



# ACTS OF TRANSLATION:

St. Jerome's University's Academic Plan (2023 – 2026)

"SAINT JEROME IN HIS STUDY (JOOS VAN CLEVE), Y1982-76," PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUMS COLLECTIONS ONLINE, JULY 6, 2023, [HTTPS://ARTMUSEUM.PRINCETON.EDU/COLLECTIONS/OBJECTS/32773](https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/32773).



**ST. JEROME'S**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*Federated with the University of Waterloo*

### **Acts of Translation: St. Jerome's University's Academic Plan (2023-2026)**

Our university's patron saint, St. Jerome is perhaps best known for being a translator. While we are not all called to translate works into Latin, I think we are all increasingly called to the work of translation. Outside of the narrow context of foreign languages, translation can more broadly refer to the action of transferring, conveying, or moving something from one place, position, or person to another. St. Jerome's as a university must translate our collective work in ever more directly comprehensible ways. In its *substance*, then, this plan provides several distinct "acts of translation." Through it, we:

- (1) Translate the value of our work in ways that allow us to stand out at the University of Waterloo;
- (2) Translate the life-long impact of our work in ways that resonate with prospective students, parents, community partners, and other stakeholders; and
- (3) Translate our research in ways that recognize the value of this research to audiences at other universities and outside of the academy.

In its *process*, I see this academic plan as an act of translation akin to how Falkenberg and Cannon (2020), writing about Strategic University Management, note that strategy is a bridge between the institution's current and future states. This short three-year plan is meant to acknowledge our current constraints, both financial and people-powered, emerging from the pandemic while also generating forward momentum towards 2026.

At this juncture in our institutional history, as Waterloo imagines itself at 100 and we imagine ourselves at 200, and as we begin consultations to update our shared understanding of the relationship between main campus and the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW), it is essential that we are what Jesuits describe as "contemplatives in action," contributing to University of Waterloo's strategic goal of "connecting imagination with impact." While we must give reflexive thought not just to where we have been, what we do now, and where we would like to go in the future, we must also take concrete steps to try new things, evaluate their results, and, where they are successful, articulate their contribution to the work we share with the University of Waterloo. This is a core commitment of the St. Jerome's University Strategic Plan (2022-2027).

At the centre of the Strategic Plan is growth, the ambitious goal "to become Canada's premier Catholic undergraduate university, committed to outstanding student experiences of education and Integral Human Formation." This Plan also directly calls for us to articulate an Academic Plan that further elaborates how we will live out these commitments in the heart of the institution over the next several years. Specifically, the articulation of the Academic Plan presented here meets Strategic Plan objectives:

2.2.1- Develop an innovative and attractive academic plan for the University that accentuates our course and program offerings, their content and delivery

2.3.1- Develop an Academic Plan that leverages and builds upon existing scholarship, research, and creative activities to establish SJU as a centre of excellence

In addition, it contributes significantly to the following Strategic Plan objectives:

1.1.2- Engage in dialogue with the University of Waterloo about the unique role and value of St. Jerome's as a Catholic University partner

2.1.1- Communicate SJU's role at the University of Waterloo as a centre for exceptional research and education

2.1.2- In partnership with the University of Waterloo, become an exemplary model of best practice in federated and affiliated university college relations

Throughout this document, you will also note references to where Academic Plan initiatives align with Strategic Plan objectives, but the exercise of creating an Academic Plan is about more than checking off items on a to-do list. Creating this Academic Plan should articulate what is important to us, refine and focus our efforts, and ultimately ensure that St. Jerome's University is thriving and is well-positioned moving into the future.

### **The Academic Planning Process**

The Academic Planning Process reflects a year of collective thinking that would not have been possible without key contributions at various stages from members of our community.

Step 1 (Fall 2021) - Collaboratively reflect on and close out the 2015-2020 Academic Plan ([Report](#))

Step 2 (Winter/Spring 2022) - Collect preliminary survey data to generate early ideas and information to shape the process

Step 3 (Spring 2022-Winter 2023) - Establish Steering Committee (Academic Committee) and Form Working Groups

Steering Committee/Academic Committee

- Carol Ann MacGregor, Vice President Academic and Dean (Chair)
- Michelle Atkin, Associate Librarian
- Veronica Austen, Associate Dean
- Steven Bednarski, Co-Director, Medieval Studies (guest; non-voting)
- Susan Brophy, Chair, Sociology and Legal Studies
- Serena Catania, Registrar (ex officio; non-voting)
- John Rempel, Chair, Psychology
- Caitlin Roehrig, Student Representative (ex officio; non-voting)
- Andrew Stumpf, Acting Director, Health Humanities (ex officio guest; non-voting)
- Ryan Touhey, Chair, History
- Bruno Tremblay, Chair, Italian and French Studies; Chair, Philosophy
- Cristina Vanin, Chair, Religious Studies
- Jessica Vorsteveld, Director, Student Affairs (ex officio; non-voting)
- Denise Whitehead, Chair, Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies
- David Williams, Chair, English

## *Acts of Translation: St. Jerome's University's Academic Plan (2023-2026)*

### Working Group #1-Keeping Our Promises and Living Our Mission Members:

- Carol Ann MacGregor, Vice President Academic and Dean (Chair)
- Michelle Metzger, Service Learning Program Coordinator
- Andy Stumpf, Assistant Professor, Philosophy
- Cristina Vanin, Associate Professor, Religious Studies
- David Williams, Associate Professor, English

### Working Group #2- Leveraging and Integrating Our Strengths to Reach New Audiences Members:

- Veronica Austen, Associate Dean (Chair)
- Serena Catania, Registrar
- Emily Litster, Manager of Outreach and Recruitment
- Zeke Schneider, Residence and Community Life Coordinator
- David Seljak, Professor, Religious Studies
- Jessica Vorsteveld, Director of Student Affairs
- Denise Whitehead, Associate Professor, Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies

### Working Group #3- Enriching Lives Through Research Members:

- Anastasia Tataryn, Associate Professor, Sociology and Legal Studies (Chair)
- Steven Bednarski, Professor, History
- Susan Brophy, Associate Professor, Sociology and Legal Studies
- Roberta Cauchi-Santoro, Assistant Professor, Italian and French Studies
- Angela Underhill, Lecturer, Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies

During this phase each working group read a background document, prepared by the Vice President Academic and Dean (VPAD), that offered preliminary questions, ideas, and other feedback generated in the preliminary survey and other conversations. They were tasked with brainstorming 7-10 initiatives that responded to this background document. Where possible, further research and stakeholder conversations were encouraged but groups were cautioned against investing too much time in researching any one idea before it was vetted by the Steering Committee and the larger community.

Step 4 (February 2023) - Initial Working Group Report Back to Steering Committee

Step 5 (Winter 2023) - Share First Draft with Community and Incorporate Feedback

A first draft was shared with the community on April 2, 2023, with an invitation to provide comments on the document itself or via anonymous survey by April 27, 2023. This feedback was shared with the Steering Committee and discussed at length during the May 5, 2023 Academic Committee meeting. As a result of this discussion and feedback received, the version of the Plan moving through Step 6 has been substantially revised.

Step 6 (Spring 2023) - Move Final Draft through the Governance Process

Note that the first draft and second draft maintain some of the language of the working group reports but is not identical with them and, as such, may not reflect the views of all members in all places. The first draft was authored by the VPAD who added some initiatives to capture the outcome of processes, such as the Wellness Program Review, so as to include other major academic projects that need to be addressed in the coming years. As this draft is meant to reflect objectives that are realistically achievable

and not dependent on the outcome of other processes, some working group objectives were omitted but might well be taken up in Collective Bargaining or in conversation with the University of Waterloo.

Step 7 (June 2023-January 2024) - Establish Implementation Teams for Key Initiatives, Finalize Plans for Measuring and Reporting Progress, Commit Budget Where Appropriate

You will find as an appendix to this document a preliminary plan for accountability and measuring success. In many cases, because of the exploratory nature of key initiatives, more work will be needed to flesh out appropriate metrics, timelines, and (if needed) resource allocation. In addition, the VPAD will provide a once a term update on progress to the SJU Assembly and SJU Senate Council.

Some working groups have created materials (e.g., "Proposed Principles for an SJU Living Learning Community") that give implementation groups a running start on initiatives and issues to consider as work begins.

### **Keeping Our Promises, Living Our Mission**

The initial charge of the working group tasked with examining this area included a call to address the tension between our teaching equity obligations, which imagine a certain number of "butts in seats" in courses in the Faculty of Arts, and our long-standing self-understanding of St. Jerome's as a small-class-size community. In addition, it was tasked with considering how we might address problems with low enrolment in programs that are aligned with our mission. While it was not a focus of the working group's discussion, items that refer to maintaining and building upon our historical reputation for teaching excellence and further developing and refining our commitment to holistic wellness are included in this subset of initiatives.

1. Build a plan for unique cohort-based curricular experience that allows co-registered St. Jerome's Arts and Arts and Business students to **opt into** a first-year experience that includes common coursework alongside mentorship, student support services, and co-curricular opportunities [Strategic Plan Objectives 1.1.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.4.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.1.2]  
This would not be a new major, minor, or diploma but more simply a meaningful way of progressing towards an undergraduate degree using available degree plan space. Possible organizing frameworks for a "SJU Start" program, all of which would need to be researched and discussed further at the implementation stage, include:
  - a) a re-imagined and re-named credit-bearing seminar (or seminars) that takes elements of the current Human Sciences/Catholic Studies programs;
  - b) a subset of offerings of the Health Humanities program focused on courses to be taken during the first year;
  - c) a set of courses from across our humanities and social sciences disciplines that share a common focus on and commitment to community engagement; social justice; equity, diversity, and inclusion; indigenization/decolonization; and/or applied research in not-for-profit settings;

- d) any other organization of courses that build upon existing faculty expertise and are clearly linked in a logical way and can be compellingly communicated to students.

This experience could include special offerings of ARTS 130/140, which are already required components of the first-year experience, and each themed course group could have a dedicated Peer Academic Leader (PAL) or other co-curricular supports.

*Sample Implementation Timeline [to be further developed post-approval]*

*YEAR ONE: Investigate models at other institutions (e.g. [Vic One](#) at University of Toronto and [Foundation Year](#) at Kings at Dalhousie University), develop proposal, seek curricular approvals (where needed), determine staffing plans for mentorship and other outside of course components, as well as develop marketing materials for pilot.*

*YEAR TWO: Pilot one thematic cluster and evaluate progress.*

*YEAR THREE: Continue a second year of pilot and develop action plan for expansion or, if justified, end pilot and use lessons learned to shape the next academic plan.*

- 2. Communicate in both words and actions our commitment to being known for the exemplary quality of our teaching at the University of Waterloo [Strategic Plan Objective 2.4.1]
  - a) Address amongst ourselves how we engage in practices that incorporate learner and peer feedback.
  - b) Pursue external recognition of teaching excellence by routinely putting forward colleagues for local (University of Waterloo), national, and international teaching awards.
  - c) Broaden our communication strategy to include more celebration of outstanding teaching and course development at SJU.
  - d) Undertake departmental discussions annually to ensure appropriate strategies for meeting equity agreement obligations while also being intentional about providing options for small-class-size experiences for students.
- 3. Create a Wellness Program Review Implementation Team as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting student, faculty, and staff wellness [Strategic Plan Objectives 3.2.2, 4.1.2]
  - a) Translate recommendations of the [McMurray Report](#) into specific action plans within Student Affairs as part of Student Affairs Strategic Planning.
  - b) Explore additional opportunities for collaboration between student-support units and academic departments and labs on wellness initiatives (e.g., Well-Link Lab, SMF courses).
  - c) Develop strategies for supporting faculty and staff who find themselves on the frontlines of new and challenging student mental health and accessibility challenges.

4. Implement the recommendations of the SJU Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan as they pertain to offices and employees under the purview of the VPAD
  - a) Ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization training are part of orientation and ongoing professional development.
  - b) Determine appropriate ways to interview job candidates about how equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization will be addressed in their work.
  - c) Ensure improvements in hiring systems and practices are matched with programs that ensure racialized and other equity deserving faculty and staff are supported in their work and retained at the University.
  - d) Acknowledge that a “nothing about us, without us” approach will require engaging external experts to provide support for those seeking to review, revise, and update their curriculum and pedagogies or to develop extra or co-curricular programming.
  - e) Determine how best to foster equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, decolonization, healing and reconciliation in experiential and service-learning programs.
  - f) Ensure AODA compliance in digital learning materials.
5. Partner with the Indigenous Advisory Circle on initiatives that are responsive to calls to decolonize the curriculum and respect alternative forms of knowledge
  - a) Leverage the new United College-SJU library partnership that houses an Indigenous Studies reading collection on our campus.
6. If Human Sciences/Catholic Studies are not areas pursued in the cohort-experience outlined above, bring forward a separate plan to SJU Senate Council that addresses the issues raised by program reviews and consider the suggestions outlined in the Human Sciences ad hoc working group [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.2.1]

### **Leveraging Our Strengths to Reach New Audiences**

The working group charged with this broad area of inquiry was originally charged with addressing questions on registrations and enrolments, including the development of a cogent narrative about why someone should co-register (and not just live or take a class or two) at SJU. In addition, it was noted that we have had terms where there is more demand than available beds in our residence buildings. However, this begs the question of how we ensure this remains true when we are no longer the newest building at Waterloo. Further, how do we ensure those residential students not co-registered at SJU also benefit from our academic resources and opportunities? Moreover, since Catholic universities are often distinguished by their strong local and international nonprofit partnerships and their commitment to integrate traditional coursework with experiential learning, the group was charged with considering how we can ensure our service-learning programs are robust and attractive to as many students as possible. Other questions included: how do we reach non-credit or non-degree audiences (continuing education/lifelong learning) who could benefit from programs that build upon existing strengths? And finally, are there ways that addressing these questions also help address the issue of our reputation as a relatively homogenous institution and community?

In their own words the group's conversations focused, in the end, on attempting to satisfy three key priorities:

- Outreach to Community beyond the University
- Providing Students with Engaging Opportunities, including Opportunities that Keep them Invested in the SJU Community Beyond First Year
- Creating Opportunities for Earlier Connections to Potential Students.

Based upon these priorities they recommended:

1. Create microcredentials, accessible in formats that work for working professionals and non-degree seeking students or that add on to existing academic programs [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 2.2.2]
  - a) Using feedback from the Advisory Committee of Catholic School Board Directors and Superintendents, Catholic Non-Profit Leaders, and Diocesan Officials, create at least one microcredential that is formally recognized by the Diocese of Hamilton as a hiring asset or training component.
  - b) Create microcredentials recognized by professional associations associated with the Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF) program.
  - c) Explore opportunities for other offerings where there is departmental interest (e.g., Student Affairs' interest in collaborating on microcredentials around Leadership for student leaders).
  - d) Explore partnerships with other Canadian Catholic universities and AFIW partners to offer an extended range of courses in the Master of Catholic Thought and related graduate certificates that leverage each institution's individual faculty strengths.
  - e) In alignment with the UW Strategic Plan, consider opportunities for work-integrated learning at the graduate level in our Master of Catholic Thought program and any new post-Bachelor credentials we might develop.
  - f) Collaborate with the St. Jerome's University Library to purchase and/or license any library materials required to support the development of microcredentials.
2. Investigate a Living Learning Community that distinguishes itself from the course-based common curricular experience by its emphasis on the residential experience. Pending further operational planning and research on feasibility, this program would be accessible to students of all Faculties, including those where program requirements might not allow for significant traditional coursework outside of the major; it would not require co-registration [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.2.1, potentially 2.2.2]. Such a program would:
  - a) encourage collaboration between Student Affairs and academic staff;
  - b) increase engagement, retention, and success of students;



- c) increase a sense of belonging for diverse students; and
- d) recruit and engage students whose values align with SJU's mission.

Additional details can be found in appendix, "Proposed Principles for an SJU Living Learning Community." If approved, this aspect of the plan would require the creation of a group to do additional research to flesh out a full proposal building upon the principles proposed.

3. Summer Institutes [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.1.1, 4.2.1]
  - a. Leverage summer institutes as part of the strategy around developing microcredentials as outlined above.
  - b. Explore opportunities for high school students to become familiar with St. Jerome's campus through course or camp-based experiences.
  - c. Explore opportunities for graduate students, alumni, and other community members to participate in short-term service-learning opportunities.
4. Reinvigorate SJU Lecture Series [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.1.1, 4.2.2, 2.1.1]
  - a. Create a case for support for the creation of a Health Humanities Lecture Series to support and enhance the diploma program and faculty research in this area.
  - b. Re-establish the Bridges Lecture Series which supports relationship-building outside of the humanities and social sciences and continues to connect us to the Faculty of Math and our Math alumni.
  - c. Grow impact of Lectures in Catholic Experience and establish SJU as a place where the Canadian Catholic Community seeks to deepen their understanding of complex issues facing the church and the world.

### **Enriching Lives through Research**

The working group focused on research was originally tasked with addressing how we can ensure research remains central to the culture of SJU.

1. Advance our commitment to enable all types of faculty research activity [Strategic Plan Objectives 2.3.1, 2.3.2]
  - a) Explore ways to allow internal funding (e.g., Faculty Research Grant) to be used to buy out time rather than offset expenses.
  - b) Develop internal opportunities for successful grant recipients to support those who have not yet applied for or received funding.
  - c) Ensure our commitments to decolonization and indigenization include adequate consideration for alternative forms of knowledge in our internal funding allocation processes.

2. Investigate the creation of a Research Centre as an umbrella research hub in order to: [Strategic Plan Objective 4.1.2]
  - a) facilitate collaboration among faculty across disciplines;
  - b) create public venues for showcasing faculty research;
  - c) contribute to knowledge mobilization in ways recognized by the major Canadian funding bodies; and
  - d) share software and other resources/expenses now being acquired individually.
3. Enhance opportunities for students to learn about and participate in faculty research and faculty-student collaborative research [Strategic Plan Objective 2.3]
  - a) Encourage applications to external funding opportunities that support hiring students for research projects and develop mechanisms for ensuring those applications can be rated highly on key assessment categories including those that prioritize commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion in training and mentoring.
  - b) Develop a case for support and fundraise for scholarships to fund students interested in working with a faculty mentor for a semester similar to Waterloo's President's Scholarship.
  - c) Consider mechanisms for recognizing faculty who take on significant mentorship work (both mentoring students and formally mentoring junior colleagues).
  - d) Establish a culture of periodic casual "student-meets-prof" events on campus in settings like the Funcken Café.
4. Transform the SJU Archives into a site of expanded scholarly activity and foster projects that elucidate St. Jerome's and its community [Strategic Plan Objectives 2.2, 2.3]
  - a) Work with interested faculty to incorporate archival content into courses where appropriate (e.g., archival workshops and hands-on training for upper-level students) to encourage undergraduate student engagement with our digital and physical archival collections.
5. Create a process and framework for creation and periodic evaluation of Centres, Labs, and Institutes that wish to be housed or continue to be housed at St. Jerome's [Strategic Plan Objectives 2.3, 4.4, 2.2].

This is the spot a conclusion would normally be found in a document like this but, in many ways, this work is only just beginning. It will continue to require the good will and hard work of many in our community and it will require the institution to be judicious in its use of resources both financial and human. You will begin to see how that will look in the Appendix on Accountability that follows.

## **Appendix A: Accountability**

### **Preliminary Notes on Data and Accountability**

It is imagined that the VPAD will provide a once per term update on progress to SJU Assembly and Senate Council. The notes below begin to flesh out some of the tracking progress, aligning resources, and measuring success which would be part of those updates. It is imagined that this document would be fleshed out further if the plan is approved in principle.

### **Keeping Our Promises, Living Our Mission**

1. Build a plan for unique cohort-based curricular experience that allows co-registered St. Jerome's Arts and Arts and Business students to opt into a first-year experience that includes common coursework alongside mentorship, student support services, and co-curricular opportunities [Strategic Plan Objectives 1.1.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.4.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.1.2]

WHO: A New Working Group

GOVERNANCE PATH: Academic Committee, Senate Council

RESOURCES NEEDED: None to plan, some to be proposed as part of plan

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: To be developed as part of "build a plan" and to be vetted along the governance path

2. Communicate in both words and actions our commitment to being known for the exemplary quality of our teaching at the University of Waterloo [Strategic Plan Objective 2.4.1]
  - a. Address amongst ourselves how we engage in practices that incorporate learner and peer feedback.

NOTES: This is not meant to speak to issues that are generally reserved for Collective Bargaining such as how feedback is used in hiring, tenure, and promotion. It is meant to be a more holistic call to ensure that we are not complacent about the need to constantly pay attention to reflection and revision as part of treating teaching as a practice.

WHO: Faculty, Teaching Forum (VPAD)

GOVERNANCE PATH: In some cases Academic Committee and Senate Council may be needed

RESOURCES NEEDED: No financial costs but need people willing to engage

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: These are just examples-- policy statement on institutional approach to peer and learner feedback, teaching forum events on tools for seeking and incorporating feedback

2. Pursue external recognition of teaching excellence by routinely putting forward colleagues for local (University of Waterloo), national, and international teaching awards.

*Acts of Translation: St. Jerome's University's Academic Plan (2023-2026)*

WHO: VPAD coordination, Colleagues nominating Colleagues

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: No financial resources, need engaged people

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: # of awards or honorable mentions, # of submission

- c. Broaden our communication strategy to include more celebration of outstanding teaching and course development at SJU.

WHO: Office of Marketing and Communication, Office of the VPAD

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: No financial resources, Marketing and Communication office time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Daily Bulletin coverage, # of stories

- d. Undertake departmental discussions annually to ensure appropriate strategies for meeting equity agreement obligations while also being intentional about providing options for small-class-size experiences for students.

WHO: Department Chairs, Faculty

GOVERNANCE PATH: Could be presented not for approval but for information at Academic Committee

RESOURCES NEEDED: No financial resources, chair and faculty time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Meeting equity targets, qualitative assessment of small class size experiences

3. Create a Wellness Program Review Implementation Team as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting student, faculty, and staff wellness [Strategic Plan Objectives 3.2.2, 4.1.2]
  - a. Translate recommendations of the [McMurray Report](#) into specific action plans within Student Affairs as part of Student Affairs Strategic Planning.

WHO: Wellness Implementation Team (WIT) already formed

GOVERNANCE PATH: Would vary by initiative

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be recommended by WIT, key fundraising priority

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: In progress of being determined by WIT

- b. Explore additional opportunities for collaboration between student-support units and academic departments and labs on wellness initiatives (e.g., Well-Link Lab, SMF courses)

WHO: Wellness Implementation Team (WIT) already formed

GOVERNANCE PATH: Would vary by initiative

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be recommended by WIT, key fundraising priority

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: In progress of being determined by WIT

- c. Develop strategies for supporting faculty and staff who find themselves on the frontlines of new and challenging student mental health and accessibility challenges.

WHO: Wellness Implementation Team (WIT) already formed

GOVERNANCE PATH: Would vary by initiative

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be recommended by WIT, key fundraising priority

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: In progress of being determined by WIT

4. Implement the recommendations of the SJU Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan as they pertain to offices and employees under the purview of the VPAD
  - a. Ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization training are part of orientation and ongoing professional development
  - b. Determine appropriate ways to interview job candidates about how equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and decolonization will be addressed in their work
  - c. Ensure improvements in hiring systems and practices are matched with programs that ensure racialized and other equity deserving faculty and staff are supported in their work and retained at the university
  - d. Acknowledge that a “nothing about us, without us” approach will require engaging external experts to provide support for those seeking to review, revise, and update their curriculum and pedagogies or to develop extra or co-curricular programming
  - e. Determine how best to foster equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, decolonization, healing and reconciliation in experiential and service-learning programs
  - f. Ensure AODA compliance in digital learning materials

WHO: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Committee (already formed)

GOVERNANCE PATH: Would vary by initiative

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be recommended by Action Committee but commitment to build in realistic budget support from Senior Leadership Team

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: To be determined by Action Committee

5. Partner with the Indigenous Advisory Circle on initiatives that are responsive to calls to decolonize the curriculum and respect alternative forms of knowledge
  - a. Leverage the new United College-SJU library partnership that houses an Indigenous Studies reading collection on our campus

WHO: Indigenous Advisory Circle

GOVERNANCE PATH: Would vary by initiative

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be recommended by Indigenous Advisory Circle but commitment to build in realistic budget support from Senior Leadership Team

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: To be determined by Indigenous Advisory Circle

6. If Human Sciences/Catholic Studies are not areas pursued in the cohort-experience outlined above, bring forward a separate plan to SJU Senate Council that addresses the issues raised by program reviews and consider the suggestions outlined in the Human Sciences ad hoc working group. [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.2.1]

WHO: Human Sciences Advisory Committee, Catholic Studies Advisory Committee

GOVERNANCE PATH: Academic Committee, Senate Council, UW

RESOURCES NEEDED: People Time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: to be developed as part of the plan this initiative imagines

### **Leveraging Our Strengths to Reach New Audiences**

1. Create microcredentials, accessible in formats that work for working professionals and non-degree seeking students or that add on to existing academic programs [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 2.2.2]
  - a) Using feedback from the Advisory Committee of Catholic School Board Directors and Superintendents, Catholic Non-Profit Leaders, and Diocesan Officials, create at least one microcredential that is formally recognized by the Diocese of Hamilton as a hiring asset or training component.

WHO: Advisory Board, Master of Catholic Thought Committee

GOVERNANCE PATH: Where there are new credit bearing courses or credentials-- Academic Committee, Senate Council, UW

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, advocacy for support from Diocese and employers

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Program development, enrolment

- b) Create microcredentials recognized by professional associations associated with the Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF) program.

WHO: SMF

GOVERNANCE PATH: Where there are new credit bearing courses or credentials-- Academic Committee, Senate Council, UW

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, self-funding initiative via tuition

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Program development, enrolment

- c) Explore opportunities for other offerings where there is departmental interest (e.g. Student Affairs' interest in collaborating on microcredentials around Leadership for student leaders).

WHO: Determined by interest

GOVERNANCE PATH: Where there are new credit bearing courses or credentials-- Academic Committee, Senate Council, UW

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: "Explore" doesn't mean do so; it is equally acceptable to consider and decide not to move forward; where programs move forward, same as other microcredentials—enrolment

- d) Explore partnerships with other Canadian Catholic universities and AFIW partners to offer an extended range of online courses in the Master of Catholic Thought and related graduate certificates that leverage each institution's individual faculty strengths.

WHO: VPAD, Master of Catholic Thought Director and Advisory Committee

GOVERNANCE PATH: Where there are new credit bearing courses or credentials-- Academic Committee, Senate Council, UW; Affiliation agreements according to UW protocols

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, course development support as outlined in Collective Agreement

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Partnerships formed, students enrolled

- e) In alignment with the UW Strategic Plan, consider opportunities for work-integrated learning at the graduate level in our Master of Catholic Thought program and any new post-Bachelor credentials we might develop.

WHO: Master of Catholic Thought Advisory Committee

GOVERNANCE PATH: Where there are new credit bearing courses or credentials Academic Committee, Senate Council, UW

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: WIL experience data—qualitative and quantitative

- f) Collaborate with the St. Jerome's University Library to purchase and/or license any library materials required to support the development of microcredentials.

WHO: Library

GOVERNANCE PATH: Library Advisory Committee, as needed

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, existing Library funding to start, growth based on program growth

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Titles acquired, usage statistics

2. Investigate a Living Learning Community that distinguishes itself from the course-based common curricular experience by its emphasis on the residential experience. Pending further operational planning and research on feasibility, this program would be accessible to students of all Faculties, including those where program requirements might not allow for significant traditional coursework outside of the major; it would not require co-registration [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.2.1, potentially 2.2.2]. Such a program would:
  - (a) encourage collaboration between Student Affairs and academic staff;
  - (b) increase engagement, retention, and success of students;
  - (c) increase a sense of belonging for diverse students; and
  - (d) recruit and engage students whose values align with SJU's mission.

Additional details can be found in Appendix, "Proposed Principles for an SJU Living Learning Community." If approved, this aspect of the plan would require the creation of a group to do additional research to flesh out a full proposal building upon the principles proposed.

WHO: New Ad-Hoc Committee, possible cross-committee with SJU Start Ad Hoc Committee, could be within the mandate of the Experiential Learning Advisory Committee

GOVERNANCE PATH: Student Affairs Team and, where covered by terms of reference, Academic Committee and Senate Council

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be proposed as part of plan

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: To be proposed as part of plan but residence fill rate and residence satisfaction are components

3. Summer Institutes [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.1.1, 4.2.1]
  - a) Leverage summer institutes as part of the strategy around developing microcredentials as outlined above.

WHO: Those involved in creating microcredentials

GOVERNANCE PATH: Where curricular—Academic Committee, Senate Council; where operational—Business operations

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be proposed case by case but assume self-funding MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Enrolments, Residence Revenue

- b) Explore opportunities for high school students to become familiar with St. Jerome's campus through course or camp-based experiences.

WHO: Registrar, Student Affairs, willing Faculty Partners (e.g., labs or departments)

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A unless academic credit awarded



RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, residence space and program fees via institutional subsidy, at cost to participant, or donor funded (likely some combination of the three)

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: # of participants, qualitative participant experience, % conversion from participant to applicant

- c) Explore opportunities for graduate students, alumni, and other community members to participate in short-term service-learning opportunities.

WHO: Office of Service Learning, Experiential Learning Advisory Committee, Interested Faculty

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A unless academic credit awarded that hasn't already been through the approval process

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, method of funding experience costs if not self-funding

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: # of participants, qualitative participant experience

4. Reinvigorate SJU Lecture Series [Strategic Plan Objectives 4.1.1, 4.2.2, 2.1.1]

- a) Create a case for support for the creation of a Health Humanities Lecture Series to support and enhance the diploma program and faculty research in this area.

WHO: Health Humanities Director and Advisory Group, Advancement

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Funds raised, # donors, # of lectures, attendance at lectures, assessment from faculty of value of connection with program

- b) Re-establish the Bridges Lecture Series which supports relationship-building outside of the humanities and social sciences and continues to connect us to the Faculty of Math and our Math alumni.

WHO: Bridges Coordinator(s), Advancement

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Lecture attendance, lecture engagement

- c) Grow impact of Lectures in Catholic Experience and establish SJU as a place where the Canadian Catholic Community seeks to deepen their understanding of complex issues facing the church and the world.

WHO: President and VPAD as LCE Coordinators

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: # of attendees, attendee feedback

### **Enriching Lives through Research**

The working group focused on research was originally tasked with addressing how we can ensure research remains central to the culture of SJU.

1. Advance our commitment to enable all types of faculty research activity [Strategic Plan Objectives 2.3.1, 2.3.2]
  - a) Explore ways to allow internal funding (e.g., Faculty Research Grant) to be used to buy out time rather than offset expenses.

WHO: VPAD (budget), Committee on Research and Scholarship (CRS)/Research Officer (policy and process)

GOVERNANCE PATH: Note the amount of the Faculty Research Grant and the role of the CRS are defined by Collective Agreement but other aspects of the CRS work (e.g., award criteria, process for determination, allowable expenses) are outside of the Collective Agreement and could flow from CRS to Senate Council

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Explore means explore; if it were to move beyond explore, a measure of success could be number of people successfully applying for and buying out time

- b) Develop internal opportunities for successful grant recipients to support those who have not yet applied for or received funding.

WHO: Research Officer, Committee on Research and Scholarship

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Successful grant applications

- c) Ensure our commitments to decolonization and indigenization include adequate consideration for alternative forms of knowledge in our internal funding allocation processes.

WHO: Research Officer, Committee on Research and Scholarship

GOVERNANCE PATH: Note the amount of the Faculty Research Grant and the role of the CRS are defined by Collective Agreement but other aspects of the CRS work (e.g., award criteria, process for determination, allowable expenses) are outside of the Collective Agreement and could flow from CRS to Senate Council

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Qualitative assessment of types of work covered by the FRG over time.

2. Investigate the creation of a Research Centre as an umbrella research hub in order to:  
[Strategic Plan Objective 4.1.2]
  - Facilitate collaboration among faculty across disciplines;
  - Create public venues for showcasing faculty research; and
  - Contribute to knowledge mobilization in ways recognized by the major Canadian funding bodies
  - Share software and other resources/expenses now being acquired individually

WHO: Research Officer, Committee on Research and Scholarship, Experiential Learning Advisory Committee (for partnerships) or an Ad Hoc Committee

GOVERNANCE PATH: Senate Council for academic components, Finance/Board for financial components

RESOURCES NEEDED: To be proposed by committee

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: To be proposed by committee

3. Enhance opportunities for students to learn about and participate in faculty research and faculty-student collaborative research [Strategic Plan Objective 2.3]
  - a) Encourage applications to external funding opportunities that support hiring students for research projects and develop mechanisms for ensuring those applications can be rated highly on key assessment categories including those that prioritize commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion in training and mentoring.

WHO: Research Officer, Committee on Research and Scholarship

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Successful grant applications

- b) Develop a case for support and fundraise for scholarships to fund students interested in working with a faculty mentor for a semester similar to Waterloo's President's Scholarship.

WHO: Advancement, VPAD, President GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Dollars raised, scholarships

- c) Consider mechanisms for recognizing faculty who take on significant mentorship work (both mentoring students and formally mentoring junior colleagues).

WHO: VPAD

GOVERNANCE PATH: TBD by mechanism

*Acts of Translation: St. Jerome's University's Academic Plan (2023-2026)*

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, compensation issues would be Collective Agreement issues

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Mechanisms created or documentation of factors considered

- d) Establish a culture of periodic casual "student-meets-prof" events on campus in settings like the Funcken Café.

WHO: Research Officer, VPAD

GOVERNANCE PATH: N/A

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, modest food costs

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Attendance at events, qualitative assessment of experience

- 4. Transform the SJU Archives into a site of expanded scholarly activity and foster projects that elucidate St. Jerome's and its community [Strategic Plan Objectives 2.2, 2.3]
  - a) Work with interested faculty to incorporate archival content into courses where appropriate (e.g. archival workshops and hands-on training for upper-level students) to encourage undergraduate student engagement with our digital and physical archival collections.

WHO: Library

GOVERNANCE PATH: Library Advisory Committee, as needed

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Projects worked on

- 5. Create a process and framework for creation and periodic evaluation of Centres, Labs, and Institutes that wish to be housed or continue to be housed at St. Jerome's [Strategic Plan Objectives 2.3, 4.4, 2.2].

WHO: VPAD

GOVERNANCE PATH: Academic Committee and Senate Council

RESOURCES NEEDED: People time, no cost

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: Policy/process created

## **Appendix B: Proposed Principles for an SJU Living Learning Community**

February 24, 2023

### **Context:**

In November 2022, Working Group 2 for SJU Academic Planning submitted its report to Academic Committee, the steering committee for Academic Planning. One of the ideas submitted for consideration was the possibility of launching a Living Learning Community (LLC) at SJU. Working Group 2 was thus asked to offer further information regarding a vision for a LLC. Working Group 2 reconvened in February 2023 with slightly different membership due to shifting availabilities. The membership of Working Group 2 is as follows:

Veronica Austen (Chair; Associate Dean)  
Serena Catania (Registrar)  
Rebekah DeJong (Manager, Residence and Community Life)\*  
Emily Litster (Manager, Outreach and Recruitment)  
Michelle Metzger (Service Learning Program Coordinator)\*  
Jessica Vorsteveld (Director, Student Affairs)

\* = new member

Previous Working Group 2 members: Zeke Schneider (Residence and Community Life Coordinator); David Seljak (Professor, Religious Studies); Denise Whitehead (Associate Professor, Sexuality, Marriage, and Family)

### **Outcomes:**

The Working Group has determined that launching a Living Learning Community at St. Jerome's University is a desirable priority and recommends that a Living Learning Community be launched within the timeframe of the 2023-26 Academic Plan (Fall 2024 could be a realistic goal, but Fall 2025 would likely best ensure that the LLC could be advertised throughout a full recruitment cycle).

### **The Value of an LLC:**

- Collaboration between Student Affairs and academic colleagues
- Increased engagement, retention, and success of students
- Increased sense of belonging for diverse students
- Opportunity to recruit and engage students whose values align with SJU's mission and visions

**The Working Group recommends the following principles for the formation of an LLC at SJU. The LLC should:**

- Be interdisciplinary rather than program-based
  - An interdisciplinary theme is consistent with SJU's academic identity in that we bring together many disciplines within the Faculty of Arts, rather than privileging one program over others
  - An interdisciplinary theme would allow us to engage students from across the University of Waterloo, much like our residences already include both co-registered and non-co-registered students

- The possible uniqueness of an interdisciplinary theme is marketable (particularly as a value-add for being part of the SJU community) Service-learning combined with a focus on leadership is a potential viable area of focus
- Service-learning combined with a focus on leadership is a potential viable area of focus
  - Such an area of focus would allow SJU to build on already established resources (e.g., some faculty are already involved in supporting service learning programs; some academic programming for service-learning is already established; much exploratory work went into thinking about leadership as an area of development)
  - Such an area of focus is consistent with SJU's mission
  - Such an area of focus would perhaps draw more people towards our service-learning opportunities
  - If this focus is pursued, careful consideration of how it would be described would be needed (e.g., the perception is that "service-learning" is not part of a high school student's vocabulary. Further, one would want to ensure that the program is not exclusionary (only for those who are privileged enough to 'give back'.))
  - Possible starting places for thinking about descriptors:
    - Civic engagement
    - Encounter
    - Open hearts, open minds
    - Community engagement
    - Active members of society
    - Active community members and contributors
    - Responsible citizenship
- Be open to co-registered and non-co-registered
  - Increased possibility of bringing students towards SJU community even if they don't begin as co-registered or even if they cannot be co-registered because they're not part of the Arts faculty
  - Increased ability to ensure diversity of group
- Incorporate students from multiple years of study
  - Perceptions have been that students (co-registered or non-co-registered) can lose their connection to SJU after their first-year in residence; an LLC open to upper year students could help ensure students have a pathway towards staying connected to the community

- Perceptions that upper year students in residence tend to be strong role-models for first-year students
- Be advertised clearly so that students know what it is to participate in a LLC and thereby so as to mitigate possible attrition
  - Experience suggests that first-year students who sign-up for LLCs do not always have a full sense of what it is that they've agreed to and thus when they arrive on campus and learn more, they opt out
- Have clear parameters regarding membership
  - Will someone be able to join the LLC once they're already here or will they have had to pre-register? Will membership shift between terms?
  - Include programming that is perceived as valuable, but not overwhelming so as to ensure effective participation rates throughout the academic year
  - Programming should include involvement of faculty
  - Programming may include writing workshops, guest lectures (e.g., faculty sharing research relevant to the LLC's theme), meet and greets with instructors, critical reflection skill training, reading circles, peers sharing reflections, alumni sharing reflections, PD via HREI
  - Programming may be linked to activities already undertaken at SJU (lecture series, opportunities via service learning (e.g., Encounter KW, etc.); make use of resources we already have
  - Possible link to a certificate program that students could pursue through further courses
  - Possible gamification of programming so as to ensure engagement (e.g., 'attend 10 of 12 events, get an SJU sweatshirt,' etc.)
- Not promote a division of the residence/SJU community or motivate the formation of cliques
  - We are already a small community; as such, how we can offer a special opportunity to some while not making others feel excluded needs considering.
- Be effectively resourced rather than a task done 'off the side of someone's desk'
- Not take resources away from the possibility of renewing/expanding general residence programming
- Not take resources away from the possibility of renewing/expanding opportunities for off-campus students
  - There could be a model wherein off-campus students are included in a living learning community, but this could be a consideration for a subsequent phase of development once a more traditional residence-based living learning community has been established

This Working Group's discussions have been preliminary. As such, the Working Group recommends that more detailed considerations and research, including the formation of a business plan, be undertaken.

**Preliminary Sources:**

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Spanierman, Lisa B., et al. "Living Learning Communities and Students' Sense of Community and Belonging." *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 50.3 (2013): 308-25.

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