Overview (O)

The University of St. Francis (USF) was founded in 1920 by the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate for the education of its own members. The University first accepted women outside of the congregation into Assisi Junior College in 1925. Assisi Junior College became the College of St. Francis with the adoption of a senior college curriculum in 1930. In 1971 the College became coeducational and in 1972 began offering off-campus degree-completion programs serving diploma school nurses and associate degree health care professionals. In 1980, the first master’s program, in Health Services Administration, was initiated. During the early 1990s, the University began offering additional graduate programs. In 1997, the College of St. Francis affiliated with the Provena Saint Joseph College of Nursing, which had evolved from a diploma nursing school founded in 1920 to a baccalaureate-level institution awarding the BS in Nursing degree. In 1998, the College of St. Francis became the University of St. Francis. In February 2009 the University was approved for its first doctoral program, a Doctor of Nursing Practice Program beginning fall 2009 to be delivered online and accessible to students throughout the country.

Throughout its history, the University of St. Francis has held to the charism of the founding Sisters of St. Francis and maintains a close relationship with the sponsoring Congregation. The University’s core values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Compassion are drawn from the Congregation’s Franciscan ideals.

The main campus is located on the near west side of Joliet; the campus location is adjacent to the Upper Bluffs National historic district and within the Cathedral district. Until 2004 the University and the congregation shared the campus. In 2003, the University purchased a 28,000 square foot wing of the Motherhouse from the Congregation and in 2004 purchased the remaining 75,000 square feet as well as purchasing Tower Hall, the main academic building and all of the land upon which the University sits. In August, 2005, the College of Nursing and Allied Health relocated from a facility adjacent to Provena St. Joseph Medical Center to occupy one wing of the former Motherhouse. The University is completing the renovation of the remaining areas of the Motherhouse in stages with completion of the final phase in 2010. The College of Education operates a professional development center in leased space two miles from campus. A facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico houses the Physician Assistant program. A partnership with the City of Joliet and the historic downtown Joliet Rialto Theater has resulted in moving the Visual Arts Department to the Rialto Square Building. Classes start in the new location August, 2009.

Until recently, the University viewed its urban location with some concern. The campus location was almost invisible since the University did not own property on any major thoroughfare. Playing a part in the life of the Joliet community seemed unimportant. The University, under new presidential leadership, is claiming its place as Joliet’s university, reaching out to join the community in new partnerships and connections. The re-connection is symbolized in establishing the former Motherhouse as a part of the University with a solid presence on US Rt. 30, one of Joliet’s major thoroughfares.

The location of USF in Will County is as important as its location in Joliet. Located at the southwestern edge of the expanding Chicago-land metropolis, Will County is the fastest growing county in Illinois and 10th fastest growing county in the United States from 2000-2006 (US
Census Bureau). This population growth creates opportunities for enrollment growth, programmatic expansion and partnerships.

One unique feature of USF is that we have offered a variety of programs to health care professionals for over thirty years. The first of these was the baccalaureate-level degree-completion Health Arts program followed by the MS in Health Services Administration, undergraduate and then graduate nursing programs, and a MS Physician Assistant program.

St. Francis was also an early adapter of online courses. Our MBA program first initiated online course delivery in 1998. The University’s enrollment in online courses has increased from 1300 in 2004 to 2,010 in Spring 2009 and enrollments in two new programs have been almost entirely online. Currently, four undergraduate degree completion programs and five graduate programs can be completed entirely online if the student chooses.

Due to the national dispersion of program sites, USF has had two program identities: the “national programs,” all either health-related undergraduate degree completion programs or health-related graduate programs, and “local” undergraduate and graduate programs offered in Joliet or the surrounding area. These two wings of our identity are reflected in the Strategic Plan 2004 - 2006 institutional vision.

As the University became more data driven, and as the academic and the admissions areas were reorganized to be more efficient and effective, the institutional vision became more integrated. Thus the vision articulated for Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 recognizes that the national is also local.

2006 – 2011 Vision: At the completion of 2011 the University of St. Francis will be a premier Franciscan University offering undergraduate, degree completion and graduate programs of the highest quality. Building on our heritage, the University will educate and graduate students of diverse backgrounds, preparing them to serve the world.

O1 – Goals for Student Learning and Shaping Academic Climate

The goals for student learning at USF can be summarized as follows:

1. A sense of ethics and values reflecting the religious foundations of USF and its Franciscan charism
   - Evidence of having embarked on a personal search for truth, meaning, and faith, including an understanding of and respect for Catholic ideals
   - Understanding of and sensitivity to values including: personal integrity, respect for the dignity of others, and reverence for creation, compassion, justice, and peacemaking

2. Mastery of the chosen discipline
   - Clear understanding of key ideas, concepts, and theories of the chosen discipline
   - Proficiency in skills and methodology

3. Active participation as a citizen of a diverse democracy and pluralistic world
   - Deep understanding of oneself and respect for the diverse identities of others, their histories, and their cultures
• Positive personal and interpersonal skills
• Capacity for associative living (i.e., living in common with others)
• Potential to contribute to society with leadership through service

4. Ability to communicate complex ideas in written and oral form in various situations and with diverse audiences

5. Intellectual competencies, curiosity and habits of mind that foster continual pursuit of knowledge and independent thought
• Facility in quantitative reasoning, as well as scientific and technological literacy
• Aesthetic awareness and appreciation
• Ability to analyze and interpret historical data; to understand methods and analyze concepts from philosophy, theology, and the social sciences
• Read imaginatively and critically

6. Intellectual agility and ability to adapt and manage change, including the ability to translate knowledge into action and to solve problems.
• Ability to learn in multiple modes and from different disciplines
• Ability to find the best available sources of information (electronic and print, questionnaire, interviews, etc.); sift, organize, and evaluate that information, and develop critical analyses

USF offers 35 undergraduate majors and four undergraduate degree completion programs for adult learners. The largest program is the degree-completion Health Care Leadership major. The largest baccalaureate majors are, in rank order, Nursing, Education (combined certification areas), Business (includes accounting, finance, management and marketing), and Biology. In addition, the University offers 15 Master’s programs in the fields of business, education, social work, and nursing. The largest of these is Health Administration; the next two largest are Education and Business. In February 2009 the University was approved to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice Program beginning fall 2009 to be delivered online and accessible to students throughout the country.

The University is organized into four colleges: College of Nursing and Allied Health; College of Education; College of Arts and Sciences; and College of Business and Health Administration.

**O2 – Key Organizational Services**

USF manages its student and administrative support service processes predominantly through its organizational structure. It is an expectation of all student and administrative support services that their focus is on encouraging and supporting student success in light of the University’s vision, mission and core values of respect, service, integrity and compassion. In the context of the 2006-2011 strategic plan, student and administrative support service areas fall into five broad categories: new student enrollment, learning support, student services, mission integration, and administrative support. Table O1 details the departments and functional areas grouped by those...
service categories which help support student learning and the University’s 2006-2011 strategic plan strategies.

Table O.1 Key Student and Administrative Support Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Key Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Student Enrollment</td>
<td>Undergraduate/ Graduate/ Degree Completion Admissions, Enrollment Support Services, Marketing, Academic Advising and Articulation, Student Development</td>
<td>Inquiry, application, admission, placement and testing, registration/advising, articulation and prior learning, orientation/confirming registration, welcome center, marketing, enrollment communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Support</td>
<td>Academic Colleges, Academic Resource Center, Academic and Information Support Services, Academic Advising.</td>
<td>Academic advising, online learning, academic information services, tutoring, supplemental instruction, academic coaching, disability accommodations, assessment of student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>Student Development, Residence Life, Career Development, Athletics, Institutional Diversity, Financial Aid, Registrar, Health &amp; Personal Counseling Services, Operations &amp; Facilities, Barnes and Noble Bookstore*, Sodexho Food Services*</td>
<td>Student activities, residence life housing and programming, career advising, mentoring, student governance, diversity support, intercollegiate sports, financial aid processing, wellness programming, behavioral health treatment and referral services, student records management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Integration</td>
<td>Mission Integration, University Ministry</td>
<td>Spiritual development and activities, mission/Ex Corde alignment, mission awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Outsourced services

O3 – Requirements and Expectations of Students and Key Stakeholders

The variety of programs and delivery options directs the University to categorize students for tracking purposes and programming as demonstrated in the table below. To better understand student needs, other subgroups in addition to the listed categories are also documented and tracked such as under-represented and at-risk students. For retention purposes, students with high financial need or who “stop-out” additionally are identified. The most comprehensive tracking is of traditional undergraduate students, so systems that establish the needs of these students are more advanced than those that may look at other stakeholders.
Primary Competitors:

- **Lewis University**: private not-for-profit Catholic university 10 miles away. Lewis University offers traditional undergraduate programs, off-site degree completion programs for adults and graduate programs. Lewis University is the most frequent cross-application institution and the most frequent private college destination for freshman and transfer applicants who enroll elsewhere.

- **Northern Illinois University**: public university of 22,000 located 50 miles northwest of Joliet. NIU is the second most frequent cross-application institution and the second most frequent public college destination for freshman and transfer applicants who enroll elsewhere.

- **University of Phoenix**: private for-profit university specializing in undergraduate and graduate degree programs online and at sites across the United States. The University of Phoenix is a competitor for adult undergraduate degree completion and graduate students.
04 – Administrative, Faculty and Staff Human Resources

Table O.2 Human Resources (Fall 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level*</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n/a indicates data is not applicable or not available

*Percent of full-time faculty with a terminal degree

USF is organized around functions and colleges. Six vice presidents define the operating units of academic affairs, business affairs, institutional advancement, admission & enrollment services, information technology, and mission integration. Four colleges gather similar programs to share strengths and create efficiencies organized around arts & sciences, business & health administration, education, and nursing & allied health (See Organizational Chart, Figure O.2). Information is exchanged across units through the Deans and Vice President’s Council, the President’s Cabinet, and other college & administrators groups.

Governance is handled by four major bodies: Board of Trustees; Academic Assembly; Administrator Staff Council and Student Government. The Board of Trustees oversee the University as an entity and ensure it is meeting its mission while being financially responsible. Academic Assembly oversees the academic issues of the University including curriculum. The Administrator & Staff Council oversees the needs of non-faculty employees and their role in the institution as they contribute to the academic enterprise. Student Government addresses the needs and interests of students and contributes to sustaining campus life.

The University’s structures and decision-making bodies are designed to provide a voice for each constituent with shared decision making and communication vehicles for information to flow up and down the organization.
O5 – Strategy Alignment—Leadership, Decision Making, Communication

Leadership is exercised through the formal governance bodies, through formal positional authority such as the President and Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors, and through the operational groups.

Formal Governance: The formal decision-making structures are the Board of Trustees, President, and three major groups: Academic Assembly, Administration and Staff Council (ASC), and the Student Government Association (SGA). Each of the major groups, the Board of Trustees, and the colleges operate through committees with functions and processes specified by By-Laws. The President receives recommendations from each of the groups, elects to approve or disapprove, and recommends passage of those he approves to the Board of Trustees.

The President, Provost and Vice Presidents oversee day-to-day operations (see Organizational Chart, Figure O2). The Provost and Vice Presidents each have operational departments within their divisions.

The decision-making bodies are highly formal and hierarchical. Decisions at lower levels are referred for action to higher levels. Membership in each of the bodies is generally specified and
unique to that body. Rarely is there crossover in committee participation. The exceptions are faculty membership on the ASC Social Committee and the ASC Make a Difference Committee.

**Operational Groups:** In contrast, structurally, there are a number of operational groups each dedicated to a specific task. Unlike departments, divisions and the three governance groups, operational groups are potentially ephemeral. Some are temporary, although they may continue for several years (Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee). Some are charged with planning regularly recurring events (Open House Committee) or annual events (Commencement Committee). Membership crosses divisional and department lines; any one of the groups may have a mix of members from at least two of the employee groups (faculty, staff and administrators) and some also include students.

Generally the operational groups are created by one of the formal governance bodies or by administrators (President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors) to conduct operational planning and implementation and/or exploration and recommendations on policy and procedural matters. Functionally, within the organization, they serve one or more of the following purposes:

- communication and collaboration,
- coordination and implementation of policies and processes,
- planning of new initiatives or recurring events.

**Cabinet:** The Cabinet was formally constituted by the President to advise him and is therefore not an operational group. It operates outside of the three formal governance bodies and itself has no decision-making authority. The Cabinet is charged with two major functions:

Review of and advice regarding recommendations emanating from the Operational Groups or from divisions within the University

Communication to their constituents regarding information presented to Cabinet and on other matters considered by Cabinet.

Cabinet members include the University President; Provost; Vice Presidents, the Presidents of Academic Assembly; Administrator and Staff Council; and Student Government Association; the Dean of Student Life; the Deans of the four Colleges; Comptroller, the Executive Director of Operations; the Executive Director of USF Solutions, the Executive Director of University Relations; the Executive Director of Financial Aid Services, the Director of Human Resources, Director of Athletics, and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

**O6 - Strategy Alignment—Key Administrative Support Goals**

The University of St. Francis’ vision calls for the institution to become a “premier” Catholic Franciscan university, with “highest quality” academic programs. Further, the vision statement provides the foundation to build its achievements and incorporate the principles of high performing organizations in order to develop a continuous quality culture.

The Mission forms the basis for our vision and we turn our vision into reality by accomplishing the goals of our Strategic Plan. The underlying foundation of this transformation from vision to
goals and action is based on the use of continuous quality improvement throughout the institution by:

- Focusing on the needs of stakeholders,
- Developing broad based involvement in decision-making processes,
- Ensuring shared vision through effective communication processes;
- Using data to build institutional change,
- Making decisions and evaluating performance with fact-based information gathering and analysis
- Integrating the Catholic Franciscan charism into decision making processes; and
- Investing in our most precious resource, the people who are the University family.

The six goals (Strategic Plan) are academic excellence; living the Catholic Franciscan charism; focusing on students; increasing the quality, diversity and size of the student body; creating partnerships to serve the community; and increasing resources and using them effectively to achieve institutional goals.

The table below shows the alignment of mission, vision and goals from the institutional point of view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic university</td>
<td>Premier Franciscan University</td>
<td>II. Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenged by Franciscan charism</td>
<td>Premier Franciscan University</td>
<td>II. Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic excellence</td>
<td>Undergraduate, degree completion and graduate programs of the highest quality Premier Franciscan University</td>
<td>Develop and maintain excellence in academic programs. IV. Increase the quality, quantity and diversity of the student body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming community of learners</td>
<td>Students of diverse backgrounds Premier Franciscan University</td>
<td>II. Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values. III. Create and nurture a student-centered environment, focused on student needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous pursuit of knowledge, faith, wisdom and justice</td>
<td>Premier Franciscan University</td>
<td>I. Develop and maintain excellence in academic programs II. Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values V. Access and share resources through community partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition emphasizes reverence for creation, compassion and peacemaking</td>
<td>Premier Franciscan University</td>
<td>I. Develop and maintain excellence in academic programs V. Access and share resources through community partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing women and men to contribute to the world through service and leadership.</td>
<td>Students of diverse backgrounds; preparing them to serve the world</td>
<td>I. Develop and maintain excellence in academic programs II. Affirm and communicate our Catholic and Franciscan values. IV. Increase the quality, quantity and diversity of the student body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
O7 – Data and Information

After the successful migration from the University’s legacy system to the Sungard Banner administrative system in 1999, the management and use of administrative information was handled through the Banner User Group.

As the University integrated more administrative functions within the Banner system, the Banner User Group evolved into a small more focused group of major functional system administrators. The new Banner Administrator Group continues to provide input and guidance in the management of information through the Banner administrative system.

With the integrated administrative computing system, the continued increase in electronic library material and the growth of the University’s online degree programs, the University restructured its information technology in 2003 with a goal of improving and enhancing all technology operations within the University. The Division of Academic and Information Support Services (AISS) was created by combining the various functions within the institution that had a focus on information. These areas included Network Services, Information Services, Center for Instructional Delivery, Institutional Effectiveness, Library and University Web Services. The creation of AISS has resulted in improved communication between the various departments and the University.

The University’s Assessment Council monitors the academic and student assessment processes and is responsible for the assessment of general education outcomes. An annual detailed report is provided to the University.

All requests for the collection of Banner system data from a University-wide context are coordinated among the Information and Administrative Services (IAS) Department, functional areas within the University’s administrative computing areas and the Banner Advisor Group. As requests for the collection of data are received, IAS works with other constituents, especially Institutional Effectiveness, to determine the most effective means of processing and storing the data within the University’s information systems. Institutional Effectiveness, working with AISS and other users, determines the most effective means of communicating the results and of disseminating the information.
Centralized Information Systems

USF purchased and implemented the Sungard Banner administrative computing system to manage information through a centralized, integrated, relational database system. The University’s administrative system is the main authoritative source for information within the University and functions as the central repository for current and future data storage. The main administrative functional areas and associated key informational areas of the University’s Banner system are shown in Table O4.

Another major centralized information system is the University Course Management System (CMS). The University uses Blackboard as its CMS. This system is used to manage the University’s online degree programs as well as an instructional tool to support student learning in the traditional classroom.

USF, through a grant from the CampusEAI consortium has implemented phase one of the University’s new MyUSF portal and will introduce Phase 2 during the 2009-2010 academic year. The portal has two major functions: identity management that allows the user centralized access to the various internal and external technology systems, and to aggregate information for individuals based on their role and function within the University.

Research

In order to support the University and department needs for institutional research data, USF has developed a survey procedure administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Permission to survey stakeholders must be given so students and employees are not over sampled with survey requests. Surveys are designed by OIE and results are collected and analyzed and disseminated to the appropriate department at the end of the collection period. Beginning in the fall of 2009, major surveys will be housed on the OIE web page in the portal. In addition to the survey approval process, human subject research proposals must go through the Institutional Review Board, which is co-chaired by two USF faculty, for approval.

Electronic gathering of data through secure web forms has grown considerably over the last four years. Web form-generated information is managed through the University’s Academic and Information Support Services (AISS) area and disseminated to appropriate units at the completion of the survey period. The AISS division also assists the unit in the analysis of this information through the Institutional Effectiveness.
Table O.4  Administrative Information Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Software</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Primary User</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banner Student</td>
<td>Information related to student records including course registration, grades, advising, admission and recruitment, course articulation, degree audit</td>
<td>Staff members Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner Advancement</td>
<td>Development and alumni information including fund-raising, capital campaign and pledge record keeping.</td>
<td>Staff members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner Finance</td>
<td>Full featured modules contained in financial software including: general ledger, financial controls, budget management and student billing.</td>
<td>Staff members Budget managers Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner HR</td>
<td>Functionality includes student and employee payroll, benefit management and Human Resource administration.</td>
<td>Staff members Employees Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner Financial Aid</td>
<td>Financial Aid module includes student application processing, student financial need analysis, fund management, and student aid packaging and disbursement.</td>
<td>Staff members Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O8 – Commitments, Constraints, Challenges and Opportunities

Commitments:
- Campus Master Plan
- Academic Excellence
- Catholic Franciscan Heritage
- Service to those who are not served
- Downtown Joliet Rialto Center will open in Fall 2009 creating new opportunities and needs
- Several federal and state grants we are receiving commit us to address specific issues

Constraints:
- Tuition Driven
- National, state, and local Economy
- Lack of Space (for building, classrooms, parking)
- Limited development dollars and financial resources to support institutional needs
- Large unfunded financial aid and scholarship budget competes for institutional resources
- Highly competitive market in the Chicago area

Challenges:
- Declines and threats of decline in external revenue sources including state and federal financial aid
- Closing out the Health Arts degree completion program and transitioning to two, new programs will take several years to complete. During the transition, name recognition is
lost along with enrollment and the University is facing an uncertain timeline for regaining ground.

- The University has a very small endowment (14 million, up from 10 million three years ago) and therefore is tuition-dependent.
- The current economy is extremely unpredictable as to its affects on retention and enrollment.
- Changing student populations (i.e., more ESL students)

**Opportunities:**

- Population growth in Will County and surrounding areas offers opportunities for enrollment growth and for development of programs targeted at local needs,
- Increasing ties to and involvement in the Joliet community offers opportunities for vibrant interactions with our urban environment, e.g., service learning and internships for students; on-campus public service programs
- Joining AQIP provides the structure for focusing on quality. Without improving processes, the University will not be able to effectively take advantage of emerging opportunities
- Plans for the growth of the University and capital campaign

**O9 – Partnerships and Collaborations**

**College of Education Partnerships:** The College of Education and Joliet Public School District 86 have established a Professional Development School (PDS) at Farragut and A. O. Marshall elementary schools. The mission of the PDS is to provide improved professional preparation of teacher candidates and faculty development as well as inquiry directed at the improvement of practice and enhanced student learning. Unique aspects of the partnership include the development of the Center for Urban Research in Education, Child Health and Well-being Center, and an Assessment & Diagnosis Clinic. In addition, the College of Education partners with local school districts to provide professional development workshops and courses.

**Joliet Junior College:** JJC is the largest source of transfer students for the University, enabled through a number of partnership arrangements. These include 2+2 agreements, accepting Associate in Applied Science degrees in partial fulfillment of requirements for Management, Health Care Leadership, Organizational Leadership and the RN/BSN degrees; dual admissions; and unified curricula in nursing and education.

**City of Joliet:** The City of Joliet considers the University the anchor of the near west-side and has committed city development funds to infrastructure improvements in the neighborhood in accordance with the University’s master plan. These include rebuilding streets with parkway medians and funding a statue of the foundress of the Sisters of St. Francis.

**Joliet Grade School District 86:** USF in collaboration with Joliet Grade School District 86 is participating in a $6.99 million grant program from the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Quality Enhancement Program (TQE) awarded to the Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI). USF collaborated with ACI and seven other deans/chairs of education to develop a vision of
transforming teacher preparation in high-need urban schools. The result is ACI’s new Center for Urban Research in Education which will explore educational issues affecting diverse metropolitan regions.

**Rialto Theater in downtown Joliet:** The partnership between the City of Joliet, USF and the Rialto Theater has resulted in the opportunity to move the Visual Arts Department to the Rialto building to create synergy between the USF art program and professional artists in the downtown Rialto Arts District. This opportunity greatly enhances the learning spaces for the program and is poised to take advantage of the easy access to Chicago via train.

**Joliet Park District:** For some 30 years, USF has partnered with the Joliet Park District and other entities to utilize facilities for sports, such as golf, soccer, tennis and women’s softball. USF benefits by having access to affordable facilities without having to maintain them and the Joliet Park District and other partners are able to maximize facility use and bring in some revenue. The most exciting of these partnerships is with the Joliet Jack-Hammers semi-professional baseball team for use of Silver Cross Field, a four-year old state-of-the-art professional baseball stadium.

**Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie:** This partnership provides opportunities for collaboration in management, inventory, research, monitoring, and educational activities. As of July 2009 the partnership has resulted in the following: 1) USF assuming a stewardship role for the Doyle Lake Watershed 2) Developing an interpretive brochure 3) USF Hosting a Midewin 10th Anniversary Research Symposium 4) Developing a long-term River Watch stream monitoring project of Midewin streams and 5) USF faculty and students conducting a year-long visitor survey at Midewin.

**Forest Preserve District of Will County:** This collaboration has provided opportunity for access to nearby high-quality nature preserves for teaching and research and has led to several collaborative research projects.