



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

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In 2012, Pamela Trotman Reid, then President of the University of Saint Joseph, created a Task Force charged with examining the institution's academic program structure and the decisions of other institutions with women's-only programs to remain as such or transition to co-education. At an October 2013 Board of Trustees meeting where the work of the Task Force was reviewed, President Reid indicated that coeducation was not something that the institution wanted to pursue at that time, but that it might be a way to advance the University's Mission and Core Values in the future.

The University of Saint Joseph expresses in its Mission that it is committed to developing the potential of women:

The University of Saint Joseph, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in the Roman Catholic tradition, provides a rigorous liberal arts and professional education for a diverse student population while maintaining a strong commitment to developing the potential of women.

The University is a community which promotes the growth of the whole person in a caring environment that encourages strong ethical values, personal integrity and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.

This focus on developing the potential of women is reaffirmed in one of our Core Values, *Commitment to Women*:

The University of Saint Joseph encourages, inspires, and challenges each woman to develop every aspect of her personhood: intellectual, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical.

While the University has advanced this commitment for 84 years by offering a women's-only undergraduate program, it may be possible to do so even more effectively by admitting men to the full-time undergraduate program to increase undergraduate enrollment and the size of the residential student body. This strategy would admit men to all USJ programs just as they currently are part of the graduate programs and undergraduate Program for Adult Learners. Other institutions that have made the transition to co-education have found that, by doing so, they were able to expand curricular and co-curricular opportunities for female students while maintaining relationship-based teaching, emphasis on civic obligation, and a focus on promoting women's leadership. Institutions that have made the decision to remain single gender have increased the use of consortial agreements to enhance the curricular and extra-curricular experience of students.

A Task Force of faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and students will be formed this month to revisit the academic program structure and explore the possibility of enrolling men in the full-time undergraduate program. The Task Force will be charged with providing by March 31, 2017, an assessment for the Board of Trustees and the President of the opportunities and challenges associated with both options: retaining a women's-only undergraduate program or admitting men to that program. The Task Force will solicit comments, suggestions, and advice from all members of the University of Saint Joseph community as it reviews evidence and develops its assessment. It will conduct its work with no preconceived conclusion or bias other than the knowledge that the University will in the future, as it has in the past, maintain a steadfast commitment to preparing students, especially women, for insightful leadership and service to others.

Faculty, staff, students, and alumni interested in serving on the Task Force should send an email with their name, preferred email address, role within the USJ community (faculty, student, etc.), and mailing address to Ruth Foxman at rfoxman@usj.edu, **no later than noon on November 9th**. Those who are not able to serve on the Task Force will be provided with multiple opportunities to provide guidance and comments.

Rhona C. Free, Ph.D.
President