

Vision, mission, values

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (Saint Joseph University of Beirut)

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THE SAINT JOSEPH UNIVERSITY: A VISION FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS, A MISSION AND VALUES

The Saint Joseph University is the product of the Jesuit Founders' **long-matured and long-desired dream** back in 1875. Their vision was to form leaders of social and national transformation, armed with values of probity and excellence, in civil and religious disciplines.

One hundred years later, the re-founders of 1975 renewed the mission and vision within the Charter of the USJ, **pursuing the rebuilding of the cohesion and continuity of the University's institutions** over values that combine unity with participation, authenticity with modernity, technicality and professionalism with the highly believing and humanistic culture.

Now and in the prospect of celebrating the 150th anniversary of the University in 2025, and faced with its many own challenges as well as the surrounding environment challenges, **the University, as an academic community regrouping Jesuits and laypersons, is renewing its vision.**

It is preserving the same pillars for its vision, favoring for the future the idea of a University which aims to maintain excellence in training and relevance in research. It aims at relying upon the know-how-to-be skills as well as formative humanism while adapting it to the specificities of Lebanon, and the Near and Middle East.

It also develops **the idea of the University as a crossroad** which presents itself as a cultural interface and seeks to help individuals and communities respond to a fundamental challenge of the 21st century: how can the community become a community in relationship with others, and how can the individual become the individual in relationship with others while still being rooted within his/her community?

The mission of the University articulates on three dimensions: the **creation** of new knowledge (research), the **transmission** of this knowledge (teaching) and putting this knowledge **at the service of the society** (service). In order to put this mission into execution, the University positions itself as an establishment of francophone language and culture, which privileges **multiculturalism** and **trilingualism** (French, Arabic and English) and that adopts **innovation** and **digital transformation**. Being accessible to all social classes and all communities, and at the service of the nation and the region, it promotes, in teaching and research, issues of **sustainable development**, primacy of **human rights, justice, democracy, dialogue of civilizations** as well as **issues of meaning**. Being open to the international sphere, it is determined to benefit from the extraordinary potentiality that is represented by the network of Jesuit universities throughout the world.

The vision and the mission are built on values that combine namely the Jesuit pedagogical tradition, the autonomy, the collaboration, the participation, the freedom of conscience, the political independence and the social engagement, all this around an academic, professional and ethical training of excellence, completed by an authentic culture that is founded on the issues of sense making, at the service of the promotion of the persons.

This is how education, as a concept, shall keep its strength and preserve the intensity of its content and this is how the USJ Spirit shall continue to develop dynamically and efficiently.

The vision components

A vision drawn by an organization certainly needs to express what this organization aspires to accomplish and to achieve in the medium and long terms. It is the formulation of a future state that this organization and its environment wish to attain. This formulation is expected to become the formulation of each member of the community as he can recognize and identify himself in it.

What we, the whole community of the University, need to accomplish in the next ten years of the Saint Joseph University, we see it achieved in **the following intertwining elements**:

- **We want our University to continue to be a reference of excellence in terms of university training.**

Thus, we shall work on acquiring the culture of Quality as a national and international requirement. This culture should, thanks to the good practices of university pedagogy, lead to self-assessment and then to accreditation of the activities of the central services of the University as well as the programs of the faculties. The assessment practice shall thus become an inherent part of the soul of the University. To the technical approach adopted, shall be added the major concern to ensure human and social training for the student.

Always **at the service of excellence**, our University should review and strengthen its academic programs in the two meanings of the term: by pursuing their alignment with the requirements of the Bologna Process on one hand, and putting an end to the programs which have lost relevance with time, on the other hand. This review shall be tied to **a better identification of new programs** corresponding to real needs and to a better awareness of sustainable development as well as the concepts of justice and social responsibility.

Finally, the Saint Joseph University shall be open to new audiences in Lebanon, in the Arab world and at the international level, by creating programs in English on one hand and developing relevant continuous training curricula on the other hand.

- **We want our University to continue developing quality research and innovation and creation of new knowledge, which is an integral part of our training, meeting namely the national, regional and international needs.**

We shall work on creating **new doctoral schools** covering all disciplines, on reinforcing those already existing and on **promoting publications**. We imagine then our University multiplying the number of its Ph.D. students.

- **We want our University to confirm and strengthen the remarkable position of the teacher-researcher.**

We shall have the concern to employ the biggest number possible of full-time teachers in order to ensure a long-lasting and committed team.

The teacher-researcher shall know how to enhance his pedagogical approaches, both classical and digital, and how to become a promoter of the creation of knowledge. A teacher-researcher, as per his mission as defined by the Teachers' Bylaws, shall not be confined to transmitting knowledge but shall lead quality research works that are innovative, relevant and of interest for Lebanon and the region. He shall introduce the student to becoming the actor of his own learning and an active researcher as soon as he enters Saint Joseph University.

- **We want our University to grant the necessary place to the students' life and to the students' needs.**

We consider that the **sense of belonging** that the students have towards their *Alma Mater* is the pledge of survival for the University community.

We would like to see a University that considers its students as autonomous adults, which calls for moving to a discourse that favors active participation and shouldering responsibility. A University which namely ensures a deeper understanding of **citizenship and general knowledge** subjects, in favor of the promotion of persons.

We shall seek to reinforce the **students' participation** in the activities of the University, to involve them in the decision making bodies, to provide them with adequate orientation so as to continue their university path, and a well adapted training that could pave the way for them to enter the labor market.

In view of ensuring jobs to the young graduates, it is wise to **promote relationships with enterprises** in order to weave permanent ties that shall be rooted in a shared interest.

- **We want our University to increasingly become a large crossroad where the interreligious, intercultural, multilingualism, citizenship and conviviality service paths meet.**

At the core of the crossroad, the educational act, strong with the **Jesuit pedagogical tradition**, shall tackle training on **mediation** for the biggest number possible of actors of the University, faculty and staff, students and former students. The USJ shall develop its national mission in the sense of a **meeting point for gathering and living together**, for ethical and humanistic reflection, for laboratory of democracy and participation in the service for all. A meeting point for all these denominations, but also a place of objective research for Lebanon and for the Arab world; a meeting point that confirms its 7th Day mission of being at the service of the development of the City, especially its marginalized and underprivileged part; and finally a meeting point which is a place for all those men and women who wish to join the Saint Joseph University but can not afford it.

- **We want our University to have a more and more relevant mission in the field of health.**

The Hôtel Dieu de France, a University-affiliated Hospital, and its network, the Faculty of Medicine and its affiliated institutes, the other faculties and institutes that are active in the field of health, shall reinforce their synergy to better put their skills, their know-how and their devotion at the **service of the patients** in Lebanon and the Arab region and to train the medical and health staff on the most advanced skills. These two missions are privileged because of both their scientific and human importance.

Given its history and its context, the Hôtel-Dieu de France shall be called to reinforce its role within its humanitarian mission in the service of all social classes.

- **We want our University to continue to develop its mission in the field of entrepreneurship.**

We shall seek to create trainings that are adapted for this purpose, to propose an adequate coaching and to ensure a favorable environment for the funding of **entrepreneurship projects**. The synergy with Berytech shall be reinforced in that respect.

- **We want our University to strengthen its ties with its graduates.**

Our University shall look at its Alumni as partners who actively support their university, seeking to weave sustainable relationships with entrepreneurs who are in search of our best graduates.

- **We want our University to enhance, in compliance with our Charter (art.5), its role in the promotion of the Lebanese, Arab and international culture.**

We shall seek to strengthen the synergy between the University teaching institutions and its numerous cultural venues (theaters, museums, cultural centers, etc.) and to multiply the various initiatives that shall take into consideration the diversity of the target audience.

- **We want our University to keep on developing a strategy of international cooperation, while remaining anchored in its francophone tradition.**

To that end, we shall rely on the quality of the trainings given by its members and its research teams at the highest international levels.

The Means of the Vision

In order to achieve these different objectives of excellence of training, of research development, of valuing of the teacher-researcher, of grown interest in the student's status and in the national role, the University should give itself the means to achieve its ambitions:

- Our University should fearlessly knock at doors (in the evangelical sense of the term) in order to raise the needed funds to give itself the means namely to support research in many domains, to grow its student audience by integrating the most needy and to develop its structures and infrastructures.
- Our University shall develop its infrastructures. It shall renovate its Rectorat building, its campuses and its regional centers by adopting the option of a green university. It shall have a central Campus space connected by footbridges over the 65,000 m² of the Damascus Street where two new campuses will be built. It shall be ensuring a better visibility of its other campuses namely the historical campus in Huvelin street and the technological campus in Mar Roukoz.
- Our University shall commit to help its affiliated hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu de France, remain a university medical pole of excellence supported by the Faculty of Medicine and the other academic institutions of the health sector, by contributing to the development of its infrastructure, equipment, and human resources.
- Our University shall mobilize its different actors in a jointly supportive team spirit in order to prompt them to set themselves as partners of a smart and creative university community.

MISSION

It is by answering the question: “Why maintain and develop this Lebanese *private university, founded and administered by the Society of Jesus*, while there are many universities nowadays in Lebanon, and more broadly in the Near-East?”, that the Saint Joseph University intends to define its mission for the next decade.

In other words: What is the specificity that we want to privilege, all of us, university managers, teachers-researchers and staff members? How do we intend to differentiate ourselves within our environment?

The USJ intends to answer these questions by a bouquet made of elements which if taken separately can only characterize it partly, but if taken as a whole bring a somehow strong “trademark”:

- A University which is open to all: to all social categories, to all Lebanese people, whatever their religious community, to all students of the region (Syria, Iraq, Gulf countries...) and of the whole world.
- A University which is concerned with developing continuous training for all its former students and the actors of the Lebanese society and that of the region.
- A University of French culture and language which favors multiculturalism and trilingualism (French, Arabic and English).
- A University which is at the service of the country and the region of the Near-East and the Middle-East, which favors issues of sustainable development, human rights, democracy and justice translates this privileged option in its courses and in the choice of its research projects.
- A University which favors in its courses and research studies issues of sense making as well as teaching and research related to the religious traditions present in the Near-East and particularly their interreligious dimensions.
- A University which dedicates important human and material means to research and innovation as well as digital transformation, that must come under the three university missions:
 1. To create new knowledge (research);
 2. To transmit this knowledge (teaching);
 3. To put this knowledge at the service of society (service).
- A University which is open to the international level and favors the extraordinary potential that is represented by the network of Jesuit and catholic universities throughout the world.

VALUES

In its Charter, which was developed in 1975, the Saint Joseph University defines its objectives, its missions and the values that sustain it and will be sustaining it in the next decade.

The Society of Jesus ensures that the institution is faithful to its Charter namely when it comes to the spiritual, ethical and social issues.

Triple task: professional, cultural and spiritual

The USJ intends to ensure an academic and professional formation of excellence, to be completed by an authentic culture based on issues of sense making at the service of the promotion of persons. It is open to the acknowledgement of God, transcending human values. God who is honored by the Constitution of Lebanon.

Interdisciplinary collaboration

The USJ believes in the right for each discipline to develop in an autonomous way but it strongly encourages the existence of an interdisciplinary collaboration at the service of the person.

Plurilingualism

The USJ, even if it has made the choice of bilingualism (French and Arabic), intends to promote the study and use of languages that can obviously be acquired.

Participation

The USJ structures are open to the participation of those who form the university community in the construction of the common house: teachers, researchers, students and administrative staff. The limits of this participation are within the skills required and the responsibility of the actors; they are defined in the statutes.

Freedom of conscience

It is fundamental for the USJ that no discrimination is tolerated at the religious, community or political level. It requires from its members to have mutual knowledge and esteem within their diversity. It considers that the true freedom is the freedom of conscience.

Political independence

The USJ diversifies the recruitment of its teachers and students and cannot be driven by a political ideology; it holds on to safeguarding freedom of information and dialogue.

Social commitment

The USJ must collaborate in the efforts aiming at improving the life conditions of the most disadvantaged.

Autonomy

The USJ believes in the autonomy of the University vis-à-vis any external body; it works on ensuring the respect of this autonomy in the fulfillment of its university missions, its governance and its financing.

Jesuit pedagogical tradition

As a Jesuit university, the USJ promotes pedagogy of encouragement, accompaniment and learning to discern on a day-to-day basis. The students are called upon to always do more (*magis*), to surpass themselves. To help them in that process, they are personally coached with all due respect for their person and for their learning process (*cura personalis*). The teachers' availability for the students is a strong characteristic of this Jesuit pedagogical tradition.