privilege" campaign to changing the USF mascot and providing spaces for student engagement with elected officials. Themes that cut across their suggestions include diversity, transparency, communication, engagement, and building a communal culture as well as one that supports the affinity groups on campus.

To create more inclusive, equitable, and just community beyond campus, students mentioned working more with public schools and other universities in and around San Francisco. They want to see the university become a sanctuary like the city where it is located. They want to create more porous boundaries between campus and community by bringing community organizations to USF, by providing campus space to community partners, by livestreaming more from the university to the community. They want to

bring more students to city hall and other government organizations to unlock new avenues for civic engagement. They suggest internships that have a component of civic engagement as well as more classes with a focus on San Francisco, a city that provides a powerful motivation for coming to USF. They also noted the need to create an inclusive environment on campus so that community partners will feel welcome.

Students identify many USF strengths on which to build greater civic engagement. They give highest recommendations to their professors whom they describe as passionate and committed. They recognize structures on campus including the McCarthy Center, the Cultural Centers, and DECO. They mention service learning classes and single out specific departments and programs on campus including Critical Diversity Studies, African American Studies, Esther Madriz Diversity Scholars, Muscat Scholars, Performing Arts and Social Justice, Theology and Religious Studies, and Modern Languages departments.

Finally, they note that students themselves – undergraduate and graduate – bring great assets that can be used to develop civic engagement. They note that the diversity of our students is an asset as is their passion for social justice, prior experience volunteering and working in the community, and social media skills. When asked at the teach-in what strengths students can bring to be agents of change, they said, “our voices, our empathy, our education, our identities, and each other.”

Questions to Consider

We know from our data collection and analysis that our students develop new knowledge and dispositions towards issues of social justice. What we do not know as clearly is whether these changes also lead to action. When faculty encourage students to engage with issues, they most often encourage learning about those issues rather than acting on them. In addition, USF voting rates vary little from the national average, yet students indicate that they want to learn more about how to be agents of change, how to put their ideals into practice. Are there ways in which students engage in community that are not captured in the data? What might the university do to convert students’ increased knowledge and consciousness into civic action? How might we connect students’ community engagement to political involvement? How do we prepare students to be effective agents of change on campus and in the community?

Faculty members report spending more time in their courses addressing issues of identity and competing political views now than four years ago. What is not captured by existing data is whether faculty members believe they are doing a good job. Our limited qualitative data indicate faculty – and staff – want more opportunities for professional development focused on identity and important social issues, and our data from students indicate they believe such professional development would create a better campus climate for the community. What might professional development to prepare faculty and staff to handle issues of identity and politics look like? How might faculty and staff be better supported to work more effectively with student diversity as an asset in order to model the ideal of drawing on diversity outside of campus as an asset in civic action?

How might professional development support faculty and staff in creating more equitable and satisfying relationships with community partners and with each other?

Community partners indicate many benefits to partnering with USF. Overall, they are satisfied working with our students. At the same time, they seek more opportunities for reciprocal relationships, to be involved more equally in the teaching process, and to have access to resources from USF in addition to student service. How might we draw more intentionally on the knowledge of community? How might we reward and express gratitude to community beyond the service provided by students and faculty? How can we develop and implement curriculum to prepare students with knowledge about the history, politics, and culture necessary for working in diverse communities, especially one as diverse as San Francisco?

What We Can Do Next

Based on the questions raised by data from stakeholders on campus and off, we believe the following actions are logical next steps to increase the capacity of USF students, faculty, and staff to engage meaningfully with the community and to prepare students to become active participants as civic actors and change agents based on the knowledge and values they are already gaining from their USF experience.

Enhance curricular offerings that foster civic and community engagement among undergraduate and graduate students

Schools and departments across USF should continue to design and provide community-engaged courses for students. Particular departments and programs may benefit from adding service-learning or community-engaged courses if they don't currently offer any. In alignment with USF's mission and in light of the benefits and limitations of the undergraduate service-learning requirement, it would be beneficial to pilot opportunities for students to participate in a developmental progression of community-engaged learning experiences to foster and build skills, knowledge, and values that move students from awareness of social injustice to informed, ameliorating action. Additionally, it would be helpful to determine an institution-wide mechanism for tracking community-engaged courses beyond the SL-designated undergraduate core courses to provide a more complete snapshot of USF's offerings at all levels. Further attention should be paid to authentically assessing student learning from participation in community-engaged courses.

Expand co-curricular activities that engage students with social justice issues on and off campus

USF offers myriad opportunities for students to engage the community on and off campus around issues of injustice, but there is a strong desire for more and higher quality opportunities. Students expressed a strong desire for more pro-active approaches to addressing issues of diversity on campus, including special attention to student recruitment, financial aid, and a network of support for current students. Moving forward,

offices, departments, staff, and faculty can seek more opportunities to collaborate on providing celebratory events, public forums, town halls, workshops, etc. to allow students multiple venues to discuss and take action on campus justice issues. In addition, campus leadership should seek additional opportunities to invite student participation and voice in decision-making processes. With regard to fostering off-campus engagement with social justice issues, students need opportunities to engage in direct service, advocacy, and political participation. In addition to weekly direct service opportunities, USF should seek to strengthen ongoing partnerships with organizations that would benefit from leveraging student, faculty, and staff voices in advocacy for local issues. Finally, a comprehensive voter registration initiative combined with voter education activities could increase student voting rates.

Provide comprehensive faculty and staff support for designing, implementing, and collaborating on teaching and research that address issues of inclusion, equity, and justice

USF has a strong faculty with excellent teachers and scholars as well as many staff who play an important role in students' education. Many faculty and staff members are also passionate activists and social change agents in their own right. Faculty and staff of color, in particular, have played a key role in addressing issues of inclusion, equity, and justice. USF honors and supports faculty members' desires and obligations to fulfill USF's vision and mission through their teaching, research and service. Specifically, faculty and staff would benefit greatly from increased or refocused professional development programming that builds their skills and knowledge related to facilitating dialogue across differences among their students, designing and implementing courses and programs that explicitly address issues of inequity and injustice, and engaging respectfully and beneficially with the community. Faculty endeavors to foster student civic engagement and contribute to social change through teaching and research are often and always should be valued and compensated in tangible and consistent ways.

Diversify the ways we engage community partner organizations, local leaders, and residents to reflect greater reciprocity and a stronger commitment to building a just, equitable, and sustainable community

Community partners across the Bay Area host USF service-learners, interns, and volunteers in mutually beneficial relationships, and our institution's relationship with the community reflects a multifaceted commitment. Looking ahead, we should seek more opportunities to bring community leaders and change agents to campus to inform not only our students, but also faculty, staff, and institutional leadership. USF advisory boards often include community voices, but there is always room for more. We should seek additional opportunities for community use of campus spaces and resources, including meeting facilities. We should consider additional ways we might honor some of USF's most committed community partners. All of these actions build stronger connections with community partners serving our students as they seek to put knowledge into action.