

# HISTORY, IDENTITY, AND MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES

---

## History

The University of St. Francis was established in 1920 by the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate for the education of its own members. In 1925, under the title Assisi Junior College, its doors opened to women outside the congregation. With the beginning of the fall term of 1930, a senior college curriculum was established and a new name, the College of St. Francis was adopted. In 1971, the college became co-educational, and the first off-campus degree programs began in fall of 1972. In 1980, a master's program in health services administration was offered followed in the early 90's by several more graduate offerings. In 1997, the College affiliated with Saint Joseph College of Nursing, which had been first, a diploma nursing school founded in 1920, and since 1987, a baccalaureate institution that awarded the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. The Board of Trustees of the College of St. Francis voted to move to university status and effective, January 1, 1998, the institution became the University of St. Francis. That same year, the University launched its first online degree program joining the early pioneers in higher education online learning. In the spring of 2006, a satellite campus was opened in Albuquerque, New Mexico to provide a graduate program in Physician Assistant Studies; later that fall, the University opened a city center location in downtown Joliet to host the Art & Design Department. In 2009, the University began its first doctoral program.

## Identity

As a Catholic, Franciscan institution of higher learning, the University of St. Francis reaffirms the ideal that a liberal education provides the comprehensive cultural background necessary for any profession. Conscious of its Catholic heritage, the University offers a liberal education with religious dimensions. It seeks to inspire in its students a love of knowledge and truth, and the zeal to live and proclaim them. For that reason, the University attempts to provide contact with every order of truth, so that in light of wisdom gained, the person may choose the ultimate good for which he or she is destined. The University seeks to convey its belief that knowledge may never be separated from personal holiness and that all creation can lead to the Creator. It respects the beliefs of others while remaining true to its Catholic ideals. Through the efforts of each student and graduate, the University, following the example of its patrons Francis and Clare of Assisi called to repair God's house, desires to renew society in wisdom, justice, and charity.

## Mission

As a Catholic university rooted in the liberal arts, we are a welcoming community of learners challenged by Franciscan values and charism, engaged in a continuous pursuit of knowledge, faith, wisdom, and justice, and ever mindful of a tradition that emphasizes reverence for creation, compassion, and peacemaking. We strive for academic excellence in all programs, preparing women and men to contribute to the world through service and leadership.

## Vision

Transform students into leaders inspired by Franciscan values and tradition to serve and shape our world.

## Values

Franciscan values have been selected to enrich the total human personality of our men and women.

### Respect

Regard for the dignity of each individual  
Respect for life  
Reverence for the gift of creation

### Compassion

Opening our hearts to others  
Fostering loving relationships

### Service

Building of Community  
Sharing our gifts selflessly  
Caring for the needs of others

### Integrity

Dedication to excellence  
Faith in God and trust in others  
Commitment to truth and justice