



# ✦ Notre Dame 2033: A Strategic Framework

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# Introduction

No strategy works in the abstract. This strategic framework is for a particular institution, the University of Notre Dame, at a particular moment in its history.

**To foreground our conclusion: Notre Dame must be the leading global Catholic research university, on par with but distinct from the world’s best private universities. This effort to educate students and conduct research at the highest level animated by a distinctive Catholic mission is one of the most exciting and consequential experiments in global higher education.**

Notre Dame is now the only religious university in the Association of American Universities (AAU), the nation’s leading organization of research-intensive universities. Notre Dame’s opportunity, even obligation, is to offer a complementary approach to excellence that bridges faith and reason in an academic world accustomed to separating them. Notre Dame’s approach is anchored in Roman Catholicism, the religious tradition that gave birth to universities in the medieval era and that has become the world’s most global, multicultural, and multilingual institution.

Contemporary research universities — including Notre Dame — are weakened by barriers erected between units such as schools and colleges that inhibit multidisciplinary teaching and research. Many curricular and research programs are appropriately housed in a single school or college. Yet other programs require more coordinated approaches, as do the federal agencies, foundations, and benefactors that fund them. More than any previous planning effort at Notre Dame, this strategic framework identifies areas where colleges, schools, and divisions working together will allow Notre Dame to make meaningful contributions to questions of national and international concern.

**Becoming the Notre Dame the world needs will require the University to become better at thinking as an institution.** Inspired by a common mission, located on one campus, and of a manageable size, Notre Dame is well positioned to do this. Getting there will require imagination and daring. An example: in the last generation, Notre Dame began more than 40 centers and institutes. These units have unequivocally enhanced Notre Dame’s research profile and its capacity to educate students. The next generation at Notre Dame will see the founding of new entities, but will also include more thoughtful collaboration as well as the consolidation of related programs. The University will make new investments but also foster coordination of existing funds and positions in colleges, schools, centers, and institutes. Relatedly, the University will hire more faculty holding joint appointments in two or more departments, schools, or centers and institutes with the hope that these colleagues can serve as a form of intellectual connective tissue.

# The process

The process culminating in this document began more than two years ago. It included a rearticulation of the University's goals and a decision to develop a strategic framework, not a strategic plan, to convey both flexibility and a commitment to revisit and adapt the document at regular intervals.<sup>1</sup>

The Moment to See, Courage to Act effort, beginning in early 2021, included over 700 faculty developing more than 100 proposals. Colleges and schools simultaneously drafted strategic plans. To complement these efforts, the University chartered seven faculty-led, University-wide theme advisory committees on academic excellence; the environment; health and well-being; poverty; global initiatives; service to the Church; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Two staff-led committees — on stewardship and external engagement — assessed how to broaden the reach of Notre Dame and strengthen our commitment to continuous improvement and stewardship of our resources. The deans' council discussed ideas for the framework at two retreats, and each dean served on a theme advisory committee. An outline of the framework was presented at 26 separate campus meetings, including all college and school governing bodies, Academic Council, Faculty Senate, and many divisions. The President's Leadership Council members discussed the framework at multiple retreats. Board of Trustee members scrutinized the planning documents of other universities and discussed this framework in various iterations at three successive meetings in 2022–23. Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, and friends will work together to implement the ideas put forth in this document and, ultimately, advance the University's goals.

<sup>1</sup>“A Message from Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.  
— University Strategic Planning Process,”  
March 3, 2022.

## *University Goals*

### **I.**

Ensure that our Catholic character informs all our endeavors.

### **II.**

Offer an unsurpassed undergraduate education that nurtures the formation of mind, body, and spirit.

### **III.**

Provide superb graduate and professional programs that deliver disciplinary excellence, foster multidisciplinary connections, and advance knowledge in the search for truth.

### **IV.**

Advance human understanding through scholarship and research that seeks to heal, unify, and enlighten.



*Notre Dame in 1990*



*Notre Dame today*

## Part I:

# Where Notre Dame has been and where it is now

### **If we could return to Notre Dame in 1990, much would be familiar.**

Founded by Rev. Edward F. Sorin, C.S.C., and the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1842, the University has been among the most national of American colleges and universities since the mid-20th century. It attracted students from across the United States, typically graduates of Catholic high schools drawn to Notre Dame as a leading Catholic university. The University's wider reputation derived from a tradition of excellent undergraduate education and the publicity given to the University's athletic teams, with their successes on and off the playing fields.<sup>2</sup> The leadership was unusually stable, with one president, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., serving from 1952 to 1987 and a second president, Rev. Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C., serving from 1987 to 2005.

The dedication of our alumni was striking. As early as the 1960s, alumni and friends provided matching funds to surpass the largest grant in the University's history, from the Ford Foundation. This collective effort began with a televised address to alumni clubs in 175 cities. Notre Dame still claims more such clubs (supported by alumni, parents, and friends) than any other university: 224 in the United States and 42 outside the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Notre Dame frequently reaffirmed its commitment to its Catholic mission, even if the implications of that mission for the curriculum and faculty and student recruitment provoked continual discussion. Many of the University's strongest academic programs in 1990, typically in the humanities and humanistic social sciences in areas ranging from medieval studies to Irish literature to Latin American politics, had developed out of a conscious affinity with Catholicism as an intellectual tradition. Benefactors endowed faculty positions, along with related library collections. Notre Dame faculty, unsurprisingly, wrote some of the most considered reflections on how a university might combine Catholicism with high intellectual standing.<sup>4</sup>

Our institutional commitment to teaching and the reputation of our undergraduate education was superior. Students won national fellowships, volunteered for

<sup>2</sup> John Underwood, "Casting a Special Light," *Sports Illustrated* (January 10, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> The Ford Foundation offered Notre Dame \$12 million but only if the University raised \$24 million. The University raised \$32 million. Thomas E. Blantz, C.S.C., *The University of Notre Dame: A History* (Notre Dame, 2020), 405–407.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., ed., *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University* (Notre Dame, 1994); Alasdair Macintyre, "Catholic Universities: Dangers, Hopes, Choices," in *Higher Learning and Catholic Traditions*, ed. Robert E. Sullivan (Notre Dame, 2001), 1–21; Robert E. Sullivan, "The University of Notre Dame's catholic and Catholic future: professors, teaching and scholarship" (2007); Mark W. Roche, *The Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism and the Idea of a Catholic University* (Notre Dame, 2003); Christian Smith and John C. Cavadini, *Building Catholic Higher Education: Unofficial Reflections from the University of Notre Dame* (Eugene, OR, 2014).



full-time service after graduation, found employment with major firms, and were admitted to selective medical, law, and graduate schools.

The single-sex residential system, anchored by the presence of Holy Cross priests and brothers, and, since the 1970s, women religious and laypeople, signaled the importance of character and formation, not simply academic accomplishment. At its best, it cultivated a profound sense of community. The first question asked (even now) when two Notre Dame graduates meet each other for the first time is: “What dorm did you live in?”

**Much was also different.** Graduate and professional programs were typically small. Law (1869) and Architecture (1898) had long and worthy histories but modest national influence. The University did not grant its first master’s degrees in business administration until 1969. Almost all doctoral programs ranked below competitors in the Big 10, the University of California system, the Ivy League, and institutions such as Stanford, the University of Chicago, Duke, and Johns Hopkins. Programs in science and engineering — with a few exceptions such as math, nuclear physics, and vector biology — were poorly ranked and hindered by dated equipment and facilities. No dedicated office of research existed until 2004 and few research programs attracted major federal, foundation, or corporate funding. Administrators encouraged faculty to conduct research, but struggled to find the resources (and create the time) to support that research.

Our financial situation was stable if unpromising. The wonder is how much was accomplished with so little. Only in the 1980s did faculty salaries at Notre Dame begin to creep above the median for major research universities.<sup>5</sup> Financial aid for undergraduates — excepting Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) programs and athletic scholarships — was insufficient, and admitted students often reluctantly chose to enroll at low-cost state institutions or private colleges and universities with stronger aid packages.

The inability to meet demonstrated financial need inhibited efforts to diversify (in economic and ethnic terms) an overwhelmingly white and middle-class undergraduate student body. Notre Dame first admitted women as undergraduates in 1972, roughly at the same moment as Harvard, Dartmouth, Princeton, and other once all-male institutions. As late as 1990, though, women numbered only 37 percent of the undergraduate student body (and a small percentage of faculty

<sup>5</sup> William J. Baumol and Maryse Eymonerie. “Rising Costs and the Public Institutions: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession 1969–1970,” *AAUP Bulletin* 56, no. 2 (1970): 174–239, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40224518>. W. Lee Hansen and Maryse Eymonerie, “Regressing into the Eighties: Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 1979–80,” *Academe* 66, no. 5 (1980): 260–320, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40249415>. Notre Dame Fact Book 1969–70: 26–34, <https://data.nd.edu/reports/faculty-salaries>.

and administrators). The institution at all levels grappled with forging an inclusive community in a historically male, predominantly white milieu.

**Core characteristics of the Notre Dame of 1990 endure**, notably the emphasis on undergraduate education and the residential experience, and our commitment to the University's Catholic mission. Undergraduate education has been deepened by opportunities for research (including a focus on senior theses, experiential learning, and projects), community engagement, and study abroad options. Division I athletics still provides a focal point for students and alumni, but athletic successes stretch well beyond the revenue-producing sports of football and men's basketball to the full complement of women's sports. Women's basketball, men's and women's fencing, and lacrosse have recently won national championships. Surveys of graduating seniors record extraordinarily high rates of satisfaction with the education they received and the community they found at Notre Dame, although, notably, satisfaction with the community is lower for first-generation college students and underrepresented minorities. Continuity in leadership remains significant: three presidents since 1952 with Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., as president since 2005, six provosts since 1970, five executive vice presidents since 1957, and long tenures for many deans.

**The most important changes were financial.** Financial acumen and best-in-class fundraising and endowment management combined to elevate our endowment to the seventh largest for private universities in 2022. The most recent comprehensive fundraising campaign was the largest ever by any private university without a medical school. The percentage of alumni who donate each year to the University has consistently ranked in the top three, along with Princeton and Dartmouth, institutions with significantly smaller alumni populations. The percentage of parent donors who are not alumni is also one of the top three in the country.<sup>6</sup>

Returns on the endowment over a 25-year period ranked among the highest of all universities. In 1990, Notre Dame's endowment was just over \$600 million and the payout covered 10 percent of the University's annual budget; it is now roughly \$17 billion and the payout covers 37 percent of a much larger budget. In 1990, the endowment was smaller than the endowments of the University of Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Emory, and Northwestern; today it is larger than the endowment at each of these institutions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Council For Aid to Education, *VSE-CAE Voluntary Support of Education Report*.

<sup>7</sup> National Association of College and University Business Officers, *Historic Endowment Study Data*.

Our financial successes — made possible by the loyalty and generosity of the American Catholic community from which Notre Dame draws most of its students and supporters — enabled three notable transformations:

**The first transformation was the most visible: an astonishing number of buildings constructed between 1990 and 2023.** These facilities reconstituted the physical campus and allowed the University to develop more extensive research programs for faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students. Board of Trustee policies mandated that the funding for these buildings come out of benefaction, not tuition dollars, and their design and location followed a rigorously reviewed campus master plan. The largest facilities were in Science and Engineering, including a major new facility bolstering nanotechnology and energy research, a state-of-the-art teaching facility, and two equally sizable buildings (one now underway) dedicated to interdisciplinary investigation in the life sciences and bioengineering. Law, Business, and Architecture opened impressive new facilities. Music faculty and students occupied the first facility constructed for music since the 19th century. The University completed the first two buildings dedicated to the social sciences in Notre Dame's history and a building housing the Keough School of Global Affairs. A performing arts center opened in 2004. An art museum will open in November 2023.

The total square feet on the campus dedicated to academic purposes doubled between 1990 and 2022, from 2.5 million to 5 million. Few, if any, private research universities expanded their physical plant at such a velocity. This number does not include a new student center or a new graduate student housing complex. Or the building of 10 undergraduate residence halls (with one more under construction), in part to relieve overcrowding but even more to deepen undergraduate community life.

**The second transformation was in the makeup of the undergraduate student body.** Skeptical observers had once wondered whether Notre Dame's undergraduate program could continue to attract the most talented Catholic high school students after these students were admitted in large numbers to leading secular universities.<sup>8</sup>

Notre Dame passed this market test. In 1990, half of the high school seniors who applied to Notre Dame were accepted and just under half of those students matriculated. In 2022, by contrast, 13 percent of a much larger number of students who applied were accepted and 60 percent of those students matriculated. Of those who report test scores, 54 percent of students admitted in the class of 2022 were in the top 1 percent of all students. Almost 90 percent were in the top 5 percent.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, 1968), 59.

<sup>9</sup> The percentage of students who report test scores is dropping in a test-optional environment; 44 percent of Notre Dame applicants reported their test scores in the last admissions cycle.

What accounts for this evolution? Much rested on the decision of the Board of Trustees to establish as a goal meeting full demonstrated financial need for undergraduate students. Notre Dame is now one of roughly 50 colleges and universities with both need-blind admissions for domestic undergraduate applicants and a commitment to meet demonstrable financial need. Significant pressure still exists on the children of middle-class families hoping to attend Notre Dame, especially if they have siblings. These admitted students and their parents often weigh the cost of an education at Notre Dame versus merit scholarships and more affordable options elsewhere.

Still, despite the steadily rising cost of a Notre Dame education, the indebtedness of Notre Dame students upon graduation has gone down, not up, in the last decade because of strong financial aid packages. This same focus has allowed for the recent sharp increase in Pell-eligible students (students whose families typically have incomes of less than \$65,000 per year) and first-generation college students. These students now number more than 20 percent of the incoming class of undergraduate first-year students. The cumulative result is a 2023 undergraduate student body more academically accomplished and more diverse along almost every measure than any student body in the University's history.

**The third transformation has been the growth in the range and quality of academic research conducted at the University.** A fundamental question at Notre Dame was once: "Should we become a research university?" The more relevant question now is: "How great a research university can we be?" Leading private research universities are undeniably resource intensive. But they undeniably shape our world. They educate a disproportionate number of local, national, and global leaders, and research conducted at these institutions plays a pivotal role in addressing enduring problems and contemporary challenges.

At Notre Dame, external research funds brought to the University grew from \$78 million in 2004 to \$281 million in 2022. This rate of increase was among the fastest for private research universities. When dollars received by medical schools at other universities are removed from their totals, a meaningful comparison since Notre Dame does not have a medical school, Notre Dame compares well with most — although not all — of the most competitive private research universities. More than any other single factor, this expansion of research drove Notre Dame's admittance to the AAU.



## *Part II:* Where Notre Dame should go

The path forward proposed in this framework is organized around three themes: strengthening foundations, global Catholicism, and science and engineering for a world in need.

### ✦ *A. Strengthening foundations.*

Universities are known by their best faculty, students, and programs. Our strategy in the next generation will typically be to strengthen already excellent foundations in an effort to achieve preeminence, not aspire for competence in areas where our track record is modest.

#### **1. For Notre Dame to flourish in the next decade, significant investments must be made in its most important resource: its people.**

Ensuring that an even more accomplished, even more diverse community of students, staff, and faculty thrives at Notre Dame is the bedrock upon which everything else rests.

##### **(a) Investing in faculty.**

No group is as important to the reputation of the University, or more central to its accomplishments. Improvements in overall faculty quality and scholarly productivity over the last generation are evident. All rankings systems are imperfect, but a few of Notre Dame's departments are now ranked among the world's very best. Over the past two decades every major department has improved its ranking, and more than half of the departments are ranked in the first quartile.<sup>10</sup> Initiatives coming out of this strategic framework must advance the reputations of departments and schools, even as they encourage collaborative projects.

Notre Dame awarded 287 doctoral degrees in 2022, more than some AAU private institutions, although not an especially high number when measured against the number of our faculty. A few measures of scholarly excellence — national fellowships in the humanities, funding levels for

<sup>10</sup> Theology is ranked No. 1 in the latest Quacquarelli Symonds' (QS) rankings; Philosophy is ranked No. 12. On other rankings see *U.S. News and World Report* graduate school rankings.

individual faculty in science and engineering fields, publications in highly regarded journals in some disciplines — place Notre Dame among the country's most distinguished universities. Professional school programs — including the JD and the MBA — are ranked in the top 30 and are among the most competitive in the country on some measures, notably law school graduates placed in federal court clerkships.

Other comparisons are less flattering. The University has a number of federally funded, multidisciplinary research centers, but few funded at the highest, most prestigious level. The number of Notre Dame scholars elected to honorary societies such as the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences is low.<sup>11</sup> Visibility in international rankings is lower.<sup>12</sup> A persistent risk remains a willingness to promote faculty without, in the words of another university's strategic plan, identifying markers of "potential greatness."<sup>13</sup>

The number of faculty at Notre Dame has grown significantly over the last generation, from fewer than 800 faculty members in 2002 to more than 1,300 in 2022. Only a few departments and programs can plausibly claim to be undersized. Authorizing new faculty positions — among the most consequential decisions any university makes — and reallocation of positions upon departure or retirement can now more closely mirror strategic initiatives. The challenge is to identify where the addition of a select group of faculty can catapult an already good program to excellence. These targeted initiatives require greater alignment across colleges, schools, centers, and institutes, since only such collaboration will result in appointments benefiting multiple units and prevent the duplication of expertise.

### **(b) Investing in undergraduates.**

Undergraduate education remains the University's greatest strength. Even as Notre Dame has become a major research university, its beating heart remains the Catholic liberal arts education at its core. This long tradition of excellence must be strengthened and nurtured.

**Part of that investment will again be financial.** Trade-offs in the area of undergraduate financial aid are complex, and must be calculated in the context of support for doctoral and professional students as well

<sup>11</sup> Notre Dame has one current faculty member in the National Academy of Sciences while the average of the AAU privates is 28. Notre Dame has two current faculty members in the National Academy of Engineering while the AAU private median is 11. Notre Dame has seven current faculty members (and 13 emeritus faculty members) in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences while the AAU private median for active faculty members is 28.

<sup>12</sup> Notre Dame ranks 220 in the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings, and the median rank for other AAU private institutions is 42.5.

<sup>13</sup> The reference is to a 1980 strategic plan at Duke University. See William C. Kirby, *Empires of Ideas: Creating the Modern University from Germany to America to China* (Cambridge, MA, 2022), 211.

(see below). Still, the national and global context of economic inequality compels Notre Dame and universities like it to develop even wider pathways to socio-economic mobility. To sustain the successes of the last generation, Notre Dame must consider financial aid strategies that will make it even more accessible to applicants from low-income backgrounds. The University will also build on recent efforts to target financial aid funds to avoid a campus divided between students at the highest and lowest points on the family income spectrum.

Relatedly, Notre Dame will become more intentional in creating pathways for lower-socioeconomic students to Notre Dame. Some research universities are experimenting with K-12 education, even creating charter schools near their campuses to build a pipeline of students. Our strategy will be different. Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) includes three ACE Academies and programs that train teachers and principals in more than 200 Catholic schools. The University should begin accompanying students in these schools — and analogous schools such as those in the Jesuit Cristo Rey network — from sixth grade through college graduation. This means making use of weekends and summers to supplement their in-school educational experience, ensuring that these students are better prepared to flourish at a place like Notre Dame.

**Part of that investment will be curricular.** That Notre Dame developed its research programs later than many of its peers meant that working with undergraduates was of paramount importance, expected of even the most distinguished senior faculty. This emphasis on teaching surprises (and pleases) faculty moving to Notre Dame from other universities. It must be sustained. We attract some of the most talented young people in the world and incur an obligation to challenge them. Every undergraduate should have an opportunity to pursue research as well as meaningful co-curricular experiences and a sufficient number of small-enrollment courses.

Attracting a differently prepared student body — with more first-generation college and low-income students of tremendous ability but often without access to advanced courses in high school — will mean increased investment in tutoring and multidimensional advising. This support is necessary both inside and outside the classroom. While new



strategies for tutoring and advising will include all our students, our new Transformational Leaders Program, in particular, is designed to support first-generation and low-income students.

Given the technological changes shaping how students learn, the provost's office has also charged Notre Dame Learning with assessing current pedagogical practices. We will encourage faculty, including teams of faculty working together on required courses, to compare strategies and assess how we can better ensure that our student learning environments enable success.

**Part of that investment will be in residential and community life.**

Nothing more distinguishes Notre Dame than the communities formed within residence halls. Because Notre Dame's Catholic and Holy Cross vision of education emphasizes the formation and development of the whole person, strengthening the communities formed within residence halls is crucial and led to the University requiring students to live on campus for a minimum of three years. Deepening that commitment — when off-campus alternatives possess considerable attraction — requires continuing renovation of older residence halls and construction of new residence halls when renovation is impractical.

Forging connections between student life and the academic core is also essential. These connections range from small items — ensuring space for faculty apartments in renovated or newly constructed residence halls — to larger projects such as reconceiving the required Moreau course for first-year students as an even deeper collaboration between the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Education, and the colleges and schools.

The mental health challenges faced by contemporary students also impinge on community life. Notre Dame, like its peers, is working to increase staffing in its counseling center and create an array of opportunities for mental health support, education, prevention, and early intervention. (The Division of Student Affairs is central to our research efforts in mental health, as described below.) At the same time, we can also afford to take a broader view, creating links between spiritual development and mental health and working to cultivate a culture of reflection and discernment among students.

### (c) Investing in graduate students, professional degree students, and postdoctoral fellows.

Graduate education for doctoral students occurs primarily at the level of the department or school, not the president's or provost's office, but the Graduate School is an important advocate for and supporter of all students.

One fundamental challenge is not complex: graduate students are attracted to work with successful faculty, but Ph.D. stipends matter too. The challenge is less to grow the size of our doctoral programs — a goal a generation ago — and more to ensure that Notre Dame competes for the strongest students and provides the best environment for them to flourish. These efforts to enhance stipend levels for doctoral students will require coordination between the Graduate School and the schools and colleges. On average, we now typically pay just over \$30,000 a year to admitted doctoral students, but some of our peers are offering \$40,000 per year and beyond.<sup>14</sup> We need to be competitive on stipends to avoid talented students choosing other programs for financial reasons alone.

The financial challenges presented by professional degree programs — law, business, architecture, divinity, global affairs, creative writing, fine arts and design — are slightly different. For most of its history, like its peers, Notre Dame provided little financial aid for professional students. Especially in law and business, the assumption was that students would quickly repay educational debts incurred with salaries from professional positions. This assumption is no longer always operative. More financial aid is now needed to ensure the diverse classes that create the strongest educational environment and to allow students in professional degree programs to choose between more and less remunerative career paths.

Postdoctoral fellows are a relatively new addition to the Notre Dame ecosystem. These scholars come to Notre Dame after completing a Ph.D. elsewhere, typically for two to three years of training that enables them to move onto high-level positions in academia, government, and industry. Especially in Science and Engineering, they often constitute the lifeblood of a vibrant research program. The number of postdoctoral fellows at Notre Dame, however, remains low when compared to peer institutions.<sup>15</sup> We need to increase that number, in part by endowing such fellowships. Doing so will strengthen multiple programs.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Doctoral student stipends at Princeton, Northwestern, Duke, and Chicago all begin in the high \$30,000 range and can reach well over \$40,000 per year.

<sup>15</sup> The number of postdoctoral fellows has been steadily increasing at AAU institutions but has remained comparatively stagnant at Notre Dame (1995–2020). National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, *Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering Survey*.

<sup>16</sup> Sam Zhang, K. Hunter Wapman, Daniel B. Larremore, and Aaron Clauset, "Labor advantages drive the greater productivity of faculty at elite universities," *Science Advances* 8 (2022), no. 46.

#### **(d) Investing in staff.**

Attracting, developing, and retaining talented and diverse staff across all areas is critical for Notre Dame to achieve its aspirations. We know that investing in career development opportunities for staff is vital. Superb staff play an indispensable role in advancing our academic core, creating enriching experiences to help form our students, and operating a complex research university at the highest level.

Notre Dame demonstrated its commitment to staff through the financial crisis of 2008 (no layoffs, no reduction in retirement benefits), through the pandemic (no layoffs, no reduction in retirement benefits), and with some of the highest post-pandemic wage increases in the nation. These commitments were wise.

As the University grows, especially in the area of funded research, so too must the number of staff to support faculty and students. Growth in the number of staff, like growth in the number of faculty, must also be monitored and assessed. The number of staff has increased from 3,006 in 2002 to 4,119 in 2022, with the largest increases occurring among academic staff. An opportunity in the decade ahead will be to deploy talented staff so that the rate of staff growth moderates even as we expand our capacity for teaching and research.

#### **(e) Diversity and inclusion.**

Investments in our people will not be effective unless we simultaneously build a more diverse and inclusive community. The dignity of all human beings is the core theme of Catholic social thought and as such the cornerstone of the University's diversity and inclusion efforts. Becoming more diverse and strengthening the University's Catholic mission is a single project, not two parallel tasks.

Part of this effort is cultural and intellectual. Because the documents of the Second Vatican Council urge Catholics to acknowledge and welcome what is "true and holy" in all faith traditions, Notre Dame should deepen its commitment to engagement with people coming from diverse religious backgrounds.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Nostra Aetate* (1965) § 2

Similarly, the University will contribute to the scholarly assessment and analysis of diversity and inclusion inside and outside the United States, notably through existing campus organizations such as the Department of Africana Studies, the Institute for Latino Studies, the Initiative on Race and Resilience, and the Klau Institute for Civil and Human Rights, and broad-ranging efforts in the arts. Even as University community members assess the impact of race and racism outside Notre Dame, they should also be alert to the ways in which racism within the University has weakened its witness and capacity to lead within Church and nation.<sup>18</sup> The recent Board of Trustees report on diversity and inclusion usefully contrasts “welcoming ‘others’ into ‘our’ home as guests and truly sharing that home as equals.”<sup>19</sup>

Part of this effort is representational. The undergraduate student population at Notre Dame is now more diverse than at any point in its history, with 33 percent of students in the Class of 2022 identifying themselves as members of underrepresented groups. The graduate student population is diverse as well, certainly in terms of international students (see below), although more needs to be done to recruit underrepresented students from within the United States. This summer’s Supreme Court decisions will complicate, but not deter, our efforts to enroll a student body that reflects the diversity of experiences and gifts of the human family.

Efforts to diversify the faculty and senior staff have proceeded in fits and starts, with modest successes — notably among Latino faculty — but also continued and significant challenges. Undergraduate students from underrepresented groups routinely attend classes for four years at Notre Dame without enrolling in a course taught by someone who looks like them. Graduate and professional students remark on this experience too. These issues demand not only urgency but long-term commitment. Aspirations for faculty and staff hiring and retention need to be articulated and programs to ensure an inclusive campus expanded. We must commit, again in the phrasing of the Trustees’ report, “to the long game if we are truly to become the university we aspire to be.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the testimonies in *Black Domers: African-American Students at Notre Dame in Their Own Words*, Don Wycliff and Andrew Krashna, eds. (Notre Dame, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> *Notre Dame Board of Trustees’ Task Force Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* (2021), p.4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

## **2. A second dimension of strengthening foundations is identifying particular intellectual areas where the University already possesses excellence and can imagine preeminence.**

### **(a) The first of these areas is in the humanities and the arts.**

In some excellent universities, humanities faculties feel besieged for a mixture of political and financial reasons. By contrast, these areas will remain central to Notre Dame because of their importance for understanding truth, beauty, and the human condition, and their centrality to Catholic intellectual life. Exposing students to theological and ethical questions, training students in foreign languages and cultures, exploring the moral complexity of the past, and encouraging encounters with great art and literature are fundamental, not optional, for a Catholic liberal arts education. More pragmatically, some of the University's strongest departments, programs, and library collections are in these areas, and investments with one eye toward collaboration across the University can strengthen the whole.

The arts at Notre Dame have never been stronger. The capital investments are again remarkable: a new performing arts center (2004), a new architecture building (2018), a new building for Music (2018), a new museum (2023), and a proposed new facility linking Art, Art History, and Design with the new museum so as to deepen the visual education of Notre Dame students. One relatively new program, Sacred Music, has quickly become one of the nation's best. The challenge in the next generation is to build excellent programs in the arts that draw on our collective resources, something more compelling than unrelated programs housed in neighboring buildings. Part of this effort will be drawing connections between the arts and other disciplines. Part will be even greater engagement with the local community.

### **(b) Democracy.**

A second thematic area where Notre Dame possesses great strength and even greater opportunity is the study of democracy. Crises in democratic governance are one of the disturbing aspects of our age. Partisan information flows directed by social media, doubts about election outcomes, and deep polarization mark political life in the United States as well as other countries.

A proposed Notre Dame Democracy Initiative will draw, first, on considerable scholarly expertise. The Kellogg Institute for International Studies has emphasized the study of democracy in Latin America since its founding 40 years ago, and scholars in other areas of the University, notably the Department of Political Science (including the Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy, the Notre Dame International Security Center, and the Center for Citizenship and Constitutional Government), the Law School, the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, and the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies now study politics and governance in a variety of ways. Connecting these efforts into a more coherent set of programs is crucial. So, too, is inspiring all students to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, and more students to aspire to careers in public service.

Another dimension of the University's work on democracy will benefit from its status as one of the country's most trusted institutions of higher education.<sup>21</sup> Both in an enhanced Washington, DC, office — which could provide a focal point for a number of the University's more policy-oriented efforts — and on campus, Notre Dame should more consciously strive to become a forum for bipartisan conversations about a shared democratic future.

### **(c) Ethics.**

A third thematic area is ethics. Notre Dame's overall reputation in the study of ethics is stronger than its reality. The opportunity lies in that reputation. Cornerstones exist, including scholars doing foundational ethics in theology and philosophy, and strengths in applied areas such as business and technology ethics and the ethics of development.

The challenge going forward is to determine how a shared, reimagined effort in ethics might allow Notre Dame to lead in this field. Success would be more top-flight scholars with both a professional and public voice on important ethical questions; opportunities for students to confront contemporary challenges such as artificial intelligence, bioethics, and ethical investing; and a commitment to hosting significant public events on these topics. This ethics effort would shape undergraduate and graduate education, develop industry partnerships (such as the University's current collaboration with IBM), and inform a broader public concerned that scientific and technological advances risk outrunning our capacity to mount considered responses.

<sup>21</sup> Morning Consult, *2022 Most Trusted Universities*, 2022. Accessed June 22, 2023.

## ✦ *B. Global Catholicism.*

Catholicism is the world's most global, multicultural, and multilingual institution, and Notre Dame must better embody that reality in the coming decade. The Church now includes 1.3 billion baptized members; the modal Catholic is a person of color living south of the equator. Anyone working at Notre Dame sees this reality. The Congregation of Holy Cross includes schools and parishes in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, some of which have given Notre Dame footholds for research and service in those regions. The Department of Theology trains seminarians from Ukraine, Nigeria, and China; the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism sponsors work on global Catholic history; the Keough School of Global Affairs partners with Catholic Relief Services; and the Institute for Educational Initiatives works with local dioceses on education in Haiti. The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies helped broker a peace agreement in war-torn Colombia that earned a mention in a Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech.<sup>22</sup> Some of the University's deepest institutional partnerships are with Catholic universities in not only Europe, particularly eastern Europe, but also Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Leveraging these networks is a route to both excellence and distinctiveness.

### **1. Global strategy.**

**Considerable strides have been taken in recent decades toward making Notre Dame a more global institution.** The University has long welcomed scholars from outside the United States — including an especially distinguished group that fled Europe just before World War II — and the Catholic mission has given faculty and administrators horizons beyond the nation-state. The Law School began its program in London in 1968. Architecture required all of its students to spend a year studying in Rome beginning in 1969.

The effort to become more global — potentially as important for the next generation at Notre Dame as the effort to develop research was in the last — will in some ways proceed organically. Ambitious faculty will establish research partnerships with colleagues across the world and in so doing shape the education our students receive. At the same time it is necessary to develop a global strategy — and funding model — integrated into the overall plan of the University, not as a set of auxiliary enterprises.

<sup>22</sup> Juan Manuel Santos, "Peace in Colombia: From the Impossible to the Possible," Nobel Peace Prize lecture of December 10, 2016, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2016/santos/lecture>.

The most significant recent developments were the founding of Notre Dame International (2010) as a division of the University charged with supporting and coordinating our international efforts and the founding of the Keough School of Global Affairs (2014). The Keough School is dedicated to multidisciplinary research on integral human development, a term drawn from Catholic social thought. It includes a master's program, an undergraduate major, and joint doctoral programs with departments in the humanities and social sciences. Constituent elements of the school included multiple centers and institutes testifying to Notre Dame's global ambitions.<sup>23</sup> The Mendoza College of Business sponsors global experiential learning opportunities including its Meyer Business on the Frontlines program; the Law School has recently rearticulated its vision of a global lawyer. Research efforts in many areas, from anthropology to civil and environmental engineering to global health, involve fieldwork, service-learning, teaching, and collaboration with scholars and students outside the United States.

Facility expansion was notable. Since the late 1960s, the Vatican has allowed the University to use a significant property in Jerusalem near the Old City. Between 1998 and 2014 the University purchased and renovated marquee properties in London, Dublin, and Rome and rented a modest office in Beijing. Staff and faculty located at these sites — and around the world, including in Hong Kong, Santiago, Mexico City, São Paulo, Mumbai, and Kylemore Abbey (on the west coast of Ireland) — aided in the management of study abroad programs and facilitated faculty and student research. The Rome facility, for example, has become not only a second home for Architecture but a venue for a number of other campus entities to regularly convene academic events, develop research programs (with ties to the American Academy in Rome, the Vatican, and international Catholic agencies), and establish meaningful partnerships with Italian scholars and universities.

**Challenges remain.** That 77 percent of Notre Dame undergraduate students have studied outside the United States is a wonderful achievement. The percentage is one of the very highest in the nation for institutions of our size. Still, deeper integration of those students into host cultures through internships, language learning, and rigorous coursework will better prepare them to be global citizens. Notre Dame's global sites have

<sup>23</sup> The Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion, the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies, the Klau Institute for Civil and Human Rights, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, the McKenna Center for Human Development and Global Business, the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, and the Pulte Institute for Global Development.



facilitated many research and educational successes, but campus units with global aspirations will need to become more intentional about supporting programming at these facilities. The absence of a major facility in the Global South is notable. The University possesses ties with many institutions outside the United States and the next step will be to develop a cluster of longer-term, more comprehensive partnerships rather than adding superficial agreements.

## **2. International students.**

### **One tactic to build a more global, and Catholic, and diverse Notre Dame is to make the undergraduate student body more international.**

Among AAU private universities, the average percentage of international undergraduates is 12.2; Notre Dame's percentage is 7.<sup>24</sup> Deepening the pool of qualified international undergraduates will require more admissions outreach. A more dramatic (and expensive) step would be to consider need-blind admissions for international undergraduates. Such a policy would place Notre Dame in distinguished company — only seven colleges and universities in the United States make this claim — and would expand the global Catholic community on campus.

### **The situation for graduate and professional students is somewhat different.**

Impressively, graduate and professional students come from around the globe, with more than 1,000 students representing over 100 countries. Only 90 students are enrolled in the Keough School master's program in global affairs, but they arrive at Notre Dame from 39 different countries.

Raising Notre Dame's standing in international rankings will help us recruit even stronger students from outside the United States, especially in science and engineering. (The reverse is also true: significant percentages of international students assist us in international rankings.) So too will building conscious pipelines from particular regions and institutions, where talented undergraduates from outside the United States can learn about the quality of the graduate programs on offer at Notre Dame. Here, again, we test Notre Dame's capacity to think as an institution. We should mobilize our supporters around the world to help us recruit the students (at all levels) our University needs.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics.

### 3. Poverty.

Notre Dame's mission statement calls us to cultivate in our students "a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burden the lives of so many."<sup>25</sup> The mission statement itself reflects the Catholic commitment since the Second Vatican Council to what is frequently termed a "preferential option for the poor."

How do we make this commitment more meaningful? Many building blocks exist. The Pulte Institute for Global Development, located within the Keough School, and the Building Inclusive Growth (BIG) Lab within the economics department are both focused on development issues in the Global South. The Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO), in the economics department, assesses antipoverty programs within the United States. All of these efforts leverage distinctive Catholic networks to build enduring partnerships, and move from fundamental research to policy recommendations. All provide superb research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students.

The challenge in the next decade will be to identify opportunities for collaboration between these units and other areas where Notre Dame can deepen its intellectual capacity to study poverty. The overarching goal is bold: to make Notre Dame one of the best places in the world to understand the seemingly intractable problems of poverty, and in so doing offer routes out of poverty for those trapped within its confines.

### 4. Global Catholicism as a research and collaborative opportunity.

One revelation of the theme advisory committee process was the sheer number of organizations at Notre Dame focused on the history, current status, and future of Catholicism and other global religions.<sup>26</sup> Projects in Catholic education, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, social justice, the history of Catholicism, the contemporary pastoral life of the Church, sacred music, bioethical issues, and much else thrive at Notre Dame. Too often they do so on separate paths. Here, too, collaboration is an opportunity, even an imperative.

To that end, Notre Dame should launch a multifaceted effort to establish itself as a world leader in sponsoring research on the global Church and in

<sup>25</sup> University of Notre Dame Mission Statement

<sup>26</sup> An incomplete list might include the Department of Theology, Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, Center for Social Concerns, McGrath Institute for Church Life, de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, Institute for Educational Initiatives, Nanovic Institute for European Studies, Medieval Institute, Sacred Music at Notre Dame, Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion, Center for the Philosophy of Religion, Tantar Ecumenical Institute, and Devers Family Program in Dante Studies.

fostering sustained reflection on the possibilities that Catholic beliefs and perspectives offer in response to contemporary challenges. Over the long haul, this commitment will shape the way we teach, the relationship between theology and other disciplines, and our institutional connections in the Global South.

### ✦ *C. Science and engineering for a world in need.*

It would be easier (and less expensive) not to invest in science and engineering research at the highest level. But these areas are indispensable to addressing some of the most profound questions facing humanity. While many of the topics listed below are centered in the Colleges of Science and Engineering, they also extend in meaningful ways to every college or school. To be a great university in the 21st century is to be excellent in science and engineering broadly understood.

#### **1. Part of that investment will be in facilities.**

Notre Dame's recent investment in science and engineering faculty and facilities has been impressive and welcome. The infrastructure needs over the next generation, though, will be unprecedented. The University still maintains six major science and engineering buildings initially constructed before 1985.<sup>27</sup> Some individual laboratory spaces within these buildings are satisfactory, even state-of-the-art, but the overall organization of the space is not. In an era when team science involving many collaborators is increasingly the norm, these older facilities need considerable renovation, occasionally demolition, to advance research. The costs of these projects, cumulatively, will be as significant as any academic capital projects in the University's history. Properly managed, though, these new facilities should position Notre Dame's scientists and engineers for success in coming decades.

#### **2. Part of that investment will be in three thematic areas: health and well-being, the environment, and data and computational science.**

##### **(a) Health and well-being.**

Catholic social thought is anchored in a conviction that all humans possess dignity, a belief that also provides a grounding for research and discovery that advances health and well-being. In the next decade, we will grow

<sup>27</sup> Cushing Hall of Engineering (1933); Nieuwland Science Hall (1952); Radiation Research Building (1963); The Paul V. Galvin Life Science Center (1967); Fitzpatrick Hall of Engineering (1979); Stepan Hall of Chemistry and Biochemistry (1982).

and fortify our health-related research and education activities as the cornerstone of our commitment to making discoveries and translations that improve health and well-being for all humans, with particular attention to those who are marginalized by modern health care systems.

One part of this commitment will be a focus on physical ailments and diseases. Many of the fundamental advances in biomedical research today — including understanding, detection, and treatment of diseases — occur at the intersection of bioengineering and the life sciences. While the lack of a research-oriented medical school with a local teaching hospital is often perceived as a limitation,<sup>28</sup> it also untethers the University from a singular, resource-intensive medical entity, providing greater flexibility for faculty and students. Notre Dame already boasts a number of departments, centers, and institutes that touch various aspects of human health and well-being in bioengineering, the life sciences, and social and data science.<sup>29</sup> We also have a distinguished history of research strength in infectious diseases, as well as emerging programs in areas such as neuroscience. The recent investments in multidisciplinary science buildings, McCourtney I and McCourtney II, also enable the seeding and fostering of team science in these areas.

A University-level health research initiative focusing on bioengineering and life sciences — or BELS — will span departments in Science and Engineering, and centers and institutes connected to these areas. While other institutions have shown the impact of such an aligned approach,<sup>30</sup> Notre Dame will be distinctive by focusing on research often neglected by large medical institutions — rare diseases and health inequities for people with minimal access to primary care. These align with our Catholic responsibility to pay particular attention to the most vulnerable and do not require a medical school to make significant advances.

A second part of this commitment will be to address mental health. The United States is in the midst of a mental health crisis. Suicide rates have been rising in every demographic group in the U.S. for more than 20 years, and are elevated across almost all psychiatric conditions. Fewer than half of children and adults with a mental health disorder receive treatment.<sup>31</sup> Notre Dame can be a leader here. A partnership between

<sup>28</sup> The University does enjoy a special relationship with a satellite campus of the Indiana University School of Medicine, located adjacent to campus with some shared facilities, but this does not include clinical research.

<sup>29</sup> Core departments such as Chemistry and Biochemistry, Biology, and Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering lead this effort, as do centers and institutes such as the Berthiaume Institute for Precision Health, Boler-Parseghian Center for Rare and Neglected Diseases, Eck Institute for Global Health, Harper Cancer Research Institute, Lucy Family Institute for Data and Society, Warren Center for Drug Discovery, and the W.M. Keck Center for Transgene Research.

<sup>30</sup> The Georgia Institute of Technology made a concerted effort in the early 2000s along these lines, and it led to a seven-fold increase in National Institutes of Health funding over two decades and the No. 1-ranked bioengineering department in the United States.

<sup>31</sup> NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness, “Mental Health by the Numbers,” updated April 2023. Accessed June 20, 2023.

Notre Dame's Department of Psychology (and related entities such as the Shaw Center for Children and Families and the Notre Dame Suicide Prevention Initiative) and Notre Dame's Division of Student Affairs will serve as a national model. The University will build a state-of-the-art mental health clinic in South Bend. It will focus on three core areas of research and service: suicide prevention, trauma, and substance use. This effort will assist students and community members with severe mental health challenges by using evidence-based research to develop new treatments and sending ND-trained care providers into South Bend and communities across the country.

**(b) Climate change and the environment.**

Pope Francis is perhaps the world's leading environmentalist, and *Laudato si'* (2015) is his most influential encyclical. This commitment to preserving what the pope calls our "common home" presents Notre Dame with a responsibility and an opportunity. The responsibility is to make a significant research and educational contribution. The accelerating challenges posed by climate change and its impact on food security, energy, and water systems threaten the ability of vast swaths of humanity to live lives of dignity. The deterioration of the environment is especially acute in areas of the Global South already marked by deprivation.

Our opportunity is to build something distinctive and excellent. The interconnectedness of the problems can make it difficult to spot intellectual pathways. Current strengths include expertise in energy transition to renewable fuels (Engineering), clean water (Science), ethical investing (Business), sustainable urbanism and environmental design (Architecture), environmental policy (Keough School), environmental humanities (Arts and Letters), and real estate (Fitzgerald Institute for Real Estate). The University also possesses one of the great freshwater research sites in the world at Land O'Lakes in Wisconsin. Assembling these pieces into a collaborative whole — when every major university is concerned about these issues — is the next challenge. Notre Dame is especially well-poised, though, to draw the connections between the social and environmental dimensions of this crisis and in so doing make a major contribution.

**(c) Data and computational science.**

Data and the information data provides are ubiquitous in our professional and personal lives. Notre Dame’s strengths in data and computational science are considerable. They include three academic departments: Information Technology, Analytics, and Operations in the Mendoza College of Business; Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics in the College of Science; and Computer Science and Engineering in the College of Engineering. They also include clusters of faculty and students in a range of disciplines — from biology to economics to psychology to the Navari Family Center for Digital Scholarship in Hesburgh Library — where computational training has become an essential part of the scholarly and educational toolkit. The recently launched Lucy Family Institute for Data and Society has grown rapidly, developing new data research initiatives, engaging with state and regional partners, and supporting faculty hiring in data science and related areas. Hesburgh Libraries manages massive amounts of data in support of these scholars, as do the Center for Research Computing and the Office of Information Technologies.

Pervasive interest in data and computational science has already prompted pedagogical innovation, with the relatively recent formation of a new department focusing on information technology in the Mendoza College of Business, a B.A. in computer science offered through the College of Arts and Letters, and data and computer science minors across the University. Student interest in all of these projects is considerable. The challenge is to build on existing majors, minors, and degree programs so that every student has access in the classroom and through experiential learning to this important field of study.

What greater alignment would look like in the next generation is not yet clear. An institute or another organizing structure could provide the support necessary to grow research activity, enhance research infrastructure, and deepen teaching capacity. These opportunities require reflection on near-term solutions and aspirational growth.



## Part III:

# Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges to fulfilling Notre Dame’s aspirations are not difficult to identify. But each challenge is also an opportunity.

### ✦ *A. Religious disaffiliation.*

In the United States, religious affiliation is declining, especially among young people, and this is certainly true of Catholicism, although its adherents remain roughly 20 percent of the population.<sup>32</sup> Efforts to recruit mission-sympathetic faculty and students — where Notre Dame has been notably more intentional than its Catholic peers — are consequently more difficult. Few institutions are better positioned to understand disaffiliation and develop opportunities for young people to reconnect with their natal faith traditions. Campus Ministry, the McGrath Institute for Church Life, and faculty in multiple departments are working on these issues.<sup>33</sup> Notre Dame should provide leadership for the Church in this effort and, ideally, in reversing these patterns.

### ✦ *B. Athletics.*

The athletics model of deep integration into the student body along with on-the-field competition at the highest level — upheld for decades by Notre Dame along with a small number of peer institutions — is under significant strain. At Notre Dame, the model is uncontroversial. Outside Notre Dame, traditional practices are being upended by relaxed transfer rules, name-image-likeness agreements, conference realignments (with more demanding travel schedules for student-athletes), and legislative attempts to classify student-athletes as employees. Though the current situation is challenging, Notre Dame has an opportunity to lead. If the tradition of college athletics centered on the education and well-being of student-athletes is to survive, Notre Dame must play a prominent role.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> David Masci and Gregory A. Smith, “7 Facts about American Catholics,” Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life, October 10, 2018. Accessed June 20, 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk, *Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation* (New York, 2021).

<sup>34</sup> Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., and Jack Swarbrick, “College Sports Are a Treasure. Don’t Turn Them Into the Minor Leagues,” *New York Times*, March 23, 2023.



### ✦ *C. Public trust.*

Public trust in colleges and universities in the United States has declined because of the steady growth in tuition charges, the mistaken perception that such universities no longer facilitate social mobility, and the sense that such universities are overly partisan. No single institution will recover the confidence placed in universities by the legislators and citizens of the immediate post-World War II era. But surveys suggest that Notre Dame is one of the country's "most trusted" universities, in part because its Catholic mission allows it to transcend some of the country's partisan divisions.<sup>35</sup> (At times, admittedly, divisions within the Church replicate partisan divisions. This, too, is present at Notre Dame.) Perhaps for the first time in its history, the University has both the opportunity and the reputation to convene and facilitate some of the conversations the country desperately needs.

### ✦ *D. Engagement with South Bend and the region.*

This strategic framework is the first in Notre Dame's history to use the words "South" "Bend" and "Indiana." In the modern knowledge economy, the advancement of any global research university is wedded to the capacity of the surrounding community.

Among the AAU private universities, Notre Dame is located in the third-smallest economic market. South Bend was the 91st largest city in the United States in 1960; it is now the 318th. Acquisitions, largely by companies on either coast, have diminished the number of firms headquartered in and committed to the region. Only one public company is located in St. Joseph County. Given the modest number of professional positions in the region, the challenges of dual-career recruitment are perennial.

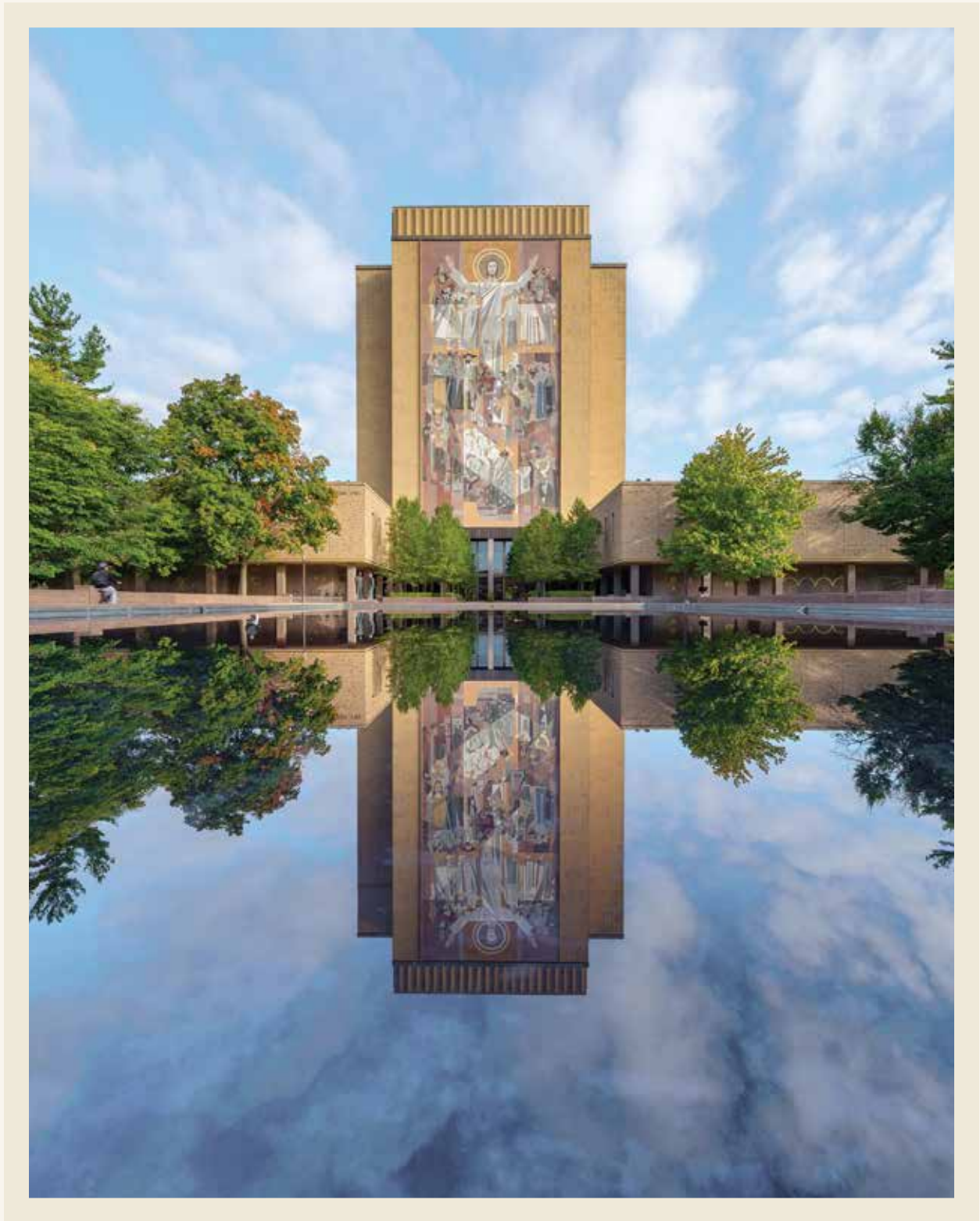
Happily, the region is on the rebound. The 2020 census revealed population growth after decades of decline. Links between the region and the University have deepened, too. Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, Notre Dame began working with partners in the surrounding neighborhoods and the city to spur high-quality social services (such as the Center for the Homeless) and volunteer opportunities for students (often through the Center for Social Concerns). In 2001, the University founded the Robinson Community Learning Center, which offers a variety of programs aimed at enhancing the education of lifelong learners and K-12 students in South Bend.

<sup>35</sup> Morning Consult, *2022 Most Trusted Universities*, 2022. Accessed June 22, 2023.

These efforts were matched by new initiatives to welcome the community to the campus. The DeBartolo Performing Arts Center (2004) and the Compton Family Ice Arena (2011), both strategically located on the southern edge of campus, have enticed tens of thousands of local visitors. Soon, the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art will accelerate this traffic, sparking an array of cultural partnerships.

Amplifying these social service and cultural advances have been significant economic development programs. The most notable of these is the IDEA Center, founded in 2017 as Notre Dame's effort to encourage entrepreneurship and stimulate the translation of foundational faculty research into thriving companies. The Lilly Endowment recently tapped Notre Dame as the lead partner for a \$42 million grant aimed at developing partnerships between University faculty and local manufacturing firms. (No other leading university in the United States is located in a region so dependent upon manufacturing.) The Eddy Street and Northeast neighborhood developments, including \$300 million in development and the construction of hundreds of apartments, condominiums, and single-family homes, have transformed a neighboring section of South Bend. Faculty at the School of Architecture are participating in civic efforts to build more stable neighborhoods and a more walkable urban core.

The promise of these efforts depends on building genuine partnerships with local governments, companies, schools, and other nonprofit organizations. It is now clearer than ever before that for Notre Dame to thrive, the South Bend region must also prosper. And a more prosperous South Bend strengthens Notre Dame.



# Conclusion

Characterizing an institution as complex as a university is not easy. Universities make long-term bets on students and scholarship that pay off over decades, even generations. Our core assumption is that Notre Dame will educate even more of the humane, informed leaders the world needs, and significantly advance human understanding and knowledge through research.

Still, a brisk, one-paragraph description of Notre Dame might read like this: it remains anchored by its Catholic mission, which animates a number of its best research programs, attracts many of its strongest students and faculty, and inspires its supporters and benefactors. The undergraduate program is among the strongest in the country. Graduate and professional school programs are on the rise and some are among the country's best, but the overall portrait is of departments, schools, and programs just outside the most elite. Its financial situation and stability are the envy of its peers. The growth in research capacity is notable but needs further enhancement. Notre Dame is more global than ever before, but less so than its standing as the leading Catholic research university might warrant. It is less diverse in the gender, ethnic, and racial makeup of its faculty, staff, student body, and leadership team than it is called to be as the world's leading Catholic university. Collaboration across school, college, and division lines is less common than should be expected, especially given a geographically contiguous campus and a common mission.

How will this paragraph read in a decade? This framework does not enumerate specific metrics to measure progress, although these are under development and will be vital to holding ourselves accountable. Now that the framework has been endorsed by the Board of Trustees, we will schedule regular reports to the campus community and periodic reviews.

The big picture, though, is clear: the quality of the undergraduate education will have been enhanced as will the University's commitment to character formation. The University will possess a cluster of more unequivocally top-tier research programs, and the amount and quality of research conducted at the University will continue on its current ambitious trajectory. Such programs will strengthen multiple departments and schools while addressing the challenges posed by a

world in need. Notre Dame's global visibility will be on a more solid footing, with superb study-abroad programs, more collaborative research ties, and a more cosmopolitan student body. The University — including its leadership, faculty, staff, and students — will be significantly more diverse and the community at Notre Dame will be more inclusive. Financial aid for undergraduates, graduate and professional students, and doctoral students will be competitive with any institution in the United States.

The distance from aspiration to reality may seem daunting. No existing template tells us how to do what we are called to do. **Building the leading global Catholic research university on par with but distinct from the world's best private universities has never been a simple task. It never will be. And yet it remains one of the most exciting projects in global higher education.**

All of this was true for those who reimagined Notre Dame for the modern era, most notably Father Hesburgh. He once described the University's mission this way:

*The future, uncertain though it is, will not be all that frightening if we have some institutions that undertake the dual task of transmitting and expanding knowledge, but at the same time, the more difficult role of educating persons with that sense of moral responsibility and judgment required to manage change and to use knowledge for mankind's betterment and progress, instead of for its destruction. It is this kind of institution that Notre Dame aspires to be.*<sup>36</sup>

Our current president, Father John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., urged us in his 2005 inaugural address to build a university "where technical knowledge does not outrun moral wisdom, where the goal of education is to help students live a good human life, [and] where our restless quest to understand the world not only lives in harmony with faith but is strengthened by it."<sup>37</sup>

The achievements of our predecessors allow our dreams. That our students, our country, our Church, and our world need a more successful and more mission-driven Notre Dame is clear. The conviction of everyone involved in drafting this strategic framework is that this document moves us toward that destination.

<sup>36</sup> Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., "And they called it the University of Notre Dame du Lac" (Notre Dame, 1977), n.p.

<sup>37</sup> "Inaugural Address of Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.," <https://president.nd.edu/homilies-writings-addresses/inaugural-address-of-rev-john-i-jenkins-c-s-c/>.

