

Mission Priority Examen Peer Visitor Committee Report

Date of Peer Visit: February 24 – 27, 2019

Institution Visited: Saint Louis University

President of Institution Visited: Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D.

Board Chair of Institution Visited: Joseph Conran, J.D.

Peer Visitor Committee Chair:

Nancy Dallavalle, Special Assistant to the Provost and Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Fairfield University

Peer Visitor Committee Members:

Seán Bray, Director of Campus Ministry, Loyola University Maryland

Elsa Chen, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Professor of Political Science, Santa Clara University

David Collins, S.J., Associate Professor of History, Georgetown University

Local Self-Study Committee (Chair and Members):

Self-Study Committee Chairs: Molly A. Schaller, Ph.D., Christopher Collins, S.J., Ph.D. and David Suwalsky, S.J., Ph.D.

Steering Committee Members

Anne Marie Apollo-Noel, Director, Digital Content and Social Media, Marketing and Communications

A.J. Baggio, MHA, Assistant Director, Pediatrics, SLUCare Physician Group

Bert Barry, Ph.D., Program Director, International Services

Carol Beckel, PT, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Education, Doisy College of Health Sciences

Donna Bess Myers, Assistant Dean of Students, Student Development

Rob Boyle, Ph.D., Assistant Dean, Richard A. Chaifetz School of Business

Fr. Chris Collins, S.J., Assistant to the President, Office of Mission and Identity

Paloma Gomez de Salazar Cordera, Counselor and Campus Minister, SLU Madrid

Patrick Cousins, Assistant Director, Campus Ministry

Pete Garvin, Police Officer, Department of Public Safety

Jordan Glassman, Junior student, Philosophy/Political Science

Paul Lynch, Ph.D., Associate Professor, English

Patrick Maloney, Learning and Development Manager, Human Resources

Gina Merys, Ph.D., Associate Director, Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning

Gerrie Meyer, Ph.D., Professor, School of Nursing

Molly Schaller, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Education and Faculty Fellow for Mission and Identity

Jonathan Smith, Ph.D., Vice President, Diversity and Community Engagement
 Fr. David Suwalsky, S.J., Office of Mission and Identity
 Bobby Wassel, Ph.D., Center for Service and Community Engagement

Pre-Examen Jesuit Mission Priority Emphases:

Strategic Initiative Five of our most recent Strategic Plan focuses on our Catholic and Jesuit Mission:

Fostering a culture of excellence, effectiveness and efficiency deeply rooted in our institutional mission and Catholic, Jesuit values

Goals Include:

- 1) We will ensure an employment environment that is consistent with our values and which supports our efforts to sustain a mission-aligned faculty and staff of the highest quality.
- 2) We will provide structured opportunities for all faculty and staff to increase their understanding of Jesuit educational principles and values in order to apply them in their daily work.
- 3) We will become a more diverse and inclusive community.
- 4) We will sustain our ability to carry out our academic mission by establishing and maintaining financial and management systems across the University characterized by subsidiarity, transparency, efficiency and responsiveness in revenue generation, allocation, cost containment, and accountability.
- 5) We will apply the Jesuit concept of care for creation to our stewardship of the environment on our campus and in our community.
- 6) We will strengthen our internal and external communications capabilities and effectiveness.

Jesuit Mission Priorities Proposed in the Institution's Self-Study:

Throughout the Mission Priority Examen Process, the community had the opportunity to articulate hopes and aspirations for the future. In light of these hopes and aspirations, we set our priorities for the future so that we may strengthen our commitment to our Jesuit Catholic Mission. As an "institution in process" we have one key priority moving forward: **Identity Formation in the Mission**. This priority, we propose, will guide our work for the next three to five years.

We have found that our community aspires to live the Jesuit Catholic Mission in more expressed ways in our individual lives through the ways that we work together at Saint Louis University. This requires an increased focus on individual formation, formation for leaders, and student formation for discernment and reflection:

Priority #1: Increased commitment to Ignatian Identity: Guided by the question: "how do we live out the Jesuit Mission 'in our own shop,'" we will focus on developing outreach and programs for teams, departments and units to support all members of the university community

in finding their place in the mission. We also recommend a reintroduction of “SHARED VISION: Jesuit Spirit in Education,” a three-part video program that had once been used as part of the orientation of new employees over the course of their first year at SLU.

Priority #2: Hiring for Mission: Building upon recent moves to engage in more formal preparation for the hiring process, we will hold Hiring for Mission discussions and formulate approaches to support leaders in the call to Hire for Mission.

Priority #3: University Leadership Formation for Mission: Leadership development is essential for our future success and it must be grounded in our Catholic, Jesuit Mission. Therefore, a formation program will be developed that focuses on leaders. It our hope that this leadership formation may then also be translated to support local Catholic partners so that we can become a significant resource for our local Catholic community.

Priority #4: Student Formation for Discernment: We seek additional ways to help our students learn how to reflect upon their community engagement and their experiences as students so that they may better discern their future direction and life choices. Student formation will take place in the curricular and co-curricular experience.

Mission Priority Examen Process

Was the process thorough, inclusive, and in keeping with the character of an Ignatian Examen? Please explain

The Peer Visitor Committee began our visit to Saint Louis University with a meeting with the Mission Examen Steering Committee, who offered an overview of their process. To prepare the Self-Study Report, the Steering Committee chairs (see above) organized a series of listening sessions with targeted campus groups. The steering committee members divided into working groups based on the “Some Characteristics” text, which resulted in the compilation of activities found in the Self-Study Report. These working groups also discussed the data from the listening sessions, and brought their observations to meetings of the whole Steering Committee. Two of the three Steering Committee chairs then authored the Self-Study. In advance of the Peer Visitor Committee visit, the Self-Study text was shared with the President, members of the Board of Trustees, and the University Leadership Council, which includes all Vice Presidents, Deans and other key leaders.

As a result of our conversations with the Steering Committee, and as a reflection on the generous yet searching self-critical tone heard throughout our visit, during which we met with over 150 members of the Saint Louis University community, the Peer Visitor Committee affirms that this process was very much “in keeping with the character of an Ignatian Examen.”

The primary conclusion of Mission Priority Examen Process was that the Saint Louis University community has been “exceptionally good at the external,” living the mission in University-appropriate initiatives for social justice, with a particular eye for service to the local community. On the other hand, those we spoke with also agreed with the Self-Study’s

conclusion that found their ongoing practice of living the mission “internally” to be wanting, both in structure and in spirit. Their four priorities reflect this primary conclusion.

The Peer Visitor Committee concurs with this finding. We were very impressed with the breadth of projects and programs that make visible the commitment of Saint Louis University to its Jesuit, Catholic mission – a breadth that speaks to an energetic faculty and staff, and a broadly supportive leadership.

Yet we are aware that the over 150 people we saw were primarily those who were most focused on the mission and, even among these, there is a strong agreement that attention to the mission requires a stronger and more clearly articulated and communicated focus and vision. In addition, the university leadership’s efforts at engaging the whole university in the task of mission are challenged – and sometimes derailed -- by three ongoing factors:

1. Organizationally, SLU has been and continues to be in a period of leadership transition, including at the most senior levels.
2. Financially, SLU is working through sustained budgetary challenges with direct implications for personnel and programs.
3. Culturally, a changing religious landscape affects who is joining the SLU community in all sectors; this changing landscape impacts not just whether but how the community engages the Jesuit, Catholic mission of the school.

Nevertheless, the Peer Visitor Committee observed that this 200-year-old institution has a long-standing and broadly accepted commitment to the Jesuit, Catholic mission, a track record of creative mission initiatives by both Jesuits and lay people, and a large and supportive Jesuit community. While mission efforts at SLU are under-resourced and the Mission and Identity office is over-stretched, the potential capacity we saw makes it all the more important that the priorities named be enacted, so that Saint Louis University can claim the leadership position in Jesuit education for which it is uniquely situated.

Given current circumstances and opportunities, are these Jesuit Mission Priorities the best possible way for the school to advance its Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity? Please explain.

Overall, the Peer Visitor Committee affirms the initiatives named through the Mission Examen Process. These four priorities draw on deep currents in the culture of Saint Louis University while also harnessing the momentum of some current initiatives.

Mission Priority 1: Increased Commitment to Ignatian Identity

This priority represents SLU’s recognition that a re-affirmation of its commitment to the development of Ignatian Identity across all sectors of the university is needed at this time.

Its breadth suggests not ambiguity about the nature of the challenge facing the university but rather the stage at which the university finds itself in developing ownership for mission beyond such obvious agents as the Jesuit community or the office for mission. The current president’s

recommitment to the AJCU and ACCU as well as his stated commitment to investing resources in the training of senior administrators and faculty through such programs as the ICP are welcome first steps.

The Peer Visitor Committee found evidence of mission initiative at every level of university life, from the Board of Trustees to students from SLU's many schools, viewing these efforts as further indicators of the university's newfound commitment to its Ignatian identity and thus to the Catholic and Jesuit mission of the school. The visiting committee was heartened by the interest in engagement that it heard from every level of university life. Retreats, workshops, programs, and reading groups are having an effect and are deeply appreciated by those who take advantage of them.

These initiatives, however, remain significantly underfunded, scatter-shot, confined to pockets of interest, and dependent on spontaneous bursts of good will. The broad-based commitment of priority 1 recognizes, even in this time of fiscal austerity for the university, that additional resources will be required for the institutionalization of necessary support for mission-focused personnel, structures and programs. For a school of Saint Louis University's scope and depth, such a formal structure, including new funding to sustain this structure, is crucial.

Mission Priority 2: Hiring for Mission

The Peer Visitor Committee heard an interest in "hiring for mission" at many different points in our visit. It is clear that hiring for mission is already a practice in several departments. Given SLU's prioritization of social justice and community engagement and its location in a diverse urban center, "hiring for mission" and "hiring for diversity" should be intertwined objectives.

There is also a recognition that "hiring for mission" will often mean that candidates are sought who are open to the Jesuit Catholic mission but not necessarily conversant in its values and perspectives at the time of hire. Indeed, some at SLU who have become quite mission-active are not Catholic or Christian – they identify with other faith traditions or none at all.

Hiring for mission is best done by those who are deeply formed in mission, and who have some sophistication about how mission functions and the many ways in which "openness to mission" might present. Hiring for mission and diversity has no easy solution; it cannot be accomplished with the addition of a few guidelines. It is not simply about choosing employees; it requires shaping the culture these employees will meet as they interview, join, and grow in their professional lives at Saint Louis University.

Mission Priority 3: University Leadership Formation for Mission

The Peer Visitor Committee commends the broad intention of this priority as it lifts up the need for an explicitly mission-driven leadership program at Saint Louis University.

The Peer Visitor Committee found the need for this formation expressed at all levels of the University, as those in faculty and staff positions sense that this formation is uneven and often lacking among those at the upper ranks. To be sure, the Peer Visitor Committee found the

leadership to be vocal about their commitment to mission, and many said that this spirit of mission attracted them to SLU. Yet there is not a strong sense, among the leadership, that mission extends well beyond an affirmation of good will, a welcoming attitude toward faith, and a commitment to service. Knowledge of the intellectual breadth of the Catholic tradition, formation in the depth of Ignatian reflection and discernment, and a familiarity with the language of Jesuit mission— all these work together for a sophisticated appropriation of the Jesuit, Catholic mission. A more intentional approach on this front is necessary, particularly as SLU discerns what this mission will mean for the ongoing re-visioning of its institutional profile, and as it brings lay leaders more clearly to the forefront. While senior leaders and members of the Board of Trustees are selected on the basis of many specific qualifications and skills, a deeper and more sustained process of mission formation would enable them to perform their duties on behalf of SLU especially effectively and with stronger ties to the institution’s students and employees.

Mission Priority 4: Student Formation for Discernment

Saint Louis University is blessed with a lively, curious, service-oriented student body. Many with whom we spoke referred to the quality and character of the students who choose SLU, and their fruitful relationships with them. Both the undergraduate and graduate populations can benefit from the reflection opportunities presented by good educators and mentors. The challenge of conveying the importance and value of a well-rounded education that extends beyond specific marketable skills is not unique to SLU; it faces all liberal arts institutions at this juncture in educational history.

At a Jesuit university, discernment is the hallmark of a mature reflective process, nurtured by Ignatian pedagogy. Sometimes this occurs in institution-defining, dramatic ways, as with the frequently mentioned process around the Clock Tower Accords. Sometimes this happens over time, in the repeated invitation to reflect on one’s self and one’s context after a period of service or an intense classroom conversation. This habit of reflection lays the groundwork for the discernment that leads to life choices guided by a well-developed sense of the *magis*.

Are the faculty and staff open to and enthusiastic about the proposed Jesuit Mission Priorities? Please explain.

The Peer Visitor Committee spoke with faculty and staff representing many areas of the University, yet we recognize that those speaking to us were a select group. Nevertheless, our impression is that many at SLU are positively disposed toward the mission, particularly if it is articulated in the language of “people for others.” Some will always be uninterested, of course.

We also, however, noticed a constant theme: that many might be interested, but were too busy to meet with us. “Wearing several hats” and “burned out” were regular refrains. These reports may be true on the surface. But they may also indicate two other things: first, that the Committee visited SLU during a period of particularly low morale, as an institution that had absorbed a significant reduction in force a year or so ago had recently learned that they would now go through the same process again; and second, that an awareness that mission culture requires ongoing formation has not really taken hold. Mission is frequently viewed as something the Jesuits “perform” and that lay people attend; or that it is an “opt-in” for those who are into “that

kind of thing.” This fundamental mindset is, the Peer Visitor Committee suggests, one of the biggest obstacles to the implementation of a full-blown mission formation program.

Such a full-blown program requires a strategic mindset. The Peer Visitor Committee was told, several times, about the use of the word *magis* as it was employed by the last strategic plan and then used again when the implementation of that plan required cuts to programs and staffing. “*Magis*” thus evolved into a term of derision. Yet, had there been a genuine strategic sense of mission, one could imagine another scenario in which the strategic plan’s call to mission would result in a mature recognition that a re-alignment resulting in cuts to programs and lines is also an expression of the mission in action. In other words, a consistent, authentic and inclusive mission narrative, communicated up and down the organizational chart, should be a positive call to action in times of growth and in times of change.

Are the trustees prepared to support and lead with these Jesuit Mission Priorities in mind? Please explain.

The Trustees have been briefed on this process. Overall, there has not been a formal institutional “sign-off” on the Mission Priorities, although their direction and intent certainly track with what the Peer Visitor Committee saw and heard from all levels of the University.

The Trustees with whom we met communicated clearly that they stand ready to support the mission of the University. As a body, however, they are in need of a much more intentional program of mission formation – not simply information. All the AJCU schools recognize the time constraints under which our trustees operate – they are often selected primarily on the basis of their ability to execute and advance fiduciary responsibilities, they have busy professional lives, they are often traveling, and they serve on other boards as well. Giving them a sense of the importance of their nuanced leadership in mission will have to come from the province and the rector of the Jesuit Community. The Peer Visitor Committee urges this case for trustee formation to be made now, not deferred to moments of crisis or leadership change.

Are the Jesuit Mission Priorities and accompanying strategies practical and achievable? Please explain.

Mission Priority 1: Increased commitment to Ignatian Identity

The Peer Visitor Committee believes that Saint Louis University is in an opportune moment for an increased commitment to its Ignatian identity. While financial challenges have bred cynicism and distrust, these moments of ill will do not, on the whole, extend to the “cause” of the Jesuit character of SLU. Indeed, this mission is seen as a refuge in troubled times, with many, for example, pointing to the use of mission in the Clock Tower Accords’ address of racial reconciliation (even as this moment is regarded as just the beginning of the road toward justice, at SLU and in the city of Saint Louis).

The current efforts of the office of mission rely on the mission officer’s careful attention to the SLU community, an attention that has nurtured this good will. Yet all recognize that the current efforts require a more comprehensive framework. Older generations of SLU employees raised

the Shared Vision program as something successful once upon a time and missing more recently from on-going mission/identity formation. The desire for such formation is something worth capitalizing on. The challenge to be kept in mind as the committee sees it is two-fold: (1) to develop structures and programs that foster this interest broadly and develop its sophistication, and (2) to increase the attractiveness of “opting-in.” The former will help situate the momentum capturing aspect of mission in the university’s mainstream and prevent it from becoming a niche interest sponsored by the remaining Jesuits and a few committed lay persons. The latter develop real incentivization for participating, for example, by making engagement with mission part of annual evaluation and personnel reports and by accounting for the different ways that engagement is possible for different kinds of SLU employees and students and across the stages of career for SLU personnel, such as faculty, administrators, support staff, medical personnel, etc.

Mission Priority 2: Hiring for Mission

While there is broad “buy-in” for a more robust attention to hiring for mission at SLU, what is also needed is a stronger recognition that mission-driven recruitment and hiring is but the beginning of a formation for mission, one that extends through the retention and promotion process.

In addition, while there is also interest in developing a more diverse workforce and student body at SLU, the essential connection between “hiring for mission” and “hiring for diversity” is not generally recognized. Here the resources of the AJCU, through its website but more particularly in conversations that emerge in the conferences, will be invaluable. Leadership at SLU must be very clear in their message that hiring for mission and diversity supports SLU’s aspirational goal of enhanced academic prestige. It is also crucial to SLU’s distinctiveness in a local and national higher education environment where competitor institutions offer lower tuition rates, higher academic rankings, and/or stronger emphases on STEM or business. A diverse, mission-driven hiring process, rooted in the Catholic tradition’s articulation of the dignity of the human person, should never be posed as “in tension” with academic aspirations, or something that is “nice,” but subordinate to “getting the right hire.” A more systematic and robust approach to the formation of search committees will aid in this understanding, including a recognition that mid-level administrators, often hired from a variety of contexts, need these tools (this onboarding should not be slighted in the rush to get a new dean or vice president “up to speed”).

Along with hiring for mission – and diversity – come questions of retention and promotion and, for mission, the role that mission engagement plays in a successful career path at SLU. Hiring needs to be supplemented with sustained formation and incentives or rewards to continue mission related work. Three points must be kept in mind.

1. The place of mission in the evaluation of staff, administration, and faculty must be clearly articulated. “Service” is often a category in these evaluations, although “mission” and “service” may not be completely overlapping categories. At the same time, the difference between mission programs that promote individual spiritual development, and programs that promote formation in the mission culture of Saint Louis University, may not be clear to all.

2. The burden of the “cultural taxation” that is placed on faculty and staff of color must be recognized, as their perspective is sought on committees and in conversations across the university, often well-outside the scope of their stated position. They are often called upon in myriad ways to support students and peers of color, as well as to patiently and publicly (and repeatedly) name the challenges of working in a predominately white institution, as our institutions think through the intertwined legacies of race and ethnicity, of gender and class. Where is this work acknowledged on our evaluation forms?

3. Key to an effective hiring for mission and diversity process is its illustration in the upper ranks of leadership. Hiring for mission and diversity should be a priority not only for staff and faculty, but also for leadership including administration and trustees. Without this example, exhortation rings hollow.

Mission Priority 3: University Leadership Formation for Mission

Making time for mission formation among University leadership will, at first, be regarded by some as “impractical.” This idea must be overcome. In addition to a more explicit onboarding structure, mission formation should have an ongoing place at the regular meetings of the University Leadership – the Board of Trustees (not just the M/I Committee) and the President’s Cabinet, but also broader meetings of university-wide and divisional leadership teams. This formation should not devolve into a “briefing” on current mission efforts, rather it should be a focused period of formation and reflection, perhaps using a text such as the recent [“Formation for Leadership in a Ignatian Way of Proceeding”](#) (IAJU, Deusto University, 2018).

Resources for this ongoing conversation exist on campus, through the office of Mission and Identity, but also through SLU’s own faculty, whose expertise should come to the fore. SLU has its own resources – it been a valuable partner for the local Catholic community for over 200 years, and has served that community in providing for the diocese through the Institute for Catholic Education, as well as various leadership programs such as those offered through the Chaifetz School of Business. These could be brought into a formation program as “in-house” discussion leaders and mentors.

In addition, Saint Louis University can turn some of this effort *ad extra*, inviting the local Church to partner with it as it also moves to a more collaborative model of ministry and mission. While the focus in the Roman Catholic Church is currently, rightly, on the crisis of accountability and sex abuse, institutions such as SLU, besides offering reflections on that crisis, can also begin to serve as a resource for models of ministry and leadership that will serve the broader US Church, as it moves forward with fewer clergy.

Mission Priority 4: Student Formation for Discernment

A powerful response to the need for discernment is Saint Louis University’s current process of development of a new University-wide Core Curriculum. The Peer Visitor Committee was impressed with the work done thus far on this important initiative. The spirit of active conversation and discernment was very much alive in our meeting with the members of Core Committee. Many stakeholders throughout the SLU community view the new Core as an

opportunity to revitalize the mission and renew the emphasis on foundational liberal arts disciplines such as those in the arts and humanities that have traditionally been central to Jesuit, Catholic education.

This academic initiative will, we hope, also shape the co-curricular elements that may arise in conversation with the new Core. Throughout our time at SLU, we were impressed with the thoughtfulness of those who shape SLU's students. It is our hope that the efforts of the core committee might be amplified by an active engagement on the topic of student discernment, one that might make common cause between faculty and staff. Perhaps the collaboration of the Faculty and Staff Liaisons could serve as a springboard for this.

A common focus on student formation for discernment could also highlight the impact of student life programs on student intellectual development. Here Saint Louis University has a rich array of high-impact offerings, from living-learning initiatives such as the Micah Program to the work of the Cross-Cultural Center, formation and advocacy through the Center for Service and Community Engagement, trips to the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice, retreats and days of reflection offered through Campus Ministry, and Monday evening programming at the Catholic Studies Centre.

How is the institution addressing the themes of *Some Characteristics*, and any additional characteristics the school may have added for the MPE?

Characteristic 1: Leadership's commitment to the mission

Saint Louis University, while led by a President and Board Chair committed to the mission, lacks significant mission formation through its upper ranks. The Peer Visitor Committee is grateful, therefore, to see the ways in which the mission priorities, as articulated by SLU's own Self-Study, anticipate a renewed program of formation for its leaders. The careful development of specific outcomes for each priority – and their thoughtful execution – will ensure that this Mission Examen Process fulfills its aspirations.

In the recent past, SLU was led by a single member of the Society of Jesus with an “old school” style of unilateral leadership. SLU has changed, its leadership has changed and, importantly, the culture around higher education has changed as well. Mission formation for leaders is not meant to simply immerse new administrative hires in a rich history. It will be important that the on-boarding process, for the leadership as well as the faculty and staff, present the best of Jesuit education – and an expansive narrative about the Catholic intellectual tradition – with an eye to the kind of high-impact, globally-minded, academically rigorous and distinctive education SLU intends to offer as an institution.

Characteristic 2: The academic life

In conversations about the academic life, the Committee recurrently heard two expressions: “the pursuit of truth to the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity” (from the mission statement) and the refrain that SLU is developing “people for others.” Component parts of the

academic commitment of SLU were often framed within these two overarching and inspiring goals.

The Peer Visitor Committee found this enthusiasm most clearly in the ongoing conversation about the core curriculum: an exemplar of a truly inclusive, collaborative, generative, deliberative, broadly engaging, and transparent process. We were gratified to hear that the committee actively sought out core or gen ed programs in place at their AJCU peers to consider as models. These other models are also facing the tensions we all know, particularly the sense that there need to be “trade-offs” between market forces in higher education and the Jesuit Catholic tradition that prizes the liberal arts, as students and their families face increasing pressure to tie their high investment in education to outcomes like employment. Sometimes the highest demand for entry-level employees and the highest pay for recent college graduates are in fields where the connection with Jesuit mission and values may be less obvious, e.g. natural sciences, business, and engineering.

The Peer Visitor Committee urges SLU to make a public case for the value of the liberal arts as the basis of an educated citizenry, and an economic case that its mission-oriented education can distinguish SLU from the competition. Overall, this new Core represents an opportunity to systematically and formally integrate diversity with mission as well as making explicit the value of the core to the professional schools. The discussion of the new core is a place where it is easy to see vigorous engagement with the Catholic, Jesuit mission and identity of the university.

The visiting committee encourages participants in these processes to keep in mind then what they articulated so eloquently during the visitation: that these curricular developments are at the heart of a university’s mission. Of the several guiding outcomes the committee has articulated, the visiting committee sees how all of them will be able to shape SLU’s Jesuit and Catholic mission in powerfully influential ways. The visiting committee wishes to encourage the university to particular attentiveness to outcome five, which touches on the importance of incorporating issues of diversity, not only in the lives of students individually but across the SLU community, in the city of St. Louis, and in the globalizing society in which SLU graduates will be active participants. In addition, several at SLU highlighted the strength of the Madrid program, including a new initiative to launch a study abroad program in Belize. Such a program would serve to broaden, for SLU students, the narrative about Catholic culture, traditions and history.

Characteristic 3: A Catholic, Jesuit campus culture

Among the AJCU schools, Saint Louis University is notable for its many instances of a thriving Catholic, Jesuit campus culture. Many expressed pride in the well-attended Sunday evening student liturgies, the commitment to service found in every corner of the institution, and a genuine thirst to move the mission forward. These all speak well to the current and future energy that shape SLU. Many spoke with gratitude about the contributions of the members of the Society of Jesus to this campus culture. Many affirmed that this campus culture was what drew them to Saint Louis University, and what kept them there.

It is not surprising that this broad tradition gives rise to a variety of expressions on campus, and that this may occasionally cause tension – for example, some named tensions between Catholic

Studies Centre and Campus Ministry. Yet these are both vibrant, providing different forms of accompaniment for SLU students. The Catholic Studies Centre is a specific program with a sharply drawn profile and academic content; Campus Ministry is charged with shepherding the student body and leading the University as a whole in an inclusive way. By their own fruits these units will be seen as the partners in mission they are. In particular, as newer faculty staff and students come to SLU from a broader variety of faith traditions, or none at all, these units should support the Office of Mission as it works to articulate an inclusive institutional vision.

SLU's commitment and partnership with the Jesuit Province provides the community with the gift of encountering many Jesuits in the daily life of the university. The community names this with great pride and with some concern for the future in light of declines in religious vocations. Throughout the process, the community expressed gratitude for the work of Mission and Identity, recognizing that this office is stretched thin.

While the culture at SLU is strong, questions emerged. Does the campus provide a “seamless garment” of Catholic culture to the university through ministry, the intellectual tradition and inclusion? In what ways does SLU provide faculty, staff and students from other faith traditions, spiritualities or value systems the opportunity/invitation to learn about the Jesuit, Catholic tradition at SLU? In this effort, do these other faith traditions and value systems report that their stories are heard and respected? How might SLU work to illuminate the connection between faith, justice and diversity? And, with strong potential for the future, how might the gifts of Ignatian spirituality be utilized to advance the culture of inclusion and dialogue at SLU?

Characteristic 4: Service

The vibrant commitment to service at Saint Louis University is widely shared and attractive to new members of the community – students, faculty and staff. It is exemplified across the curriculum and genuinely integrated into the majors, minors, certificates and programs of every school of the University. As trustees noted to the Peer Visitor Committee, SLU students have “generous hearts,” they arrive at SLU ready to serve, and to serve the most marginalized. Most impressive were those initiatives that analyzed a situation and identified gaps; this kind of careful analysis distinguished SLU’s interventions as those of a University.

As a Jesuit, Catholic school, it is important that these efforts exemplify the idea of a “faith that does justice.” Here the Peer Visitor Committee notes a philosophy course taught in a Belize prison, the Law School’s response to neighborhood tension at the time of a verdict, the Micah program, and curriculum that engages the intersection of racial injustice and Catholicism. The Peer Visitor Committee encourages the inclusion, for these and other efforts, of tools that foster habits of critical reflection on the complex realities and systems which sustain injustice; tools that reflect the depth of Catholic Social Teaching.

The Committee did not get a clear sense that these programs consistently include formation in cultural competency for predominately white faculty, staff and students engaging in service with communities of color. This is another situation in which a developed integration of mission and diversity would be of benefit. With that formation, SLU might also confirm that all of its programs are shaped by best practices, for example, that these are exercises in community

engagement as co-learning experiences rather than “service” “toward” programs. Recognizing that service activities often arise in an *ad hoc* fashion, SLU might consider a system of formation with a variety of on-ramps, coupled with a practice of lifting up and honoring those who do this work particularly well at SLU.

Characteristic 5: Service to the Local Church

The Peer Visitor Committee was happy to hear of the positive relationship between the leadership of Saint Louis University and Archbishop Robert J. Carlson. With a long history in the city of St. Louis, SLU is grateful for its wide network in the archdiocese, which has supported and shaped the University through years of growth to its current place of prominence. St. Louis has provided business opportunities, connections to education and health care, a strong culture for the arts and music, a multi-generational Catholic faith community, and the strength of a large Midwestern urban population, many of whom have been educated at SLU or served there as faculty, staff or administration.

For its part, SLU has served the Church, providing education for teachers and health care workers, institutes for expertise for non-profits, theologians and spiritual directors, and members of the Society of Jesus who have served alongside diocesan personnel as priests, spiritual directors and public leaders guided by justice and service. In particular, the Committee regards the recent initiative with Kenrick-Glennon seminary, that will offer a Saint Louis University degree for their collegians and seminarians, to be a very positive sign of the strength and forward-thinking of this relationship.

Characteristic 6: Jesuit Presence

The Self-Study affirmed that Saint Louis University appreciates “the active participation of the Jesuit community more than words can tell.” There was not a single meeting the Peer Visitor Committee had at which this appreciation was not warmly expressed. In particular, the efforts by Mission and Identity were the object of much gratitude and praise across various sectors of the university. The committee notes the presence of individual Jesuits active in administration, pastoral ministry, and in the teaching and scholarly components of university life. Among the distinctive forms of this presence is the community of two dozen Jesuit scholastics in academic study.

The Committee notes that a previous administration anchored the institutional sense of Jesuit mission in Jesuits themselves and discouraged the participation of lay faculty, administration, and staff in programs of Ignatian formation for mission outside the university. Under a new administration, however, such policies are being reversed, and the committee notes the university’s renewed membership in AJCU and ACCU as well as new encouragement within the university for senior leadership to participate in such programs as the Ignatian Colleagues Program. The Peer Visitor Committee underscores the need to form lay leadership in all sectors of the university, and particularly encourages a systematic use of the Ignatian Colleagues Program to form senior leaders, including periodic continuing formation opportunities for SLU’s ICP “alums.”

The Committee likewise encourages JAASLU to engage in more thoughtful and coordinated efforts to face the challenge of serious and continuing diminishment of Jesuit numbers at the university. The Self-Study's stated commitment to the university's recruiting more Jesuits seems, in this light, to be unrealistic and, importantly, to deflect attention from the underdeveloped but still realizable goal of forming others – particularly women colleagues – for mission.

Nor should the presence of the Jesuit scholastics, in the College of Philosophy and Letters, deflect focus from this goal. While that presence is a boon to the Jesuit identity of the institution, it places a serious responsibility in the hands of the university to model – for the scholastics and for the seminarians – a Jesuit, Catholic institution that has the realities of Jesuit and clerical diminishment in grip, one that demonstrates a lived collegiality with lay colleagues as leaders in mission. In this way, the Jesuit Community at Saint Louis University would answer the “prophetic call” to the formation of lay people to leadership in the mission, as articulated in the “Some Characteristics” text.

Characteristic 7: Integrity

Central to the many elements of this characteristic, which probes not only hiring practices but also financial management and facilities, is the notion that integrity lives throughout the enterprise. For a school such as Saint Louis University, “maintaining a vibrant Catholicity” while genuinely welcoming “diversity and multiculturalism” is a challenge that requires not “balance,” but a thoughtful, formed, lived “integrity.”

This formation, as the Peer Visitor Committee has observed above, goes well with “service,” “men and women for others,” or even “social justice.” While these concepts are indeed central to Jesuit thought, they just scratch the surface. What is truly distinctive, and how does this animate a “vibrant Catholicity?”

In terms of inclusion, how does this “Catholicity” extend to real belonging and equity for all at SLU? The Committee heard non-Catholic faculty, staff, and students who are deeply engaged in mission work. These should be supported, welcomed, and encouraged to participate in formation opportunities and to bring experiences back to share with others, so that this sense of catholicity is all the more textured. Concretely, the need for this kind of formation underscores the need for support for both mission and diversity efforts.

This characteristic might be considered as an extension of the preceding question of “Jesuit Presence.” The Peer Visitor Committee recognizes that the large Jesuit community at SLU has certainly been a blessing, but its presence may have enabled SLU to become over-reliant on that community to serve as the personification of the Jesuit Catholic mission in a way that is no longer sustainable – and perhaps no longer desirable. If the future of this mission is to be delivered in collaborative partnerships and mentorships, the work of a more intentional and restructured Office of Mission and Identity, one that delivers the broad formation envisioned by the aspirations of the Self-Study, becomes all the more important.

Have you made changes to the original Peer Visitor Report? Please detail any changes made and the rationale for each.

No.

Peer Visitor Committee's Recommendation

Does the Peer Visitor Committee recommend that Fr. General – on behalf of the Society of Jesus as a founding and continuing sponsor – should reaffirm the institution's Jesuit and Catholic status?

Yes. The Peer Visitor Committee recommends that the Society of Jesus should reaffirm Saint Louis University as a Jesuit and Catholic institution of higher education.

What specific suggestions does the Peer Visitor Committee have for the institution to realize its Jesuit Mission Priorities? Please note any changes made to the original Peer Visitor Report and the rationale for each.

The Peer Visitor Committee has offered numerous suggestions above. In summary, however, we offer a few guiding recommendations:

- A. The Peer Visitor Committee advises that a more comprehensive mission formation program, as suggested by the mission priorities, be developed in a strategic, integrated, and clearly communicated fashion, sorting through current offerings across the institution and articulating their place in a comprehensive plan. It should not be simply an "additional" layer of mission effort.
- B. The Peer Visitor Committee finds that the implementation of the proposed mission priorities will be impossible without additional staff and resources. We further suggest a study of the many models for mission organization already present in the AJCU to identify an arrangement. One model would cluster all mission efforts under a single Vice President. Other models might suggest an organizational and strategic officer for mission at the VP level, while naming a direct report to the President as the University Chaplain. Either of these might make use of a Mission Leadership Council, or similar.
- C. Mission efforts today must be responsive to our increasingly diverse communities, a diversity which includes a variety of faith traditions as well as those of no faith – or whose spirituality is not attached to a specific tradition. The Peer Visitor Committee urges Saint Louis University to draw upon the changes underway in its own campus culture to engage all mission efforts in a conversation about diversity, catholicity and inclusion. Hiring for mission must be clearly understood to be an exercise in hiring for diversity, and vice-versa.
- D. Overall, members of the Society of Jesus at Saint Louis University should be engaged as partners in all mission efforts, building on the already deep ties between their witness of presence and ministry and the University community. As the Saint Louis Jesuit community visions its own

future, the Peer Visitor Committee encourages it to bring that discernment into view as a model for the SLU community.

Additional Comments:

Shared Vision: Longer-term employees of the university often brought up an earlier mission effort, “Shared Vision,” that brought groups of employees together for mission formation. The Peer Visitor Committee was struck by the impression this program had made on these employees, one that persisted after many years. While recognizing that a spirit of nostalgia is often present as our institutions struggle with contemporary challenges, we also, however, heard in these reminiscences a spirit of collegiality and common purpose that struggles to find a foothold at Saint Louis University today. We do not recommend re-creating the past – our remarks above illustrate this. Yet we call attention to the value of a sense of common purpose, the first fruit of a successful mission effort. It is our hope, indeed we know, that this common purpose is still very much in the air at SLU, waiting to be articulated in a new and inclusive fashion and woven into the fabric of the ongoing life of a nationally-ranked research university. We also saw, as we sat through conversation after conversation, that coasters with the “Shared Vision” logo were still sprinkled throughout the institution – keep these! While the earlier program should be left to an earlier day, the Peer Visitor Committee is quite certain that the elements of a vibrant and re-freshed “Shared Vision” are already waiting in the wings.

Saint Louis University has a strong, rich and faith-filled history of living the Jesuit Catholic mission. The Peer Visitor Committee wishes to thank Board Chair Joseph Conran for his leadership and evident enthusiasm for this 200-year-old institution. We thank University President Dr. Fred Pestello for his warm welcome to us and his steady stewardship of the Jesuit Catholic mission of Saint Louis University. And we note with gratitude and warmth the vision and energy of the mission leadership team – Professors Christopher Collins, S.J., Molly A. Schaller, and David Suwalsky, S.J. Their careful attention to the community at SLU, and the SLU community’s gratitude for their work – especially that of Fr. Collins – was evident throughout our visit. AMDG