



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

Graduate Programs in Applied Behavior Analysis
M.S. in ABA
Certificate in ABA

Student Handbook
Fall 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
USJ Mission & Accreditation	4
ABA Program Mission & Objectives	5
ABAI® Verification, BACB® Certification & CT Licensure Information	6
Program of Study, M.S. in ABA	7
Program of Study, Certificate in ABA	8
BCBA® Examination® Preparatory Activities	9
Student Progress Monitoring & Mentoring	11
Academic Requirements and Policies	12
USJ Policies & Information for On-Campus Services	14

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INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of the ABA Student Handbook is to provide information to students regarding the ABA programs housed in the Department of Counseling and Applied Behavioral Studies and School of Interdisciplinary Health and Science (SIHS) at USJ. This handbook contains valuable information about successfully progressing through the program. The handbook identifies program goals, objectives and policies related to students' programs of study.

The ABA faculty members want you to have a successful academic and clinically enriching experience. The program director will be assigned as students' academic advisor as soon as they enter their respective programs and is available to assist students as they progress through the ABA program. However, it is very important that students in the program are responsible for knowing the content contained and referenced within this handbook as well as the policies that govern graduate studies at USJ.

All ABA faculty will assume students have read and understand the content in this handbook and the USJ Catalog

MISSION AND VALUES OF USJ

USJ, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in the Catholic tradition, provides a rigorous liberal arts and professional education for a diverse student population in an inclusive environment that encourages strong ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.

USJ ACCREDITATION

USJ is accredited by The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), which is recognized as an institutional accreditor by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and serves as a reliable authority and independent voice on the quality of higher education. The Commission is a voluntary, peer-based, non-governmental membership association which promotes educational excellence and quality assurance to its over 200 member institutions both inside and outside the United States, all of which are degree granting post-secondary educational institutions offering higher education

Accreditation of an institution by NECHE indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer group review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the NECHE is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of the quality of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution's accreditation by the NECHE should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

New England Commission of Higher Education
301 Edgewater Place, Suite 210
Wakefield, Massachusetts 01880
(781) 425-7785

USJ reserves the right to change instructors, to withdraw, to add any course, or to change any fees.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ABA PROGRAMS

The mission of our M.S. in ABA program is to produce well-rounded scientist-practitioners who are skilled and compassionate behavior analysts, who are proficient in the basic principles of learning and behavior, who effectively and respectfully collaborate with others, and who understand the importance of informing clinical decisions through evidence-based practice. We accomplish our mission through rigorous and inspiring graduate coursework, opportunities for applied learning experiences, and a scaffolded training in the experimental foundations of behavior analysis.

The objectives of the ABA programs include:

1. Describe the history, philosophy, and terminology of behaviorism and understand basic behavioral principles and their application to a wide range of settings, populations, and areas of need.
2. Collect and analyze behavioral data, use behavioral assessment technologies and within-subject analyses, and link assessment to intervention to make data-based and timely decisions on the effectiveness of behavioral procedures and the need for modification to intervention.
3. Engage in behaviors that are ethical, equitable, and culturally responsive when working with clients, stakeholders, trainees, and colleagues.
4. Use evidence-based practices through a decision-making process that integrates the best available empirical evidence with clinical expertise and client values and context.
5. Enhance individual and organizational outcomes by way of behavioral consultation strategies, and effective leadership, collaboration and training methods.
6. *Use behavioral research methodologies to independently develop, implement, and defend an original behavior analytic thesis/capstone project (i.e., experiential learning).
7. Pass the Behavior Certified Behavior Analyst® Examination® and become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst® with eligibility for licensure where appropriate.

**Specific to the M.S. in ABA program.*

ABAI® VERIFICATION, BACB® CERTIFICATION & CT LICENSURE INFORMATION

USJ's ABA programs are also designed to help students obtain Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA®; <https://www.bacb.com/bcba/>). Prior to becoming eligible to take the BCBA® national certification exam®, students must meet the coursework requirements specified by the Association for Behavior Analysis International® (ABAI®) AND the fieldwork requirements specified by the BACB®. All requirements are outlined in the BCBA Handbook (https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BCBAHandbook_250304-3.pdf).

Verified Course Sequence #51040: BCBA 5th Edition*

ABAI® has verified the following nine courses toward the requirements for eligibility to take the current version of the BCBA® exam® (i.e., 6th Edition Test Content Outline®; TCO®)

- IABS 501: Foundations of Behavior Analysis
- IABS 502: Behavioral Assessment
- IABS 503: Behavioral Interventions
- IABS 504: Ethics and Professional Issues
- IABS 505: Advanced Topics in ABA
- IABS 509: Experimental Analysis of Behavior
- IABS 511: Research in the Behavioral Sciences
- IABS 564: Educational Interventions
- IABS 510: Organizational Behavior Management and Consultation



**The VCS system will sunset on 12/31/25. The program will then meet the behavior-analytic coursework requirements for those pursuing the BCBA pathway 2 eligibility route. The ABA Program at USJ is pursuing recognition through ABAI's Tiered Model of Education.*

Students need to also meet the BACB fieldwork requirements (i.e., 2000 supervised fieldwork hours) *independent of USJ's ABA program* before they can be deemed eligible to take the examination (e.g., at their current employer). More information can be obtained from our Practicum Coordinator, Dr. Charlotte Mann, BCBA-D (cmann@usj.edu).

M.S. in ABA students will also need to complete the following courses: (+12 credits)

- IABS 594 & 596: Research Capstone I & II
- IABS 581 & 582: ABA Practice I & II

CT State Licensure

Students who pass the BCBA® Exam® are eligible to become licensed to practice in the state of CT (i.e., a "Licensed Behavior Analyst"; "LBA"), as well as *most* other states. A list of states that have enacted licensure laws can be found here: <https://www.bacb.com/u-s-licensure-of-behavior-analysts/> Since the field is relatively new, licensure laws are added and modified frequently, so students should be aware of the licensing requirements in other states (<https://www.bacb.com/u-s-licensure-of-behavior-analysts/>) should they plan to practice outside of CT.

M.S. IN ABA PROGRAM OF STUDY

To help students track their progress in the program, they are encouraged to use this sheet to ensure timely completion and accurate sequencing of all courses (i.e., Program of Study).*

Course Number	Title	Semester #	Semester	Grade/Pass
IABS 501 (VCS)	Foundations of Behavior Analysis	1	Fall 2025	
IABS 511 (VCS)	Research in the Behavioral Sciences			
IABS 504 (VCS)	Ethical and Professional Issues			
Feedback I				
IABS 509 (VCS)	Experimental Analysis of Behavior	2	Spring 2026	
IABS 564 (VCS)	Educational Interventions			
IABS 502 (VCS)	Behavioral Assessment			
Practice Exam & Feedback II- May				
IABS 503 (VCS)	Behavioral Interventions	3	Summer 2026	
IABS 510 (VCS)	Organizational Behavior Management			
IABS 505 (VCS)	Advanced Topics in Behavior Analysis	4	Fall 2026	
IABS 594	Research Capstone I			
IABS 581	Practical Applications of ABA I			
Comprehensive Exam & Feedback III - December				
IABS 596	Research Capstone II	5	Spring 2027	
IABS 582	Practical Applications of ABA II			

**Modifications to PoS's may be made on an individual basis upon approval from the ABA Program Director.*

CERTIFICATE IN ABA PROGRAM OF STUDY

To help students track their progress in the program, they are encouraged to use this sheet to ensure timely completion and accurate sequencing of all courses (i.e., Program of Study).*

Course Number	Title	Semester #	Semester	Grade/Pass
IABS 501 (VCS)	Foundations of Behavior Analysis	1	Fall 2025	
IABS 511 (VCS)	Research in the Behavioral Sciences			
Feedback I				
IABS 564 (VCS)	Educational Interventions	2	Spring 2026	
IABS 509 (VCS)	Experimental Analysis of Behavior			
IABS 502 (VCS)	Behavioral Assessment			
Practice Exam & Feedback I - May				
IABS 503 (VCS)	Behavioral Interventions	3	Summer 2026	
IABS 510 (VCS)	Organizational Behavior Management			
IABS 505 (VCS)	Advanced Topics in Behavior Analysis	4	Fall 2026	
IABS 504 (VCS)	Ethical and Professional Issues			
Comprehensive Exam - December				

**Modifications to PoS's may be made on an individual basis upon approval from the ABA Program Director.*

BCBA® EXAM® PREPARTORY ACTIVITIES

To help students prepare for the BCBA® Exam®, they will be required to complete the following activities.

Practice Exam (May of 1st year in program)

The purpose of this exam is solely to help students practice, and thus students are required to take the exam, but **not required to pass**. The Practice Exam will include the content covered in the first two semesters of coursework (i.e., IABS 501, IABS 511, IABS 504, IABS 509, IABS 564, and IABS 502). Students will only be permitted to take the exam if they have completed these courses with a B- or better (i.e., a passing grade in each course). The structure of the exam will emulate the BACB® Exam® and consist of *approximately* 175 multiple-choice questions and students will be allotted four hours to complete the exam; however, students will be able to take the exam virtually on Blackboard, on their own time, during a week-long exam window in May of their first year of the program (i.e., the week between the Spring and Summer semesters). All students will be provided with individualized feedback on their performance, including a breakdown of their performance across the evaluated areas of the TCO-6 (i.e., A, B, C, D, E, F & parts of G). Although students are not required to obtain a passing score (i.e., 80%), students will be required to engage in remediation activities for any of the TCO-6 areas falling below an 80%. Specifically, students will be required to complete the acquisition modules (i.e., to 100%) of the Behavior Development Modules (BDS; see description below) *prior to registering for Capstone I and Practical Applications of ABA I in the Fall*.

Behavior Development Modules (BDS; M.S. in ABA students only, but highly recommended for Certificate Students)

M.S. in ABA students are required to purchase the Behavior Development Solutions online textbook (www.behaviordevelopmentsolutions.com) during the second year in the program (i.e., 12-month subscription *with course requirement*; \$428). Students will need to purchase the modules as early as the summer of their first year (i.e., following the Practice Exam). All students will eventually need to purchase and complete the Acquisition modules as part of their 2nd year coursework. Importantly, students will be required to complete the associated Fluency modules for any modules assigned in student's 2nd year courses that they've already completed as part of their Practice Exam remediation plan. More details will be provided in the respective 2nd year syllabi.

Comprehensive Examination (December of 2nd year in program)

Students will be **required to pass this exam before they graduate**. A passing score is 80%. They will take the exam following the successful (i.e., B- or better) completion of *ALL VCS courses* (i.e., IABS 501, IABS 502, IABS 504, IABS 509, IABS 510, IABS 511, IABS 503, IABS 564 and IABS 505). The structure of the exam will emulate the BACB® Exam® and consist of *approximately* 175 multiple-choice questions and students will be allotted four hours to complete the exam. Students will take the exam in person and on campus with at least one

faculty proctor in December of their 2nd year of the program (i.e., prior to the start of their final semester). All students will be provided with individualized feedback on their performance regarding the ALL areas of the TCO-6 (i.e., A – I). If students do not pass, they will be given an opportunity to retake the exam prior to graduating. If students pass, but have any TCO-6 areas below 80%, they will be required to engage in remediation activities prior to graduation. Specifically, students will be required to complete the associated acquisition/fluency BDS modules (i.e., depending on which modules they have already completed).

**These timelines are based on the standard 2-year Program of Study as outlined above. Students with individualized PoS's will work with the Program Director to find the most appropriate time to take the Practice and Comprehensive Exams.*

STUDENT PROGRESS MONITORING & MENTORING

The purpose the ABA programs at USJ is not only to teach student's the content of ABA, but also to be professionally and interpersonally skilled. As such, each student's academic and professional abilities in the following areas will be reviewed at regular intervals:

1. Test taking, writing, and oral communication skills
2. Respectfulness, interpersonal skills, and ability to take feedback
3. Attendance & timeliness, proactivity and time-management skills
4. Class participation, engagement, effort and commitment to learning

Each student will receive performance feedback at three separate points during their time in the program*:

1. After their first semester
2. May of 1st year, following their Practice Exam
3. Winter of 2nd year, following their Comprehensive Exam

During each review, each of the above evaluated areas will be rated on a 3-point scale: "Exceeds Expectations", "Meets Expectations", and "Does Not Meet Expectations". All students are highly encouraged to use this information to set individual growth goals; however, any area receiving a "Does Not Meet Expectations" rating must have a behavioral goal associated with it via an individualized *Improvement Plan* made in collaboration with the ABA Program Director.

Importantly, egregious or significant behaviors requiring feedback and improvement will be addressed immediately (i.e., not just during the review meetings).

**These timelines are based on the standard 2-year Program of Study as outlined above. Students with individualized PoS's will work with the Program Director to find the most appropriate times to review their overall performance.*

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Professional Liability Insurance

Students are required to purchase professional liability insurance upon entry into the program and keep it updated until they complete the program in which they have enrolled. The cost to students is approximately \$25.00 *per year* and must be purchased through CPH and Associates (<http://www.cphins.com>). When applying for insurance on-line choose “Student – Behavior Analysis” as occupation. A copy of the policy face page must be sent at least two weeks before the start of the semester to the program director. ***Proof of insurance is required to begin courses.***

Credit Hours Per Course

The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), the accrediting body for USJ, holds each accredited institution to all federal laws and regulations that serve as minimum standards for higher education. Federal regulations define a credit hour as, “. . . an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence that reasonably approximates not less than one hour [denoted as 50 minutes] of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of 2 hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester.” For each 3-credit course in which one is enrolled, beside the 2 ½ hour class meeting each week, it is expected that a minimum of 6 hours per week will be dedicated to working on assignments outside of class.

Course Grades and GPA Requirements.

Students must earn a **B- or better** in all courses and maintain a *cumulative* GPA of 2.67 to remain in good academic standing and graduate. USJ’s grading system is as follows:

Grade	Definition	Grade points per credit
A	100-93	4.000
A-	92-90	3.670
B+	89-87	3.330
B	86-83	3.000
B-	82-80	2.670
C+	79-77	2.330
C	76-73	2.000
C-	72-70	1.670
D+	69-67	1.330
D	66-60	1.000
D-	62-60	0.670
F	<60	<0.670

Course Retake Policy (Note: This policy supersedes the policy in the USJ catalog)

If a student receives a grade below B- for any course, they must re-take the course. Should that course serve as a prerequisite for another course in the program, the student will not be able to move on to the next course until the low-grade prerequisite has been met. If the course is not offered in the following semester, a student must wait until the course is offered to continue with their program of study. This has the potential to impact the student's graduation date and full-time status (i.e., at least 6 credits) depending on the course schedule for their remaining time in the program. ***Failure to earn a satisfactory grade (B- or above) in the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.*** A student required to repeat a course will be subject to the following:

1. The original course grade will remain on the student's transcript.
2. The most recent grade of the two will be used in calculating the student's GPA.
3. Only the credits from the most recent course will be counted toward the graduation requirement.

Academic Probation Policy

Any grade below a B- will result in departmental review. Upon review, if the student's GPA is below 2.67, that student will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on probation will not be eligible for tuition waivers through Graduate Assistantships (but they *are still available* through employment as a Gengras Center Teacher's Aide). ***Failure to increase the GPA to above 2.67 in a subsequent 6 credits following probation will result in dismissal.***

Academic Dismissal Policy

A student may be dismissed from the program if they:

- Receive a grade of "F" in any of their courses
- Fail to bring their GPA above 2.67 after 6 credits of probation
- Fail to earn a satisfactory grade (B-) in a course after *two attempts*

A student may be dismissed for other factors, even with good academic standing. USJ reserves the right to exclude from further enrollment any graduate student whose conduct is deemed improper or prejudicial (inclusive of academic integrity issues) to the best interest of the university. All students enrolled in coursework in this program will be expected to follow the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (Code; BACB, 2020) - see <https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Ethics-Code-for-Behavior-Analysts-240830-a.pdf>. Violations of the Code will be immediately reviewed by the ABA faculty and met with an Improvement Plan, and in some egregious cases, may also be grounds for student dismissal.

Please see the USJ Student Handbook and Catalog for the current policies regarding: Academic Integrity, Grade Appeals, Graduate Grievance and Appeal Procedures, Leave of Absence, Administrative Withdrawals, Transfer Credits, and Application for Graduation

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ON-CAMPUS SERVICES

Admissions (Graduate) - 860-231-5261; graduate@usj.edu

The Office of Graduate Admissions handles issues related to program applications, matriculation records, graduate assistantships, and leaves of absence.

Bursar - 860-231-5266; bursar@usj.edu

The Bursar's Office handles issues related to tuition, fees, and payment of bills.

Campus Safety Officers (Emergency) - 860-231-5222

Disclosure Statement. Notice is hereby given that, in accordance with the Connecticut Safety Act (Public Act 90-259), the Uniform Campus Crime Report for USJ is available from the University's Office of Campus Safety and will be provided upon request.

Campus Security Office & Parking- 860-231-5742

Each graduate student who parks a car on campus is to register her/his car and obtain a parking permit from the Public Safety Office (you must bring your automobile registration with you to purchase a parking tag). All cars must be officially registered and parked in designated locations. Fines are imposed for parking violations.

Career Development Center - 860-231-5893; careercenter@usj.edu

The Career Development Center maintains a Resource Center, which has information on professional and other graduate schools, various occupations, current job openings, potential employers, and part-time and summer employment.

Center for Academic Excellence - 860-231-5514; cae@usj.edu

The CAE provides students with writing tutoring to assist with graduate-level papers, as well as Academic Success coaching to refine time management, critical reading, note-taking, and study skills. You can find the CAE on the second floor of the library, or you can send an e-mail to caeappt@usj.edu that includes your phone number.

Counseling and Psychological Services - 860.231.5530; cwc@usj.edu

It is common for college students to experience concerns that may interfere with academic success such as academic stress, sleep problems, managing multiple responsibilities, life events, relationship concerns, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you or a friend is struggling, I strongly encourage you to seek support. The office of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers short-term, confidential counseling without additional charge to currently enrolled USJ students. To schedule an appointment, please call 860.231.5530, email cwc@usj.edu, or stop by CAPS located on the second floor of McGovern Hall. Additional information can also be found at

<https://www.usj.edu/student-life/counseling-and-psychological-services/>.

Notice of Rights Under Title IX

1. **Parenting and Pregnancy.** Pursuant to the United States Department of Education, University of Saint Joseph provides protections and accommodations for students who are pregnant or parenting. Pregnant and parenting students are entitled to reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy, childbirth, post-birth recovery, medical recovery from pregnancy-related conditions (including those not resulting in a live birth), adoption, and the medical needs of a child during the first year following birth or adoption. Lactation Rooms are located on the first floor of McDonough Hall and the second floor of Lourdes Hall. Both spaces are equipped with a chair, refrigerator, and sink. Please contact Facilities or the Office of Accessibility Services if these items are missing or require maintenance. If a room is locked, please contact Public Safety for access. For additional information, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services at Accessibility@usj.edu
2. **Sex Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX).** At the University of Saint Joseph, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all members of our community are free from sex- or gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct. Under Title IX, prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, sex-based discrimination, and retaliation. Our Title IX policy applies to conduct occurring on campus, on USJ-controlled property, at USJ-sponsored events, and, in some cases, off-campus or online conduct. Faculty and staff are *Mandated Reporters* and are required by University policy and federal law to report any disclosures or concerns to the USJ Title IX Coordinator. **For more information**, please visit the Title IX page on MyUSJ here: https://www.my.usj.edu/ICS/Sexual_Misconduct/ or contact any of the Title IX team members below.

To report an incident:

1. **Submit a Tell Somebody Report:** [Tell Somebody Report Form](#)
2. **Email** titleIX@usj.edu
3. **Contact the Title IX Team:**
 - **Christopher McKee**, Title IX Coordinator (Student Affairs)
860.231.5396 | cmmckee@usj.edu
 - **Sheri Lee**, Title IX Deputy (Human Resources)
860.231.5390 | slee@usj.edu
4. **USJ Public Safety (Available 24/7):** 860.231.5222

Financial Services Center – 860-231-5223; financialaid@usj.edu

The Financial Services Center handles issues related to scholarships, financial aid, and loan plans.

Housing

Housing arrangements are available during summer sessions through the Director of Residential Life (860-231-5214). There are limited residency facilities on campus for full-time graduate students during the academic year (August – May).

Office of Information Technology (OIT) - 860-231-5310; ServiceDesk@usj.edu

The OIT is located on the first floor of the Pope Pius Library and provides technology solutions and support. For more information, including submitting a “ticket” to assist with your technology needs, visit your USJ MyIT portal:

<https://usj.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1899/Portal/Home/>

Online Bookstore (860) 231-5290; bookstore@usj.edu

Allows students to purchase textbooks online. Located on the first floor of McGovern Hall. Students can order their textbooks each semester through their online bookstore. Simply login to MyUSJ, click on “Student”, and scroll down to find the “Online Bookstore”.

Pope Pius XII Library - 860-231-5209

Offers many services for online students including off-campus access to databases.

Registrar – 860-231-5225; registrar@usj.edu

The Registrar’s Office handles issue related to course registration and official and unofficial transcripts and records.

Office of Accessibility Services

The University of Saint Joseph is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. At USJ, the Office of Accessibility Services ensures a university experience that gives individuals with disabilities the same access to programs, opportunities, and activities as all other students. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, USJ provides reasonable accommodations to eligible students. The services offered by the Office of Accessibility Services at USJ are designed to meet the unique educational needs of all students with documented permanent and temporary disabilities. If you have a disability which may impact your academic achievement in this course and you require accommodations, you must provide the appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services. Please note that academic accommodations cannot be provided prior to your professor’s receipt of an Accommodation Letter and are not retroactive. Please visit the Accessibility Services

page on the USJ Website for information about registering for services. You can also contact the office directly at Accessibility@usj.edu.

Tell Somebody Report/Community Assistance Team (CAT)

The CAT is a committee of USJ professionals that promotes the well-being and safety of all members of the campus community through identification, assessment, intervention, and management of students who exhibit concerning, disruptive, or potentially harmful behavior to themselves or others. To inform the CAT about a student who you are concerned about and may need assistance, please submit a "Tell Somebody Report" through MyUSJ (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofStJoseph&layout_id=1).

This is not a system to be used for emergencies. If a student has disclosed in any way (email, conversation, writing) a possible threat to hurt themselves or others, please contact 911 and Public Safety (860) 231-5222.

Weather Cancellation

Classes are rarely cancelled. Occasionally, however, it may be necessary to do so because of emergencies or hazardous weather situations. Cancellation announcements are made on the University home web page, via email alert, text message, Facebook, Instagram, and on the following radio and television stations:

WDRC-AM, FM 1360, 102.9

WELI AM 960

WHCN-FM 105.9

WTIC-AM, FM 1080, 96.5

WVIT, Channel 30 Television, NBC

WKSS-FM 95.7

WLAD-AM 800

WRCH-FM 100.5

WFSB, Channel 3 Television, CBS