



Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC

Strategic Plan 2021–25

Our mission is to strengthen Catholic thought and imagination and their ability to contribute to the important questions of the day.

Our vision is to ensure that the rich and evolving tradition of Catholic thinking will thrive among future generations through the research and teaching of scholars and intellectuals.

Our core values are:

- ***Faith and reason.*** The ‘mind that is Catholic’ holds that religious faith and rational, intellectual inquiry are fundamentally in harmony and can significantly enhance each other.
- ***Catholic faith and openness to the other.*** As we explore the largest questions that can be asked about human existence, Catholic intellectual work means holding in tension all of one’s own convictions with the humble willingness to recognize truth, goodness, and beauty in the different perspectives of others.
- ***The sacred with the secular.*** As a Catholic research institute located on a secular university campus, we cherish free academic inquiry, and seek to engage non-religious academic viewpoints respectfully in a mutual search for wisdom and truth.
- ***“Freshness deep down things.”*** As Gerard Manley Hopkins well knew, the intellectual search for truth is complemented by the creative search for meaning

and together they can create scholarship that enriches the imagination and thinking that feeds the soul.

- *Many ways of knowing.* A greater good and a richer truth can emerge from reconciling different convictions, experiences, and kinds of knowledge.
- *Widening the circle.* We have a preferential option for inviting new perspectives and previously non-included groups into conversations around faith, intellect, and imagination.
- *Creative fidelity, faith-filled creativity.* Fostering the living Catholic tradition requires a willingness to re-examine it in the light of changing contexts, in order to respond nimbly to new opportunities and challenges.
- *The local is global.* Our location – in a world city of international reach, with a richly diverse population – shapes our perspectives and priorities, and enables us to engage in true catholicity with the global Church.

To carry out our mission, we

- assist upcoming generations of Catholic scholars to grow from PhD to prominence.
- support groundbreaking research in a broad array of disciplines around emerging themes.
- engage topics that are best understood by interdisciplinary perspectives.
- convene groups of scholars to work on specific topics.
- connect scholars to the “Church-on-the-front-lines” in order to shape their work in ways that shape the Church’s thinking and action.
- move projects from research to publication by major publishing houses.
- provide practical research support for scholars whose work contributes to the Catholic tradition of thinking.
- seek to be a blessing for the USC community, the local Church, and beyond by hosting lectures and conferences on topics of mutual concern.

Goals

- Foster the exploration of Catholic thought, imagination, experience, and practice
- Broaden and deepen the impact of the Institute
- Build the profile of the Institute through communicating and disseminating its work
- Establish a sustainable administrative, financial and development infrastructure

Goals and Initiatives

A. Foster the exploration of Catholic thought, imagination, experience, and practice

1. Enhance the Generations in Dialogue program
2. Grow and broaden the research projects
3. Activate the funded fellowships
4. Co-sponsor an undergraduate Catholic seminar series as a collaboration with the Caruso Catholic Center (Nova Forum)

B. Broaden and deepen the impact of the Institute

1. Revise and activate the Academic Advisory Council
2. Partner with USC units to broaden audiences and increase our USC profile
3. Establish partnerships with national and international peer organizations

C. Build the profile of the Institute through communicating and disseminating its work

1. Create a national brand for and awareness of the Institute

2. Create and operationalize a comprehensive communications strategy to push the work out to broad audiences

D. Establish a sustainable administrative, financial, and development infrastructure

1. Clarify and strengthen our institutional relationship with USC
2. Determine and secure staffing needs
3. Design and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy
4. Strengthen the donor base at all levels of giving
5. Recruit new Trustees
6. Establish a suitable location for the Institute to accommodate planned staff growth and sabbatical research

