

Juan Diego Academy

Catholic Regional High School



Justice + Devotion + Action

Strategic Improvement Plan

2016-2020

Juan Diego Academy
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What we think is important:

- Catholic identity
- Financial stability and sustainability
- Attract, develop, and retain Catholic leaders – professional and volunteer
- A Catholic experience that fosters the unwavering presence of God – manifested in behavior and decisions
- Formation of servant leadership
- Good stewardship of relationships and funds
- Sharing our JDA “God Moments”
- “Clearing the path” for a robust Catholic educational experience
- Intentionality for growth
- An experience of God that yearns for life-long relationship
- Formation of a faith community
- Formation and sustainability of core leaders
- A propensity to serve the poor – spiritual, financial, relational

Strategic Planning Retreat April 16, 2016

Vision

Juan Diego Academy is a Christ-centered, Catholic learning community forming young men and women to answer the call to lead and be active participants in their Church and community.

Mission

As a Catholic regional high school, Juan Diego Academy:

- Offers a quality, comprehensive academic curriculum
- Utilizes the latest in technology and innovation
- Educates the whole person: mind, body, and spirit
- Instills a sense of Christian responsibility and service to others
- Trains leaders to meet the current and future challenges of society

Statement of Philosophy

Juan Diego Academy is dedicated to giving students a Catholic-based, holistic education.

Religious and Spiritual Formation—Education in the doctrines, customs, and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church challenges students to see and appreciate the dignity of all persons as children of God. Catholic values are reflected throughout the curriculum: in daily prayer, religious instruction, weekly Mass, Christian ministry, and periodic retreats. In this environment of prayer and reflection, students are challenged to internalize their Christian beliefs and put them into practice. The centrality of religion to life is foundational.

University Preparation—Rigor, relevance, and relationship are hallmarks of a thorough, comprehensive, college preparatory program for the 21st century. Students are academically challenged with courses that emphasize the development of critical thinking skills, the integration of technology, an understanding of the relevance of what is being studied to life and career goals—all the while forming relationships between ideas and concepts across the curriculum. Students are equipped with the tools needed to be successful college students and life-long learners.

Educating the Whole Person—In addition to the religious and the intellectual, a truly Catholic education: builds character based on gospel values, promotes physical fitness and health, gives students the opportunity to exercise their aesthetic, kinesthetic, and artistic abilities, and involves them in competitive activities designed to foster growth of self-image, the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and the pursuit of excellence. These important concepts are addressed in various forms across the curriculum, particularly in competitive sports, fine arts, and extracurricular clubs and organizations.

A Christian Learning Community-- Educating the whole person requires more than excellent classroom instruction. For this reason, Juan Diego Academy continually strives to build a Catholic Christian community where each student is offered love, acceptance, discipline, and challenge. The witness of faculty, with the care, attention and respect shown to students, contributes significantly to this atmosphere. In turn, students are expected to treat faculty and each other in a similarly loving and respectful manner, responding to the Gospel mandate to, "...love one another as I have loved you." (John 15, 12).

School Assessment

Strengths:

- ❖ Diocesan Support: donation of land, buildings, funding commitment by Bishop, ongoing technology support
- ❖ Support of area priests who take turns celebrating Mass at the school on a weekly basis
- ❖ Support of local parishes, schools, and religious communities in promoting the school and soliciting pledges/donations
- ❖ An active and committed Board of Trustees
- ❖ A highly qualified and committed Administration (President & Principal, Vice President, Dean of Instruction)
- ❖ Committed parents actively involved in fundraising events, chaperoning student activities, and promoting service opportunities
- ❖ Location of school: land owned by the Church for over 150 years; highest natural point in the area; ambience of peace and the presence of the Holy Spirit
- ❖ A beautifully landscaped campus, well cared for
- ❖ Wireless Internet environment in all classrooms, common areas, and grounds
- ❖ Educational resources (grades, assignments, research databases, blogs, etc.) that can be accessed from a variety of electronic learning devices
- ❖ Student-centered, student-led campus ministry programming, including prayer leaders, retreats, liturgical ministries
- ❖ Student-led recruitment program for all 8th graders from Catholic/private feeder schools
- ❖ Most textbooks and course materials are available online
- ❖ Freedom of students to choose and use their own personal electronic devices in learning
- ❖ Rigorous Pre-AP and AP[®] curriculum
- ❖ Small class sizes that lend themselves to individualized instruction
- ❖ Enrichment period at the end of each day
- ❖ All staff trained in CPR/First Aid by a licensed instructor
- ❖ Multi-faceted security system, including gated entry with security cameras, and security guard whenever students are present

Weaknesses:

- ❖ Lack of daily presence of priests and vowed religious on campus
- ❖ Lack of campus ministry personnel
- ❖ Need to recruit and retain more teachers with advanced degrees, experience, and Catholic identity
- ❖ Need for more competitive salaries and stipends
- ❖ Need for more reliable internet speed throughout campus
- ❖ Limited library space and titles
- ❖ Need for additional classroom facilities to support a growing student population

Goal Area 1: Mission/Catholic Identity

Goal: Assure a Strong Catholic Identity at JDA

Action Steps:

- 1. Develop a program for the ongoing Catholic formation of faculty and staff**
- 2. Develop a tool to measure the Catholic identity of the school**

2016-2017

- Overnight faculty retreat for community building, initial faith formation in Catholic identity of JDA (culture. Charism)
- Book Study: *Rediscover Catholicism* (faculty); *Redeeming Administration* (administrative team)
- Ad Hoc Committee to develop modules, program for initial and continued faith formation, Catholic identity measuring tool

2017-2018

- Implement module(s) for new teacher orientation, year one faith formation program
- Evaluate and revise new teacher orientation modules as necessary

2018-2019

- Implement revised new teacher orientation module(s); year two faith formation program
- Evaluate and revise modules as necessary
- Plan for next steps

2019-2020

- Codify new teacher modules and process for ongoing formation of faculty (yearly book study, additional modules, etc.)
- Evaluate program and work of Ad Hoc Committee; conclude committee's work

Agents: President & Principal, Ad Hoc Committee

3. Create a vetting process for “buy in” of incoming students/families to Catholic culture, vision, mission, and philosophy of school

2016-2017

- Develop a list of “Catholic and JDA values” questions to use in the interviewing process for prospective students & their parents

Agents: Administrative Team

4. Hire a Campus Minister/Chaplain

2016-2017

- Hire a part time priest to serve as campus minister and chaplain for the school

2018-2019

- Increase the part time position to full time, based on student enrollment, institutional need, and the financial resources of the school

Agents: President & Principal, Dean of instruction

5. Incorporate (where appropriate) Catholic signs and symbols into outward appearance of buildings and grounds (e.g. signage on buildings)

Spring 2017

- Naming of gym conference room for St. Marcella Ewers (Marillac Room)

Summer 2017

- Signage for Seton Hall exterior; naming of classrooms for saints as appropriate, based on student/teacher input,

Ongoing

- Investigate other opportunities for Catholic naming rights of buildings, rooms, etc.

Agents: Administrative Team, Building Committee

Goal Area 2: Curriculum/Programs

Goal: **Continue to provide a rigorous, college-prep curriculum that meets the needs of all students**

Action Steps:

2016-2017

1. Inaugurate AP Human Geography as a required freshman social studies course

Agents: President & Principal; Dean of Instruction, Social Studies Teachers

2. Inaugurate an elective course in robotics

Agents: President & Principal; Dean of Instruction, Science Teachers

3. Expand AP Government to a year-long course; include a current events and U.S. politics component that uses Church teaching in a critical analysis of political and social issues of the day

Agents: President & Principal; Dean of Instruction, Social Studies Teachers

4. Expand AP Macroeconomics to a year-long course; include a “College 101” and personal finance component that uses Church teaching to help form and shape students’ discernment and preparation for the transition to college

Agents: President & Principal; Dean of Instruction, Social Studies Teachers

- Principal, Dean of Instruction, and Social Studies Teachers meet periodically to review, and evaluate implementation of these new courses

Ongoing

5. Ensure small class sizes

- Dean of Instruction, Guidance Counselor, and Registrar meet at each semester break to review class sizes, concerns

Agents: Dean of Instruction, Guidance Counselor, Registrar

6. Investigate adding additional dual enrollment courses with STC, UT-RGV as feasible

Agents: President & Principal, Dean of instruction, Guidance Counselor, Personnel from STC/UT-RGV

Goal Area 3: Staff Development/Personnel

1. Recruit and retain highly-qualified Catholic faculty and administration

2016-2017

- Develop a list of “Catholic values” questions to use in the interviewing process for job applicants

Ongoing

- Preferential option for Catholic job applicants, priests, and religious for hiring

Agents: President & Principal, Dean of Instruction, faculty/staff/Board members of hiring committees

Goal Area 4: Physical Plant/Facilities

Goal: **Implement the next phase of the Long-Term Master Plan for the Development of the Physical Plant and Facilities (Expansion of Seton Hall, cafeteria, athletic field)**

Action Steps:

2016-2017

- 1. Obtain building documents for addition to Seton Hall**

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees Building Committee, Architect

2017-2018

- 2. Build the additional classrooms, office, storage, and restrooms to Seton Hall**
- 3. Obtain building documents for addition to cafeteria**

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees Building Committee, Architect, Construction Company

2018-2019

- 4. Expand the existing cafeteria to include additional floor space and restrooms**

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees Building Committee, Architect, Construction Company

- 5. Obtain building documents for athletic field**

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees Building Committee, Architect, Construction Company

2019-2020

- 6. Construct an athletic field with bleachers, scoreboard, and track to service soccer, track & field, and physical education/intramural activities**

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees Building Committee, Architect, Construction Company

Ongoing

- 7. Continue modifying existing campus facilities to meet the needs of growing student population**

Agents: President & Principal, Building Committee, Contractors

- 8. Evaluate the Master Plan for future needs**

Agents: President & Principal, Chair of Building Committee, Architects

Goal Area 5: Institutional Advancement

Goal: **Grow the Endowment and Raise Funding for the Continued Growth of the School**

Action Steps:

2016-2017

- 1. Launch a capital campaign to grow the endowment and pay for the next phase of the long-term master plan for the school's physical plant and facilities**
 - **Complete committee training in doing major capital campaign**
 - **Obtain architectural plans**
 - **Plan and execute a kick-off event**
 - **Individual and small group visits with potential major donors**

Agents: Capital Campaign Committee, President & Principal, Board of Trustees

Ongoing

- 2. Continue developing the Master Plan**

Agents: President & Principal, Administrative Team, Board of Trustees

Goal Area 6: Marketing/Public Relations

Goal: **Promote Juan Diego Academy to the larger community**

Action Steps:

2016-2017

1. Target 3-5 students in 5-7 “feeder parishes” for recruitment to the class of 2021

- Establish a recruitment committee of Board members, faculty, parents, and students
- Personal visits to pastors, religious education coordinators, youth ministers to identify potential students
- “Socials” in student homes/parish offices/restaurants to meet potential students and families
- “Shadow Day” and/or Saturday “Day @ The Hill” program at JDA for targeted students
- Evaluate the recruitment process and make changes as needed

Agents: President & Principal, Vice President, Guidance Counselor, Recruitment Committee

2016-2017

2. Review, revise, and expand the facilities use policy and fee schedule

Agents: President & Principal, Administrative Team, Board of Trustees

Ongoing

3. Continue to promote the school to the larger community

- Posters, bulletin inserts in churches and schools
- Web site promotion
- Advertisements in local media
- Strategically-placed billboard in high-traffic area
- Radio and television spots (KMBH, etc.)
- Opportunities for free press surrounding school events (gala, spring festival, academics, fine arts, athletics, graduation)

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees

4. Use Catholic Schools Week as an opportunity to highlight the school to local civic groups

- “Community Appreciation Day” gifts to local agencies that have assisted the school

Agents: President & Principal, Guidance Counselor, Parents

5. Continue looking for ways to generate community support for the school by parents and the community

Agents: President & Principal, Vice President

Goal Area 7: Technology

Goal: Implement Cutting Edge Technologies to Enhance Classroom Instruction

Action Steps:

2016-2017

- 1. Use E-Rate Funding to transition to Fiber Optic Internet Connection**
- 2. Complete a wireless link to the chapel audiovisual system**
- 3. Implement Google Classrooms applications in all courses and across the curriculum**
- 4. Create Tech “help sheets” and a demonstration/troubleshooting video for students, staff, and parents**

Agents: President & Principal, Dean of instruction, School Technology Coordinator, Technology Committee, Building Committee

Ongoing

- 5. Review and revise the school’s acceptable use policy, and technology “spec sheets” as needed**

Agents: President & Principal, School Technology Coordinator, Technology Committee

- 6. Apply for and receive E-Rate discounts on telecommunications and internet access**

Agents: President & Principal, School Technology Coordinator, Technology Committee

- 7. Do an annual evaluation of the school’s technology and make recommendations for additional equipment, resources, and training based on ever-increasing needs of the school population**

Agents: President & Principal, Dean of Instruction, School Technology Coordinator, Technology Committee

Goal Area 8: Leadership Development

Goal: Evaluate the ongoing growth and development of the Board of Trustees, school administration, faculty, and staff

Action Steps:

2016-2017

1. Establish a procedure for yearly evaluation of the President & Principal

Agent: Chair of the Board of Trustees

Ongoing

2. Evaluation of Administrative personnel

Agents: President & Principal, Board of Trustees

3. Identify potential Board members

Agents: President & Principal, Vice-President, Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees

4. Seek out opportunities for ongoing Board formation and education

- Annual Board Retreat
- Diocesan Board Workshop
- Strategic Planning Retreats *(as needed)*

Agents: President & Principal, Vice President, Chair of the Board of Trustees

5. Evaluate open and potential new positions in light of the needs of the school

Agents: President & Principal

Goal Area 9: Seven-Year Accreditation

Goal: Accreditation of School through TCCED 7-year Accreditation Visit (Spring, 2017)

Action Steps:

2016-2017

1. Form an Ad Hoc Committee to prepare the official welcoming of the Accreditation Team

- **Sunday evening welcoming of team, tour of school (*prayer, hospitality, interviews with Board Chair, members*)**
- **Wednesday afternoon closing remarks of Accreditation Team Chair**

Agents, President & Principal, Faculty Accreditation Steering Committee, Board of Trustees