

*S*nsight

History and Heritage

Mission and Core Values

Catholic Intellectual
Tradition



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Introduction

Insight introduces readers to the legacy that inspired the founders of the University of San Diego and the common ground upon which its principles, values, and aspirations have been built. To know the University is to understand its history, heritage, mission, intellectual background, and distinctive Catholic identity.

The University of San Diego is a young institution. It was founded in 1949 when Most Reverend Charles Francis Buddy, first Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego, and Reverend Mother Rosalie Hill, Religious of the Sacred Heart, obtained charters from the State of California for the San Diego University and the San Diego College for Women respectively. Classes began in 1952, and the institution has consciously fashioned for itself an image both intellectually challenging and aesthetically attractive.

The beauty of the University of San Diego campus, known as Alcalá Park, reaches beyond the “eye of the beholder,” for Mother Hill believed in the enhancement of learning through beauty and harmony. Here, beauty is a transcendental quality imparted to students as part of their education to goodness and truth—a simple but profound educational philosophy. The University sits on a prominent mesa and blends graceful architecture, at once stylistically and historically unified in its appearance, with stunning views of the ocean, bay, and rugged canyons that drop away from the mesa. The beauty of the campus, with its harmonious design, invites all who study, work, and live here to serious intellectual endeavors that shape a vigorous learning community.



History and Heritage

The University traces its origins to fifteenth-century Spain. Its namesake, San Diego de Alcalá, born in the province of Seville circa 1400, became a Franciscan brother and served as a missionary in the Canary Islands. He later was a cook and infirmarian at the Franciscan convent at Alcalá de Henares near Madrid, where he died in 1463. Because of Diego's exemplary life, he was canonized as St. Didacus of Alcalá in 1588. The University of Alcalá, founded by Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros in 1499, opened for classes in 1508. Its Spanish Renaissance architecture and general setting inspired the design of the University of San Diego.



The University of San Diego has a dual heritage. Bishop Buddy invited the Society of the Sacred Heart under the leadership of Mother Hill, RSCJ, to join him in establishing an institution of higher learning in San Diego. The Society of the Sacred Heart, founded in France in 1800 by St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and brought to America in 1818 by St. Philippine Duchesne, has schools and colleges throughout the world. Founded by Mother Hill, the San Diego College for Women began classes in February 1952.

Originally sponsored by the Diocese of San Diego, the College for Men and the School of Law, the first professional division of the University, both began classes in 1954. It became clear that distinct educational advantages would be gained if the curricula, libraries, and structures of these institutions were shared. In July 1972, the two colleges and the School of Law merged, forming a single, co-educational Catholic university. The governance of the University was transferred from the founding organizations to an independent Board of Trustees.

The 1972 merger brought major changes in the corporate relationships of the two governing bodies. The University remains Catholic by charter and is responsible to its own Board of Trustees, a group of forty men and women from various faith traditions. The founding entities, the Diocese of San Diego and the Society of the Sacred Heart, continue to participate at faculty, administrative, and Board levels.

In 1994, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching reclassified USD as a “Doctoral University II,” recognizing the strides the University had made in graduate studies and research. USD was reclassified as a Doctoral/Research-Intensive University in 2000 and earned a Phi Beta Kappa charter in 2003.

Today the University of San Diego includes the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business Administration, School of Education, School of Law, the Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science, and the future Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies.



Mission

The University of San Diego is a Roman Catholic institution committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service.

*C*ore Values

The University of San Diego expresses its Catholic identity by witnessing and probing the Christian message as proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church. The University promotes the intellectual exploration of religious faith, recruits persons and develops programs supporting the University's mission, and cultivates an active faith community. It is committed to the dignity and fullest development of the whole person. The Catholic tradition of the University provides the foundation upon which the core values listed below support the mission.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The University pursues academic excellence in its teaching, learning, and research to serve the local, national, and international communities. The University possesses that institutional autonomy and integrity necessary to uphold the highest standards of intellectual inquiry and academic freedom.

KNOWLEDGE

The University advances intellectual development; promotes democratic and global citizenship; cultivates an appreciation for beauty, goodness, and truth; and provides opportunities for the physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and cultural development of students. The University provides professional education grounded in these foundations of liberal learning while preparing students to understand complex issues and express informed opinions with courage and conviction.

COMMUNITY

The University is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and collaborative community accentuated by a spirit of freedom and charity, and marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual. The University values students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds and faith traditions, and is committed to creating an atmosphere of trust, safety, and respect in a community characterized by a rich diversity of people and ideas.

ETHICAL CONDUCT

The University provides a values-based education that informs the development of ethical judgment and behavior. The University seeks to develop ethical and responsible leaders committed to the common good who are empowered to engage a diverse and changing world.

COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

The University embraces the Catholic moral and social tradition by its commitment to serve with compassion, to foster peace, and to work for justice. The University regards peace as inseparable from justice and advances education, scholarship, and service to fashion a more humane world.



The Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Intellectual life is central to the identity of a Catholic university. Catholics have traditionally used reason to understand truths about nature and human existence, as these witness the divine origins of history. A distinctive

feature of the Catholic intellectual tradition is the belief that knowledge achieved through reason, and knowledge attained by faith, are equally valid and ultimately compatible.



A vigorous intellectual life was implicit in Christianity's very beginning. The evangelists and the apostle Paul developed ideas in their writings that related Christianity to the great themes of the Hebrew Scriptures. Writers of the second century interpreted Christianity with the language of the major philosophies of the day, especially Platonism. There was an implicit confidence that, as St. Augustine wrote, "The truth is yours, O God, wherever it is found."

The Church's intellectual life has been carried out in monasteries, cathedral schools, universities, and institutes. The emergence of the monastery in the early Middle Ages not only provided a focus for the Church's intellectual life, but also ensured the continuation of the culture of western civilization.

Beginning in the twelfth century, Catholic scholars pursued all types of learning at universities, drawing not only upon their own tradition, but also upon Greek and Roman writers, as well as contemporary Islamic and Jewish scholars. Many felt that there should be neither fear nor hesitation in raising questions and in searching for truth from all sources. The Catholic tradition has always been enriched by the contributions of other faiths as well as a broad range of philosophies and ways of living.

One gift of the medieval university has been the development of an independent intellectual tradition of theology in dialogue with the leadership of the Church. The Catholic intellectual tradition has welcomed the creative tensions that have existed between theological scholars and Church leaders. This tradition has never been monolithic; diversity has always been present. Even in the New Testament, different ideas and emphases are discernible in the various stories that are told.

Certain characteristics are typically displayed where the Church's intellectual life is vibrant:

- ◆ The Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures are translated and studied in an attempt to explain the themes of the Bible in a contemporary idiom.
- ◆ Spirituality, with its rich and varied traditions, is regarded as a genuine expression of faith.
- ◆ Innovative as well as established philosophical ideas are examined, since disciplined and systematic thought can help discern significant truths about reality and human existence.
- ◆ The classic texts of early Christianity are re-studied in the light of contemporary language and culture, as Catholic intellectuals attempt to understand the ages that preceded them.



- ◆ Ethical issues come to the fore as thinkers examine the value of life and attempt to understand behavior in such arenas as family, health, economics, environment, and human conflict.
- ◆ Language is a recurrent challenge to Christianity, since to preach the Gospel to the nations implies speaking to people in their own tongues. During periods of intellectual ferment within Catholicism, the learning of languages, both classical and living, has been held in high regard.
- ◆ Where Catholic thought has flourished, there has often been concurrent expression in literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music.

The contemporary Catholic university sees itself as heir to this tradition. Open to free inquiry and enriched by the contributions of many religions and schools of thought, as well as by the culture in which it exists, the modern Catholic university welcomes scholars of different traditions, all of whom are essential to its purpose.



Just as the University of Alcalá rests on the principles of Christian humanism, so too does the University of San Diego. Over the course of the last century, those principles have been more explicitly articulated in a collection of documents that comprises the social teachings of the Church. These have become the touchstone for judging the authenticity of this Catholic university's public purpose; that is, its work on behalf of God's creation.

The University and the Catholic Church

The modern university as we know it today evolved, in part, from the Roman Catholic Church in medieval Europe. Universities were first developed in Italy at Bologna and Padua, in Spain at Salamanca and Alcalá, in France at Paris, and in England at Oxford and Cambridge. One of the few medieval institutions to continue to the present day, the university adapts to new cultures and places, influencing significant thought and initiating social and political reform in the spirit of Christian humanism.

In the New World, the first institutions of higher learning were founded by Spanish Catholics in Mexico and Peru in the mid-sixteenth century. In the thirteen English colonies, early universities were Protestant, beginning with Harvard College in 1636 and Yale University in 1701. Like Harvard and Yale, Catholic universities also have a history coterminous with the nation itself. In 1789, the first bishop in the new United States, John Carroll, founded Georgetown College. This educational venture blossomed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the establishment of many Catholic colleges and universities by religious congregations and dioceses.

As a Catholic university, USD takes seriously the interfaith theme of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and welcomes students, faculty, and staff of every faith tradition. In this religiously diverse environment, members of the USD community mutually share their differing beliefs, both intellectually and spiritually, to the benefit of all, believing that a person's faith intensifies and deepens when



enriched by understanding other religious traditions. This solidarity with others and their faith commitments grounds USD in its Catholic mission of education.

According to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (From the Heart of the Church), a document issued by Pope John Paul II in 1990, the Catholic university is recognized as “an incomparable center of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity.” The Catholic university is an academic community which, in rigorous and critical

fashion, promotes the protection and advancement of human dignity and cultural traditions through teaching, research, and outreach locally, nationally, and internationally. Further, it possesses the institutional autonomy necessary to fulfill its mission and guarantees its members academic freedom, which preserves the rights of both the individual and the community in the spirit of truth and the common good. *Ex Corde*



Ecclesiae emphasizes the role of the Catholic university as “a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative.”

Ex Corde's emphasis on the university's identity as Catholic has significant implications for its academic and communal environment. The university pursues its goals through the formation of an authentic human community whose

unity springs from its dedication to the truth, its common vision of the dignity of the human person, and its institutional witness to Christ and the gospel message. Its academic efforts include the search for truth, the integration of knowledge, and the dialogue between faith and reason, all of which contribute to the student's development through the consideration of moral and ethical implications within each branch of study. In particular, USD students pursue an education that combines academic excellence with growth in the capacity to ask questions; to understand; to make personal judgments; to develop a spiritual, moral, and social sense; and to promote social justice.



Intellectual Life and Academic Freedom

The University's advancements in academic knowledge and reputation are made possible because of the University's commitment to academic freedom. The University of San Diego endorses the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure coauthored by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges. USD's *Policy and Procedure Manual* makes it clear that academic freedom is essential to teaching and to the pursuit of scholarly activities within an academic community. Freedom in teaching, research, and service requires free inquiry, free expression, intellectual honesty, respect for the academic rights of others, and openness to change. All members of the academic community share the responsibility for maintaining a professional atmosphere in which academic freedom is embraced.

Academic freedom ensures that the governance of a Catholic university remains autonomous so that the institution may flourish. USD's Catholicity and its commitment to Catholic principles and values place no obligation on faculty, administration, or staff with regard to their personal beliefs or religious practices, nor do they prevent statements of personal views that may differ from those held by the Catholic Church. Just as the University respects the religious traditions, the freedom of conscience, and the liberty of each member of its academic community, so too does it ask for respect with regard to its Catholicism.



As is true of most Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, the University of San Diego includes students, faculty, and staff from varied religious traditions, all of whom have made and continue to make significant and valuable contributions to fostering the identity and mission of the University. Experience has shown that in a Catholic university people can share educational ideals and values without necessarily sharing religious beliefs. What the University of San Diego seeks from its academic community is that all bear the professional responsibility to recognize and respect its Catholic identity, and to understand and foster its mission and values.



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