



CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION

**A GUIDE FOR
MISSION REFLECTION**

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ASSOCIATION OF JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: 2021
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PROLOGUE

This revision of the 2013 document, *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, follows the completion of the first round of Mission Priority Examen (MPE) self-studies and peer review visits that took place between 2016 and 2020. Originally commissioned by the Board of Directors for the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and Jesuit Provincial Superiors to serve as a tool for internal review and improvement, *Some Characteristics* ultimately became the primary resource document for the MPE process, assisting institutions as they conducted their self-studies and framed their reports—and guiding peer review visiting teams in their evaluations. Although the process bears some resemblance to an accreditation, and is part of the Society of Jesus' confirmation of an institution's Jesuit and Catholic identity, it is meant to be conducted collaboratively with the schools and in the reflective spirit of an Ignatian Examen.

The MPE thus begins with gratitude for the centuries-old tradition of Jesuit higher education as a gift to each of the colleges and universities that are part of the AJCU network. Affirming the ways in which the Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity is strong and vibrant, and discerning how the institutions might grow in mission effectiveness, are at the heart of the MPE experience. We engage in the MPE as a community of schools deeply rooted in the mission and acting from a foundation of hope.

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This current revision, which will guide the next sequence of MPEs for all institutions of Jesuit higher education in North America, is informed by what we have learned from the initial round of self-studies; peer visit reports; feedback from the Jesuit Superiors General, Presidents and Provincials; and suggestions from involved colleagues at the schools. Specifically, it seeks to:

- Respond to new emphases of the Society of Jesus that have evolved in recent years, including the theme of reconciliation from General Congregation (GC) 36, and the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) guiding all Jesuit works.
- Accentuate the importance of the MPE process as a primary mechanism for self-review by institutions on how they live out their Jesuit, Catholic mission, and as an essential tool for the Society to discern and re-affirm its continuing relationships with Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S., Canada, and Belize.
- Anchor the MPE process as a shared endeavor of the schools and the Society. While ultimate responsibility for affirming Jesuit identity rests with the Society, designing and conducting the MPE process should be a joint and proactive responsibility of the Society and AJCU schools.
- Communicate that recognition of an institution as a Jesuit college or university does not rely on the presence of Jesuits on campus, but rather on the demonstrated commitment of these institutions to live out their Jesuit mission and values in ways that are real, enduring, and grounded in a well-prepared community of leaders personally dedicated to an Ignatian vision.

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We also re-affirm the insights of the initial document, which rightly insisted that “the noun ‘university’ and the adjective ‘Jesuit’ always remain fully honored” (GC34, Decree 17). The Jesuit and Catholic descriptors that mark us as institutions are not simply two characteristics among many. Rather, they signify our defining character – what makes us uniquely who we are in higher education. As universities, our mission is peer-reviewed research; research-grounded teaching, mentoring and advising of students; and service to the wider community – all within a climate of academic freedom. Jesuit universities are also an important ministry of the Catholic Church. Therefore, we remain committed to serving the Church within the essential framework of faith and reason that mutually illuminate and advance each other (cf., *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, para. 17).

The Jesuit and Catholic dimensions of our mission compel us to educate and form students so that they may discern the unique ways in which they are called to be people of faith and service for and with others. This Jesuit charism is built upon the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. It inspires and gives shape to how we educate, encouraging students to find God in all things; to discern the *Magis*, that which leads to the more universal good; and to “[engage] the world through a careful analysis of context, in dialogue with experience, evaluated through reflection, for the sake of action, and with openness, always, to evaluation” (GC35, Decree 6).

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Further, we remain committed to a promotion of “a faith that does justice through interreligious dialogue and creative engagement with culture,” reaffirmed in GC36, with its emphasis on reconciliation as a defining characteristic of our Jesuit commitments, and underscored by the insights of the **Society’s Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs)**, promulgated by Very Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus:

To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment

All members of the campus community should have opportunities to discover the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola and the related practice of Ignatian discernment. Though the Exercises are rooted in the Christian Gospels, there is also much in them that is resonant with the values of non-Christian traditions. Interfaith encounters yield important insights for all people of faith.

To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, and those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice

Fr. Sosa’s phrase illuminates the imperative for a Jesuit university to provide students, faculty, and staff with a “well-educated solidarity” (Kolvenbach) by helping them walk with and learn from those who are marginalized in reciprocal and compassionate relationships.

To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future

Accompanying students is at the heart of university life. This Preference calls professors, staff, and mentors to foster in students a sense of responsibility for the future that is theirs.

To collaborate in the care of our Common Home

Applying this Preference to our higher education context allows us to consider that every colleague in a Jesuit university has an indispensable role in protecting and renewing the world’s limited resources, in collaboration with local and global partners. An educational plan, embedded in a prescribed curriculum, should aim to link ecological and human concerns into an integral ecology.

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These Preferences are not a "checklist" but, rather, in the words of Fr. Sosa, "orientations that go beyond 'doing something' and enable us to achieve our transformation as persons, as religious communities, and as apostolic works and institutions...." (Letter to the Society of Jesus: Feb. 2019). They "seek to unleash a process of revitalization and creativity that make us better servants of reconciliation and justice." In our North American context, the UAPs further lead us to build institutions that are antiracist and inclusive.

We hope that this update of *Some Characteristics* will encourage a growing sense of shared gratitude for the ways in which Jesuit universities exercise the mission, cultivate an awareness of the distinctive nature of our work, and make visible the possibilities for its enhancement. The MPE process is also designed to forge a stronger Jesuit higher education network, vision, and active co-responsibility for mission between AJCU members and the Jesuit Conference.

This document, along with the practical materials found on the MPE website (ajcunet.edu/missionexamen), provides guidelines for completion of the next cycle of the MPE and logistical assistance for the MPE process. Please note that the term "universities" is used in these materials to denote all AJCU institutions of higher education, including the many colleges within our network.

Finally, it is important to recall that the MPE process is both evaluative and developmental in its orientation. Consistent with the style of the individual Ignatian Examen, the goal of the MPE is to look honestly at our institutional life, notice the activity of God within it, and respond freely to the invitation to grow in Faith, Hope and Love.

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU)

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU)

A NOTE ON CONTEXT

In the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius Loyola reminds his fellow Jesuits to adapt the application of their ministry goals to “whatever will seem suitable to them in accordance with the circumstances of persons, places, and times” (*Formula of the Institute*). So, too, the Characteristics and questions in this document are a guide to institutional reflection, meant to be adapted to the situation at each Jesuit college or university. A university need not respond to every question, but may choose to provide nuance and explore some in greater depth, depending on their developmental needs. Each school will come to these choices in dialogue with their local Provincial and/or his Provincial Assistant for Higher Education (PAHE).

We in Jesuit higher education are perennially focused on the *Magis*: the greater and more universal good. In that spirit, the language of this document is aspirational, even as challenges are noted along the way. No university will excel in every area and, in fact, it is the honesty and candor with which a school engages the process that will make it rich and meaningful for ongoing discernment and growth.



"How do we help our young people not to see a university degree as synonymous with higher status, with more money, or social prestige? It is not synonymous with that. How can we help make their education a mark of greater responsibility in the face of today's problems, the needs of the poor, or concern for the environment?"

~ Pope Francis

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The most obvious purpose for this document is its use in the Mission Priority Examen (MPE), but it has been updated to serve other purposes, as well. These include communicating the Jesuit mission in higher education to Church officials, locally and internationally; orienting new trustees, faculty and staff to contemporary issues in Jesuit schools; and providing alumni/ae, and community and global partners with a view of what is important to us as a network. A brief document cannot address the interests of all readers, but this update may assist in meeting the needs of each group.

It is the deep hope of both AJCU and the Jesuit Conference that this document will foster a prayerful and reflective approach to the second round of the MPE (2021-22 to 2027-28) and that the experience will closely reflect a true Examen. By becoming aware of the consolations and desolations that arise, as the schools strive to live out the Characteristics in daily life – and by welcoming the Spirit of God into the process – we will be “living Ignatian” in a new way.

Finally, it should be said that the MPE is a process of mutual discernment by the University, AJCU, and the Society of Jesus. Like an individual Examen, it is an experience best undertaken with shared humility and love. This, too, will be the measure of our success.

CHARACTERISTIC 1: LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO MISSION


The University's leadership effectively communicates and enlivens the Jesuit, Catholic mission of the institution.

In recent years, the leadership and governance of Jesuit universities have continued to evolve, as Presidents and other senior leaders are more likely to be non-Jesuits, campus Jesuit communities have become smaller, and fewer Jesuits serve as trustees. While new key leaders bring important perspectives and contributions to Jesuit institutions, they are also less likely to be Catholic or to be familiar with Jesuit higher education's traditions, spirituality, and values.

In response to these changes, individual Jesuit universities, AJCU, and the five North American Jesuit Provinces have increased their efforts to involve the leadership, trustees, faculty and staff of the schools in mission engagement and development programs, including the Ignatian Colleagues Program, *AJCU Trustee Forum*, AJCU Leadership Institute (formerly known as the Jesuit Leadership Seminar), and various retreats for colleagues. Among the primary purposes of the MPE is assessing the impact of these and other mission engagement efforts on the people and work of the University and – through the influence of peer visitors – sharing best practices across the AJCU network.

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Given the pressures associated with the increasingly competitive marketplace of higher education, a Jesuit and Catholic University should be unambiguous in its focus on the Jesuit, Catholic intellectual tradition, and on its mission of teaching, research, and service. It exercises its three-part identity as University, Jesuit, and Catholic in and for the community in which it is located, and within the larger fabric of American higher education. It also allies itself with the network of AJCU schools that are becoming increasingly interdependent in charting a shared future. *Characteristic One* essentially asks, how does the University explicitly understand and present itself as an active participant in this larger tradition?

A photograph of Pope Francis, dressed in his white papal attire, shaking hands with a man in a dark suit. They are surrounded by other people, including a man in a blue uniform in the background. The scene appears to be an official event or a public appearance.

"...For leadership, there is only one road: service. There is no other way. If you have many qualities – the ability to communicate, etc. – but you are not a servant, your leadership will fail, it is useless, it has not power to gather [people] together... Leadership must enter into service, but with a personal love for the people."

~ Pope Francis

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A. How are trustees chosen and prepared to fulfill their responsibility as stewards of the University's mission?

What formal orientation and ongoing development processes are in place for trustees? What is the nature and frequency of in-depth, integrating discussions by the Board on the University's mission and Catholic identity?

B. When new officers, including the President and other senior leaders, are selected, by what criteria are they chosen?

How are they prepared to articulate and lead the Jesuit mission of the institution? In which Ignatian leadership programs and networks are they expected to actively participate, and how is growth in their capacity for mission leadership fostered and assessed?

C. How are institutional commitment to the network and projects of AJCU made visible in the University's stated identity and institutional practices?

Do leaders understand their work as part of a larger AJCU leadership network? Do they actively promote the programs and other resources of AJCU?

D. Is there a robust and well-funded Mission and Ministry department with University-wide reach?

How does the Mission Office address the complementary challenges of institutional, formational, and pastoral mission integration? What orientation and mission engagement programs are made available to all staff and faculty, and does the institution provide paid time for employees to attend mission programs and events?

E. How are institutional discussions on mission clearly tied to the University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Is the institution's Jesuit mission and Catholic identity recognizably and thoughtfully presented in the University's bylaws, public and promotional materials, and the physicality of its campus, including its commitment to a diverse, inclusive and equitable world?

F. When the University posts position openings, how does it represent to all potential applicants that it is both Jesuit and Catholic?

How are candidates offered opportunities and resources for exploring the school's Jesuit and Catholic mission in the hiring process? How are current faculty and staff prepared to integrate the school's mission commitments into the hiring process while promoting a diverse workforce?

CHARACTERISTIC 2: THE ACADEMIC LIFE

The University's academic life and institutional choices clearly represent the Jesuit and Catholic commitment to a liberal arts and Christian humanistic education for all students. In addition, academic programs, distinctively informed by the University's Jesuit and Catholic character, contribute to the diversity of higher education in North America through an education shaped by the service of faith and the promotion of justice.



Grounded in the mission and identity of their animating tradition, Jesuit colleges and universities seek to offer an education that will transform students and help them to be, in the words of former Jesuit Superior General Adolfo Nicolás, “converted to humanity.”

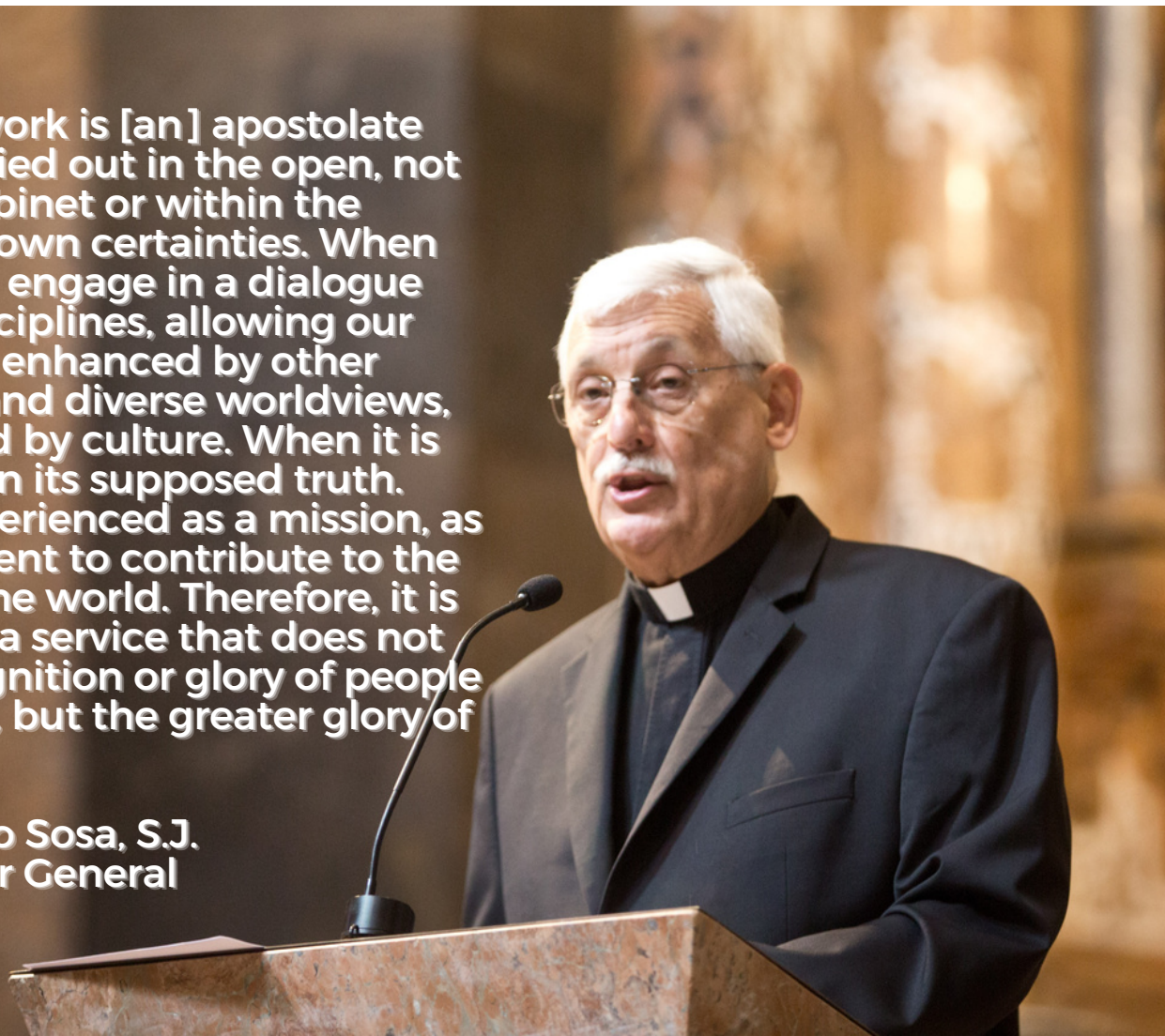
Their emphasis on developing the whole person relies not only on the communication of content, but also on the quality of relationships among a wide community of educators and co-learners. Within that community of scholars, each student grows to appreciate that the life of the mind can bring unanticipated joy. Discovering how to think analytically, reflect, imagine, communicate, and create enlivens their intellects and nourishes their spirits.

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Jesuit universities are always seeking to diversify their student populations and create equitable and inclusive academic environments. At the faculty level, these goals require meaningful changes in (a) who teaches (i.e., the makeup and culture of the faculty), (b) what is taught (i.e., curricular foci), and (c) how teaching is done (i.e., through Ignatian Pedagogy and various approaches to community-engaged learning). With their roots in a spiritual tradition, Jesuit universities are compelled to address historical exclusion based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other identities – and the faculty have an irreplaceable role in assuring that academic life reflects this commitment. Further, the international focus of the Society of Jesus situates the University in a global context that locates it as one contributing partner to the international project of Jesuit higher education.

"Intellectual work is [an] apostolate when it is carried out in the open, not locked in a cabinet or within the comfort of its own certainties. When we are able to engage in a dialogue with other disciplines, allowing our position to be enhanced by other perspectives and diverse worldviews, by science and by culture. When it is not enclosed in its supposed truth. When it is experienced as a mission, as having been sent to contribute to the liberation of the world. Therefore, it is carried out as a service that does not seek the recognition or glory of people or institutions, but the greater glory of God."

**~ V. Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J.
Jesuit Superior General**



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Across the curriculum, there is a visible effort to develop students' imaginations and to help them address transcendent questions. The core curriculum prizes inquiry about God, salvation, ethics, beauty, human dignity, meaning, and truth, as important intellectual pursuits. This integrated, intellectual expression of our Jesuit, Catholic mission is at the service of the entire human community.

For the spiritual and justice emphases of this educational vision to be realized today, the Society of Jesus proposes that a Jesuit education should provide both academic grounding and personal experiences in each of the UAPs. The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP), our vision and method for promoting an integrated and engaged learning process, draws on more than 470 years of Jesuit educational history, fostering critical faculties and growth toward responsible citizenship. Faculty with the IPP's orientation, along with its interrelated components of Context, Experience, Reflection, Action and Evaluation, is essential for faculty. It enhances both the quality of their teaching and encourages their contributions to a vibrant community of teacher-scholars in the Ignatian tradition.

Similarly, research contributes to the advancement of knowledge and promotes depth and appreciation of our world and our human condition. It shapes and enlivens our teaching, and communicates the need for continuous exploration. While some faculty maintain a greater focus on research than others, all should be committed to deep engagement with their field of study as researchers or practitioners. Likewise, Jesuit and Catholic universities are especially committed to research and informed practice that promote the Catholic intellectual tradition and contribute to the betterment of the human condition. The call of Jesuit higher education to advocate for justice and reconciliation should be based on solid research and reflection.

Characteristic Two asks: *Is the University's mission as a Jesuit and Catholic institution embedded and evident in its academic life and faculty pursuits?*

A. How is the undergraduate curriculum, especially the core curriculum, designed to ground the student in a humanistic intellectual tradition that equips them to reflect on the significant questions of a life of faith and reason? How does it expose them to the ancient and perennial questions of art, truth, and virtue?

B. How are graduate and professional students exposed to the significant values and ethical issues in their field of study? How are faculty prepared to work with them in this way?

C. How does the University ensure that diversity and inclusion are integrated into the curriculum and taught as a constitutive dimension of the mission, as illuminated in the UAPs? In what ways are faculty and academic departments helped to undertake this work?

D. How are pressing concerns related to sustainability and an integral ecology available to all students through their academic explorations? How are they embedded in the University's academic priorities?

E. How are the Jesuit and Catholic intellectual traditions and Catholic social thought incorporated into the curriculum so that every graduate has achieved at least a basic understanding of what it means for a University to be Jesuit and Catholic?

F. In what ways does the University demonstrate its commitment to research and informed practice that promotes the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the institution? How are these pursuits incentivized in tenure and promotion processes, and in faculty evaluations?

CHARACTERISTIC 3: THE PURSUIT OF FAITH, JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION

The Jesuit University actively responds to the most morally urgent issues of our times in ways that reflect the deepest sources of the Jesuit, Catholic tradition; anchor healing in truth; and recognize the fulfillment of justice as the forging of right relationships.



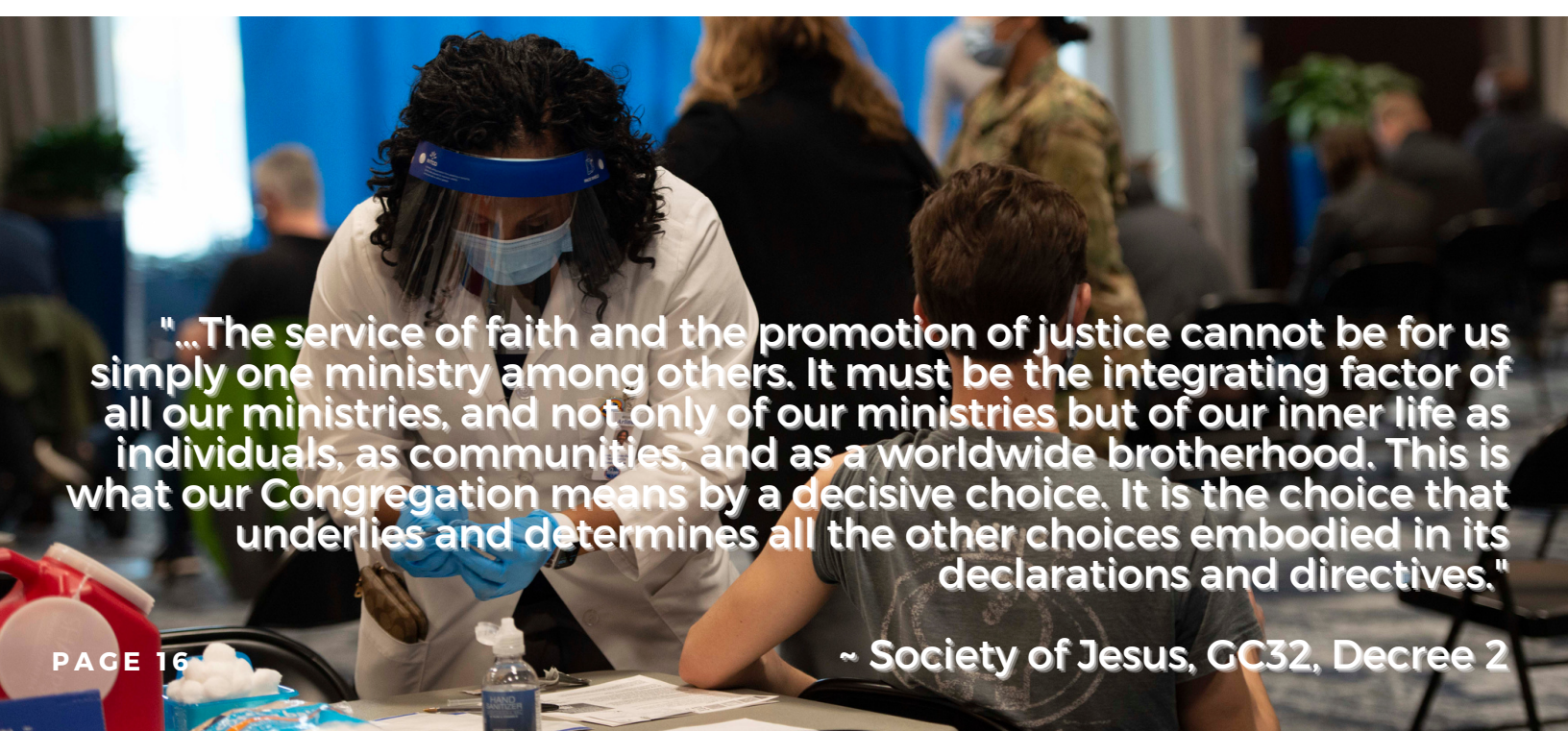
In an address during a meeting of the International Association of Jesuit Universities in July 2018 (pictured left), Fr. Sosa said that, in its commitment to universities, the Society of Jesus “seeks to contribute to turn the word of Jesus into a historical truth ... ***I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly***” (John 10:10).

Inspired by an understanding of God, who labors to repair a broken world, Fr. Sosa asserted that a Jesuit University becomes “a project of social transformation to generate a full life.” Therefore, a Jesuit University is challenged to move “toward the margins of human history, where it finds those who are discarded by the dominant structures and powers.”

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Jesuit Universities, though imperfect and embedded in flawed systems, are called to be a “project of social transformation.” Amid the pervasive reality of racism; the imperative to care for our planet; and the need to respond to a range of other issues of moral urgency, we need to rely on our deepest resources as Jesuit, Catholic institutions. Our distinctive faith traditions and spiritual roots can offer hope and creative energy to make change. We are invited to imagine justice as a generative network of right relationships and, to achieve that, we must be ready for a long process of repair and commitment to truth, which may alone yield authentic reconciliation among fractured peoples.

To that end, four important, interrelated areas for institutional reflection and planning are presented in *Characteristic 3*: (a) a commitment to social justice and reconciliation; (b) a commitment to anti-racism within the University and wider culture; (c) a commitment to care for our common home, the Earth; and (d) a commitment to serving the global community. It should be noted that these commitments follow logically from the UAPs, and from Catholic social thought, which orients all Jesuit works toward the creation of a more just and loving world. Central to our shared mission, these commitments should be embraced by all groups and communities within the University.

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white lab coat, a blue face shield, and a blue surgical mask, is leaning over a table. She is wearing blue gloves and appears to be working with a small object, possibly a piece of equipment or a sample. A young boy with short brown hair is sitting at the table, looking towards the woman. The background is a blurred indoor setting with other people and blue walls.

"...The service of faith and the promotion of justice cannot be for us simply one ministry among others. It must be the integrating factor of all our ministries, and not only of our ministries but of our inner life as individuals, as communities, and as a worldwide brotherhood. This is what our Congregation means by a decisive choice. It is the choice that underlies and determines all the other choices embodied in its declarations and directives."

~ Society of Jesus, GC32, Decree 2

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Social Justice in the Context of Jesuit Higher Education

A Jesuit and Catholic University is committed to advancing a particular understanding of social justice within its own community and outside itself, and connecting that understanding to the service of faith. This is the foundation of what are referred to as "Jesuit values." Thus, the University seeks to model to people of various religious backgrounds, and people of no faith and diverse commitments, how faith can motivate the pursuit of social justice. The core principles of Catholic social teaching which, in their depth, inform our justice orientation, include:



- The inherent dignity of all people based on an understanding that all persons bear the image of God,
- Environmental justice as a moral imperative to care for the gift of creation entrusted to us,
- A preferential option for those who experience poverty and marginalization, stemming from a vision of God as "deliverer" who identifies with those who are oppressed,
- The right to life in its fullness as a consequence of an adherence to the Gospel, solidarity with all people, and the imperative to love our neighbor.

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The Jesuit University seeks to promote discourse on these values among faculty, staff and students, and in public statements. It takes seriously its responsibility to promote the common good and requirements that follow from it, such as a commitment to truth, public health, access to education, dignified work, a just wage, clean water, etc. It seeks to widen and deepen the understanding of social justice, moving from retribution or restitution to a right relationship with God, the earth, and other creatures. The guiding star of a right relationship, in a Jesuit context, is reconciliation, which implies the hard work of truth-telling and a faith in the possibility of something new. Therefore, terms such as “justice” and “truth” should be understood in such a way that they lead to reconciliation among fractured parties.

In application, a Jesuit University seeks to find the will of God in all endeavors; thus, the practice of Ignatian discernment should inform the way members of the University respond to critical issues. To be consistent with their mission, Jesuit Universities provide opportunities to discuss how the moral grounding for central concerns of social justice, (e.g., economic justice, a redistribution of power and privilege, etc.) intersect with institutional choices. The mission of justice and reconciliation asks us to reflect on the following:

A. In what ways do a University's operations, policies and programs advance a deeper and richer understanding of social justice and reconciliation?

B. What programs and experiences help faculty and staff to grow in their understanding of social justice and reconciliation through this Jesuit and Catholic lens?

C. How is the University exercising its role as a public citizen to offer programs and convene discussions on social justice and reconciliation with local, regional, or national communities?

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Racial Justice & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



It is important to speak the truth about the University's and Church's history, with respect to racism. A Jesuit and Catholic University should provide opportunities for honest discussion and acknowledgement of how colonialism, white supremacy and exclusion played a part in the institution's founding and early days, whether through the ownership of enslaved persons or by reliance on the wealth that the labor of enslaved persons and land of indigenous communities accrued to the nation. How successful have efforts been to understand the institution's own history around race and race relations?

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A comprehensive plan to address racial injustice and systemic racism might involve:

- Dialogue about cultural differences and de-centering white privilege;
- A commitment to racial equity and inclusion by the Board, administration, and departmental leadership;
- Diversifying the campus community;
- Developing the skills necessary for undertaking ongoing conversations about antiracism. This might include an assessment of how the University integrates the input and needs of Black, Indigenous, Asian, and Latinx communities, and an assessment of belonging among all members of the campus community and alumni/ae.

Plans might also address pedagogy, courses on racism and the history of race; a commitment to lifting up research related to racial and gender inequalities; opportunities for self-reflection on one's beliefs and experiences; and the service by colleagues of color on academic and governance committees. Perhaps, most important of all, would be a commitment to recruiting and retaining members of underrepresented communities to the student body, faculty, administration, and staff of the University. We should then ask ourselves the following:

D. Does the University have a plan with elements, e.g., those mentioned above, to address systemic and functional racism on campus? How are the elements of the plan known throughout the campus, and how will the University measure its progress in combatting institutional racism?

E. In what ways is the University invited to better understand and reconstruct relationships that have been damaged by racism, to work to repair harms done, and to seek reconciliation with other people and God?

F. How does the University plan to contribute increasingly to research and advocacy on racism, racial justice, and reconciliation?

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Caring for Our Common Home

In our day, the crisis of the environment is very much on the minds of young people. In such documents as Pope Francis' *Laudato Sí*, ("On Care for Our Common Home"), the University is asked to commit itself to work for environmental justice and sustainability. The Jesuit and Catholic University is expected to promote awareness and understanding of the dangers faced by over-consumption; misuse of our resources; pollution of air, land and water; and the host of problems directly related to environmental degradation and its impact on those who experience poverty and marginalization. All groups and communities within the University should aspire to address the challenge of environmental degradation.



The late Jesuit activist and educator, Rev. Dean Brackley, S.J., said, "A university that strives to understand reality, especially the great life-and-death issues; that struggles to overcome bias; that helps students discover their vocation to service; that embraces the Catholic tradition in

dialogue with others; that opens its doors to minorities and the poor; that takes public stands on vital issues: that community of learning is committed to greater academic excellence."

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This responsibility to care for our earthly home should be evidenced in the University's duty to model, teach, carry on research, and advocate for a sustainable environment, not only on the campus, but in the wider community. In a Jesuit and Catholic University, personal responsibility is inspired and guided by an integral ecology that recognizes the critical spiritual dimension of a culture of ecological sustainability. We are invited then to ask ourselves the following:

G. How does the University's curriculum – including the core curriculum and academic majors – mirror its aspirations for sustainability and the environment? What dedicated courses and programs introduce students to the complexities and the challenges of environmental justice?

H. How does the University plan to contribute increasingly to research and advocacy on environmental sustainability issues?

I. How has the institution made a commitment to sustainability that addresses this issue on campus and in the community (e.g., through an environmental sustainability plan)? What mechanisms are in place for public accountability on these sustainability commitments?

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Service and Solidarity with the Community

Service to the wider community, and to the Church, characterizes a Jesuit and Catholic University. This institutional commitment to service is reflected in institutes, research and advocacy projects, clinics, and outreach programs. And, finally, a commitment to service is embedded in curriculum through such pedagogical practices as service learning. The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) is a valued contemporary expression of how formation of the whole person has been undertaken in Jesuit education. The IPP prizes the human encounter with others, an insertion into their reality, reflection on experience, and a response of genuine solidarity.

Critical to educating through service is a curriculum that incorporates the values and principles of community-engaged learning and the motivations of Jesuit higher education. Through both affective and intellectual experiences, students are given opportunities for theological reflection on their own beliefs. They engage honestly with the Jesuit imperative of a faith that does justice, and garner wisdom from other faith traditions. For this to be successful, faculty members, campus ministers, student development personnel, and service-learning professionals must be prepared to lead diverse groups of students through reflection and analysis of their service experiences, with special attention to the economic, social and cultural realities of the communities they engage. We should then reflect on the following:

J. How do University-sponsored immersions, advocacy experiences, and other extended engagements with persons in marginalized communities encourage an open and respectful sense of mutual encounter? Are members of host communities identified as teachers or experts? How do these formative experiences include opportunities for theological reflection?

K. How do faculty and students approach community-based learning and research as a shared experience with the communities they engage? How does the University develop healthy partnerships with community organizations that might inform its pedagogy and research priorities?

CHARACTERISTIC 4: PROMOTING AN IGNATIAN CAMPUS CULTURE

The University works to foster within its students, administrators, staff, faculty, alumni/ae, and Board of Trustees a virtuous life and learning characterized by personal responsibility, compassion, forgiveness, respect, a habit of reflection, and integration of body, mind, and soul.


A Jesuit and Catholic University relies on the Ignatian spiritual tradition. This tradition provides resources needed to develop a campus culture characterized by respect for all persons, thoughtful dialogue, reconciliation, compassion, and a way to discern the invitations of God in the events around us. Nonetheless, the challenges are real, given the complex needs of our students for a supportive, welcoming learning environment, and the increasing polarization that we see in the Church, and in our global and national political life. The UAPs call upon all Jesuit institutions to tap into the Spiritual Exercises, and especially the practice of Ignatian discernment, for cultivating wisdom and making choices that reflect our deepest values.

To ground and animate the Ignatian living and learning environment, and in recognition of the profound ways in which experiential learning enhances our academic approach, Campus Ministry offers a vibrant liturgical life for the community. Celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments, and multi-faith and interfaith worship opportunities for our increasingly diverse communities, open a wide and welcoming door to student participation, within and among faith traditions.

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Complementing worship are retreats, support groups, spiritual direction and conversation, catechetical offerings, peacebuilding, advocacy inspired by Catholic social teaching, and service programs. Campus Ministry plays a vital role in the life and mission of the University, and its partnership with the Jesuit community and Student Affairs strengthens its effectiveness. On some campuses, Ignatian spirituality centers, devoted to the spiritual needs of faculty and staff, offer yet another source of support for the community.

In Student Affairs, professional staff assist with the complex needs of students through counseling, campus activities, residence life, athletics and recreation, wellness programs, and student leadership opportunities. Resources for career counseling, academic advising and residence life for on-campus students – informed by principles of Ignatian discernment – should help students discover vocational callings that join their “own deep longings and the world’s deep needs” (Frederick Buechner) as the aim of an authentic life.



"If you were to design an antidote to the ways the world seems to be falling apart, it would be a place that knits glorious diversity together into a community, where students listen to each other with open hearts. It would be a place that teaches students the wisdom and perspectives of many disciplines so that they can solve the toughest of problems. It would be a place that demands that every student go out and change the world."

~ Tania Tetlow, J.D., President, Loyola University New Orleans

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At a vibrant Jesuit University, ample opportunities are made available for students, faculty, and staff to engage the community, particularly through programs that foster a sense of kinship with persons who struggle with poverty and other forms of marginalization. Consistent with the Ignatian understanding that the heart and mind are both means to God, academic and ministry resources should provide students with structured opportunities to deepen their learning and understanding of the issues and people they encounter.

The campus itself represents a culture within which other cultures reside. Given the profound divisions in our world, it is all the more important for students at Jesuit Universities to understand the unspoken assumptions of their own cultures; grow in curiosity and contact across other cultures; learn to see the “other” as connected to themselves; and develop the skills of dialogue and compassionate listening that lead to genuine respect and reconciliation. The learning environment exposes students to an honest confrontation with wide-ranging ideas and forms of reasoning, encouraging them to become more comfortable with diversity, and to see themselves as part of a larger community. The historic Jesuit commitment to intercultural respect and dialogue remains a strong foundation on which to build.

Students, faculty, and staff from a variety of faith traditions enrich Jesuit Universities and animate a deep reflection on what a dynamic, inclusive Catholic culture might look like today. Our campuses are more religiously diverse, and an increasing number of students are unfamiliar with any religious tradition at all. Further, the context of a predominantly secular intellectual community that is sometimes reluctant about or resistant to the idea of a Catholic culture risks disconnecting the school’s mission from the philosophical and theological traditions that give it meaning. In the absence of a shared understanding of human flourishing, Jesuit Universities will be hard-pressed to communicate a relevant, Christian, anthropological vision. Thus, we are presented with a unique opportunity as a community to build with intent a more coherent, inclusive, and vibrant Catholic moral vision and ethic for the future, and to help students articulate their own religious and spiritual realities.

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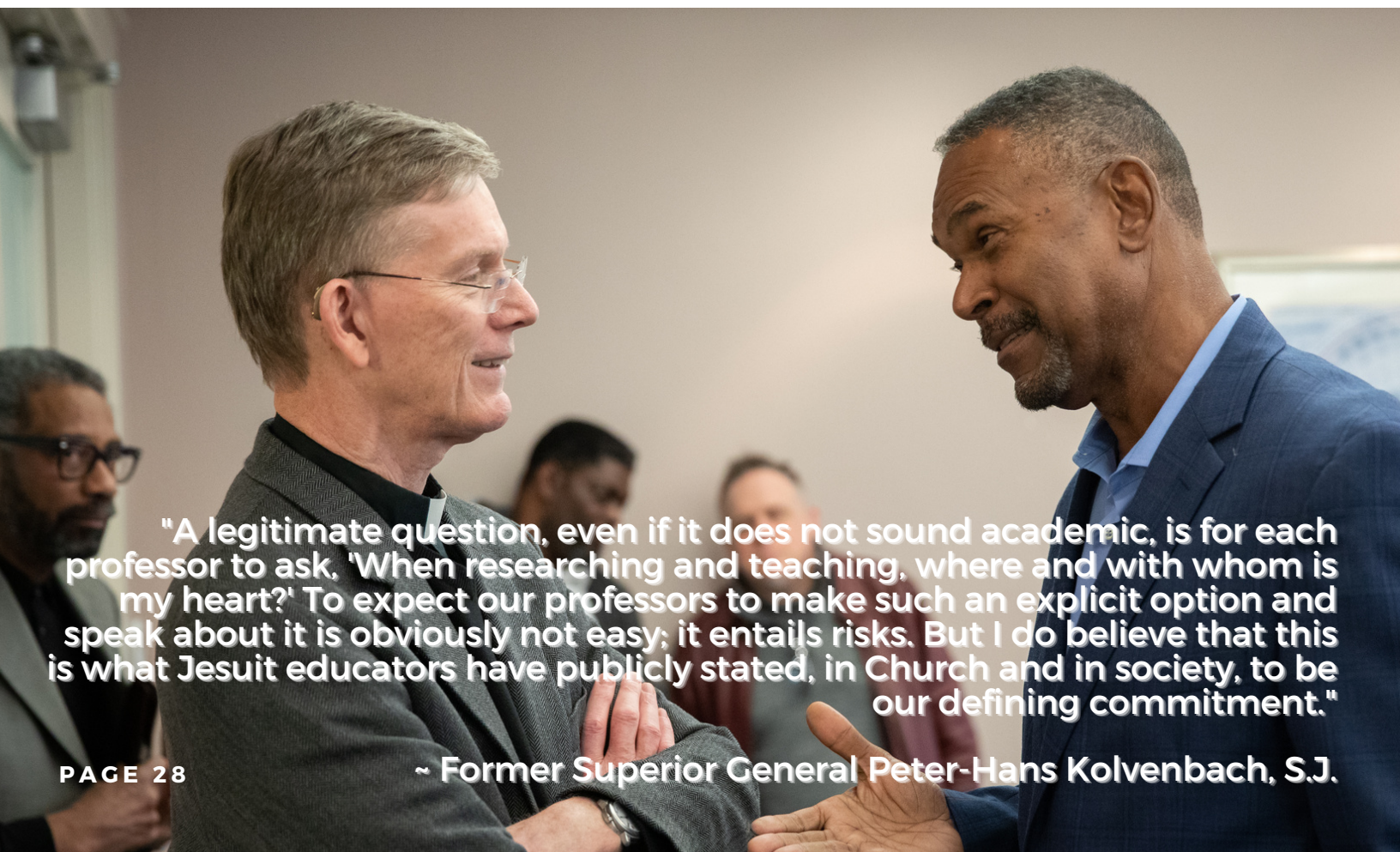
Characteristic Four *implies a foundational respect for human dignity and an orientation toward the love that is evident in the life of Jesus.*

- A. How are members of the University community invited to encounter the Ignatian tradition and heritage in a significant way? How are they invited to deep meaning and purpose through their own faith and spiritual traditions? What resources exist for students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni/ae, and the Board to receive pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, attend liturgies and other worship services, make the Spiritual Exercises and participate in a range of retreats, and/or take part in cultural immersions?
- B. How does the University prioritize and support the work of Campus Ministry, in order to meet the spiritual needs of students and community members?
- C. How do Student Affairs professionals become conversant with the values and aims of a Jesuit education, and how are these integrated into their work with students? How are academic advising, career development/placement, residence life, and other services framed in the context of Ignatian discernment and aligned with the aims and goals of a Jesuit education?
- D. Is the campus life robust and healthy with opportunities for the cultivation of leadership skills, listening and the exchange of ideas, and a diversity of opinion? How are the skills of dialogue, civil discourse, and moral agency promoted and taught in the curriculum and co-curriculum?
- E. How are students, faculty and staff able to express and organize themselves freely and manage conflict peacefully and respectfully, in ways consistent with Jesuit values?
- F. How are Intercollegiate Athletics – coaches, conferences, programs, and students – contextualized in and responsible to the University’s mission? What mission development opportunities are provided for Athletic Directors, coaches, and staff, to help them exercise the Jesuit, Catholic mission?
- G. In what areas do discussions on the University’s Ignatian and Catholic culture take place? What is the quality and impact of the discussions?

CHARACTERISTIC 5: SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

Through educational and formational programs, the University offers resources to build up the local Church, so that people of faith can wrestle with difficult questions facing the Church and the world.

Since their founding in North America, Jesuit Universities have been blessed to be in and of the Catholic Church. They exist along with other Catholic institutions of higher education, thanks to the vision and commitment of generations of women's and men's religious communities, bishops, donors, and colleagues who have taught and served our students. The network of Catholic parishes, schools, health care systems, and other charitable organizations continues to build up the Church in our local communities and in the world, and we benefit from their contributions and example.



"A legitimate question, even if it does not sound academic, is for each professor to ask, 'When researching and teaching, where and with whom is my heart?' To expect our professors to make such an explicit option and speak about it is obviously not easy; it entails risks. But I do believe that this is what Jesuit educators have publicly stated, in Church and in society, to be our defining commitment."

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As Jesuit and Catholic Universities, we aspire to respond to God's invitation to make this a better world by partnering with the local and universal Church in its message of salvation and hope; in particular, we do this by contributing our unique resources of education and formation of students, of research and teaching, and by advancing the Catholic intellectual and social traditions.

Catholic Universities fulfill this obligation by offering undergraduate and graduate courses and degree programs that prepare students for careers in Catholic parish ministries, education, and health care; celebrating the Eucharist; providing an active sacramental life on campus, alongside thoughtful campus ministry formation programs; and providing a model of Church life that will nourish students in the future. This commitment is also evident when our faculty explore challenging theological questions as the Church encounters the contemporary world and culture.

Our Universities offer adult faith formation programs in the community that model respectful dialogue among Catholics, among different faith traditions, and with the wider culture. Jesuit Universities with strong capacities for research also provide scholarship that supports Catholic organizations in the community and around the globe as they carry out their own essential work. Most Jesuit Universities have articulated partnerships with Catholic organizations to address the critical needs of communities that are exploited, discriminated against, and cast aside by society. These organizations include Catholic schools, Catholic health care groups, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, and other regional, national, and international Church organizations.

In short, by supporting the needs of the local diocese and the wider Church, in consultation with the Bishop and other leaders of regional Church organizations, we continue this long tradition of partnering with the Church to help it fulfill its mission. The Jesuit and Catholic University is one place where the Church does its listening and its thinking. In the context of Characteristic Five, we might then ask ourselves:

A. In what ways is the University preparing young Catholics for service in the local, national, and global Church? How are we assisting those who are Catholic in developing a deeper and clearer understanding of their faith tradition?

B. How is the University in communication with the Bishop and other Catholic Church leaders, to remain aware of critical needs in areas such as Catholic education, health care, and social services? How has the University assisted in these efforts through the preparation of professionals, provision of expertise and assistance, service-learning opportunities, and advancing relevant academic research?

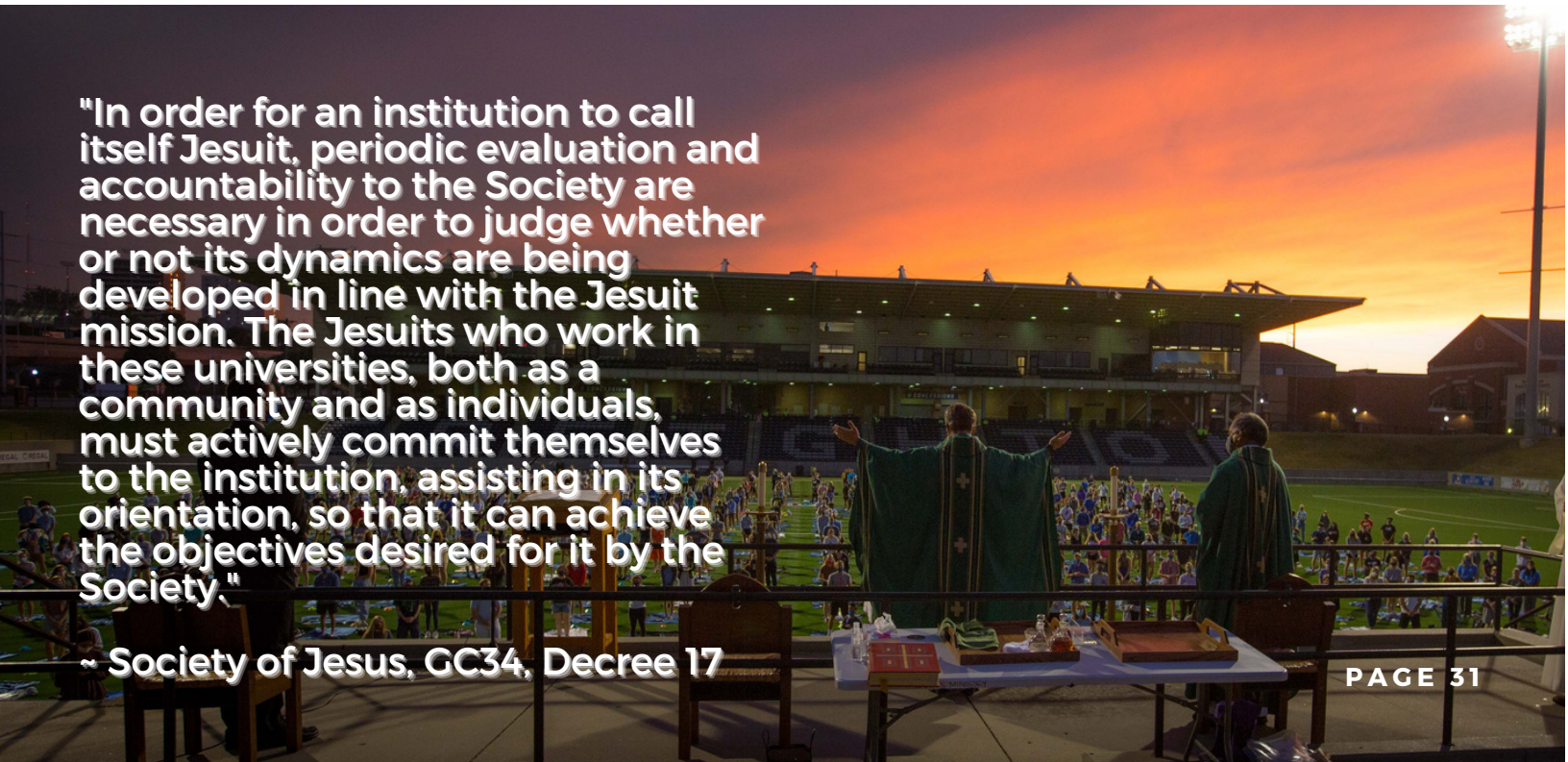
C. How is the University forging a partnership with the Church, locally and globally, through its capacity for identifying issues and challenges, convening religious partners on areas of common concern, and engaging in dialogue with people of faith and/or those of no faith?

D. How does the University support the Church in addressing the roots and effects of racism, the need for an integral ecology, and the desire to become, in Pope Francis' vision, a "field hospital" for those in greatest need?

CHARACTERISTIC 6: RELATIONSHIP TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

The University lives out its commitment to its Jesuit identity through collaboration and vibrant partnerships with the Society of Jesus, including individual Jesuits at the University, the campus Jesuit Community, and the Province, as well as national and international Jesuit networks and organizations.

Our Universities were founded by visionary Jesuits and were built up by their labors over decades. In many ways, these Universities were marked and inspired by their insights, kindness, and support for students and colleagues. Generations of alumni/ae and retired faculty and staff remember how Jesuits rigorously taught, mentored, nourished the Eucharistic and sacramental life of their campuses, and challenged the institutions through a world-affirming spirituality and a commitment to the “faith that does justice.”



"In order for an institution to call itself Jesuit, periodic evaluation and accountability to the Society are necessary in order to judge whether or not its dynamics are being developed in line with the Jesuit mission. The Jesuits who work in these universities, both as a community and as individuals, must actively commit themselves to the institution, assisting in its orientation, so that it can achieve the objectives desired for it by the Society."

~ Society of Jesus, GC34, Decree 17

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Jesuit communities remain this face of the Church, though they are smaller in number today. The Universities, secondary schools, retreat centers, parishes, and social justice programs sponsored by the Society of Jesus continue to grow in their influence and impact on the lives of many people, due to the leadership, collaboration and major support of colleagues and friends of all faiths and traditions. Jesuits make vital contributions to these ministries, but their work is nearly always collaborative. The changing nature of Jesuit University communities makes discussions on their collective contributions to, and relationship with, the University especially important.

The University's relationship to the Society both includes and exceeds its relationship with the local Jesuit community and the Jesuit Province in which the school is located. North American Jesuit Universities are part of a regional association (AJCU) and an international network (International Association of Jesuit Universities, a.k.a. IAJU), each of which coordinates common projects, shared aspirations, and communication among the schools. The University's relationship to and active participation in these networks is key to its Jesuit identity, and to increasing our shared ability to serve the common good.

Further, as Universities sponsored by the Society of Jesus, all are accountable to the goals of the international Society, and specifically to the UAPs that offer an overall focus and direction.

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Characteristic Six asks us to reflect on how we might continue to strengthen the relationships that sustain the work of the Society's "University Apostolate."

A. How well developed are the University's efforts for attracting retaining, and supporting Jesuits whom the Society makes available to teach, lead, and minister on our campuses? How often is the President or Mission Officer in regular dialogue with the Province regarding Jesuit assignments? How are vocations to the Society of Jesus promoted?

B. How are the President and Chief Mission Officer engaged in regular dialogue with the Jesuit community and its Superior, to identify ways in which the Jesuit Community can support the advancement of the Jesuit and Catholic character and mission of the University? How does the local Jesuit community communicate support for lay leaders who carry forth the Jesuit and Catholic mission?

C. How is the University actively supporting the national and international foci of the Society of Jesus through AJCU and IAJU, especially the efforts of these bodies to promote the UAPs?

D. How does the University assist and partner with other Jesuit apostolates in the region (e.g., retreat centers, high schools, and parishes) and with international organizations such as Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)?

E. How does the University collaborate with the Provincial and the PAHE? How does it support Province priorities and projects?

CHARACTERISTIC 7: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The University demonstrates a commitment to Jesuit values through its administrative policies practices, and community relationships.

Jesuit and Catholic Universities, like all institutions with a mission to care for the common good, are expected to live up to the highest ethical and moral principles. This is especially important in an institution that educates the leaders of society's social, economic, religious, and political institutions. In recent times, educational institutions have faced an unprecedented number of challenges, including the growing financial instability and cost burdens of private higher education, managing issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, unfair labor practices and student recruitment tactics, and unethical and predatory behavior on the part of staff in a position of power.



Furthermore, all institutions of higher education have struggled to determine how best to address the historic realities of race and other biases (e.g., those related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, and age) and other very real problems related to diversity, equity, and inclusion on our

campuses. Meeting these challenges with competence, compassion, and integrity will require both care and continuing attention to our Jesuit values. Jesuit and Catholic Universities, therefore, are expected to manage themselves with the highest standards of ethics and care for all members of the community.

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Characteristic Seven calls on us to examine our policies and procedures in detail and with honesty, in order that the institution manifests in its dealing with all members of the community the care and respect they deserve. It asks us to review policies and procedures not only for their compliance with civil law and best practices of management in mind, but also in accord with the prescriptions of Catholic social teaching. We should then ask ourselves the following:

- A. Do the institution's Human Resource policies provide just compensation and benefits? How do existing policies demonstrate fairness and concern for employee well-being, including faculty, staff, and contract vendors?
- B. What opportunities are available for colleagues to participate in meaningful mission-engagement activities and to support professional development and advancement? What is the commitment of supervisors to promote that involvement?
- C. How are openness and responsiveness evidenced in the institution in its commitments to equity and inclusion; to the elimination of racial, gender and other biases; and to promoting policies that demonstrate care for our common home?
- D. How are the University's budgeting processes transparent and participative in a manner that is appropriate for its mission, size, and complexity? How is shared governance understood and exercised?
- E. How are the University's practices and economic engagements with the wider community consistently fair and attentive to the needs of those who experience marginalization?
- F. How does the University demonstrate transparency about its Jesuit, Catholic mission in its hiring processes, and how are those tasked with hiring prepared to invite candidates into that mission?

GLOSSARY

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU): The network of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and Belize.

Catholic Social Teaching: The formal expression – through documents written by Popes, Church Councils and Bishops’ Conferences – of the Church’s social tradition. Broadly understood, it encompasses seven principles:

Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; Care for God’s Creation

General Congregation (GC): The periodic gathering of Provincials and other representatives of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to elect a new Superior General (currently V. Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J.) and to set a course for the world-wide Society. Formal documents of the General Congregations are issued as Decrees, each with its own theme and number (e.g., GC34, Decree 14).

International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU): The international coordinating and communication body for all Jesuit-sponsored institutions of higher learning, IAJU focuses its work on four goals:

Create a vibrant network of regional Jesuit higher education associations to assist them with internal and external collaboration; Implement the calls of GCs 35 and 36 that all [Jesuit] institutions should promote a faith that does justice and become communities of discernment and reconciliation; Better serve the mission of the Church by advancing Catholic Social Thought through teaching, research, and advocacy; Foster collaboration and research among and between scholars and institutions within IAJU on priority issues and challenges.

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Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU or Jesuit Conference): The collaborative and governing body of the five provincial superiors in the U.S. and Canada.

Mission Priority Examen (MPE): The Jesuit Conference Provincials and AJCU presidents jointly conduct this self-study and peer review process for reaffirming the Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity of North American Jesuit colleges and universities. Schools participate formally in the MPE process every seven years by writing a self-study and inviting a visiting team of colleagues from other Jesuit institutions to provide feedback. Establishing a clear set of mission priorities for ongoing growth and mission integration is at the heart of the process. The self-study, peer report and letters from Jesuit leaders are submitted to the Superior General in Rome, who provides a response to the school's mission progress and priorities and indicates whether the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the institution has been reaffirmed.

Province: The geographic regions within the U.S. and Canada overseen by a provincial superior (Provincial), who governs the formation and work of individual Jesuits and maintains relationships with Jesuit-affiliated universities, secondary schools, parishes, retreat centers, social justice ministries and other programs.

Spiritual Exercises: Refers to a retreat based on the spiritual insights of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. Often referred to simply as "the Exercises," the retreat was codified by Ignatius in the book of the *Spiritual Exercises* – a guide for retreat directors, enabling them to accompany others on a path toward God. The Exercises have been passed down over centuries, and making the retreat has had a profound impact on people of faith for generations. Prayer and contemplative practices associated with the retreat are often linked by the term "Ignatian Spirituality."

OVERVIEW OF THE MPE PROCESS

The university's portion of the MPE process, from the Provincial's invitation at the beginning, to the school's submission of all materials at the conclusion, should be completed within two semesters. Additional time is necessary for consideration and response by the Society of Jesus, as described below.

Whether a school begins its MPE in the fall or spring is to be determined jointly by the Provincial and the President. Times listed here refer to an MPE conducted in the fall semester. However, deadlines for Peer Visits and submission of materials are the same, whether the school begins its process in the fall or spring. The process follows eight steps:

I. Agreement by the Provincial and Institution on the Focus and Scope of the Self-Study: *Spring or Earlier*

A. Following on conversations with the Provincial Assistant for Higher Education (PAHE) during his annual visit to each college or university, the local Provincial writes a brief letter to the President, inviting the school to conduct its MPE and recommending particular areas of emphasis. With an exception for Year One, schools will typically have at least a year's notice regarding the timing of their MPE.

B. The President meets with the PAHE, to discuss any questions regarding the process and to provide clarity on the Provincials' areas of emphasis (the President may wish to include an AJCU representative in this meeting).

II. Assignment of Self-Study & Peer Review Committees: *Spring/Summer*

A. The President names the Chair(s) and members of the Self-Study Committee, based on input about the school's mission priorities from faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae, and trustees.

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B. The President names the Chair(s) and members of the Peer Review Committee, in consultation with the PAHE and AJCU.

- The proposed slate of Peer Visitors is approved by the Provincial and AJCU President.
- The Peer Team Chair works with the Self-Study Chair(s) to establish the logistical parameters of the visit.

III. Completion and Submission of Self-Study: *Summer/Fall*

A. The Self-Study Committee drafts and submits a self-study at least one month prior to the Peer Team visit. If the month allotted to the Peer Team for reading and review overlaps with the semester break, then the self-study should be submitted even further in advance. The self-study includes:

- The previous MPE self-study (and executive summary, if available);
- The previous Peer Team report and related correspondence with the institution;
- A review of (a) how successfully the school has implemented its mission priorities over the previous five years, including input from the PAHE, and (b) a summary of significant changes on the campus during the same period;
- The Provincial's letter to the President, inviting the school to undertake the MPE and denoting areas of emphasis (these areas should receive greater attention in the self-study);
- Institutional reflection on the feedback received from various constituencies in the self-study process; and
- The school's updated mission priorities and plans for implementing them.

B. Institution schedules the Peer Team Visit for late fall/early spring – no later than February 15.

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IV. Peer Team Visit and Report: *Late Fall/Early Spring*

A. Peer Team members visit the campus, during which time they meet with the President, key leaders, faculty, staff, students, alumni/ae and trustees.

These meetings, along with the self-study, provide the basis of an initial report which is submitted by the Peer Team to the President and Self-Study Committee for response.

B. The President and Peer Team Chair then discuss any recommended changes to the self-study or mission priorities. The school may incorporate these changes, or both the school and the Peer Team may, in writing, note areas of disagreement.

C. The Peer Visitors' report is sent, along with any relevant correspondence, to the Provincial and the President of AJCU. Though somewhat duplicative, it is a best practice for the Peer Team report to be sent independently.

V. Final Submission of MPE Materials: *Due by March 15 for all schools (applies to both fall and spring MPEs)*

All documentation listed above in III-A – along with the Peer Team report, institutional response, and accompanying correspondence – is sent by the school to the (a) Provincial, (b) AJCU President, and (c) Peer Team.

VI. Consideration by the Society of Jesus: *Spring to Early Fall*

A. MPE materials are reviewed by the local Provincial and the Jesuit Conference in April/May. They are then sent to Fr. General with a cover letter from the local Provincial regarding the process, mission priorities, and implementation. The Jesuit Conference and AJCU presidents also submit separate letters of recommendation from their organizations to Fr. Sosa.

B. Fr. General writes a letter to the Provincial in early fall, outlining his decision regarding the school's Catholic and Jesuit identity, and any areas of affirmation or needed attention. The Provincial then writes a letter to the University President (copying the AJCU President and the Bishop), relaying Fr. General's decision and inviting further dialogue, if needed.

VII. Campus Communication: *Fall*

The President shares Fr. General's decision with the trustees, University community and other stakeholders. Sharing the affirmation of the Jesuit Superior General in this way offers the school a unique opportunity to demonstrate transparency about its mission and to exercise its Jesuit mission and Catholic identity.

VIII. Follow-up: *Ongoing*

PAHEs are tasked by their respective Provincials to follow up with the school on the implementation of its mission priorities. In their annual visit to the school, and through more informal support and communication, they are the principal points of contact with the Province regarding progress toward goals. AJCU also stands ready to assist the schools in achieving their mission priorities and can provide written and personal resources tailored to the school's needs.

A Note on the Participation of Trustees and Bishops

Trustees: Among the school's constituencies, trustees have a unique role in the MPE. They are apprised of the MPE process at its beginning and updated on it regularly. Some may be invited to participate in focus groups or conversations with Peer Team Visitors.

Bishops: Involving the local Bishop in the MPE is as much an opportunity to seek his perspective on the institution as it is to help him appreciate the complexity and mission of a Catholic and Jesuit University. It is expected that every school will find a way to solicit the input of the Bishop. That said, it is the responsibility of the president to determine how and when the Bishop is consulted. Presidents are encouraged to follow-up with the Bishop at the conclusion of the MPE process, to discuss ongoing collaboration.

A more detailed description of the MPE process is available online at ajcunet.edu/missionexamen.