THE NEWMAN INSTITUTE was founded by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and the Editorial Board of the periodical Signum. The foundational idea for both Signum and the Newman Institute was to make the Catholic intellectual tradition accessible in Sweden. Academic work and higher education is at the heart of the Jesuit vocation, and Signum (founded 1975) and its predecessors have since 1920 introduced Catholic thinking in a faithful, scholarly and comprehensible way. As a result, the Catholic Church has become more respected among intellectuals in Sweden, as well as among its critics. In addition to this outwardly-directed function, Signum has also fulfilled an important inwardly-oriented function: as the journal has increasingly attracted Catholic intellectuals, it has operated as a Catholic think-tank, which has been a valuable instrument for the Church, enabling it to position itself self-critically in the public debate in Sweden.

IN THE SAME WAY that Signum uses the written word to open the minds of people for Catholic thinking, so too does the Newman Institute with the spoken word of courses, lectures, conferences and events. The individual courses that were offered in the beginning had topics ranging from philosophy and theology to different cultural issues, and they developed a reputation for being of high academic quality. An important purpose of the philosophical courses was to train students in critical thinking as a pre-condition for doing theology. The courses on cultural topics demonstrated how theology is not an abstract intellectual discipline but is an expression of faith in all areas of human life. In these ways, the students of the Institute have the opportunity to encounter the world of Catholic thinking, both in its depth and its openness.
The large number of participants in the courses revealed the existence of a need for this type of education but also an appreciation for the way the courses were taught. The students were encouraged to enter into the process of learning as individuals, with their own experiences as background, and were always challenged to move on in their search for truth. The evaluation of the educational experiences provided by the courses offered by the Jesuits in Sweden prior to the founding of the institute made it clear that the Newman Institute would fill a real and significant need in society; that is to provide a place where people can reflect about philosophical and theological questions in an academic framework.

The Founding of the Newman Institute corresponded very well with the desire of the Diocesan synod of 1995 to start a University College in the Nordic countries in order to have a place to educate theologians for the needs of the
Catholic Church in Scandinavia. Thus, the foundational idea of the Newman Institute developed not only because of an encounter of the Church with the secular environment in Sweden but also in response to the educational needs of the Church in Sweden itself.

As a Jesuit institution the Newman Institute belongs to a long tradition of university-level education. The vast network of Jesuit universities all over the world has inspired the Jesuits in Sweden in the founding of the Institute. Being part of this network is an enormous asset in terms of expertise, faculty and economic resources. Furthermore, the ongoing reflection within the Jesuit order on the unique contribution of Jesuit education to higher education at large gives the Newman Institute a specific direction that distinguishes it from other institutions. The Institute is challenged to develop the core values of Jesuit education in the Swedish context. In his speech to the presidents of Jesuit universities in 2010, Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás SJ pointed out some of these core values; among them are the pursuit of depth in thinking and the education of critical minds.

The accreditation of the Newman Institute by the Swedish Government in 2010 marked the transition from a cultural institute to a university. The significant change in the identity of the institute as well as the concomitant new external expectations triggered the need and the desire to write a strategic plan.
AS A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE the Newman Institute is committed to the truth. It stands for values that are in correlation with, but at the same time, independent of the culture that surrounds it. Thus, it stands for a certain fidelity to its vision of life. The Institute is rooted in a coherent and at the same time flexible worldview. Its Catholic breadth enables it to be open to different opinions.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN emphasized the importance of viewing theology in its historical context and not isolating it from philosophy, literature, art and other cultural expressions. The Christian faith itself is often misrepresented by one-sided descriptions, since faith is not only or even primarily the hypothetical result of abstract thought or theoretical musing, but rather constitutes a consent to divine revelation that evolves from a person’s total life experience, such as it is rationally justified. In the Christian faith there is an interaction between impressions and experiences from various areas of life, and therefore faith is expressed in various “languages” - conceptual language, imagery and non-verbal expression. The Institute’s goal is to provide a theological education in line with these insights, an education which as a whole is an interplay between theology, philosophy and various cultural topics. Similarly, this proposed educational program is characterized by an attempt to break down the unfortunate barriers that currently separate different theological subject areas from one another. Graduates of the Newman Institute’s program will be well-equipped to continue studies or work in a variety of fields, including but not limited to: in religious organizations, libraries, schools, in ethical counselling in hospitals and hospices, legal advisors in Catholic matters, diplomacy and political advisors.

THE INSTITUTE is committed to offering education of highest quality. Quality refers to both the academic standard of the institution as well as the pedagogical level of its teaching. Specifically, the Institute offers Jesuit education, which implies that it is committed to the pursuit of depth in academic work as well as an integration of studies and life that result in formation of the whole person. It seeks to form a cross-generational learning community, and also to reach out to all religious denominations, and non-believers of all ethnic backgrounds. It is committed therefore not only to academic courses but
also to “low-threshold” events. The Institute plans to offer courses in Uppsala and also to cooperate with institutions worldwide.

As a college in the Catholic diocese of Stockholm, the Newman Institute will contribute to the development of the local church in a spirit of cooperation and trust with the local bishop, without compromising its intellectual rigour and independence. It will therefore be in an ongoing conversation with the hierarchy about the specific educational needs in the diocese, such as the training of priests, teachers, deacons, catechists etc.

THE CATHOLIC PROFILE of the Newman Institute places it in a privileged position for ecumenical dialogue. Already now, many of its students are Lutheran or evangelical pastors. The Institute should continue to recruit members of other Christian denominations. Also, converts to the Catholic faith are an important group of potential students as they are often highly motivated to deepen their knowledge about their faith and to seek true forms of faith in the multicultural society. In order to implement its international vocation the Newman Institute looks to develop partnerships with strategically chosen universities and academic networks.
GENERAL OVERARCHING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

TO OFFER JESUIT EDUCATION – characterized by the formation of the whole person, including the spiritual side, and pursuing depth in academic work.

TO MAINTAIN and continuously develop effective pedagogy as a hallmark of the Newman Institute’s student-centred emphasis.

TO INCREASE the number of students in order to reach a more stable and financially healthy organisation.

TO ESTABLISH NI as a reputable research Institute with internationally well regarded research niches.

TO DEVELOP national and international alliances with other academic and non-academic institutions in order to attract more students; guarantee a sustainable economic development; to achieve knowledge exchange; to stimulate research and to secure a global positioning.

TO BE COMMITTED to integration and facilitation of intercultural dialogue.

TO BECOME organisationally sustainable, including achieving a critical mass of full-time staff; stable; buoyant and diverse funding sources; strong, flexible and well supported programmes; secure identity; sound staff – student ratios.

TO SECURE full university status as quickly as practicable.

TO ENHANCE the Institute’s regime of quality assurance.
**Teaching and Learning**

To achieve the highest possible quality of student theses through systematic preparation and supervision and quality assurance arrangements.

To develop and invest in flexible distance education provision according to identified need, and to enhance student recruitment.

To facilitate the study of professionals at NI.

To develop a robust QA system consistent with best international standards and NI provision.

**Formation of Students**

As far as is feasible, to give students the opportunity to spend some time of their studies at a non Swedish HEI.

To develop in NI students a balanced profile of skills and competencies and behaviours compatible with the mission of the Institute.

To create in NI a stimulating atmosphere of a non campus community to encourage cross-fertilisation and collaboration.

**Life Long Learning**

To utilise lifelong learning approaches to evaluate the visibility, esteem and perceived value of NI in Swedish society.

To serve and support various target clientele with a flexible, prompt, updated and relevant offering.

To develop systematic approaches to the identification of client needs and the controlled management and expansion of the programme.

To develop mutually beneficial relationships between lifelong learning activities and the mainstream programmes, research and knowledge exchange endeavour of NI.

To contribute towards non-state income generation.
RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

SELECTING THREE PRIORITY research areas and supporting – through highly qualified, paid advisors – the teachers and scholars connected to the Institute in writing applications for funding of research within these areas;

STARTING, in addition to the already existing Patristics and Late Antiquity seminar, at least one more interdisciplinary research-oriented seminar at the Institute, meeting regularly (one or twice a month), serving the development of one of the priority research areas of the Institute and stimulating research in general;

ENCOURAGING all teachers without exception who are and will be employed at the Institute to improve their scholarly competence and the repute of the Institute by preparing, as soon as possible, ‘docent’ applications or by completing their PhD and reducing their teaching obligations and other tasks in order to give them realistic opportunities to do so;

MORE ACTIVELY than until now encouraging and supporting the participation of the teachers of the Institute in national and international research conferences and networks;

EXPANDING THE LIBRARY – though the Institute will continue to depend on Uppsala University Library – and improving other research facilities, such as giving access to a selection of very important internet-based research databases;

ORGANISING PUBLIC ACTIVITIES such as symposia and guest lectures (partly directed to the general public) in a more structured way than until now; regularly recurring activities which are primarily, though perhaps not exclusively, connected to ongoing research at the Institute and to the priority research areas;

INVITING Catholic scholars and academic teacher to become members of a Swedish network for Catholic thinking.

To strengthen competence and experience at the Newman Institute as regards teaching and supervision on Master’s and PhD levels by:
READILY ACCEPTING INVITATIONS for teachers of the Institute to act as second supervisors for doctoral students at other institutions, and actively seeking such invitations;

ORGANISING professional training of supervisors;

PREPARING AND OFFERING, in collaboration with other universities and/or university colleges, selected specialised courses which could be counted as parts of 3rd cycle programmes.