



CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

Presidential Leadership Profile

University of San Francisco

San Francisco, CA

THE SEARCH

The Board of Trustees of the University of San Francisco invites nominations and applications for the 29th President of the University of San Francisco (USF). USF is recognized nationally and internationally as a leading Jesuit Catholic, urban university with a global perspective and is deeply embedded in the intellectual, spiritual, and cultural life of one of the most innovative, diverse, and dynamic cities in the world. Since its founding, the university has provided an education based in justice, service, and faith steeped in its Jesuit mission and values to students from different socioeconomic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. The president will have an exceptional opportunity to lead and help shape the future of this innovative, student-centered university as it continues to achieve its vision of positioning its students - and thus the university - to thrive in a rapidly changing world through local and global experiences that cultivate rigorous thought, hone future-ready skills, nurture the whole person, and prepare students for a pluralistic world. The university welcomes both candidates from the Society of Jesus and lay candidates who have a deep understanding of USF's Jesuit Catholic mission and ethos and the ability to inspire and engage others in this mission.

Established as San Francisco's first institution of higher education in 1855, USF instills Jesuit values in its graduates and these timeless values, especially *cura personalis* or care of the whole person, recognition of the human dignity of all people, and changing the world for the better, are more relevant than ever. USF serves approximately 5,800 undergraduate and approximately 3,400 graduate and professional students in Arts and Sciences, Education, Law, Management, and Nursing and Health Professions. The USF community is home to 1,127 faculty and librarian members, 963 staff members, and has an operating budget of over \$515 million.

The next president will succeed Rev. Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J., who concluded his service on December 31, 2024, after a decade in the office. USF Chancellor and Chief Mission Officer, Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J., has assumed the role of interim president of the university, effective Jan. 1, 2025. Fr. Fitzgibbons will not be a candidate for the permanent role. With Fr. Fitzgerald's leadership, the university developed a strategic plan for the university's future; strengthened its mission; expanded the campus footprint and visibility across San Francisco; overhauled facilities; and embraced a meaningful university-wide commitment to social justice. The university recently completed the largest ever comprehensive

campaign of over \$312 million and initiated an eight-year \$500 million campaign which is currently on track for completion after a successful first two and a half years.

As chief executive officer, the president leads the university, embodies its mission, and serves as the university's chief advocate and fundraiser. The president will be a critical thought leader for issues related to the university, its mission, and the broader higher education landscape and will be willing to make bold choices and tough decisions to sustain the long-term health and financial stability of the university. The president will be an ambassador for USF, able to articulate the value of a USF education as an investment in a future that pays dividends for a lifetime. The president will also continue to collaborate with leaders in the San Francisco community to create opportunities that will benefit both the city and the university. The president joins the university at a pivotal moment of tremendous opportunity and will be expected to:

- Unite the USF community around a compelling vision that celebrates the university's place as a top urban Jesuit Catholic institution and positions the university for a dynamic future
- Embody and promote USF's Jesuit Catholic values and commitment to social justice
- Ensure the financial stability of the institution
- Prioritize enrollment growth, program development, and student success
- Engage with all stakeholders and build an open and transparent culture
- Support USF's commitment to integrate sustainability and justice into all aspects of the university
- Realize USF's vision and strategic direction as San Francisco's university

A complete list of the desired qualifications and characteristics can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was produced as a result of extensive feedback sessions with all USF key stakeholder groups. All confidential nominations, inquiries, and applications should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

USF TODAY

Text. The University of San Francisco distinguishes itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high-quality scholarship and academic rigor, sustained by a "faith that does justice." The university draws from the cultural, intellectual, and economic resources of the San Francisco Bay Area and its location in a dynamic and culturally rich location to enrich and strengthen its educational programs. Deeply rooted in its [Jesuit mission](#) and guided by [aligned Catholic values](#), the community is mid-course in the implementation of the five-year strategic plan, [USF Strategic Plan 2027](#). Developed in June of 2022, the plan positions the university to thrive in a rapidly changing landscape, bolster student success, strengthen enrollment, and ensure the academic program's sustainability.

US News and World Report ranks USF in the top 15% of universities nationally for social mobility, and #109 among all national universities. The university is frequently recognized for its contribution to the common good. *US News* also ranks several undergraduate programs in the top 30 nationally, including nursing, entrepreneurship, and marketing. Rooted in service, the university is classified as a community-engaged institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The university welcomes and supports a student body reflective of San Francisco's diversity and rich multiculturalism. Over 30 percent of the university's students are first-generation college students, and the university has been designated an [Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution](#) by the Department of Education. The 2025 *US News and World Report* ranks USF as tied at number one for student body ethnic diversity among national universities, in addition to the distinction of being a "Best Value" national university.

USF's main campus is perched in the center of San Francisco and the hilltop campus is divided between two adjacent plots: Lone Mountain and lower campus. Spread across 55 acres in a residential neighborhood, the campus is separated by Turk Street in San Francisco's Inner Richmond neighborhood. From there, students have easy access to everything San Francisco offers, including 27 distinct neighborhoods, nearby recreation in Golden Gate Park, the Financial District, and music and museums south of Market Street as well as easy access to Silicon Valley and greater Northern California and the exciting and dynamic industries including high technology, bio-technology, AI, as well as venture capital and innovation in all its forms.

Academics

Distinguished by its Jesuit liberal arts foundation and strength in community-engaged learning, the university offers over 100 degree programs with over 70 majors, minors, and concentrations. Academics at USF are driven by a focus on intellectual rigor, innovation, and transformative learning experiences. The university is of the size and breadth to offer excellence in teaching, applied research, and service, but also offers a highly personal experience for students and faculty with a 12:1 student to faculty ratio. The university also offers robust internship and community outreach programs, and expanding both is a strategic goal.

In service of the goals of the Strategic Plan 2027, the university recently launched two academic initiatives – an expansion of [accelerated bachelor's and master's programs](#) and the interdisciplinary [Horizon Collective](#) initiative. USF offers an increasing portfolio of accelerated bachelor's and master's degree programs designed to address the needs of students seeking to go further and faster as they prepare for life after graduation. The number of accelerated bachelor's and master's pathways (e.g., 4+1 and dual degree programs) has doubled in the last year, positioning USF to become one of the premier providers of accelerated pathways. Additionally, the Horizon Collective aims to elevate USF's interdisciplinary teaching and research strengths in three areas of critical global need: climate and sustainability; artificial intelligence (AI) and technology; and health and wellbeing. Focusing on these three areas allows the

institution to address critical issues where students' interests, global needs, and labor market demands intersect.

Community

USF's faculty and librarian community is diverse, talented, and productive, winning national awards and grants that distinguish the work of this community of teacher-scholars. In the last 15 years, 18 faculty members were invited to participate in the Fulbright U.S. Scholars Program. All full-time faculty and librarians, except the law school faculty, are members of the USF Faculty Association (American Federation of Teachers, Local 4269), and all part-time faculty are members of the USF Part-Time Faculty Association (California Federation of Teachers, Local 6590). The associations represent members for the purposes of collective bargaining, ensuring economic and material well-being, fostering and protecting the rights of the individual under the contract, and promoting and preserving academic freedom. As the faculty governing bodies, the associations advance the Jesuit educational tradition as embodied in the University's statement of Mission and Goals, exercise a substantial voice in the allocation of university resources, and promote the educational and professional excellence of the University.

The USF community is also home to nearly 1,000 dedicated, passionate, highly talented staff members who are committed to the institution, its mission, and students. They are integral to the university's operations and support every aspect of the university. Staff are represented in the decision making at the university through the Staff Council. The Council engages and supports its members and the surrounding community, empowering excellence through growth and learning opportunities, staff recognition, workshops, trainings, and events, and collaborative partnerships that promote and enhance our experience at USF.

St. Ignatius Church, which serves as USF's chapel, is also home to the parish of St. Ignatius and is served by the Society of Jesus. It is a prominent fixture on the campus that provides a beautiful and compelling connection to St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit community. One of the city's largest churches, its location on the hilltop as well as its twin spires and dome also make it a prominent San Francisco landmark. The Church recently underwent a major refurbishment that will ensure its prominence for many years into the future.

[Star Route Farms](#), a self-sustaining organic farm in Bolinas, CA, was purchased by USF in 2017. It is the longest running certified organic farm in California and has 40 acres of organically farmed land and 60 acres of mixed-woodland habitat, including riparian forest and a year-round stream, Pine Gulch Creek. The farm delivers vegetables and produce to approximately 50 restaurants in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and sells their products to consumers in Farmers Markets. They operate 12 months a year and provide products to the USF campus for student, faculty and staff meals. The farm, land, creek, and associated out-buildings also provide USF faculty, staff, and students an incredible opportunity to escape the urban landscape and participate in innovative learning experiences through courses, research, retreats, and workshops.

The [Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning](#) at the University of San Francisco (USF) encourages persons, age 50 and older, from all walks of life, to engage their minds in academic pursuits while enriching their social lives with a community of fellow lifelong learners. The Institute offers noncredit courses with no assignments with no other objective than the love of learning. Organized in 1976 with support from Hanna and Alfred Fromm, the Institute's program served as a model for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes that have been established at over 120 universities and colleges in the United States

The University of San Francisco [Silk Speaker Series](#) is designed to provide learning opportunities and discussions for USF's students, alumni, faculty, and friends of the university and to broaden the reputation of USF as a leader in business ideas and innovation. Key thought leaders on global affairs, the economy, business, sports and entertainment, and other topics bring the community together and shine a spotlight on USF. Past speakers include Viola Davis, Trevor Noah, Kal Penn, Charles Schwab, and Janet Yellen.

In addition to its campus in San Francisco, USF has a long, distinguished history of providing working adults the opportunity to further their education through its satellite campuses. These campuses are located in Downtown San Francisco, Sacramento, Santa Rosa, San Jose, and Pleasanton and offer full services conveniently located to students' homes and workplaces. Online degree programs are available in a growing number of fields.

Athletics help cultivate the health, character, and sense of community among the student body at USF and USF has a long and rich history of excellence in athletics. The [USF Dons](#) boast 13 team and individual national championships, 101 conference championships, and 102 All-Americans throughout the institution's history, including basketball legend Bill Russell, distance runner Charlotte Taylor, and NFL Hall of Famer Ollie Matson of the undefeated 1951 Dons football team. The men's and women's basketball teams have developed a particularly strong national reputation in recent years and the university also fields teams in baseball, men's and women's teams in soccer, cross country, golf, and track and field, and women's volleyball, beach volleyball, and triathlon. In addition to varsity sports, USF offers robust club sports programs and a thriving intramural sports program.

Finances

USF is a tuition-dependent institution that relies upon an ability to generate favorable operating results to finance its activities. For FY2025, the total operating budget is approximately \$515 million, with budgeted enrollment of 9,434 students. Compared to FY2024, student credit hours decreased by 4.1%. Actual enrollment for Fall 2024 was 8,863, or 5.0% short of budgeted enrollment. For FY2026, tuition for traditional undergraduates will increase by 3.9%, while various graduate programs will see varying increases. The unrestricted financial aid budget is set at \$143.1 million, reflecting a slight decrease from the previous year's budget in light of lower enrollment. The FY2025 budget aims to address a \$58 million deficit, accumulated over several years, through identified savings and additional revenues, with a focus on reallocating resources to support new academic programs and maintaining university reserves. The university holds an A3 rating from Moody's Investors Services, and the university is working to address recent trends, including dropping enrollment, increasing discounting, and increasing operating costs. The

USF budget emphasizes managing these financial challenges, while ensuring strategic alignment with the university's mission and priorities.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the president is the chief executive officer of the university and is responsible for all areas of operation for the institution, including academic excellence and student success, management of staff, faculty and librarians, investments and budgets, facilities, enrollment management, marketing and public relations, alumni relations, and fundraising. The president is an ex-officio member of all standing committees of the Board of Trustees, presides at key university functions, and represents the university before the public. A successful candidate must be able to advance the Jesuit Catholic mission and identity of the university; maintain and develop a strong relationship with the local Jesuit community, especially its rector/superior through regular meetings and other forms of communication; and maintain and develop a strong relationship with the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the larger Society of Jesus and its other apostolic works.

Reporting to the president are the officers of the university, who comprise USF's cabinet: Chancellor and Chief Mission Officer; Chief Operating Officer (currently being filled by the Acting Sr. Vice President and General Counsel); Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs; Vice President, Business and Finance; Vice President, Development; Vice President, Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Vice President, Marketing Communications; Vice President, Operations; and Vice President, Student Life. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees is an officer of the Board of Trustees and reports to the Board in that capacity and to the President as an executive assistant.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE TITLE

The president is responsible for determining and implementing the university's strategic priorities while responding to the changing higher education environment. The president will be expected to:

Unite the USF community around a compelling vision that celebrates the university's place as a top urban Jesuit Catholic institution and positions it for a dynamic future

The USF community shares the ambition to reach ever greater heights of academic excellence and be even more widely recognized as a premier Jesuit Catholic institution. To achieve these goals, the value of a USF education will be more widely understood and celebrated as an investment in the future in California and beyond. In the increasingly competitive higher education environment, it is critical to have a common understanding of what makes a USF education truly distinct and a clear roadmap for how USF will further define and differentiate itself in the future. The president must be an innovative thinker who can critically assess the university's current position and articulate a compelling vision for the future. In partnership with the Board of Trustees, Cabinet and other senior leaders, Faculty Associations, Staff Council, students,

and other governing bodies, the president will establish a clear set of priorities to achieve this vision, ensuring that decisions are made in a collaborative and transparent way and communicated broadly. On a practical level, the president must ensure that this message is reflected in university communications and branding, as well as in its enrollment strategy.

Embody and promote USF's Jesuit Catholic values and commitment to social justice

The president must embrace and personify the institution's ethos and values. The president will have a deep appreciation for and understanding of Jesuit Catholic higher education and be able to clearly and consistently articulate and advance the Jesuit Catholic character of the university. Furthermore, the president must inspire the university community to embrace a distinctively Jesuit and modern way of proceeding in advancing its mission, including a deep commitment to engagement with the world's most challenging issues; fostering a community of reflection and discernment; engaging with the Catholic intellectual tradition; championing care for the marginalized; encouraging ecumenical and interfaith dialogue; and advancing a USF education in a way that is distinctively global, Jesuit, and Catholic. In understanding and appreciating the university's history, mission, and identity, the president will lead the community in further evolving USF's identity to best address current conditions and institutional priorities.

In alignment with the mission and core values of USF, the president will work to uphold the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This requires a relational leader with high emotional intelligence and an unwavering commitment to social justice. The president will prioritize efforts to serve students, faculty, librarians, and staff with underrepresented identities; recruit and retain faculty, librarians, and staff who reflect the diversity of the student body; and create a sense of belonging on campus.

Ensure the financial stability of the institution

As a tuition-dependent institution, the university's long-term sustainability requires that it be ready to embrace change, respond to new opportunities, create and enhance programs that are striking points of distinction for USF, divest of programs that are not financially viable, and successfully navigate economic challenges. The president must be able to think creatively about new educational models and ways to reach students, while always ensuring both that the principles and tenets of a Jesuit education are upheld, and that USF's programs remain accessible and of an exceptionally high quality. The president must be willing to take bold steps and empower the provost, vice presidents, deans, and faculty and librarians to experiment and pursue ideas about new sources of revenue, particularly in the professional schools. The president must consult widely and be transparent in decision making but willing to make tough decisions.

The president will also be the university's chief fundraiser and will work to create a team of highly capable leaders, both in the development office and throughout the university, as partners in fundraising efforts. The president will steward existing relationships with alumni, foundation and community leaders, and other philanthropic supporters while also expanding the base of support by cultivating prospective donors. Growing both annual giving as well as the university's endowment will be important priorities.

Prioritize enrollment growth, program development, and student success

The president will play a central role in positioning USF to nurture a well-qualified, mission-focused, and diverse student body year-over-year, employing data-informed decision-making to improve enrollment growth and student retention. In partnership with academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment management leadership, athletics, and other leaders, the next president will establish strategic enrollment goals, set priorities, and allocate the financial resources to achieve them. Success on this front will include an analysis of current marketing, recruitment, and student success and retention efforts. The president will leverage the city of San Francisco as a distinct advantage. The president will also celebrate USF's legacy as a leader in athletics, showcasing USF's long-standing commitment to student athletes consistent with its Jesuit values, particularly as the institution navigates the changing nature of athletics. The successful president will also ensure that USF students and graduates are even more highly sought after in the job market as interns and employees, are successful in pursuing advanced degrees, and go on to live lives of meaning and purpose. This will involve the collaborative development of relevant academic offerings, particularly accelerated programs and the Horizon Initiative.

Engage with all stakeholders and build an open and transparent culture

The next president will need to be a servant leader, a convener, a bridge-builder, and an open, transparent communicator who values input from the greater community. The president must be accessible to the university community and the city of San Francisco and engage openly, authentically, and frequently with students, faculty, librarians, staff, alumni, the Jesuit community, and Board. Bringing the university community together, leading varied voices through conversation and reflection, enhancing strong alumni relations, and negotiating and identifying points of commonality will anchor the success of the next president.

Support USF's commitment to integrate sustainability and justice into all aspects of the university

USF was among the first Jesuit universities to respond to the Vatican's call to integrate sustainability and justice throughout all Catholic institutions by committing to a seven-year action planning process to meet the goals arising from Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* encyclical on care for a common home. Administrators, faculty, librarians, staff, and students have prepared a plan that seeks to: enhance the community's ecological spirituality and culture; enhance students' exposure to integrated and interdisciplinary approaches to the environment and social justice; pursue sustainable operations that put words into action; and better coordinate, support, and uplift the university's existing strengths. The president must be committed to realizing these goals and positioning USF to become a higher education leader on issues that are of vital importance and that will continue to be in the decades to come, attracting students and helping them prepare for the challenges ahead.

Realize USF's vision as San Francisco's university

The university is uniquely positioned to offer extraordinary educational and life experiences for its students. San Francisco provides a rich and diverse cultural setting, and as a hub for innovation is home

to many new and burgeoning industries in technology and artificial intelligence, healthcare, finance, education, and not-for-profit organizations. Countless leaders and prominent figures in the San Francisco community are alumni, donors, parents, or friends of the university. This environment provides students, faculty, librarians, and staff rich opportunities for global engagement and leadership. USF has made remarkable progress in further raising its visibility in the San Francisco Bay Area in recent years by offering many high-quality academic programs, the Silk Speaker Series, the Fromm Institute, and through a marketing campaign that highlights the distinct nature of a USF education. However, as the San Francisco market has several highly competitive universities and the city itself has suffered from some decline in its reputation, the president must lead USF to connect in ever more meaningful ways to the San Francisco community while also promoting its distinctive offerings and its location in San Francisco on a national and international scale. The successful president will ensure that USF students and graduates are even more highly sought after in the broader job market as interns and employees; that the faculty are even more widely recognized as intellectual leaders in their fields; and that USF's success becomes even more of a source of pride for the city.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The University of San Francisco seeks a visionary, inspiring, and collaborative leader to guide the institution's next period of growth and to uphold the Jesuit, Catholic, liberal arts mission of the university.

The successful candidate will offer evidence of many of the following experiences, abilities, and qualities:

- A deep understanding of the university's Jesuit mission and ethos and the ability to inspire and engage others in this mission;
- An understanding of and commitment to the Ignatian method of discernment in decision-making;
- A proven commitment to and understanding of the value of academic excellence in both teaching and scholarship and experience in supporting such excellence;
- A sound grasp of complex financial models and a demonstrated ability to build a sustainable model of affordable higher education that considers best practices but also encourages innovation and experimentation in areas such as financial incentives, curricular flexibility, enrollment management, and delivery methods;
- A record of embracing change, making bold but calculated decisions, and understanding risk;
- A record of personal and visible leadership in seeking philanthropic support. This would include enhancing and leveraging internal and external fundraising resources to build support for endowment, operations, and capital projects;
- A genuine, personal commitment to diversity in all its forms, and social and environmental justice, with a particular sensitivity to USF's global perspective;
- An ability to cultivate and maintain a strong relationship with the Jesuit community at the university, especially with its rector/superior, the Society of Jesus and its works, including the superior general of the order and the local provincial, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, International Association of Jesuit Universities, other Jesuit colleges and universities, as well as the Archdiocese of San Francisco;

- Exceptionally strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills and the ability to galvanize stakeholders around a strategic vision in a context where stakeholders have different motivations and interests and are spread out geographically;
- A charismatic and genuine communication style and ability to connect with a variety of audiences as the spokesperson for USF. This includes the ability to create meaningful dialogue around important issues and to lead in times of crisis;
- Deep commitment to shared governance and a track record of successfully engaging in complex decision making;
- Proven, successful experience in the executive leadership of a values-based higher education institution, including involving varied and diverse constituencies (faculty, librarians, staff, students, alumni) in a common pursuit;
- Exceptional management skills and a strong track record of developing leaders, managers, and administrators, delegating to them, holding them accountable, and ensuring succession plans;
- A decisive, yet inclusive leadership style that embraces risk-taking and innovation to adapt to changing global perceptions and local dynamics;
- Leadership characteristics – personal integrity, honesty, intelligence, a commitment to excellence, outstanding judgment, energy, creativity, decisiveness, courage of conviction, diplomacy, resilience, tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to inspire others, and a sense of humor;
- An earned doctorate or terminal degree is preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The salary range for this position is \$550,000-\$650,000 annually, commensurate with related experience and qualifications. Other compensation, including short- and long-term incentive programs as well as certain expense allowances, including a housing allowance, may be offered depending on the needs and qualifications of the successful candidate.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-san-francisco/president>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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