

UNIVERSITY OF
ST. FRANCIS

CIC NetVUE Grants for Reframing the Institutional Saga

One Paragraph Executive Summary:

University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois (established in 1920), is a “welcoming community of learners challenged by Franciscan values and charism, engaged in a continuous pursuit of knowledge, faith, wisdom, and justice, ever mindful of a tradition that emphasizes reverence for creation, compassion, and peacemaking” (USF Mission Statement). This is our centennial year, but it has been most unusual. While many of our events were abruptly cancelled or moved online due to the pandemic, our over-arching effort to infuse our history and heritage with our mission of lifelong learning has held the course. The CIC NetVUE grant challenges the university to re-examine its historical narrative in order to craft and articulate an institutional vocation going forth that responds to the needs of the present and future. To undertake this challenge, we propose two publication projects. The first is a volume of 100 essays by faculty who share personal vignettes of how teaching and service align with the university’s core values of respect, service, integrity, and compassion in the past and in the future. The second book is a companion volume that collects student writing and artistic contributions on how our core values shape the way they engage with current situations, such as the pandemic, structural racism, the immigration crisis, and climate change. Consistent with the Franciscan tradition of honoring each individual entity, this project to shape our vocation will arise from the broad community of teachers and learners to gather discrete experiences and collectively assert that USF is a privileged place of compassion and wisdom, a sanctuary university dedicated to sustainability, racial justice, and civil dialogue. This project is coordinated with an ambitious institutional strategic plan, curricular redesign, and an infusion of new technologies and strategies to engage our students critically and creatively. It will produce an institutional narrative that renews the university’s heritage and values, grounding them in vocations that address the demands of the present and face the future.

Brief Public Description:

University of St. Francis (IL) will launch a two-year initiative as part of its 2020 centennial celebration to reexamine its historical narrative and articulate a new institutional vocation that responds to a present and future that a short while ago were unimaginable. Two book projects will reflect this work. The first is a volume of 100 essays by faculty sharing personal vignettes on how teaching and service have aligned with the university’s core values of respect, service, integrity, and compassion in the past and how they are being realigned for the future. The companion volume of student writing and artistic contributions will display how each student lives our core values and creates our vocation as they engage with current events, such as the pandemic, structural racism, the immigration crisis, and deep political divides. Together the publication projects will promote new Franciscan discourse that takes our values and ideals into the world to address the urgent demands of the present and face the future.

Narrative:

The University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois, is a liberal arts university in the Franciscan, Catholic traditions that serves nearly 4,000 students. USF requests a \$40,000 CIC NetVUE Grant for Reframing the Institutional Saga to support two publication projects that reconsider USF's history and position the university to thrive in the future. This opportunity could not have come at a better time for USF. We had just begun celebrating our centennial in 2020 when the pandemic suddenly compelled us to rethink what we do, reinvent how we do it, and reconsider why. The publication projects that we propose will result in two tangible books, but it will also create a repository of digital content ideal for redistribution over a number of channels and platforms as podcasts, digital narrative projects, and social media posts, recrafted in student internships before being passed to USF Marketing. This new discourse will support curriculum redesign with new pedagogies and strategies to engage our communities in projects that will prepare USF graduates to critically and creatively “contribute to the world through service and leadership” (USF Mission Statement).

As part of our 2020 Centennial Celebration and in spite of the pandemic, USF has been able to commemorate its history and heritage in several special ways. We have launched a webpage devoted to many of these projects (<https://www.stfrancis.edu/centennial/>) which features a historical timeline and “stories from the archives.” A Centennial Collage installed in Tower Hall depicts our history in images, with a copy and a breakdown of each element available on the web. In June 2020, USF's *Engaging Mind and Spirit* magazine featured an illustrated institutional retrospective by Associate Professor of History & Political Science David Veenstra. With the centennial celebration, the institution has affirmed its Franciscan identity and values, history and heritage, and its mission of lifelong learning—a true strength of the university—which we are ready to ground in vocations that address the urgencies of our current world.

An annotated list of published histories follows. The first two works are broader histories of the University of St. Francis, while the next five focus on the work of our founding congregation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate:

Knapp, Linnea. *The University of St. Francis: Campus History Series*. New York: Arcadia, 2010. (Primarily a pictorial history, with snippets of the history.)

Sterling, Jo Ann Jackson. “The College of St. Francis: An Examination of Institutional Response to Societal Influence From 1925 to 1980.” EdD diss., Northern Illinois University, 1984. (The most thorough institutional history, but it only goes up to 1980.)

Jubilate Deo, 1865-1940. Joliet, Illinois: Saint Francis Convent, 1940. (Primarily a pictorial archive of the institution in its early years.)

Kraman, Carlan. *Odyssey in Faith: The Story of Mother Alfred Moes, Foundress of Two Franciscan Congregations and Saint Marys Hospital, Rochester, Minnesota*, 1990. (This is a biography of Mother Alfred Moes, with some early university history.)

Peterson, Ingrid. *Keeping the Memory Green: Mother Alfred Moes and the Sisters of Saint Francis, Rochester, Minnesota*. Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes, 2013.

Whelan, Ellen. *The Sister's Story: Saint Mary's Hospital--Mayo Clinic 1889 to 1939*. Rochester, MN: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 2003.

Wright-Peterson, Virginia M. *Women of Mayo Clinic: The Founding Generation*. Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2016.

USF's Opening Day on August 17 will kick-off a year-long initiative focused on mentoring, mission integration, and vocation, supported by a CIC NetVUE Professional Development Award. USF's core values and mission create a strong foundation for our institution, but they have most often been framed as ethical ideals. By grounding those ideals in our vocation, we will both renew our Franciscan roots and reinvent our institutional saga for the future. This process of renewal and reinvention will be initiated in a campus-wide conversation because coming together as a community to discuss vocation is vitally important to our culture, especially in light of the pandemic and other crises. As this campus-wide conversation moves into the classrooms, it becomes an educational initiative as well. A brief description of how pertinent events of the last few months frame our project proposal follows.

As part of USF's Centennial Celebration, in spring 2020, the Provost invited all faculty to contribute to a volume of collected essays modeled after NPR's "This I Believe" series. The goal was to receive contributions from 100 faculty for our 100 years that would showcase the university's commitment to teaching and learning. The working title of this book project is *Roots and Wings: A Centennial Celebration*. The volume is divided into four sections dedicated to USF's core values: respect, service, integrity and compassion. To make the writing fun, we planned to hold retreats for faculty to write in community, share stories of how we chose teaching as a vocation, and why we continue to teach.

That project was slowed by the pandemic. Like most universities, all USF classes went fully remote in late March. Faculty focused intensely on learning new technologies, sharing expertise with colleagues, maintaining quality standards, and helping students stay on track to meet their academic goals amidst all the changes. This summer faculty worked tirelessly to prepare for different modalities and host a month-long series of three online seminars per day on vital new ways to teach with new technologies in our current environment. We changed the fall calendar and the weekly schedule to promote safe practices as we reopen this fall with multiple in-person and remote learning options. Despite the increased workload and rapid pace of change, 18 faculty contributed essays to the centennial project by the June deadline.

The CIC NetVUE grant for Reframing the Institutional Saga will allow USF to reboot this book project and raise the bar. A number of the university's centennial events were canceled due to the pandemic: a pilgrimage to Assisi, a concert with commissioned works, special commencement exercises, convocation, and various ceremonies and recognitions. This is not the centennial year anyone imagined. Guided by the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare, as well as our founding congregation the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate, we continue to mentor and challenge our students so that they can fulfill their educational aspirations and contribute to the world. Moreover, we recognize that as educators, we are called upon to reflect on wisdom of the past, but also to respond to our world, address injustices, and cultivate understanding. The University of St. Francis examined its history during this centennial year. The time is ripe to articulate our historical contexts in a forward-thinking discourse.

Under the leadership of President Johnson, the university has a current strategic plan with ambitious goals. Since the spring, university leadership has written white papers on "target niches" that establish priorities to position the university for success with new undergraduate and

graduate programs, on-line learning, international partnerships, Church sponsorship, and engagement with the Joliet community. The white papers have been reviewed by 50 stakeholders who sit on University Council and will be shared at the October Board of Trustees meeting. These thought pieces crystalize our vocation in programs and projects that will be rolled out over the next 3-5 years.

With NEH support, faculty are currently developing interdisciplinary “pathways” that allow students to focus on complex problems from multiple perspectives as part of their General Education coursework. The pathways identify contemporary problems that guide and empower students to frame and ask “big questions” about sustainability, social justice, service, and digital ethics, knowing that we don’t always have answers, that there may be multiple answers, and that answers can change. Our current situation with the pandemic and racial inequities reflects these often-unsettling ambiguities. For several years, the Mission Division, which houses our co-curricular wing, has been developing complementary curricular goals and assessments to connect the classroom to real-world experiences. By collaborating with our Mission Division, our pathways program will connect experience and service to learning as students come face to face with the uncertainty and ambiguity of fluid real-world situations.

Faculty have also spearheaded a professional development series focused on new technologies and how they shape new strategies for teaching, where one faculty member shares expertise with others. Full-time and part-time faculty have participated in more than fifty of these experimental, collaborative sessions over four weeks. The recordings are accessible to all faculty unable to attend the live Zoom sessions. Judging from the number of hits on these recordings, they are being used and reviewed widely. In responding to the pandemic, we have created a critical pedagogical resource for the future.

With this demonstrated spirit of collegiality and creativity, the university is excited to reinvigorate the book project and add a second one. Under the leadership of the English Department, which also directs writing curricula, the two book projects will be distributed over two years. In year one, USF will complete a volume of 100 collected essays by faculty that share personal stories of how teaching and service have aligned with the university’s core values in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The second book is a companion volume that collects student writing and artistic contributions on how our core values shape the way students engage with current events such as racial and economic injustice, the immigration crisis, incivility in our public discourse, cyber insecurity in our political systems, and global climate change, among others. We will hold writing retreats to spur creativity and will shape the volume through collaborative student copyediting internships. Together these book projects will tell a new story about age-old Franciscan values and how they offer a just and equitable path forward. USF will remain a privileged place of compassion and wisdom facing the future as a sanctuary university dedicated to sustainability, racial justice, and civil dialogue.

The project goals and objectives include 1) completing the faculty-authored book by June 2021; 2) completing the student-authored book by June 2022; 3) providing 2 writing retreats per year, in-person or virtual, to foster the art and practice of writing in community; 4) updating curricula to integrate current events; 5) articulating and adopting a new discourse that positions the university to thrive in the future.

We will measure our success by the completion of the books as tangible objects. However, the books' micro-narratives are also ideally suited for redistribution over social media, as web widgets on our website, and repurposed as podcasts by our Department of Communications & Media Arts and radio station to shape the outward face of the institution. This new discourse will also support internal curriculum redesign with new pedagogies and strategies to engage our communities in projects that will prepare USF graduates to critically and creatively “contribute to the world through service and leadership” (USF Mission Statement).

We expect that the books, which will have local appeal and interest alumni and graduates, will garner modest revenue from sales. Locally, we will use the books as fundraising tools to demonstrate the talent and dedication of our faculty and students. Our Caritas Student Scholarship gala will be the perfect venue to showcase these projects and promote our renewed institutional narrative. We will analyze attendance numbers and survey attendees to evaluate the quality of our writing retreats. We will collect data on how faculty are integrating current events into specific courses, and review course evaluations to gauge how well our revised curriculum engages students and meets their needs in this challenging time. The webpages now hosting the centennial information will be updated to reflect the new discourse that reframes our institutional history as a result of this two-year project. Much of this information will be utilized to track achievement of goals in USF's strategic plan. Reports that analyze activities, the quality of events, and finances will be issued and submitted twice a year. The final report will be shared with the campus community.

USF genuinely hopes that our project will be a model for other NetVUE institutions, just as we look forward to learning from others. The shared resources available to NetVUE institutions are one of the most valuable benefits. USF looks forward to participating at the 2021 and 2023 NetVUE conferences with a team led by the Chief Academic Officer. We are excited to share what we have learned from these activities with colleagues in the spirit of intellectual generosity.

We believe this project will be generative, fueling creativity that projects well into the future. As USF embarks on an exploration of its vocation, reflects on its mission and identity, and positions the university for a vibrant next 100 years of educating students to contribute to the world, we have no doubt that this work will make a lasting impression not only on current members of our university community, but on future generations.

Project Timeline:**Year One**

January 2021: Faculty book project launched
 February: Writing Leadership Group Opening Retreat
 March: Faculty Writing Retreat #1
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 April: Publisher contract secured
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 May: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 August: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 September: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 October: Faculty Writing Retreat #2
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 November: Interim progress and budget report due to CIC by December 1
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 December: Copyediting for faculty book

Year Two

January 2022: Student book project launched
 Student Writing Leadership Group Opening Retreat
 Faculty book submitted for publication
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 February: Student Writing Retreat #1
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 March: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 April: Student Writing Retreat #2
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 May: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 August: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 September: Student Writing Retreat #3
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 October: Copyediting for student book
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 November: Copyediting for student book
 Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 December: Monthly Writing Leadership Group Meeting
 January 2023: Final narrative and financial reports submitted to CIC by March 1, 2023
 Student book submitted for publication
 Presentation Event for Campus Community

Roster:

Principal Project Contact

Kathryn Duys, Professor of English and Foreign Languages
815-740-3453
kduys@stfrancis.edu

Dr. Duys is a senior faculty member with valuable institutional history who directs the writing concentration at USF and will lead the project.

Senior Cabinet-level Administrator

Beth Roth, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
815-740-3757
broth@stfrancis.edu

Dr. Roth is the Provost and will support the project through completion.

Project Leaders

Kevin Spicer, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of English and Foreign Languages
815-740-3852
kspicer@stfrancis.edu

Dr. Spicer is a respected chair and revered by students.

Elizabeth McDermott, Assistant Professor of English and Foreign Languages
815-740-3752
emcdermott@stfrancis.edu

Dr. McDermott is director of Foundations 2, the first-year writing course, the main assessment lead of writing, and co-director of an emerging writing program at USF.

Anna Ioanes, Assistant Professor of English and Foreign Languages
815-740-3422
aioanes@stfrancis.edu

Dr. Ioanes is co-director of an emerging writing program at USF and director of a new digital humanities program.

David Veenstra, Associate Professor of History and Political Science
815-740-3603
dveenstra@stfrancis.edu

Dr. Veenstra is a fine historian and was commissioned to write the most recent history of USF for the centennial.

Elizabeth Davies, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
815-740-3819
edavies@stfrancis.edu

Dr. Davies is Dean of CAS and will support the project through completion.

Students completing the Writing Concentration in 2022-23
President of the Student Government Association in 2022-23

Explanation of Staffing with concurrent CIC NetVUE Professional Development Award

The project leaders for the Professional Development Award focusing on mentoring, mission and vocation include Chairs of several faculty committees and Directors of two programs and two areas in student support services. Of 12 persons identified as project leaders for the Professional Development Award, the only overlap is the Provost. In both projects, the Provost's role is to support the work of the project leaders to ensure successful project completion.

Concise Budget:

The University of St. Francis requests \$40,000 over two years from January 2021 to January 2023.

Description	NetVUE Award	Institutional Support	Total
REVENUES			
NetVUE grant funds (year one)	\$20,000		\$20,000
NetVUE grant funds (year two)	\$20,000		\$20,000
Institutional funds spend during grant period		\$4,881	\$4,881
Totals	\$40,000	\$4,881	\$44,481
EXPENDITURES			
Year One:			
Project Oversight			
Project director @ \$2850 per course x 1 course	\$2,850		\$2,850
FICA (7.65%) for one course replacement	\$218		\$218
Writing Leadership Group Year 1 Stipends			
Spring term 2021 with 5 faculty participants @\$500 each	\$2,500		\$2,500
Fall term 2021 with 5 faculty participants @\$500 each	\$2,500		\$2,500
FICA (7.65%) for stipends	\$383		\$383
Faculty Author Writing Stipends			
100 authors at \$100 per submitted essay	\$10,000		\$10,000
FICA (7.65%) for stipends	\$765		\$765
Writing Leadership Group Opening Retreat			
Lodging for 7 participants @\$140 per night x 1 night	\$980		\$980
Meals for 7 participants @\$75 per day x 2 days	\$1,050		\$1,050
Travel for 5 vehicles at 90 miles roundtrip @ \$.54/mile		\$243	\$243
Books and Materials			
Books for Writing Leadership Group @\$30 x 7 participants	\$210		\$210
Copying and printing		\$100	\$100
Galley proofs and run-offs as pre-release	\$800		\$800
Writing Retreats for Faculty Authors			
Snacks for 100 participants @ \$9 per person x 2 retreats	\$1,800		\$1,800
Copyeditor Stipend			
1 Copyeditor @ \$500	\$500		\$500
FICA (7.65%) for stipend		\$38	\$38
Year One Total:	\$24,556	\$381	\$24,937

Concise Budget continued:

Year Two:			
Project Oversight			
Project director @ \$2850 per course x 1 course	\$2,850		\$2,850
FICA (7.65%) for one course replacement	\$218		\$218
Writing Leadership Group Year 1 Stipends			
Spring term 2022 with 5 faculty participants @\$500 each	\$2,500		\$2,500
Fall term 2022 with 5 faculty participants @\$500 each	\$2,500		\$2,500
FICA (7.65%) for stipends	\$383		\$383
Faculty Mentors for Student Author Stipends			
10 mentors at \$75 each	\$750		\$750
FICA (7.65%) for stipends	\$57		\$57
Student Writing Leadership Group Opening Retreat			
Meals for 7 participants @\$75 per day x 2 days	\$1,050		\$1,050
Writing Retreats for Student Authors			
Lunch for 60 participants @ \$12 per person x 3 retreats	\$2,160		\$2,160
Books and Materials			
Books for Student Writing Leadership Group @\$30 x 12 participants	\$360		\$360
Copying and printing		\$100	\$100
Galley proofs and run-offs as pre-release	\$770		\$770
Copyeditor Stipends			
6 Student copyeditors under faculty supervision @\$200	\$1,200		\$1,200
Digital Media Stipend			
Web design and upload stipend	\$600		\$600
FICA (7.65%) for stipend	\$46		\$46
Presentation Event			
Celebration and presentation for campus community space reserve		\$400	
Reception for 200@\$20 per person		\$4,000	
Year Two Total:	\$15,444	\$4,500	\$19,944
TOTAL: Two-Year Budget	\$40,000	\$4,881	\$44,881

Budget Notes

Project Oversight

The project director will receive one course release per year to lead monthly meetings, inspire the leadership group, work with faculty and students, arrange for logistics, and write the interim and final reports. Grant funds will be used to pay FICA at 7.65% for the replacement instructor hired to teach this course.

Writing Leadership Group Stipends

Total stipend per person for each year is \$1,000, with \$500 paid in August and January. Grant funds will be used to pay FICA at 7.65% of the stipend amount. The leadership group will work with the project director to participate in monthly meetings, arrange for retreats, and encourage writers.

Faculty Author Writing Stipends

Total stipend per person is \$100 with 100 authors contributing. Grant funds will be used to pay FICA at 7.65% of the stipend amount.

Writing Leadership Group Opening Retreat

Overnight lodging at a hotel in Chicago with meals included. Travel will be reimbursed by the university.

Books and Materials

The Leadership Group will select two books, one as a model for the final product and the other as a styleguide/primer for editing the volume. Galley proofs and pre-release run-offs will be printed in house.

Writing Retreats for Faculty Authors

Two on-campus afternoon gatherings with snacks to share progress reports and respond to common logistical questions.

Copyeditor Stipend

Total stipend is \$500 for one person. Grant funds will be used to pay FICA at 7.65% of the stipend amount.

Year Two New Expenditure Categories:

Faculty Mentors for Student Author Stipends

Total stipend per person is \$75 for 10 persons to work with 5-10 students each. Grant funds will be used to pay FICA at 7.65% of the stipend amount.

Writing Retreats for Student Authors

Three on-campus afternoon gatherings with lunch to share progress reports and respond to common logistical questions.

Digital Media Stipend

Total stipend is \$600 for one person. Grant funds will be used to pay FICA at 7.65% of the stipend amount.

Presentation Event

Celebration reception and presentation of books at reserved venue with reception for 200 persons. Paid for by the university.

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August 13, 2020

Dear CIC NetVUE Grants for Reframing the Institutional Saga Evaluators:

I am delighted to write this letter of support for the CIC NetVUE Grants for Reframing the Institutional Saga proposal submitted by the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

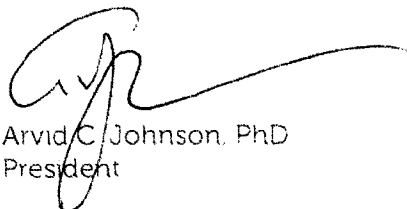
While 2020, our Centennial year, is not exactly what we had anticipated in marking this milestone moment, the events of the past six months allowed the University to carefully consider how we move forward in understanding our institutional past and positioning the University to respond to the needs of the present and future. In particular, the grant narrative refers to the "defensible niches" work that drives USF strategy.

The books produced by faculty and students over the next two years will be used to celebrate individual and collective voices of our USF community and will be used in our recruitment and community engagement efforts as tangible evidence of mission in words and action. I also believe the books will be models for other NetVUE institutions.

This project will be overseen by Dr. Beth Roth, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Roth has worked closely with our English Department and a variety of faculty shown on the roster to bring this project forward. The University of St. Francis looks forward to our continued membership in NetVUE throughout the grant period. We also look forward to sending a campus team of three led by the Provost to the 2021 and 2023 NetVUE Conferences.

I look forward to working with the USF leadership team in supporting this project and the aims of NetVUE.

Yours truly,



Arvid C. Johnson, PhD
President