



**PONTIFICIA
UNIVERSITÀ
GREGORIANA**

Strategic Plan

2023-2028



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CONFIDENT IN OUR MISSION, SEEKING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

After receiving the External Evaluation Committee Report from AVEPRO, the University sent the Agency the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in the different areas, which formed the backbone of the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan was developed from these basic questions:

- What are we today and what do we want to be for the future, doing what and for whom, bearing in mind the context in which we find ourselves, the link with the Supreme Pontiff and the Society of Jesus?
- Is our academic profile and organization adequate to the changing challenges of today's social context, and what are society's expectations of us today?
- What can we do to respond with sufficient flexibility to the expectations of the Society of Jesus, the world and the Church, while remaining faithful to our identity and promoting quality and excellence, in keeping with our Ignatian charism?
- How do we serve the Society of Jesus and the Church today and how can we serve them in the near future through shared discernment?
- Having observed a growth in the lay student body and a greater inclination toward the use of technology and more interactive forms of learning, how can we improve excellence in the academic experience of our students, taking into account their origin from every continent and the culture of which each of them is an expression, and ensuring their centrality in integral formation?
- How do we form students who will have to serve the Church in every part of the world in the future, a living, growing, outgoing Church?
- How do we promote *cura personalis* so as to create a true university community?
- How can we combine our dreams for the future with the reality of who we are today and the human and economic resources, the limits of which we know?

To answer these questions, one cannot ignore the integration of the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Oriental Institute into the Pontifical Gregorian University, which was ordered by the Pope with a chirograph dated December 17, 2019, and which indirectly satisfies the request of the Dicastery for Culture and Education for greater rationalization and collaboration among the pontifical institutions. To this end, a

document was developed containing the Vision proposed by Fr. Delegate of the Society of Jesus for Interprovincial Houses and Institutions in Rome and in which it is enunciated that *"We are a pontifical university entrusted by the Holy See to the Society of Jesus characterized by the two lungs of universal catholicity: the tradition of the Latin Church and the traditions of the Eastern Churches, which creates a community to cultivate spiritual values that respond to the needs of today; which with the goal of academic excellence, enhances and strengthens the mission of formation, research and service of each academic entity"*¹

The process is still ongoing and several aspects are being defined.

One of the challenges we face is to develop the Strategic Plan as the Pontifical Gregorian University, as we are now, but also to enter into the perspective of a single "Vision," in which the specific missions of the three institutions involved in the process are framed.

We are well aware of the need to strengthen the articulation and commitment of the shared educational mission in every area of the University through the Integration process, but it is difficult to draw up a Strategic Plan oriented to what we will be in the near future, which is not what we are today. And it is equally difficult to design a Strategic Plan with the current organizational chart, which is not that of the future University and its missions.

In the first three priorities we refer to the current structure of the University.

Instead, in the fourth priority, which addresses the issue of an integrated University, institutional figures who are envisaged in the new organizational chart are indicated as responsible for the various action plans.

Working Method for the Strategic Plan

To develop the Strategic Plan, a Steering Committee consisting of the Rector and the 2 Vice Rectors, and an Organizing Committee consisting of 7 members representing all categories of the University was appointed. The University was aided by an external consultant, Prof. Francesco Cesareo², who worked in close synergy with the different components of the University Community, keeping in mind the University's SWOT analysis and Self-Assessment Report, as well as the Report of the AVEPRO External Evaluation Committee and the Quality Improvement Plan.

¹ *Vision for the integration process*, in *Integration. DIR newsletter for the integration of PUG, PIB and IOP for students, faculty and employees*, November 2022, no.6.

² Prof. Francesco Cesareo, a Gregorian alumnus, was President of Assumption University in Massachusetts for 15 years: during this time he oversaw the writing of 3 strategic plans.

The work on drafting the Strategic Plan began in December 2022 and ended in September 2023, and consisted of several stages of analysis, discussions, and comparisons in Focus Groups composed of members from each category of the University. We would like to thank the entire University Community (faculty, administrative staff, students) and especially the members of the Organizing Committee and Reflection Groups for their participation in this process, their commitment and contributions. We also thank Prof. Cesareo for the courtesy, expertise and dedication with which he accompanied us through this process.

The final text is an institutional plan that can be applied in the particular circumstances of each academic unit and is the result of a collegial work that allowed us to identify the Strategic Priorities present in the Plan for the next 5 years, 2023-2028.

Two elements are worth serious consideration:

1. All the ideas and proposals that emerged from our sharing could not be included in the Strategic Plan, for different reasons. One should be aware that the implementation of priorities requires:

- human resources
- economic resources
- time
- reshaping of activities, implementation of processes that must go hand in hand with the conduct of the ordinary life of the University.

We have to build the future while remaining grounded in the present, and have the courage to dare in the knowledge of what we can realistically do. We have therefore had to strike a balance between what we want to do and what we can do.

The development of the Strategic Plan was an important time to stop and reflect, to think differently, with creativity. The vision and mission of the University must guide the Strategic Plan and be reflected in it, but for that very reason the focus must remain on the University's own mission, which must be in line with the challenges of the times.

2. The Strategic Plan is – and must be – a living plan that can change over the years and that requires constant monitoring, not only to see where we stand, but also to assess whether the goal we want to achieve has remained the same or changed. The implementation of integration, for example, will involve adjusting the Strategic Plan and reshaping it.

For this reason, each year the Plan will be reviewed by the Quality Committee with the aim of presenting the progress to the Rector and the Senate, evaluating its effectiveness through the status of project implementation, monitoring of objectives and results, and the introduction of necessary changes.

Strategic Plan Priorities

From the synthesis of the SWOT analysis, the Self-Assessment Report (RAV), the AVEPRO External Assessment, the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and the elements that emerged during the meetings, the Steering Committee identified the following Strategic Plan priorities:



Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is not the plan of one or another Academic Unit, just as the vision also does not exist in the abstract: the institutional plan is of the University as such and belongs to the entire University Community, so everyone must be involved in its implementation.

The Strategic Plan is not imposed from above, and its implementation depends on the will of the University as such.

Priority 1 - Improve and promote excellence in the academic and student experience

Academic excellence has always been the focus of the Pontifical Gregorian University. As such, the academic environment is characterized by research, study and deepening for - and with - students. Consequently, the PUG wishes to direct its efforts in research so that it can have more and more impact on the students' component, and it does not hesitate to respond to their expectations and desires for learning, thus developing specific and clear learning outcomes for each Cycle, study program, discipline and courses. In this sense, it can be said that the PUG promotes a teaching-learning process that places the student at its center, seeking to involve him or her more and more in active teaching.

Within the path of improvement and promotion of academic excellence, the international nature of the PUG community imposes continuous attention, both in the efforts for constant revision of the student admission process and in addressing the challenges of language and academic preparation of students. Within this framework, the faculty's commitment to fostering a learning environment that enables interaction with students is emphasized.

The improvement and promotion of excellence in the academic experience also concerns Third Cycle students, who are required to possess both the capacity for critical analysis and the development and synthesis of new and complex ideas. On this path, the ability of the Third Cycle student to succeed in communicating their specific expertise to their peers, the academic community and society is not to be underestimated. To best achieve these goals, the PUG, at the beginning of the Third Cycle, offers a *cursus ad doctoratum*, different in each Faculty/Institute, as well as a Doctoral School that accompanies and supports the student in the different stages of their research.

For an ever-increasing tension toward excellence in the academic experience of students, the PUG faculty identifies new ways of collaboration among Academic Units that translate into greater opportunities for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching, especially in the First and Second Cycles, as well as in research programs. As such, ways to effectively use and integrate technology and distance learning within the academic program should be examined.

All of this effort reflects an ongoing internal review, recently reinforced by the AVEPRO (2022) evaluation report. Thus, this priority purposefully capitalizes on both the strengths and weaknesses revealed in recent and current evaluations, not as a setback but rather as an opportunity for an ever-stronger Pontifical Gregorian University, now and in the future.

Objective 1

Implement and strengthen the evaluation process in each Academic Unit according to uniform criteria for the entire University.

- Draft a protocol in each Academic Unit to promote quality.
- Create a new course evaluation tool.
- Establish a course evaluation feedback process that is shared with faculty and students to address identified problems and improve teaching.
- Establish a training meeting on Self-Assessment/SWOT analysis processes for those responsible for coordinating these activities.

Objective 2

Identify new ways of collaboration among academic units that result in greater opportunities for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching, especially in the first and second cycles, as well as in research programs.

- Strengthen Study Days on shared insights and research between different Academic Units.
- Develop interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary courses around topics of interest among different faculties.
- Encourage the organization of International Conferences on a topic that succeeds in involving different Academic Units and other external institutions, leading to a publication and/or subsequent doctoral research.

Objective 3

Develop a regular academic review process to determine the continuation, consolidation or elimination of certain programs.

- Establish a committee to help the Academic Vice Rector evaluate academic programs, departments, and courses offered based on student numbers, costs, and university-wide needs.
- Involve the committee in an advisory process for evaluating proposals for new courses, avoiding duplication and overlap.

Objective 4

Reform the pedagogical approaches used by Academic Units in light of learning outcomes that will foster more active participation.

- Establish a Center for Excellence in Teaching to train faculty in various new pedagogical approaches, also drawing inspiration from Ignatian pedagogy.
- Encourage more active student participation during courses and seminars, especially in First Cycle face-to-face classes
- Develop a curriculum in First Cycle Theology that allows for more elective courses.

Objective 5

Promote a more student-centered learning environment in terms of pedagogy, culture and attitudes.

- Establish Course Assistants who can assist full and extraordinary professors, chosen from among doctoral students who have completed the *cursus ad doctoratum*.
- In the curricula, it should be clearly explained how the teaching will be carried out, indicating any requirements, method and evaluation, as well as the skills that students must acquire upon completion of the course (learning outcomes).
- Encourage inclusive disability policies.
- Establish a communication channel for students where they can share experiences and information.

Objective 6

Determine ways to effectively use and integrate technology and distance learning into the academic program.

- Offer online intensive or remedial courses (e.g., languages and prerequisite subjects) for current students and those about to begin the path to university.

Objective 7

Address expectations and the relationship between research and teaching so as to improve teaching and the learning experience in courses.

- Involve students through collaboration with some faculty members in writing scholarly articles or texts for publication, with the intention of teaching how to make their own contribution to academia through research.

Objective 8

Develop a strategy for faculty recruitment to ensure the quality of teaching and research.

- Develop a protocol for recruiting new faculty.
- Establish a faculty selection process and protocol that is uniform across the University.

Objective 9

Improve and strengthen the orientation of new students to the University.

- Provide a mandatory orientation to the University for new students.
- Open a "permanent" section of the Gregorian web portal dedicated to orientation.
- Establish a satisfaction and suggestions questionnaire for new students.

Objective 10

Develop ways to deal with the changing student body to better meet its needs.

- Address the need for better methodological training in each Cycle.
- Provide academic writing training for Second Cycle students in preparation for writing the Licentiate thesis.

Objective 11

Address issues related to exam scheduling to meet the special circumstances arising from an international student body.

- Introduce a new procedure for choosing exam dates for courses, starting with the consideration that these dates should be known at the beginning of the semester, not at the end.
- Propose tools to ensure the fairness and integrity of exams and research.

Objective 12

Address the academic preparation challenges of an international student body, including a review of the admissions process and admission standards.

- Establish the maximum number of students in the Third Cycle who can be admitted to the faculty.
- Revise the admission process for each cycle of study.
- For students seeking admission to the Second and Third Cycles, introduce among the required documents a letter from a faculty member from the previous cycle describing their academic level.

Priority 2 - Identify potential collaborations that will benefit the University

The Pontifical Gregorian University has always had many academic agreements with institutions in different parts of the world. It is very important for us to continue "networking," as Pope Francis asked in *Veritatis gaudium*. Collaborating in different networks is a great mutual enrichment on an institutional and human level.

The Gregorian recognizes the need and added value of networking and makes this choice not only in the field of education, but also in the field of research. In this area the University can make a special contribution.

The Gregorian wishes to be careful in evaluating the collaborations put in place: these should enrich the experience and academic opportunities of the students; at the same time, it is desired to avoid a waste of energy on the part of the University that does not raise the quality of our education.

Current resources, both human and financial, are limited; for this reason we wish to rationalize the different collaborations so that the service offered by our University is increasingly qualified towards the students, offering them excellence in teaching, and towards the teaching staff, so that they can devote more time to research.

We see the importance of collaborating with other Roman Pontifical Institutions, but it is equally important to strengthen collaboration with other universities not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world. With academic agreements already in place, both students and faculty can benefit for their human and professional formation.

As a university entrusted to the Jesuits, the Gregorian intends to strengthen participation and/or networking with other Jesuit institutions around the world. Jesuit specific such as Ignatian pedagogy and *cura personalis* can make a great contribution to the Church and society today. The Gregorian is already part of the Kircher Network - Jesuit Higher Education in Europe and the Near East, and the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU). It wishes to further strengthen these ties in the areas of teaching, research and social presence, also to offer other Jesuit universities around the world the opportunity to learn more about Gregorian and the academic programs it offers.

Objective 1

Identify opportunities for collaboration with other academic institutions and develop a process to identify collaborations that are no longer useful.

- Seek ways to foster exchanges with other academic institutions.
- Establish the protocol and precise criteria for collaboration to make academic agreements, the conditions for entering or terminating collaborations, and the added value for the institutions in question.
- Continue to explore opportunities for collaboration with the various Pontifical Universities.

Objective 2

Develop collaboration in Third Mission initiatives.

- Define what the University means by "Third Mission."
- Give visibility to initiatives on Third Mission.
- Develop a collaborative network with technical institutes and universities to initiate training projects on the topic of building management.
- Promote energy efficiency in buildings, through monitoring and remote management systems, and an efficient environmental management model.

Priority 3 - Ensure growth and diversification of income streams

The Pontifical Gregorian University feels the need to grow and diversify its income streams to ensure the availability of the resources needed for research, teaching and study, in order to improve the service offered by the university and the student experience.

The provision of advanced technological tools, maintenance and modernization of facilities and buildings, support for research activities and services, and scholarships are all necessary initiatives for university life that need adequate funds to be implemented.

There are two avenues to be pursued to improve the efficiency of economic management: on the one hand increasing revenues, and on the other making costs more efficient.

In the first direction go the projects and initiatives aimed at finding new sources of funding for the University's activities: these certainly include the development of strategies for fundraising, the creation of a structure aimed at enhancing relations with alumni, and the study of possible agreements with Societies and Institutions around the world for the purpose of obtaining their support for specific training and research projects.

In the second direction, on the other hand, go the interventions aimed at quantifying and rationalizing the costs related to teaching and administrative staff, reviewing the distribution of workloads and implementing a control reporting system that facilitates cost-benefit analysis of the various activities and services, so that resources are used in a way that is more useful for the University.

It will be critical to pursue the goals outlined in this Priority, as the success of these initiatives can help advance the action plans outlined in the other Priorities of this Strategic Plan.

Objective 1

Plan income inflows and outflows for the next five to ten years.

- Rationalize and objectify the costs of teaching and non-teaching staff including in meritocratic terms, rationalize expenditures.
- Review the distribution of activity hours among all faculty members, seeking objective criteria for quantifying commitment and rationalizing costs.
- Implement a reporting system that allows for cost/benefit verification.

Objective 2

Develop processes to keep alive and manage relationships with alumni and benefactors, enhancing the opportunities offered by technology.

- Establish an alumni office to maintain an up-to-date computer database, containing respective contact information, for all current and future University Academic Units in the perspective of Integration.
- Publish a newsletter and send it to alumni once a year in electronic form.
- Establish an Alumni Association to collaborate with each Academic Unit, to organize meetings where there are many alumni and initiatives that may arouse interest in alumni, either at Gregorian or in their home regions or even remotely using IT tools.

Objective 3

Develop fundraising strategies to contribute to the financial sustainability of the University.

- Recruit a Fundraising Manager to develop fundraising activities.
- Create a new endowment (Stable Fund) that gives more opportunity to project the growth of the integrated PUG.

Objective 4

Identify resources to support and expand academic offerings and research opportunities for faculty across the University.

- Establish a Database of for-profit and nonprofit financial, commercial, and industrial companies operating on various continents that are interested in funding educational and research projects.

Priority 4 - Strengthen the articulation and commitment of the shared educational mission in every area of the University through the process of Integrating PIB and PIO into PUG

Since 1928, the creation of a consortium between the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Oriental Institute was desired; the three institutions have been cooperating in teaching and research ever since. On Dec. 17, 2019, the date of Pope Francis' chirograph, the three institutions committed to a process of integrating the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the Pontifical Oriental Institute into the Pontifical Gregorian University.

The Pontifical Gregorian University is aware of the need to strengthen the articulation and commitment of the shared educational mission in each area of the University through this process of Integration. Consequently, continuing the path indicated by AVEPRO, the Pontifical Gregorian University has decided to include in its Strategic Plan the commitment to develop a structure that reflects the new reality and ensures the advancement of Integration, as well as the redefinition of the vision and mission, the development of an implementation plan and new communication and advancement strategies, understood as the development and advancement of the University and its services.

The strategic plan also notes the need to identify ways of collaboration among all Academic Units, in line with the vision and mission, both at the level of teaching and research as well as the third mission. It should also not forget to emphasize Ignatian identity and pedagogy, which will remain a point of reference and distinguish our institution from others.

Objective 1

Establish the tools for the advancement of Integration.

- Develop a timetable that establishes specific dates for each stage of integration of PIB and PIO into PUG.
- Create an Implementation Committee composed of members from each institution to develop the implementation plan for Integration and a communication strategy for it.
- Deepen the already proposed vision and mission of the integrated university that reflects the missions of PIB, PIO and PUG.

Objective 2

Develop an integrated communication and advancement strategy and structure.

- Establish a centralized Office of Communication and Advancement for the University integrated with the recruitment of an advancement professional.
- Create the website and a logo for the Integrated University.

Objective 3

Identify new ways of collaboration among Academic Units that will result in greater interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary opportunities for teaching and research that reflect the Integration of PIB and PIO in PUG.

- Analyze current academic programs that have already planned and implement interdisciplinary and (where possible) transdisciplinary programs.
- Establish where possible common planning processes for academic course objectives between PUG, PIB and PIO and for subsequent consistent assessment.

Objective 4

Articulate how the vision and mission of the integrated University is lived out in research, teaching, and the third mission.

- Establish guidelines and incentives for integrating Ignatian pedagogy into teaching.
- Consider commitment to the third mission on par with teaching and research.

Objective 5

Develop a strategy to ensure the presence and momentum of the Jesuit and international charism among the faculty and administrative staff of the integrated university.

- Develop solutions to maintain Jesuit mission and identity, its Ignatian charism and international character.
- Offer an orientation program in Ignatian pedagogy, life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Jesuit history and history of the Gregorian University for new students, faculty and administrative staff.

Objective 6

Cultivate a university culture that enhances the multicultural character of the University and its impact in the educational mission.

- Propose specific liturgical celebrations and cultural or multicultural events throughout the academic year.
- Examine the socio-economic and cultural environment of students to understand the potential impact on the academic quality and educational mission of the University.
- Promote forums to present and discuss contextualized theologies, histories, and other intellectual developments outside Europe.
- Promote students' extra-curricular activities at the Gregorian and increase opportunities for cultural and language exchanges.