

Saint Louis University
Mission Priority Examen Self-Study Report
Fall 2024



SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY™

— EST. 1818 —

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Institutional Information

University Leadership

Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D. University President
 Michael Lewis, Ph.D. University Provost
 Eric Engler, M.B.A. Board of Trustees Chair
 David Suwalsky, S.J., Ph.D. Vice President for Mission and Identity

Mission Priority Examen

Co-chair David Suwalsky, S.J., Ph.D., Vice President for Mission and Identity
 Co-chair Virginia Herbers, Director of Mission Formation, Mission and Identity

Steering Committee Members

Esmeralda Aharon, Program Director, School of Medicine
 Anne Marie Apollo-Noel, Director, Development Communications
 Jon Baris, J.D., Assistant Dean, School of Law
 Ellen K. Barnidge, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Research
 Rob Boyle, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Business
 Patrick Cousins, Director of Pastoral Formation, Mission and Identity
 Peggy Dotson, Assistant Provost for Academic Success
 Noelle Fearn, Ph.D., Dean, School of Social Work
 Michael Hankins, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Science and Engineering
 Lisa Jaegers, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Doisy College of Health Sciences
 Joel Jennings, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology
 Ashley Jost, Director, Office of Student Life
 Joanne C. Langan, Ph.D., Professor, School of Nursing
 Atria Larson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Theological Studies
 Donna Bess Myers, Senior Advisor, Student Development
 Janet Oberle, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Athletics
 Ben Perlman, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President, Student Development
 Gary Ritter, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education
 Amy N. Sanders, J.D., Executive Director, Center for Health Law Studies
 John Stiles, M.B.A., Senior Director of Development
 Michael Swartwout, Ph.D., Professor, School of Science and Engineering
 Brian Yothers, Ph.D., Chair, Department of English

Visiting Team

Chair: Mardell A. Wilson, Ed.D., Provost, Creighton University
 Jennifer Abe, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Loyola Marymount University
 Dan Joyce, S.J., Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Saint Joseph's University
 Michael Serazio, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication, Boston College

Executive Summary

Since the last Mission Priority Examen (MPE) in spring 2019, Saint Louis University has undertaken a wide array of initiatives to strengthen the Catholic, Jesuit mission culture of its community. The two most robust pursuits have been:

1. The development of strong, varied mission formation programming for faculty and staff
2. The development of a rigorous and integrated undergraduate Core curriculum that intentionally incorporates elements of the Ignatian tradition and Catholic, Jesuit mission

This current MPE was structured as an Ignatian examen in the context of community. Focus groups of faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, alumni, and community partners gathered for an extended period of private reflection on the health and vitality of SLU's mission and then shared communally the fruits of their reflection. Simultaneously, their perspectives were offered in a confidential digital forum, providing additional input and insight about the mission of SLU as it is currently lived and experienced.

As a result, we have discerned a way of proceeding for the next several years. Mindful of the Universal Apostolic Preferences as well as the seven characteristics of Jesuit higher education, we identify and commit to the following mission priorities:

Priority 1: We will bolster our university culture of mission.

Unless a culture of mission exists, mission commitment is sporadic at best and superficial at worst. Recognizing the need for integrity and accountability in the life of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university, we will prioritize two large-scale actions to strengthen the mission culture of SLU: ap"qpi qlpi university mission gzco gp for continuous feedback and improvement, and infrastructure support for students in need.

Priority 2: We will integrate mission formation programming for all levels of university leadership.

While mission formation programming for faculty and staff has become much more robust in recent years, there remain gaps in the same formation opportunities for upper administrators and trustees. Although mission formation programming is universally offered, a lack of substantive recognition for mission-committed employees precludes greater participation and investment. Cognizant of the need for more deliberate mission integration, we will prioritize two initiatives to bolster mission formation for the entire SLU community: university leadership formation for mission, and recognition and celebration of faculty and staff mission commitment.

Priority 3: We will enhance curricular and co-curricular student initiatives to teach and mentor students in the practice of Ignatian discernment.

Particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 disruptions to student life, we recognize the increasing importance of providing the mental and spiritual tools needed for students to learn vocational discernment in the Ignatian tradition. Beyond this, however, students can derive great benefit from the practice of Ignatian discernment in their everyday interactions, choices, and relationships. SLU's undergraduate Core curriculum has been designed to incorporate Ignatian practices, but there is still much room for growth and development throughout all curricular and co-curricular student activities. To this end, we will prioritize ongoing curricular integration of Ignatian discernment practices and targeted co-curricular efforts to provide students with opportunities to learn and practice discernment.

Priority 4: We will promote the Catholic, Jesuit identity of the university with clarity and collaboration.

Recognizing the various contemporary challenges in higher education, we likewise recognize that it is SLU's Catholic, Jesuit mission that distinguishes us from our local institutional peers. Strengthening our commitment to that mission and clarifying university messaging around it (both internal and external) thus becomes all the more important. As one of the few institutions of higher education in the City of St. Louis, SLU is dedicated to collaborating with our community partners as well as the Archdiocese of St. Louis. As a member of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and an apostolate of the Central Southern Province of the Society of Jesus, SLU is eager to expand opportunities to collaborate in order to strengthen our common Jesuit mission. We therefore prioritize ongoing support of Jesuit presence on campus and the strengthening of ties to our local and national Catholic and Jesuit partners.

Ultimately, we as a university community are committed to ongoing discernment of the best way of proceeding for the life and vitality of the mission of Saint Louis University as we pursue truth for the greater glory of God and the service of humanity.



**SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY**

— EST. 1818 —

**OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT**

One North Grand Boulevard
DuBourg Hall
Room 206
St. Louis, MO 63103

P 314-977-7777
F 314-977-7105

president@slu.edu

www.slu.edu

December 2024

Very Reverend Tom Greene, S.J.
Provincial, USA Central and Southern Province
of the Society of Jesus
4511 West Pine Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63108

Dear Father Greene,

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

I am pleased to share with you the 2024 Mission Priority Examen (MPE) of Saint Louis University.

Under the leadership of David Suwalsky, S.J., SLU's Vice President for Mission and Identity and Virginia Herbers, Director of Mission Formation, and a 23-member Steering Committee composed of faculty and staff, SLU's MPE engaged more than six hundred faculty, staff, administrators, students, trustees, alumni and parents in the spring 2024 semester. The MPE was drafted over the summer of 2024 and then shared with the Steering Committee, the Peer Review Committee and the SLU community in October 2024. Now, having received the Peer Review Committee's report, I can share it with you.

The MPE process took inspiration from the way of proceeding of the Synod on Synodality by inviting personal reflection from participants, asking them to share the fruits of those reflections in a Google form, and then facilitating robust discussion. The experience was so positive for participants that many encouraged the mission office to continue this type of consultation as an ongoing project.

The MPE process identified much that is worthy of commendation, while also acknowledging areas for improvement. I am particularly pleased to call your attention to Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski's letter included in the MPE. The archbishop highlights the many ways that Saint Louis University supports the Archdiocese of St. Louis. We are fortunate that the archbishop's vision and our University mission are greatly aligned.

After review of this Mission Priority Examen, I am confident asserting that the Catholic, Jesuit mission of Saint Louis University remains foundational to our identity as an apostolate of the Society of Jesus.

Sincerely,

Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D.
President



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

Office of the Archbishop

Cardinal Rigali Center
 20 Archbishop May Drive
 St. Louis, Missouri 63119
 p) 314.792.7841
 f) 314.792.7842
 www.archstl.org

April 3, 2024

Dr. Fred Pestello, PhD.
 Office of the President
 St. Louis University
 1 N. Grand Blvd.
 St. Louis, MO 63103

Dear Dr. Pestello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Catholic identity of St. Louis University as you undertake the Mission Priority Examen. Having been archbishop here for almost four years, I have greatly appreciated our meetings and my attendance at numerous events sponsored by the University groups, including Campus Ministry and the Center for Catholic Studies.

First of all, I feel very blessed to have a good working relationship with you as President of the University. Your openness to our meetings, including the bi-annual meetings of Catholic higher education Presidents, has been a source of great help to me in understanding the mission of St. Louis University and its deep commitment to Catholic teaching and values. This relationship is critical for the open conversation that needs to take place between the ordinary of the archdiocese and the President of St. Louis University. I am hopeful that this conversation will continue in the years ahead.

I would also like to highlight the relationship between St. Louis University and Kenrick-Glennon seminary. Our college seminarians study at St. Louis University for their philosophy degrees, thus giving them a solid foundation for the study of theology and ultimately, for those who are ordained as priests, a great basis for their philosophical and theological expertise as they shepherd God's people. The close working relationship between the seminary and St. Louis University is a great gift to the Church.

Over these past years, I have witnessed the impact of the Catholic Studies program at St. Louis University upon not only the students who are part of that program, but also in its influence in various aspects of college life. Particularly edifying is the emphasis on service as a living out of our baptismal commitment. From service projects in the local neighborhoods to mission trips that reach out to a wider area of the United States and the world, this emphasis on living out our faith in such concrete ways helps our young people realize the positive influence they have on society when they boldly express their faith through service.

(2)

The opportunities for numerous liturgical experiences, weekend retreats, Ignatian mentor meetings and opportunities to learn the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola provide a fertile field for deepening students' spiritual lives during their college experience. I commend the leadership of St. Louis University for making these opportunities a high priority for students. It has been very heartening for me to celebrate Masses at St. Francis Xavier College Church to witness the number of students who actively participate in Sunday liturgies with great devotion and enthusiasm.

As a painful legacy, all of us are aware of the ties to slavery from the early days of the Catholic Church in our region. The Archdiocese of St. Louis, as well as St. Louis University are addressing our ties to this regretful part of our history as institutions. It has been edifying to witness St. Louis University's response in research and commitment to addressing systemic racism that continues to plague our city and wider communities of our region. The need for healing and reconciliation is very evident and I am inspired by the commitment of the University to address its past as well as to bring about healing in our present day.

St. Louis University's Division for Mission and Identity is a crucial part of campus life for both faculty, staff and students in comprehending the tenets and practicing our Catholic Faith. Each student and faculty member receive a copy of the St. Louis University Prayerbook which contains prayers for all aspects of Catholic life. I commend those who have so thoughtfully compiled the prayers to help deepen the spiritual life of the St. Louis University community.

On both an archdiocesan and university level, we are grappling with moral issues that have surfaced in various ways over these past few decades. Here I am speaking of the LGBTQ+ community which has a presence in our Church. I commend the leadership of St. Louis University for its pastoral care and concern for members of that community as well as its clarity in teaching the basics of our faith. There is a fine line between pastoral care and clear presentation of the teachings of our faith. I believe that St. Louis University is achieving the vision of Pope Francis in dealing with the members of the LGBTQ+ community.

As archbishop, I clearly realize the need for open communication between the leadership of St. Louis University and the leadership of the archdiocese. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Pestello for his willingness to communicate with me, particularly any issues of concern that may have arisen at the University, in a prompt and clear manner. I believe that this communication needs to be sustained so that the conversations that take place can continue to be beneficial to both the University and the Archdiocese. As St. Louis University will experience a change of leadership in the near future with Dr. Pestello's retirement, I want to affirm my commitment to keeping those channels of communication open and direct. This type of communication is the basis for the Synodality of which Pope Francis speaks and the health of the local Church and Catholic higher learning.

(3)

Finally, I wish to commend the process of the Mission Priority Examen in soliciting input from so many constituencies that compose campus life. As archbishop, I appreciate having the opportunity to participate in the process, adding my own perspective as ordinary of the archdiocese. It is a privilege for me to serve here in the Archdiocese of St. Louis with such a solidly Catholic institution as St. Louis University. I commend the leadership of Dr. Fred Pestello over this past decade and my prayer is that his successor will be as open in communicating with me as Dr. Pestello has been in my time here.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchell T. Rozanski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(Most Rev.) Mitchell T. Rozanski
Archbishop of St. Louis

Progress on Previous Jesuit Mission Priorities

SLU's first Mission Priority Examen began in spring 2018. The Peer Review Committee report and the MPE were submitted to SLU president, Dr. Fred P. Pestello, and Father Provincial Ron Mercier, S.J., in December 2018. In Spring 2019, SLU received a positive response from Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J. The stated mission priorities were:

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. This program explores the story behind the mission statement of all Jesuit institutions and also offers an examination of the relevance and benefits of the Ignatian mission in contemporary life and activity.
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 Hiring for Mission.
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 is 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.
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.

Despite various disruptions and obstacles to implementation, SLU's Division for Mission and Identity has worked to respond diligently to these mission priorities. Implementation was hampered in part by leadership changes in the division¹ but even more significantly by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.² Nevertheless, the Director of Mission Formation and the Director of Pastoral Formation were hired to address faculty and staff needs, allowing for the development of numerous opportunities for mission formation and pastoral engagement. Progress on the specific mission priorities includes:

¹ David Suwalsky, S.J. was named Vice President for Mission and Identity in July 2020, and in Spring 2021 the Department of Campus Ministry was moved operationally from the Division of Student Development to report to the Vice President for Mission and Identity.

² In March 2020, in-person classes and activities were suspended. When SLU returned to on-campus classes in fall 2020, highly restrictive policies were in place, keeping many faculty and staff remote and severely hindering mission activities.

Mission Priority 1: Increased Commitment to Ignatian Identity

The [Shared Mission](#) video series was introduced to the SLU community in Fall 2023 as a response to the call for a revision of the *Shared Vision* series.³ *Shared Mission* is designed for both new and current employees, bringing together small group cohorts six times during the course of the academic year to meet, learn, discuss, and integrate the history, impact, and lived reality of the Jesuit mission and Ignatian identity of SLU. Additionally, the six short videos and their accompanying curriculum guides have been used for undergraduate students in the Core curriculum, for faculty and staff development, for alumni, and for parent and family engagement. In addition to *Shared Mission*, a [wide variety of mission formation opportunities](#) have been made available to employees, and a concise explanation of the [Catholic, Jesuit Identity of Saint Louis University](#) has been created for use by the entire SLU community. All these materials are available on the division's updated [website](#).

SLU continues to send university leaders to participate in the Ignatian Colleagues Program and the Leadership Institute sponsored by the AJCU, but to reach a wider audience on campus, several mission initiatives have been launched and have begun to make a substantial impact on the culture of Jesuit mission at the university. Of particular note are the following:

- [ICP @ SLU](#), a local version of the Ignatian Colleagues Program, launched in 2022. This two-year cohort-based program is focused on Ignatian scholarship, service, and spirituality. There are 61 faculty and staff participants in the program in fall 2024.
- [The Arrupe Fellowship](#), a two-year mission formation program for faculty and staff who have demonstrated a commitment to the Jesuit mission of SLU, began in 2021. Four fellows are accepted each year to study Jesuit history and Ignatian pedagogy, to participate in an Ignatian pilgrimage in Spain and Italy, and to integrate their learning into their work at SLU.
- Immersive encounters for faculty and staff to engage the community were offered beginning in 2023. During the academic year, local sites of significance were highlighted as daytrips (St. Louis Holocaust Museum, Shrine of St. Joseph, etc.) When the spring 2024 term concluded, 15 participants joined a week-long trip to Navajo Nation.
- [The Pilgrim's Path](#) is a mission-centered audio walking tour that tells the story of SLU's Catholic and Jesuit heritage represented by statues and bas reliefs found throughout the north campus. Mission banners highlighting this opportunity appear on interior light posts throughout campus.

³ The *Shared Mission* program was recently highlighted in the summer 2024 issue of the Central Southern Province *Jesuits* magazine. It can be accessed in Appendix E or online [here](#).

Mission Priority 2: Hiring for Mission

The Division for Mission and Identity provides mission training for faculty and administrator search committee chairs, including questions that can be used during candidate interviews. New faculty orientation incorporates mission formation with an address from the Vice President for Mission and Identity, as does the orientation for new staff hires with an introduction to Jesuit higher education and the Ignatian tradition of scholarship, service, and spirituality at SLU. The Vice President for Mission and Identity typically interviews finalists for upper administrative positions.

In the summer of 2020, under the leadership of the Provost and the Vice President for Mission and Identity, the university adopted a Jesuit Hiring Policy.⁴ According to this policy, a Jesuit is made available to a department and his salary and benefit expense is borne by the Provost's Office. A Jesuit hired into a department under this policy is subject to the same tenure, research, and teaching expectations as all faculty, but is effectively an "add" to the department without any departmental expense. The ingenuity and fiscal acumen of this policy have allowed Jesuits to be hired recently onto the economics, history, law, medicine, philosophy, and public health faculties.

⁴ Although not a recommendation of the 2019 MPE, Father Provincial Tom Greene, S.J., requested an explanation of the hiring policy in effect for Jesuit faculty and staff.

Mission Priority 3: University Leadership Formation for Mission

In the 2022-23 academic year, SLU President Fred P. Pestello provided time during the [University Leadership Council](#)⁵ monthly meetings for mission-related discussion facilitated by a consultant hired by the Division for Mission and Identity. Due to the universal positive response, we are hopeful for additional such opportunities in the future. The Division of Human Resources has continued its efforts to integrate mission formation into leadership training by creating tools for middle management leaders and supervisors, implementing regular micro-learning modules that could provide ways to incorporate Ignatian vocabulary and mission perspectives into their day-to-day responsibilities as university leaders.

Consistent participation in the AJCU Leadership Institute and Ignatian Colleagues Program is a priority at SLU. Due to the considerable turnover of university deans and vice presidents since the last MPE, however, many participants in these programs no longer serve at SLU, making this expensive endeavor less fruitful than we hoped.

Mission formation for the Board of Trustees could be much more robust than it currently is. Meaningful mission orientation would be of great benefit not just for the board but for the integrity of the mission writ large. On the positive side, the board's Governance Committee uses mission criteria when vetting board candidates, new board members are oriented by the Vice President for Mission and Identity and sit for their first year on the Mission Committee, and the Mission Committee regularly discusses matters related to the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university. Plans for initiating a board pilgrimage to Ignatian sites in Spain and Italy have been discussed. It should also be noted that the Mission Committee's February 2024 MPE focus group experience was extremely positive, and largely due to their encouragement a focus group session was held for the full board at the May 2024 Board of Trustees meeting.

⁵ The University Leadership Council (ULC) is responsible for reviewing and approving all university policies and providing input on other important university matters. The group is composed of senior administrators, academic deans, and the leaders of the Faculty Senate, Staff Advisory Committee, Student Government Association and Graduate Student Association.

Mission Priority 4: Student Formation for Discernment

The retreats offered to students by Campus Ministry are creative and varied, but the COVID-19 pandemic drastically impeded efforts to expand ministerial outreach to help students deepen their understanding of discernment. In the 2023-24 academic year, the men in formation (scholastics) of Bellarmine House developed a “Java with the Jesuits Retreat” which includes an emphasis on discernment. Academically, the Office of the Provost hosts an annual fall vocation week incorporating Ignatian discernment into professional and personal decision-making, and the Vocational Inquiry Through Advocacy and Service (VITAS) component of the undergraduate Core curriculum focuses on vocational discernment, particularly in relationship to student engagement in community service and advocacy. In 2023, a revised SLU prayer book was distributed to parents and families of incoming students at the freshman convocation and then campus-wide to faculty, staff, and alumni. The revision was intended to collate prayers around the Universal Apostolic Preferences. In addition to traditional Catholic and Ignatian prayers, newer voices including Thea Bowman, Carlo Acutis, Oscar Romero, influential Jesuits, and non-Catholic religious traditions are represented.

In the years since the last MPE, Campus Ministry has been impacted by several trends common in higher education, particularly regarding student engagement. Student participation in Sunday liturgies is lower now than prior to the pandemic; affirmative sign-ups for activities can no longer predict actual attendance (‘yes’ often means ‘maybe’); retreat lengths have been shortened due to student reluctance to commit for more than one overnight; and the percentage of students self-identifying as Catholic has been steadily declining. Campus culture continues to reflect the “spiritual but not religious” reality of contemporary Western society. This is bolstered by the perceived lack of credibility in the institutional Church due in large part to the clergy abuse crisis and the harsh posturing of many Catholics on LGBTQ+ issues and sexual expression. Conversely, SLU has also seen a growing population of more traditional Catholic students who find solace in devotional practices (Eucharistic processions, use of chapel veils, Exposition and Benediction, etc.) The activities of the Catholic Studies Center attract these students and provide these liturgical experiences through the Champion Society. Increased collaboration between Campus Ministry and the Catholic Studies Center, particularly in forming students for discernment, would be a powerful witness to reconciliation on campus.

In general, students are congenial to the Ignatian charism and see the large variety of service outreach at SLU as an essential element of their Jesuit education. Increased opportunities to incorporate Ignatian reflection and see themselves as “contemplatives in action” have helped students become more familiar with the discernment process.

MPE Process

In December 2023, at the invitation of Thomas P. Greene, S.J., provincial superior of the Central and Southern Province, Saint Louis University launched its second Mission Priority Examen. After consultation with David Suwalsky, S.J., Vice President for Mission and Identity, President Fred Pestello convened a 23-member steering committee representing each of SLU's campuses (main/north, medical/south, law, Madrid, virtual, and prison education), their correlating academic and administrative units, students, alumni, community partners, parents and families, and donors.⁶

The steering committee collaborated with the Office of Mission and Identity to facilitate 67 focus group sessions throughout the spring 2024 semester. The sessions were intentionally designed to incorporate elements of the synodal process within the structure of an Ignatian examen.⁷ By means of a [university-wide email in February 2024](#), President Pestello formally invited the SLU community to participate in the MPE through focus groups, providing the relevant background, context and importance of the process, and encouraging full and active engagement of SLU's entire community.

Focus groups met for 90 minutes: 20 minutes of introduction, context-setting, and explanation; 15 minutes of private examen; and 45 minutes of communal reflection and spiritual conversation in the Ignatian tradition. The examen walked participants through the process of intentional reflection (composition of place) from a posture of gratitude (presupposition), with an honest and courageous review of the health and vitality of SLU's mission (examination of conscience) and an acknowledgment of both light and shadow in each person's lived experience (discernment). This examen was done through a confidential online survey format first, and then communally in the group setting. For some groups the format was adapted to better fit the specific needs of the constituents; for example, a Zoom option and a shorter process were available for groups who were better served by the adaptation. In general, more than 80% of focus groups participated in the full 90-minute process.

The average number of participants in a focus group was 10, with total participation numbering more than 600 individuals. The SLU community provided frank, courageous, and valuable feedback about the lived reality of the university's Catholic, Jesuit mission. Many participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to gather and speak in this context, and multiple requests were made for the process to become an annual experience.

⁶ See p. 2 of this report

⁷ See Appendix A

Some of the following factors may account for the universally positive experience of the focus group sessions:

- Personal invitation to participate from a steering committee member in their own division/department/unit.
- Encouragement to participate from the president as well as deans, department chairs, and vice presidents.
- An increased frequency of mission communication and engagement in some departments, largely due to the work of faculty and staff mission liaisons.
- An overall strong appetite for conversation about SLU's mission.

Conversely, participation may have been stronger except for the following factors:

- The conclusion of the all-university 2023 Faculty and Staff Voice Survey coincided with the invitation to participate in the MPE; this may have seemed a redundancy to some members of the community.
- The 90-minute time commitment for the MPE did not easily correlate to class schedules for students and faculty and was difficult for hourly workers to navigate.

The information gathered from the focus group sessions falls into two categories with related but differentiated usefulness:

1. the input from the communal conversations serves as the primary source material for this self-study; and
2. the full results of the private examen will be used by the Division for Mission and Identity as an ongoing formation initiative to advance and strengthen the mission culture of the SLU community within and between departments/divisions/units.

Due to its complementarity with the process of Ignatian discernment, the analytic methodology used with the extensive qualitative data was inductive and thematic. This approach allowed patterns to emerge from the data rather than predetermining specific attributes or themes. Because participant input was focused on individuals' lived experiences, a phenomenological approach was also employed, allowing for personal perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of SLU's mission to be explored as it is experienced in day-to-day reality within the community. Finally, the peer team reviewed this report and met with members of the SLU community during their October 2024 visit. The peer visit meetings included a representation of SLU's community like that of the focus group sessions, with university leadership, faculty, staff, and student participation ensured.⁸

"This [MPE] process has surfaced a lot of important issues and topics and feelings and experiences that will lead us where we need to go. We don't know what the end point is, but starting with the process feels very positive for what we need to do right now."
~Trustee participant

⁸ See Appendix D

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY INPUT

Introduction

“I sense hope, not fear, when our universities open space for difficult conversations that make people uncomfortable, conversations about the past and the future, about cultures and churches, about what it means to be human and who we are called to become. And I sense more hope than fear when I speak with our students.” ~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

The MPE focus group conversations surfaced common themes across the university community as well as distinctive insights for specific departments. This report seeks to represent those conversations authentically while recognizing the inherent limitations of focus group input. To that end, the following acknowledgments are important at the outset:

- Perceptions of the community, even when commonly held, require further exploration, data collection, dialogue, and discernment to understand the full scope of any given reality or situation.
- Common concerns gleaned from focus group input need to be shared with the responsible leaders and departments to round out the full picture of the realities.
- Although the MPE focus groups represented the full extent of the university community, not every community member participated, so the voices represented in this report are limited to the voices of those who opted in to the process.
- Although the SLU community exists across six campuses (St. Louis with main/north, medical/south, and [law](#); [Madrid](#); [online](#); and the [Prison Education Program](#)) this report most heavily reflects the St. Louis campus realities.
- Recommendations about curricular and co-curricular activities are largely directed toward the undergraduate student population.

Given these understandings, the focus group participants shared the following common perspectives on the health and vitality of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university:

Areas of strength, light, and encouragement:

- The people of SLU are the greatest source of light and hope; the community created around mission is life-giving and fruitful in a multitude of ways.

“It is the people here who further the mission.” ~Catholic Studies Center

- The strong and consistent presence of the Jesuits provides great encouragement and a sense of support to students, faculty, and staff.
- SLU's commitment to service is strong, as exemplified through curriculum design, community engagement, neighborhood partnerships, and the language of social justice.
- The emphasis on *cura personalis* is demonstrated in the strong sense of faculty care for students and institutional attentiveness to student well-being.
- A growing commitment to diversity in hiring, recruitment, and promotion; substantive efforts at promoting both a culture of inclusion and belonging; and development of methods for both praxis and accountability.

"Jesuits mentor our students in a very visible way which makes SLU's student experience distinctive." ~Student Development participant

"SLU is ever-present in the community, volunteering for a variety of service opportunities. It's a natural, ingrained part of what we do here. We are involved in the greater St. Louis area in positive ways, making an impact in the city." ~School of Social Work participant

"The focus on students is impressive. Students learn how to care for each other—even for strangers—in a way that is compassionate, friendly, and respectful. There's something in the water here that helps us nurture lovely students." ~Medical School participant

"I'm not Catholic, but I came here for the intersection of faith and work, the desire to care for the whole person regardless of religion, and the fact that the institution attempts to keep true to this." ~Business School participant

Areas of discouragement, weakness, or shadow:

- Mission language has been used by supervisors/leaders to leverage cooperation and compel acquiescence in ways that undermine both the authenticity of SLU's mission and the commitment of the community to it.
- Budget, resource allocation, staff workload, and compensation structures do not always reflect mission values and priorities.
- Concern for the needs of international students (specifically regarding reports of food insecurity) is strong, as is the perceived need for additional support/infrastructure for the "Global Grad" initiative.
- Communication and collaboration among and within units/departments is poor, leading to a sense of disconnection.

"We have ruined certain Ignatian terms and made them both scandalous and impotent." ~Jesuit participant

"Workload is so bad that there is no time to be innovative or mission-centered. Sometimes I have so much to do that I can't even be friendly!" ~Staff participant

"The increase in 'Global Grad' enrollment has been positive for revenue generation, but I worry that we weren't adequately prepared to support such an increase in student numbers." ~College of Arts & Sciences participant

"The university still struggles with the problem of silos and hierarchy. Trust and collaboration are stunted because of this." ~Medical School participant

- Difficult conversations (both internal and with the larger community) sometimes appear to be avoided, lack of transparency and clear communication forms obstacles to greater trust within the community.

“We need to be more courageous in taking difficult stands, especially with things which directly impact our mission and identity.” ~Faculty participant

Beyond these general sentiments, the community spoke to SLU’s embodiment of each of the seven characteristics of Jesuit higher education. Those insights and perspectives follow, with special attention given to the three focus areas specifically requested by Father Provincial Tom Greene:

1. Collaborative efforts between Provost Mike Lewis and Vice President David Suwalsky, S.J., to attract more Jesuits to SLU and integrate them into the community;
2. Incorporation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences in university mission efforts; and
3. The question of how SLU might provide leadership in supporting its AJCU partner institutions in the Central Southern Province.

Characteristic 1: Leadership and Public Commitment to Mission

How does SLU form its leaders and demonstrate its relationship within the larger Jesuit tradition of mission?

“We will be much stronger if we understand ourselves to be part of a network, if we contribute to the network, if we leverage the strength of the network for greater service.”

~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

Mission formation for the SLU community includes a wide variety of initiatives and opportunities, both at the university level and in collaboration with the wider offerings of the AJCU. SLU is an active participant in the Ignatian Colleagues Program, the Leadership Institute, and a variety of network conferences including Campus Ministry Directors, Mission and Identity, and Chief Academic Officers. In recent years, more intentionality has been given to formation opportunities among the Board of Trustees, particularly the Mission Committee of the Board, but there is much room for growth and expansion in this area.

Mission formation programming for faculty and staff is robust and varied. It has general institutional support, with many leaders encouraging participation. Celebration of employee

“I am heartened by the number of people across the university who are committed to the mission, even when it comes at personal cost.” ~College for Public Health & Social Justice participant

investment in mission (through participation in these types of programs) is weak, however, without meaningful recognition at the university level. Many staff express both enthusiasm for mission programming and frustration that workloads are often too heavy to allow for participation.

The prioritization of the mission is apparent in university messaging, particularly from the office of the president. SLU’s Catholic, Jesuit identity is often the reference point for difficult decision-making, as exemplified in the university’s response to the COVID pandemic and the May 2024 student protests surrounding the war in Palestine and Israel. The SLU community feels strongly that the institution takes strong and decisive mission-aligned stances during times of crisis. Conversely, there is a sense that the Jesuit mission can be better infused into ordinary decision-making, processes, and policies to foster a greater sense of trust and collaboration within the community. Of particular concern is the question of whether the mission is central to the ordinary operations of the university, and how to hold leaders (particularly middle management) accountable when it comes to mission alignment. Focus group participants universally desire for the mission to be

“Dr. Pestello prays through his decision; his leadership provides the model for the institution.” ~University Leadership Council participant

foundational to the community, not voluntary or ancillary. As one participant said, *“Mission should be the bay leaf of the chili that is SLU, not the sour cream add-in option.”* This is expressed as a desire to develop practices of hiring for mission that prevent bad behavior in the workplace, to prioritize mission-centric research projects, and to increase transparency related to budget, compensation practices, short-staffing, retention, and policy creation. Many also expressed a strong desire to improve trust and understanding between the Board of Trustees and the SLU community.

“We talk a lot about being supportive of ‘mission things,’ but there are not enough resources to fund mission initiatives—the mission office itself, the Core, DEI work, outreach programs, etc.” ~School of Medicine participant

Improving ordinary communication within the university would also bolster the community’s investment in the mission. Focus group participants express a desire to diversify university leadership and to create career pathways into leadership roles, particularly for under-represented populations.

The programming offered by the Division for Mission and Identity has served to unite the SLU community around the Jesuit mission.⁹ By creating space and resources for mission formation,

“If we want to honestly see what we value as an institution, we won’t find it in our mission statement. We’ll find it in our budget allocations.” ~Office of the Vice President for Research participant

community and communication have been strengthened across departments, breaking down the silos that are often experienced at the university. Additional formation of leaders who can further strengthen the sense of mission authenticity in their own spheres of influence is necessary. Greater buy-in for mission initiatives

(specifically, explicit and consistent encouragement from senior leadership) would extend the reach of the Division for Mission and Identity and allow for a larger percentage of the SLU community to participate. Furthermore, faculty involvement in mission initiatives is inconsistently promoted. Greater faculty commitment to mission is crucial for the overall life of the mission to flourish.¹⁰ Supporting ongoing mission formation on all levels and determining a means of recognition for employee mission commitment would prove effective and helpful in strengthening SLU’s Jesuit identity.

“Colleagues are hungering for something to provide greater meaning and purpose, and they have a sense that the Jesuit mission may be the way to answering the hunger.” ~Jesuit participant

⁹ See Appendix C

¹⁰ The significant number of faculty who have experienced the instructional and curriculum development programs and services of SLU’s [Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning](#) and the creative ways they have incorporated their learning attest to the value and importance of formation in Ignatian pedagogy.

Characteristic 2: The Academic Life

How is SLU's mission as a Jesuit and Catholic institution embedded and evident in its academic life and faculty pursuits?

"Our universities should be places of solid education but not only that. They should bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ." ~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

Embedded in SLU's short motto, "Higher purpose. Greater good." is the Jesuit concept of being men and women for and with others. At SLU, this is demonstrated in a variety of ways, but the academic life and faculty pursuits are strong examples of how SLU educates young people for something beyond themselves and something greater than any individual pursuit. SLU's academic curriculum strives to develop people who put their gifts at the service of God and of humanity.

The greatest areas of strength regarding SLU's academic life are the development of a student-centered curriculum around service learning, the dedication of faculty to their students, and

*"Students now have a shared language of the mission because of the Core, and care for the student is built-in. It is a holistic way of implementing a well-rounded Ignatian view of the world."
~Jesuit participant*

the embedding of Ignatian principles in the curriculum. Students and faculty believe the new undergraduate Core, with its overt connections to the Jesuit mission (e.g., the *Cura Personalis* and *Eloquentia Perfecta* series, the reflection-in-action co-curricular experience, and the Ignite seminar), provides

opportunities for students to engage in meaningful research and prepares them well for the complexities of the world.¹¹ Additionally, SLU's medical and legal clinics of the university allow students to integrate their studies, their professional goals, Jesuit values, and tenets of Catholic social teaching, forming a pedagogical framework of Ignatian praxis as well as principle. The Office of the Provost's

[Teaching Effectiveness Project](#) is grounded in Ignatian values and a priority to create instruction that is consistent with our Ignatian educational identity is embedded into the Academic Strategic Plan.¹²

"My friends at other colleges can't believe that I get to contribute to faculty research projects in a meaningful way—even as an undergrad!" ~Student participant

"The Core design attempted to be a balance between preserving Catholic, Jesuit tradition in the curriculum and having it open and broad enough to get commitment cross-university. But it is very hard to maintain that balance and to preserve the inspiration behind the design. The administrative labor assumed by faculty and staff is just too much of an obstacle." ~Core Committee participant

Some areas of the undergraduate Core curriculum implementation are worrisome, however. Students appreciate the

opportunity to develop their understanding of the mission and gain faculty mentorship, but questions

¹¹ See Appendix B

¹² See Priority #1 of [SLU's Academic Strategic Plan](#).

about how to better support the Core infrastructure remain. Administrative obstacles and procedural frustrations currently experienced by Core curriculum staff and faculty might be ameliorated by increased staffing, streamlined and less cumbersome procedures for course development and approval, clearer communication and collaboration between the Core staff and faculty, and in-depth assessments of effectiveness. The Core curriculum is a dynamic work in progress, providing reason to hope that many of the challenges in these initial years will soon be resolved.

A significant area of concern is how to maintain a focus on the liberal arts and humanities curricula while pursuing the status of an [R1 research institution](#).¹³

The profound benefit of SLU initiatives such as the [Center for Research on Global Catholicism](#), the [Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#), and the Collaborative for Humanistic Inquiry¹⁴ demonstrate the importance of the liberal arts in the Jesuit

“Humanities professors are a vulnerable population on campus. The humanities need to be shored up financially. The humanities are central to the enterprise of Jesuit education.” ~Department Chair participant

educational tradition, underscoring the ongoing need for financial and structural support for the humanities.¹⁵ Questions persist regarding how research at the university can better align with mission values in a meaningful and consistent manner. As one trustee cautioned, “R1 status has the potential to negatively impact the trajectory of the university’s mission. SLU has had a great impact on the

“We have a strong need here at SLU to balance teaching, research, and service. We do well in general, but how do we encourage research that is sustainable and keeps students on track with the mission?” ~Dean participant

Catholic intellectual life of the local church. That legacy must not be jeopardized.” A common unease among the SLU community is the effect of pursuing market success and institutional prestige while trying to maintain mission integrity.

¹³ R1 is a classification of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Higher Education. R1 institutions have “very high research activity” based on criteria such as research expenses, awarded doctoral degrees, and research staff. SLU’s recognition as an R1 research institution is anticipated in spring 2025, making SLU one of only four Catholic R1 universities in the United States (SLU, Boston College, Georgetown University and the University of Notre Dame).

¹⁴ This fall 2024 initiative creates opportunities to enhance collaboration among SLU’s nine existing research centers while facilitating faculty and student scholarship across a variety and range of disciplines.

¹⁵ Thanks to the success of the most recent capital campaign, a \$10M fund has been established to support research in the humanities.

An area of discouragement in the academic life of SLU is the way commitment to the Catholic, Jesuit mission is supported and/or encouraged in the life of the university. Current practices of recognizing faculty service, teaching, and mission involvement are weak. A more effective way to confirm mission commitment needs to be created for hiring and onboarding, faculty evaluations, and tenure and promotion processes.¹⁶

In general, SLU is strong in its commitment to the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and the service of humanity. The incarnation of this pursuit in the academic life of the institution is demonstrated in powerful ways, but there is significant room for growth and stronger commitment.

¹⁶ The [NSF Partnership grant](#) with the University of Seattle and Gonzaga University is a promising new initiative focused on better aligning faculty promotion with mission-aligned work and research.

Characteristic 3: The Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation

How is SLU's mission as a Jesuit and Catholic institution evident in its commitment to social justice, anti-racism, ecology, and service to the global community?

“Our educational charism invites us all, as Pope Francis often says, to integrate head, heart, and hands.” ~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

Of universal sentiment among the SLU community is gratitude for the university's strong commitment to service. This commitment is more than humanitarian; it is an expression of Catholic social teaching and the manifestation of the Jesuit understanding of the faith that does justice. The pursuit of faith, justice, and reconciliation is evident in academics, co-curricular activities, faculty research pursuits, engagement with the local community, and everyday operations at SLU. This pursuit is demonstrated in a variety of ways, including:

- Strong initiative to address historical issues of slaveholding and institutionalized racism at SLU, particularly through ongoing efforts to build relationships with descendants of those enslaved by SLU and the Jesuits.
- Strong collaborative efforts between the Division for Mission and Identity and the Division of Diversity and Innovative Community Engagement.
- Concerted effort to care for those in need within the community, both locally at the university and regionally in the greater St. Louis area through programs such as the [Transformative Workforce Academy](#), [Helping Our Own](#), partnerships with local organizations including [Habitat for Neighborhood Business](#) and [Casa de Salud](#), and the revitalization efforts of the [St. Louis Midtown Redevelopment Corporation](#).
- Encouragement of student service with faculty and staff accompaniment, as exemplified by the [Center for Ignatian Service](#), the [Prison Education program](#), the [Center for Social Action](#), and immersion trips offered by the Division for Mission and Identity for faculty, staff, and students.
- Being a campus of hospitality, welcome, and belonging for all persons and creeds; offering opportunities for spiritual growth and development; and support for students and employees.

“The pursuit of truth creates a learning model, particularly when it comes to service learning, experience ‘in the field,’ so to speak. The classrooms also create safe spaces to explore the big and small questions that are relevant and practical for the good of society.”
~School of Social Work participant

“Service is really emphasized here—and it is made possible by the faculty.”
~Medical Student participant

- Commitment to the Universal Apostolic Preferences and overt reference to them in university initiatives, particularly the [Academic Strategic Plan](#). For example, the implementation of [Vocation Week](#) (UAP 1) to assist students in discerning their gifts and desires; partnering with [Jesuit Worldwide Learning](#) to provide degrees to refugees (UAP 2); SLU’s certification as a [JED campus](#)¹⁷ (UAP 3); and participation in the [Laudato Si Action Platform](#) (UAP 4).

SLU’s strong commitment to faith, justice, and reconciliation occurs in these initiatives yet there remains ample room for growth. Ongoing issues of racism and bias can be better addressed through greater transparency, stronger systems of internal accountability for “bad behavior,” and willingness to

“Diversity on campus within the student population and staff and faculty is encouraged, as is diversity of perspective and opinion. Actually, it’s more than encouraged; it’s supported.”
~Philosophy & Letters participant

“Although we support nontraditional students, that diversity has not trickled up to leadership roles. Can we see more diverse leadership?” ~School for Professional Studies participant

engage in difficult conversations around local, national, and global realities. More effort can be made toward prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in recruitment and leadership training and greater support for underrepresented populations. With the

university’s impressive diversity of people and ideas, more forums for mutual understanding, respect, and dialogue should be created using [Ignatian Guidelines for Civil Conversation](#).

This would benefit not only SLU’s culture of mission and also provide examples of constructive dialogue and civil discourse for the larger community while engaging differences of opinion, discernment, and community-building.

“There seems to be a sense of fear about how to engage students—or anyone, really—in difficult dialogue.”
~University Deans participant

An additional area of concern regards SLU’s commitment to social justice, environmental sustainability, anti-racism, and service in fiscal decisions, policymaking, and budgeting and staffing. Many in the community expressed frustration that although they are personally committed to such social justice efforts, they often believe they need to justify and fight

“In times of tight resources, the focus on mission dwindles. It becomes an extra, if you have time for it, not a priority. This may seem prudent in the moment, but in the long run, it won’t get us where we ultimately want to go.”
~Law School participant

for funding to implement these efforts into their work. Many community members are calling for greater attention and financial commitment to the university’s Catholic mission, faith-based initiatives, and more resources for faculty and staff wellness.

¹⁷ JED Campus is a signature program of the Jed Foundation, designed to empower colleges and universities with a framework and customized support to enhance student well-being and prevent substance use issues and suicide.

Characteristic 4: Ignatian Campus Culture

How is SLU's mission as a Jesuit and Catholic institution evident in its foundational respect for human dignity and orientation toward the love that is evident in the life of Jesus?

"All Jesuit governance depends on knowing one another, trusting one another, delegating authority in appropriate ways, sharing complete information and maintaining transparent communication."

~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

The Catholic, Jesuit mission of SLU is fundamentally rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The university community incarnates Christian love in a distinctly Ignatian way, primarily through its commitment to *cura personalis*, the care of the whole person. Members of the community, particularly in their local departmental experience of classroom learning (for students) and interaction with colleagues (for employees) experience SLU as caring and

"I'm not Catholic but I came here for the intersection of faith and work, the desire to care for the whole person regardless of religion. This is demonstrated so well by the people here. Even the language we use is helpful for immersion in the mission."~Business School participant

supportive. Spiritual offerings are made available to those who are interested, across a variety of religious traditions and expressions. The community built around the university's Ignatian heritage serves as a source of positive morale, inspiration, and creativity. While there is room for growth and fuller expression of integrity, the unique character that is embodied is distinctly Jesuit and Catholic in nature.

"The best part of my job is the friendliness of all the people on this campus."~Distribution Services participant

"We always seem to be short on people, resources, and time, so it would be really beneficial to prioritize better communication."~Admissions participant

The people of SLU are universally considered the most significant area of strength in the university's Ignatian campus culture. In particular, undergraduates and parents of current students recognize SLU's student-centered culture and applaud the many ways that student well-being is supported. Students themselves provide hope and joy to the faculty and staff, creating a sense of connection and community. Overall, people believe SLU is a place of

"SLU has provided a community for my daughter; she has found her people here. SLU helps students find their place even if they're having a hard time."~Current Parent participant

belonging and inclusion, with expressions of compassion, kindness, and support being common, warm, and genuine. There is freedom to speak about faith, religion, and spirituality in ways that extend beyond campus ministry or Catholicism, with various opportunities for liturgical celebration, Ignatian retreat experiences, pastoral counseling, and spiritual direction available for students,

"There is a good sense of community at the university; it both draws people in and becomes a place for them to invest themselves."~Human Resources participant

faculty, and staff. The Division for Mission and Identity developed a variety of robust mission

formation programming available to faculty and staff, and many departments partner with the office to provide opportunities specifically tailored to the needs and work of their staff. Perhaps most notably, the Catholic, Jesuit mission has been used as the compass for university leadership to navigate through some of the more difficult moments of SLU's recent history, including the question of return-to-campus in Fall 2020 and the student protests in May 2024.

Areas of discouragement regarding SLU's Ignatian campus culture largely revolve around two areas: realities of disconnection and a desire for a stronger expression of our Catholic, Jesuit mission. A common complaint is a pervasive sense of poor communication and missed opportunities for collaboration. Many faculty and staff members believe their needs are not acknowledged or respected by SLU's administration while many administrators believe the fiscal and personnel demands of the university are not understood by the community, thus creating unrealistic expectations for compensation, workload, etc. Frequent turnover of employees (on all levels of management) demonstrates a work environment with ample room to improve. Staff members indicate that they are not always treated with respect, particularly by faculty. Division and conflict within the university are

*"The 'Global Grad' initiative did not at all reflect the mission well."
~Trustee participant*

evident even between groups dedicated to serving students from a foundation of faith and the way toward reconciliation is often unclear. More strategic means of encouraging civil discourse on campus would be welcome. Of serious concern to the community is the plight of international

"We are meant to be ministers of reconciliation; the divisions that exist are very sad to me as they exist even within our own little community of faith." ~Jesuit participant

graduate students, as they appear to be struggling to find housing, food, and campus employment. These concerns call the university to more rigorous commitment to *cura personalis*, the care of the whole person. Many participants expressed a desire for more emphasis on the Catholic, Jesuit identity of SLU, demonstrated by bolder stances on current issues and clearer articulation of Catholic, Jesuit values and heritage.

*"We could do a lot better in finding ways to talk about faith and spirituality."
~Athletics participant*

There was broad recognition of the struggle to maintain excellence in education and remain competitive in a shrinking market, while also meaningfully addressing personal wellbeing and fair compensation structures. While full resolution to this struggle may be aspirational, the community at large hopes for more honest and transparent communication across all sectors of the university.

Characteristic 5: Service to the Church

How is SLU's mission as a Jesuit and Catholic institution embedded and evident in its partnership with the St. Louis Archdiocese and the local community as well as in its formation of young people?

"Our style of learning is Ignatian, active, engaged, rooted in experience."

~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

The Jesuits came to SLU at the invitation of Bishop Louis William Valentine DuBourg in the early nineteenth century, marking the beginning of a more than 200-year-long relationship between the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the university. Currently, SLU's north campus sits less than one mile away from the Cathedral Basilica of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and St. Francis Xavier "College Church" is both an archdiocesan parish and the heart of the university.

Several recent initiatives serve to strengthen the relationship between SLU and the local Catholic community:

- [The Billiken Teacher Corps](#) forms the next generation of Catholic school educators through service, learning, and spiritual growth in the community, providing no-cost teachers to several underserved Catholic schools in St. Louis.
- The Catholic Studies Center offers an academic minor and major, and is home to the Edmund Campion Society, a student organization dedicated to Catholic worship, community, and scholarship.
- [The Center for Ignatian Service](#) directs a service-learning program for undergraduate students to work in under-resourced public and private elementary and middle schools in St. Louis providing tutoring and after-school activities in a networked educational pathway to help end the cycle of poverty in St. Louis.

"SLU has had a great impact on the Catholic intellectual life of the local church." ~Trustee participant

These newer initiatives, together with long-standing university programs such as SLU's [legal](#) and [medical](#) clinics, [Campus Kitchen](#),

[Billiken Bounty](#), and a plethora of opportunities offered through the

[Center for Social Action](#), all serve to reinforce the Ignatian principle that a Jesuit education is aimed

"It matters a great deal that students have so much access to Catholic liturgy on this campus, the opportunity to attend daily Mass at College Church. The fact that I have had some very reflective and energetic Theological Studies students in my class has been wonderful. This is part of the mission that could be enhanced."
~Steering Committee participant

"I see the mission as hopeful when students are offered opportunities to serve the St. Louis community. Through various campus involvements, students are introduced to non-profits, church organizations, and different agencies that supply aid to people living in St. Louis. By completing acts of service off-campus, students are granted opportunities to see SLU's mission in action in the real world." ~Student participant

at more than individual learning; a Jesuit education is aimed at the formation of the whole person. It is oriented not inward toward self-interest but outward in service to the people of God, near and far.

SLU enjoys a positive and healthy relationship with Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski and the Chancery staff. The relationship between SLU and Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is strengthened by the arrangement providing a SLU philosophy degree for the archdiocese's college seminarians. Additionally, the priests of the university Jesuit community frequently assist in archdiocesan events, including presenting retreats/talks, offering sacraments at local parishes and communities, and regularly supporting the ministerial needs of local parochial schools and the White House retreat center.

Ongoing and more frequent communication is encouraged as a means to strengthen the relationship that binds SLU to the Catholic ecclesial tradition of St. Louis. The ability to articulate the Catholic nature of SLU's Jesuit mission clearly and unapologetically, as previously mentioned, will serve to strengthen the relationship with the archdiocesan church and fortify the 200-year-old legacy of Catholicity entrusted to the university.

"Not wanting to offend people sometimes prevents us from being clearer and stronger about our Catholic identity." ~Campus Ministry participant

Characteristic 6: Relationship to the Society of Jesus

How does SLU continue to strengthen the relationships that sustain the work of the Society's "university apostolate"?

"We Jesuits therefore don't just want to work for and with you, we want to partner with you in mission." ~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

SLU is an active member of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, participating in collaborative initiatives across the network in a multitude of ways and hosting conferences for AJCU deans, honors, marketing and communications, student development and Ignatian Q communities in the past two academic years. Additionally, SLU is an active partner with the Central Southern Province of the Society of Jesus, providing leadership in province initiatives such as fundraising for the exiled UCA community in Nicaragua, co-directing the province's Ignatian Colleagues Retreat, and celebrating Jesuit ordinations at College Church. Locally, SLU regularly collaborates with the local Jesuit institutions of St. Louis University High School, DeSmet Jesuit High School, Loyola Academy, and the White House Retreat Center.

The entire SLU community values the presence of Jesuits on campus, recognizing their gifts of personal attention, spiritual counsel, and professional companionship that differentiates SLU from other universities locally and nationally. The Division for Mission and Identity offers students the

*"We are so lucky to have a Jesuit in the business school who tends to our spiritual needs as a community when needed. He is present, warm, caring, and generous. Having that every day is a blessing beyond words."
~Business School participant*

opportunity to share pastries and "Java with the Jesuits" on Fridays on the north campus (with a strong request to expand it to south campus). This allows students to get personally acquainted with the men in formation at the Bellarmine House of First Studies program through easy conversation and interaction.

Academic departments universally benefit from the positive impact of Jesuit faculty in the classroom and in campus life, noting the affective difference that contributes to the culture of camaraderie resulting from the Jesuit presence in their department.¹⁸ The SLU Jesuit community also includes members from Portugal, Germany, Nigeria, Ghana, and Burundi, representing the international Society of Jesus.

¹⁸ SLU is fortunate to have Jesuit faculty not only in the Theology and Philosophy departments, but also (as of this writing) in History, Economics, Philosophy, Public Health, Mathematics, Medicine and Law. Since the adoption of the Jesuit Hiring Policy in 2020, the number and diversity of Jesuit faculty members has been increasing. Jesuit graduate students and Jesuit scholastics are studying in a variety of disciplines as well.

Due to the concerted effort of the Central Southern Province and SLU's president, provost, and vice president for mission and identity, SLU is fortunate to have a significant presence of Jesuits on campus both as scholastics and in the classroom. Although the closing of Jesuit Hall in 2022 decreased the number of Jesuits in the immediate area, the concurrent opening of the Jesuit Center in the heart of campus has opened new possibilities for building relationships. The Jesuit Center hosts a variety of university events including weekly student Masses, faculty memorial services, mission receptions, and day retreats. Additionally, the Jesuit Center chapel is open to the public during the day, providing opportunities for the entire SLU community to interact with the Society more casually and personally.

"Among the AJCU institutions, SLU is one of the oldest and that's a strength. We also have a very young Jesuit community and this bodes well for continuing the Jesuit mission." ~Jesuit participant

Because of this very strong positive impact of the Society of Jesus at SLU, there are calls for increased Jesuit presence and accessibility on campus. However, there is broad recognition of the decreasing number of active Jesuits and the need for a strong formation of lay people. The efforts of the Division for Mission and Identity in creating robust mission formation opportunities, particularly those that encourage collaboration across the AJCU network, are recognized as vital for the life of the Jesuit mission at SLU. There is a strong recommendation to provide additional support for the work of the office and a desire to see participation in mission initiatives encouraged and recognized in meaningful ways. As one focus group participant remarked, "the voluntariness of the mission has increased; there used to be more 'expected' participation in mission programming, especially for new hires. It called us to

"I think (and hope) that we take very seriously our responsibilities as lay leaders in a Jesuit institution to be faithful to the charism of the Society of Jesus by continuing to reflect on how our pursuits -- scholarly, academic, and community based -- are true to the work of the Society. We are also incredibly fortunate to have such a large community of Jesuits working with and among us at SLU." ~Steering Committee participant

"The mission and identity [office] is creating great opportunities for faculty and staff formation, and helping facilitate really productive conversations about mission, even among those who understand it in really different ways." ~Core Committee participant

accountability, and it was good; it created an environment where the mission was built-in and everyone shared a common vocabulary and understanding." Focus group participants affirmed the value of the conversations during the MPE process, expressing strong interest in having the Division for Mission and Identity host such gatherings on an annual basis in their departments.

Characteristic 7: Institutional Integrity

How is SLU's mission as a Jesuit and Catholic institution embedded and evident in its policies and procedures, particularly in light of Catholic social teaching?

"A university cannot be a Jesuit university without choosing that identity over and over again."

~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

The people of the SLU community are exceptionally invested in the Jesuit mission. The integrity of the mission is embodied most valuably and authentically in the day-to-day interactions between instructor and student, supervisor and staff member, chair and faculty member, parent and administrator, and peer-to-peer. In this sense, the institutional integrity of SLU is one of its finest characteristics.

Focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed that SLU as a whole is strongly committed to the Catholic, Jesuit mission, using

*"The mission is what brought me here and what keeps me here. And I experience it every day in my coworkers."
~Reinert Center participant*

mission as the basis for macro and micro level decision-making. This is best exemplified in times of

*"The mission is central, not peripheral, to all that we do."
~Madrid campus participant*

crisis, including during the protests leading up to the [Clock Tower Accords](#), the discernment of how to [return to campus in fall 2020](#) in the throes of COVID, [employee retention during the pandemic](#), and ongoing commitment

to a generous [university benefits package](#). Mission is recognized as being central to the working of the university operations, with an increasing strength in using mission in hiring and onboarding practices. Of particular note is the deliberate integration of mission topics into the new undergraduate Core curriculum, and the inclusion of mission formation for faculty search committee chairs.

The most common criticism of institutional integrity at SLU regarded disingenuous use of mission language. Many focus group participants expressed frustration that when mission concepts are used to

*"I would love to see some kind of a system to keep faculty and staff accountable and mission-focused."
~University Deans participant*

describe initiatives or decisions that appear antithetical to Ignatian principles or Jesuit mission (e.g., the [2016 Magis Operational Excellence Program](#)), SLU's institutional integrity is compromised.

*"The Jesuit mission can be such a powerful means of inspiration and motivation...which is what makes it all the worse when mission is used as a weapon to prevent objections or to separate the 'loyal ones' from the 'trouble-makers.'"
~Student Development participant*

Likewise, appealing to the mission can sometimes be employed to defend or justify administrative decisions that result in painful ramifications for students or employees. Discerning and implementing a method of accountability to mission at all levels of campus life (administrative, academic, research, student life, work culture, etc.) would be of great benefit.

Some issues previously mentioned in this report were cited by participants as detrimental to institutional integrity, specifically, the “Global Grad” initiative, the pervasive need for clearer communication within the university, right-sizing work-load structures, and aligning budget allocations with mission priorities. Saint Louis University experiences the same challenges as other institutions of higher education in the United States, namely the:

- Shrinking number of traditional undergraduate students.
- Growing expense of providing a high-quality education.
- Student and parent/family expectation of state-of-the-art facilities, wellness services, tuition discounts, strong athletics, and small class size.
- Desire for compensation and workload structures that are comparable to other institutions.

“There is always a tendency to fall back on easier ways—less generous/gracious people-focused ways—in response (proactively or reactively) to stresses and challenges, be those financial, political, social, or institutional. Naming and taming this tendency is vital for our future.” ~Steering Committee participant

While these realities pose difficulties, SLU is currently in a strong position with regard to student enrollment, endowment, and alumni base.¹⁹ Additionally, its strong and abiding relationship with the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the Central and Southern Province of the Society of Jesus has allowed the university to address controversial issues, upholding the Catholic, Jesuit mission without reservation or apology. SLU remains committed to upholding the dignity of all persons as beloved of God. Administrative efforts to offer a just compensation and a living wage coincide with the

“Spirituality and faith are the lens by which most challenges and opportunities are reviewed. This is an important lens to make sure decisions are driven by the right motives.” ~Trustee participant

university’s commitment to exclude financial investments that are inimical to Catholic social teaching, despite the additional financial growth they would provide. SLU continues to prioritize the admission of first-generation students and students from under-represented

populations, working to make a SLU education accessible to all our neighbors. Acknowledgement of SLU’s historical complicity in the institution of slaveholding is partnered with working toward reconciliation with descendant communities and efforts to rectify the consequences of upholding racial segregation at the university.

Although admittedly imperfect, SLU nevertheless strives to uphold its Catholic, Jesuit mission with authenticity and integrity, celebrating the “grandeur of God” with which our world is charged, and seeking to share that grandeur within and beyond our university community.²⁰

¹⁹ 2023-24 [student enrollment](#) was the highest in SLU’s history; the endowment is almost \$2 billion having just benefitted from a [capital campaign](#) that exceeded its \$500 million goal.

²⁰ “[God’s Grandeur](#),” by Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

Jesuit Mission Priorities & Implementation

Throughout the Mission Priority Examen process, the SLU community discerned the health and vitality of the university's Catholic, Jesuit mission. They identified areas of strength, light, and hope and areas of discouragement, weakness, and shadow regarding the ways SLU lives out the mission. After this communal examination, they discerned what the Holy Spirit seemed to be indicating about where the mission focus at SLU should be right now. As a result of these discernments, the following Jesuit mission priorities comprise our way of proceeding:

1. **We will bolster our university culture of mission.** Unless a culture of mission exists, mission commitment is sporadic at best and superficial at worst. Recognizing the need for integrity and accountability in the life of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university, we will prioritize two large-scale measures to strengthen the mission culture of SLU:
 - a. *Ongoing university mission examen:* We will continue to engage the MPE process in units of greatest impact, identifying the presence and prevalence of our mission values and discerning what is needed to rectify areas of concern, providing an annual summary of the process to the university president
 - b. *Infrastructure support for students in need:* We will create and sustain the necessary infrastructure to ensure international student and first-generation student success, particularly by ensuring basic needs such as housing, food, and work are met, and adequate support is provided for academic success.

2. **We will integrate mission formation programming for all levels of university leadership.** While mission formation programming for faculty and staff has become much more robust in recent years, there remain gaps in the same formation opportunities for upper administrators and trustees. Although mission formation programming is universally offered, a lack of substantive recognition for mission-centered employees precludes greater participation and investment. Recognizing the need for more deliberate mission integration, we will prioritize two initiatives to bolster mission formation for the entire SLU community:
 - a. *University leadership formation for mission:* We will create and implement a rigorous program of mission formation for the Board of Trustees and the University Leadership Council.
 - b. *Recognition and celebration of mission-committed employees:* We will create and implement a recognition system, celebrating faculty and staff who have a demonstrated commitment to mission engagement.

3. **We will enhance curricular and co-curricular initiatives to teach and mentor students in the practice of Ignatian discernment.** Particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 disruptions to student life, we recognize the increasing importance of providing the mental and spiritual tools needed for students to learn vocational discernment in the Ignatian tradition. Students can derive great benefit from the practice of Ignatian prayer and discernment in their everyday interactions, choices, and relationships. The undergraduate Core curriculum has been designed to incorporate Ignatian practices, but there is still room for growth and development throughout all curricular and co-curricular student activities, particularly at the graduate level. To this end, we will prioritize:
- a. *Ongoing curricular integration of Ignatian discernment practices:* We will ensure that the delivery of the Core curriculum includes the substantive and effective transmission of the Ignatian principles embedded in its design, and we will explore meaningful extensions of the same opportunity to graduate, professional, and Madrid campus students.
 - b. *Targeted co-curricular efforts to provide students opportunities to learn and practice discernment:* We will evaluate co-curricular student programming and incorporate discernment principles to the highest appropriate degree.
4. **We will promote the Catholic, Jesuit identity of the university with clarity and collaboration.** Recognizing the various contemporary challenges in higher education, we likewise recognize that it is SLU's Catholic, Jesuit mission that distinguishes us from our local institutional peers. Strengthening our commitment to that mission and clarifying university internal and external messaging around it becomes all the more important. As one of the few institutions of higher education in the City of St. Louis, SLU is dedicated to collaborating with our community partners and the Archdiocese of St. Louis. As a member of the AJCU and an apostolate of the Central Southern Province of the Society of Jesus, SLU is eager to expand opportunities to collaborate to strengthen our common Jesuit mission. We therefore prioritize the following initiatives:
- a. *Ongoing support of Jesuit presence on campus:* We will continue the collaboration among the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, and the Division for Mission and Identity to promote the recruitment and retention of Jesuit faculty.
 - b. *Strengthening of ties to local and national Catholic and Jesuit partners:* We will maintain and seek to increase collaborative opportunities with the Archdiocese of St. Louis, the AJCU, and the Central Southern Province of the Society, particularly through the work of the Division for Mission and Identity.

Conclusion

“I have learned that both the product and the process of the MPE are important. . . . people were energized by meaningful conversations about identity and mission. . . . This experience is itself formative.” ~Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J.

The input provided by focus group participants is best understood through the lens of an Ignatian examen. The SLU community has great strengths and some apparent weaknesses. Beginning from a posture of gratitude for the history and legacy of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of SLU, we recognize that our history and legacy continues forward from this present moment. We find this examen extremely timely, as SLU is in the midst of a presidential search. We hope this report will serve as a vital, poignant resource for our 34th president to understand the mission culture of SLU and to set a mission-centered course for its future.

As with every Ignatian examen, we have reflected on the lights and shadows of our current realities. Having done so, we are called to humbly acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses evident in our embodiment of the mission. We are called to celebrate the areas of hope and to remediate the areas of discouragement. Strengthening the Catholic, Jesuit mission of SLU requires the clearest picture possible of the community’s areas of concern. This requires collaborating as a university community to clarify misperceptions and false narratives while concurrently addressing concerns directly and transparently.

Ultimately, we are committed to discerning ever more faithfully the best way of proceeding for the life and vitality of the mission of SLU as we pursue truth for the greater glory of God and the service of humanity.

*“The mere fact that we are doing this examen gives me great hope. Doing a self-examination is critical, and what we are doing here is valuable.”
~School of Social Work participant*

“This process is a source of hope, light, and strength.” ~Current parent participant

“Including students in this process? Well, that’s just amazing. Students involved in charting the course for the university’s future? That’s just amazing!” ~Student participant

*“This type of a guided yearly examen would be excellent to implement.”
~School for Professional Studies participant*

*“I am really grateful to be part of this process. I hope it doesn’t stop here.”
~Neighborhood partners participant*

Saint Louis University

Thursday, October 31, 2024

Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D., **University President**

Eric Engler, M.B.A., **Board of Trustees Chair**

Peer Visitor Committee:

Mardell A. Wilson, Ed.D., R.D.N., Provost, Creighton University, Peer Visitor Committee Chair

Dan Joyce, S.J., Vice President, Mission and Ministry, Saint Joseph's University

Michael Serazio, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Communication, Boston College

Local Self-study Committee:

Co-Chair David Suwalsky, S.J., Ph.D., Vice President, Mission and Identity

Co-Chair Virginia Herbers, Director, Mission Formation, Mission and Identity

Steering Committee Members

Esmeralda Aharon, Program Director, School of Medicine

Anne Marie Apollo-Noel, Director, Development Communications

Jon Baris, J.D., Assistant Dean, School of Law

Ellen K. Barnidge, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Research

Rob Boyle, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Business

Patrick Cousins, Director of Pastoral Formation, Mission and Identity

Peggy Dotson, Assistant Provost for Academic Success

Noelle Fearn, Ph.D., Dean, School of Social Work

Michael Hankins, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Science and Engineering

Lisa Jaegers, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Doisy College of Health Sciences

Joel Jennings, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Ashley Jost, Director, Office of Student Life

Joanne C. Langan, PhD., Professor, School of Nursing

Atria Larson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Theological Studies

Donna Bess Myers, Senior Advisor, Student Development

Janet Oberle, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Athletics

Ben Perlman, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President, Student Development

Gary Ritter, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education

Amy Sanders, J.D., Executive Director, Center for Health Law Studies

Michael Swartwout, Ph.D., Professor, School of Science and Engineering

Brian Yothers, Ph.D., Chair, Department of English

II. Previous Jesuit Mission Priorities

1. Increased Commitment to Ignatian Identity

The Shared Mission video series was introduced to the SLU community in Fall 2023 to update the Shared Vision series. It is designed for both new and current employees, bringing together small group cohorts six times during the academic year to discuss and integrate the Jesuit mission and Ignatian identity of SLU. The videos and curriculum guides are also used for undergraduate students in the Core curriculum, faculty and staff development, alumni, and parent and family engagement. Additionally, various mission formation opportunities have been made available to employees, and a concise explanation of SLU's Catholic, Jesuit Identity has been created for the entire community. All these materials are accessible on the division's updated website.

SLU continues to send university leaders to the Ignatian Colleagues Program and the Leadership Institute sponsored by the AJCU. To reach a wider audience, several mission initiatives have been launched, including ICP @ SLU, the Arrupe Fellowship, immersive encounters, and The Pilgrim's Path.

2. Hiring for Mission

The Division for Mission and Identity provides mission training for faculty and administrator search committee chairs, including interview questions. New faculty and staff orientations include mission formation with an address from the Vice President for Mission and Identity. The Vice President also interviews finalists for upper administrative positions. In 2020, the university adopted a Jesuit Hiring Policy, allowing departments to hire Jesuits without bearing their salary and benefit expenses, which are covered by the Provost's Office. This policy has enabled the hiring of Jesuits in various faculties without departmental expense.

3. University Leadership Formation for Mission

In the 2022-23 academic year, President Pestello provided time during the University Leadership Council monthly meetings for mission-related discussions facilitated by a consultant hired by the Division for Mission and Identity. The Division of Human Resources has integrated mission formation into leadership training by creating tools for middle management leaders and supervisors, and implementing regular micro-learning modules.

Consistent participation in the AJCU Leadership Institute and Ignatian Colleagues Program is a priority, however turnover of university deans and vice presidents has made this endeavor less fruitful. Mission formation for the Board of Trustees could be more robust, but the Governance Committee uses mission criteria when vetting candidates, and new members are oriented by the Vice President for Mission and Identity. Plans for a board pilgrimage to Ignatian sites in Spain and Italy have been discussed.

4. Student Formation for Discernment

The COVID-19 pandemic impeded efforts to expand ministerial outreach for student retreats. In the 2023-24 academic year, Bellarmine House developed the "Java with the Jesuits Retreat" focusing on discernment. The Office of the Provost hosts an annual fall vocation week incorporating Ignatian discernment into decision-making. The VITAS component of the undergraduate Core curriculum focuses on vocational discernment through community service and advocacy. In 2023, a revised SLU prayer book was distributed to parents, families, faculty, staff, and alumni, collating prayers around the Universal Apostolic Preferences and including newer voices.

Since the last MPE, Campus Ministry has faced several trends common in higher education, particularly regarding student engagement. Student participation in Sunday liturgies has decreased since the pandemic, and affirmative sign-ups for activities no longer predict actual attendance. Retreat lengths have been shortened due to student reluctance to commit for more than one overnight, and the percentage of students self-identifying as Catholic has been steadily declining. Campus culture reflects the "spiritual but not religious" reality of contemporary Western society, bolstered by the perceived lack of credibility in the institutional Church due to the clergy abuse crisis and harsh posturing on LGBTQ+ issues and sexual expression. Conversely, SLU has seen a growing population of more traditional Catholic students who find solace in devotional practices. Increased collaboration between Campus Ministry and the Catholic Studies Center, particularly in forming students for discernment, would be a powerful witness to reconciliation on campus. Students are congenial to the Ignatian charism and see the large variety of service outreach at SLU as an essential element of their Jesuit education. Increased opportunities to incorporate Ignatian reflection have helped students become more familiar with the discernment process.

III. Current MPE Self-study Process

- A. Was the school's Self-study process (i.e., data gathering, dialogue/input, and Self-study Committee work) thorough and inclusive? How were students, staff, faculty, Jesuit Community, alumni/ae and the Bishop included? Please note strengths and challenges.
- B. How was the work of the Self-study Committee in keeping with the character of an Ignatian Examen, or how might their process have been strengthened in this regard?

In December 2023, Saint Louis University (SLU) launched its second Mission Priority Examen (MPE) under the guidance of the provincial superior of the Central and Southern Province, Thomas P. Greene, S.J. President Fred Pestello formed a 23-member steering committee, which included representatives from various SLU campuses and units including also the Jesuit Community and Board of Trustees. Beyond general sentiments, the community provided insights into SLU's embodiment of the seven characteristics of Jesuit higher education. Particular attention was given to three focus areas requested by the Provincial:

- 1) Collaborative efforts by Provost Mike Lewis and Vice President David Suwalsky, S.J., to attract more Jesuits to SLU and integrate them into the community.
- 2) Incorporation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences in university mission efforts.
- 3) Exploring how SLU might provide leadership in supporting its AJCU partner institutions in the Central Southern Province

Over 600 individuals participated in 67 focus group sessions, contributing valuable insights into the university's Catholic, Jesuit mission. The sessions followed an Ignatian examen format, encouraging reflection and discernment. This process, reported in both the self-study as well as during the site visit, was viewed as highly positive.

Factors contributing to the success of the focus groups included personal invitations from steering committee members and encouragement from university leaders. Many of the sessions were conducted within units which was found to increase participation. The sessions revealed a strong desire for mission-related discussions in which the campus is considering opportunities for how to continue ongoing engagement. Some participation barriers were indicated including scheduling conflicts and perceived redundancy with other surveys. Furthermore, during the site visit it was also indicated that some audiences, for example, Facilities, the interactive, sharing methodology used for the focus groups may not

have been as comfortable and therefore reduced participation. In addition, it was noted that opportunities, although robust in the collective, were oftentimes limited to one date/time.

IV. Self-study Content

- A. Note briefly any strengths or weaknesses in the school's Self-study, with respect to each of the seven themes in *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education: A Guide for Mission Reflection*, and to common issues arising from these themes in focus groups and interviews.

The self-study clearly addressed the seven themes in the *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education*, providing a comprehensive overview of the institution's alignment with these principles. The self-study included both highlights and areas of concern or opportunities for improvement, offering a balanced perspective on the institution's strengths and challenges. These findings were further validated during the various on-campus sessions with the peer site visitors, who confirmed the accuracy and thoroughness of the self-study. This collaborative process underscores the institution's commitment to continuous improvement and faithfulness to its Jesuit educational values.

Specifically, data from the focus groups participants yielded the following common perspectives on the health and vitality of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university:

Areas of strength, light, and encouragement:

- The people of SLU are a major source of optimism, creating a life-giving and fruitful community around the mission.
- The strong and consistent presence of the Jesuits provides support and encouragement to students, faculty, and staff.
- SLU shows a strong commitment to service through curriculum design, community engagement, neighborhood partnerships, and social justice language.
- Faculty demonstrate *cura personalis* through their care for students and the institution's focus on student well-being.

- Increasing dedication to diversity is evident in hiring, recruitment, and promotion, along with initiatives to cultivate a culture of inclusion and belonging, supported by practical methods and accountability measures.

Areas of discouragement, weakness, or shadow:

- Mission language has been misused by supervisors and leaders to enforce cooperation, undermining the authenticity of SLU’s mission and community commitment.
- Budgeting, resource allocation, staff workload, and compensation often do not align with mission values and priorities.
- There is significant concern for international students, particularly regarding food insecurity, and a need for more support for the “Global Grad” initiative.

It should be noted that during the site visit it was affirmed that the concern for the basic needs of the Global Grad students was likely the outcome of misinformation and/or miscommunication. Evidence supported that the current needs of students were being well-considered and addressed.

- Poor communication and collaboration within and between departments lead to a sense of disconnection. Additionally, difficult conversations are sometimes avoided, and a lack of transparency and clear communication hinders trust within the community.

B. List the areas of institutional emphasis recommended by the Provincial (in dialogue with the President) when he invited the school to undertake the MPE. These areas may coincide with Characteristics themes. This section of the Report should focus primarily on how the school’s Self-study has addressed these areas of Provincial emphasis.

The self-study report noted that Father Provincial Tom Greene requested the SLU community address three primary focus areas:

1. Collaborative efforts between Provost Mike Lewis and Vice President David Suwalsky, S.J., to attract more Jesuits to SLU and integrate them into the community.

The university is committed to the newly established policy for Jesuit hiring that was instituted in 2020. Under this policy, the Provost's Office covers the salary and benefits of Jesuits hired into departments. Jesuit faculty members are held to the same standards for tenure, research, and teaching as their colleagues, yet they do not impose any

financial burden on the department. This policy has recently enabled the hiring of Jesuits at SLU in economics, history, law, medicine, philosophy, and public health.

2. Incorporation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences in university mission efforts.

The self-study referenced the university's commitment to the Universal Apostolic Preferences among various university initiatives, but particularly cited the *Academic Strategic Plan* and the implementation of: Vocation Week (UAP 1) to assist students in discerning their gifts and desires; partnering with Jesuit Worldwide Learning to provide degrees to refugees (UAP 2); SLU's certification as a JED campus (UAP 3); and participation in the *Laudato Si* Action Platform (UAP 4).

3. The question of how SLU might provide leadership in supporting its AJCU partner institutions in the Central Southern Province.

SLU has articulated in Priority #4 their commitment as a member of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and an apostolate of the Central Southern Province of the Society of Jesus. The institution is dedicated to enhancing collaborative opportunities to fortify the shared Jesuit mission. Consequently, the university emphasized sustained support for the Jesuit presence on campus, as well as the strengthening of connections with local and national Catholic and Jesuit partners. No distinct examples were offered.

V. Jesuit Mission Priorities

A. List the Mission Priorities articulated in the school's current MPE Self-study

Priority 1: We will bolster our university culture of mission.

Unless a culture of mission exists, mission commitment is sporadic at best and superficial at worst. Recognizing the need for integrity and accountability in the life of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university, we will prioritize two large-scale actions to strengthen the mission culture of SLU: a university mission survey for continuous feedback and improvement, and infrastructure support for students in need.

Priority 2: We will integrate mission formation programming for all levels of university leadership.

While mission formation programming for faculty and staff has become much more robust in recent years, there remain gaps in the same formation opportunities for upper administrators and trustees. Although mission formation programming is universally offered, a lack of incentivization and recognition precludes greater participation and investment. Recognizing the need for more deliberate mission integration, we will prioritize two initiatives to bolster mission formation for the entire SLU community: university leadership formation for mission and mission incentivization for faculty and staff.

Priority 3: We will enhance curricular and co-curricular student initiatives to teach and mentor student in the practice of Ignatian discernment.

Particularly in the wake of COVID-19 disruptions to student life, we recognize the increasing importance of providing the mental and spiritual tools needed for the students to learn vocational discernment in the Ignatian tradition. Beyond this, however, students can derive great benefit from the practice of Ignatian discernment in their everyday interactions, choices, and relationships. SLU's undergraduate Core curriculum has been designed to incorporate Ignatian practices, but there is still much room for growth and development throughout all curricular and co-curricular student activities. To this end, we will prioritize ongoing curricular integration of Ignatian discernment practices and targeted co-curricular efforts to provide student with opportunities to learn and practice discernment.

Priority 4: We will promote the Catholic, Jesuit identity of the university with clarity and collaboration.

Recognizing the various contemporary challenges in higher education, we likewise recognize that it is SLU's Catholic, Jesuit mission that distinguishes us from our local institutional peers. Strengthening our commitment to that mission and clarifying university messaging around it (both internal and external) thus becomes all the more important. As one of the few institutions of higher education in the City of St. Louis, SLU is dedicated to collaborating with our community partners as well as the Archdiocese of St. Louis. As a member of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and an apostolate of the Central Southern Province of the Society of Jesus, SLU is eager to

expand opportunities to collaborate in order to strengthen our common Jesuit mission. We therefore prioritize ongoing support of Jesuit presence on campus and the strengthening of ties to our local and national Catholic and Jesuit partners.

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

The MPE priorities are practical. The university also provided some examples of how they hope to address the priorities. The peer team offered select recommendations that may assist in establishing a path to success and to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned with the practical steps required to achieve the goals. This would not only enhance the clarity of the plan but also increase confidence in its feasibility.

C. Are the faculty and staff open to and enthusiastic about the Mission Priorities?

The faculty and staff have shown a remarkable openness and enthusiasm towards the Mission Priorities. This positive attitude is evident not only in the data provided in the self-study but also in the comprehensive data set presented during the site visit. Additionally, the various meetings that the peer team engaged in during the site visit further highlighted this enthusiasm, as faculty and staff actively participated and expressed their support. It should be noted that although the faculty and staff may have not been well versed in the four priorities, there was a common theme for a desire to continue to advance and address mission centric work on campus. This collective commitment and eagerness to embrace the Mission Priorities underscore the SLU community's dedication to achieving the outlined goals and ensuring the success of the initiatives.

D. Are the Trustees prepared to support and lead with these Mission Priorities in mind?

The trustee meeting included select trustees who are also serving on the Presidential Search Committee. The trustees were articulate in their expressions of the desire to continue to remain committed to the mission as they seek the next President of Saint Louis University. In addition, trustees acknowledged the need to make mission formation a priority and cited opportunities such as a Board of Trustee Retreat, a possible Pilgrimage, as well as joining AJCU sponsored Board formation programs.

- E. How will the Mission Priorities be embedded into institutional planning processes and documents?

As the university finds itself at a pivotal moment as they undergo budget challenges that need immediate attention while also engaged in searching for a new president that will begin in summer 2025, the peer review team noted in the *Commendations* the emphasis that was being made to use the MPE self-study, as well as the raw data, as essential resources that provide both a campus pulse as well as guided mission-focused playbook for the new president and his/her team. In addition, the focus on a mission-based decision and execution of the recent campus layoffs was expressed in several of the sessions during the site visit. It should be noted, that although these were recent events they did not dominate the conversations which was yet another illustration of the thoughtfulness that was apparently given both the decision and how they were communicated to the campus as well as those individually impacted.

VI. Peer Visitor Team Recommendations to Saint Louis University

A. Commendations:

The commendations that follow highlight exceptional efforts that the campus has taken to fulfill the priorities that were established in the prior Mission Priority Examen as well as illustrates the campus culture while preparing for and executing the current MPE.

- 1) Clearly worked to design a more inclusive, broad-based method to collect data to inform the develop of the new priorities. The sessions were designed to incorporate elements of the synodal process within the structure of an Ignatian examen. The average focus group had 10 participants, with total participation exceeding 600 individuals. The SLU community provided frank, courageous, and valuable feedback about the university's Catholic, Jesuit mission as well as the current state of mission integration.
- 2) Fully agree with those various campus members who wisely identified the MPE report, as well as the raw data, as essential resources that provide both a campus pulse as well as guided mission-focused playbook for the new president and his/her team.
- 3) The review team commends the development of an undergraduate Core curriculum that provides students with a dynamic opportunity to be animated by the mission of the university. Furthermore, the Core curriculum faculty clearly articulated the purpose and

value of the core and how the thoughtful development of Core course with mission focus has translated to courses/curriculum outside of the Core.

- 4) Generalized interest and enthusiasm in reviving mission as a priority. The intentionality towards faculty and staff formation has been significant and recognized. A renaissance in mission specifically acknowledging the mission liaison program , Ignatian Colleagues Program at SLU, the Arrupe Fellowship, The Pilgrim's Path, shared mission videos and other relevant resources which are more easily accessible to the SLU community.
- 5) A genuine sense of commitment and dedication to the university and its mission; many of the stakeholders engaged in our meetings have been members of the SLU community for a significant number of years.
- 6) The promotion and participation to actively engage with AJCU and UNIJES colleagues and networks are commended.
- 7) Acknowledge the honor of receiving the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award as well as the reaffirmation of the Carnegie elective classification for community engagement.
- 8) A strategic approach to increase Jesuit presence on campus through a newly established, thoughtful faculty hiring practice. In addition, specific programming that engages Jesuits, for example, *Java with the Jesuits*, has proven to be very well received.
- 9) A mission-informed and mission-led approach to achieving a successful protest outcome in the spring of 2024.
- 10) The clear dedication to mission in hiring, coaching and mentorship within the Division of Athletics is to be commended; especially amidst the dynamic environment in which NCAA athletics finds itself.
- 11) A strong commitment to mission formation at the highest level of the university with a welcomed enthusiasm for that opportunity.

B. Recommendations:

The recommendations that follow were designed to be constructive and supportive as the university considers the newly established priorities outlined for the campus through this MPE cycle. These suggestions aim to build on the solid foundation already established, providing actionable steps to enhance future initiatives. By focusing on continuous improvement and leveraging the strengths SLU has been able to establish in recent years,

these recommendations were offered to help the campus drive success, or more importantly, magnify the university's faithfulness to mission.

- 1) Clearly outline for the campus community how the institution's goal of reaching R1 status aligns with the mission of the organization and is unique in structure and execution to other more traditional R1 institutions. It should be clearly outlined to campus members how attaining and maintaining R1 status does not conflict with university's commitment to exceptional undergraduate education, particularly as it relates to the new Core curriculum.
- 2) Find opportunities to emphasize the value of mission formation and integration and celebrate contributions of faculty, staff, and administration.
- 3) Develop a meaningful and predictable opportunity for self-reflection on mission with tangible outcomes or identified action items.
- 4) Among your priorities, consider how to include mission formation efforts for not only undergraduate but also graduate and professional students and those students served at the Madrid campus.

C. Outcome of Recommendations

What was the outcome of recommendations made to the school, following the Peer Team visit? (e.g., changes to the Self-study, Mission Priorities, and/or Peer Visitor Report)? Please note the rationale for any changes made and attach relevant documentation.

Based upon the recommendations provided by the peer review team, the MPE co-chairs made minor modifications to Priorities #1 and #2. In addition, regarding the recommendation offered concerning the university's aspiration to become R1 the MPE co-chairs acknowledged that the primary responsibility for this recommendation sits in the offices of the President and the Provost. In response, an amendment to *Characteristic 2: The Academic Life of the University* of the self-study was offered signaling the full support of the Mission Office with efforts of the President and Provost in any useful and appropriate ways to facilitate the implementation of the recommendation.

Edited excerpts of the self-study are provided in Appendix A (of this Peer Report)

Conclusion and Additional Comments

We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as reviewers for the SLU Mission Priority Examen. The experience has been incredibly rewarding, and we are thankful to the MPE co-chairs and the many individuals who participated in and supported the Mission Priority Examen as well as our site visit. The collaboration and dedication of everyone involved were truly inspiring, and we are proud to have contributed to such a meaningful initiative. Thank you for entrusting us with this important task.

Appendix

Edited Excerpts of SLU MPE Self-Study based upon Recommendations provided by the Peer Team

Priority 1: We will bolster our university culture of mission.

Unless a culture of mission exists, mission commitment is sporadic at best and superficial at worst. Recognizing the need for integrity and accountability in the life of the Catholic, Jesuit mission of the university, we will prioritize two large-scale actions to strengthen the mission culture of SLU: an **ongoing** university mission **examen** for continuous feedback and improvement, and infrastructure support for students in need.

Priority 2: We will integrate mission formation programming for all levels of university leadership.

While mission formation programming for faculty and staff has become much more robust in recent years, there remain gaps in the same formation opportunities for upper administrators and trustees. Although mission formation programming is universally offered, a lack of substantive ~~incentivization and~~ **recognition for mission-centered employees** precludes greater participation and investment. Cognizant of the need for more deliberate mission integration, we will prioritize two initiatives to bolster mission formation for the entire SLU community: university leadership formation for mission and **recognition and celebration of faculty and staff mission commitment**. ~~incentivization for faculty and staff.~~

Characteristic 2: The Academic Life

A significant area of concern is how to maintain a focus on the liberal arts and humanities curricula while pursuing the status of an [R1 research institution](#).¹ The profound benefit of SLU initiatives such as the [Center for Research on Global Catholicism](#), the [Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#), and the Collaborative for Humanistic Inquiry² demonstrate the importance of the liberal arts in the Jesuit educational tradition, underscoring the ongoing need for financial and structural support for the humanities.³ Questions persist regarding how research at the university can better align with mission

¹ R1 is a classification of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Higher Education. R1 institutions have “very high research activity” based on criteria such as research expenses, awarded doctoral degrees, and research staff. SLU’s recognition as an R1 research institution is anticipated in spring 2025, making SLU one of only four Catholic R1 universities in the United States (SLU, Boston College, Georgetown University and the University of Notre Dame).

² This fall 2024 initiative creates opportunities to enhance collaboration among SLU’s nine existing research centers while facilitating faculty and student scholarship across a variety and range of disciplines.

³ Thanks to the success of the most recent capital campaign, a \$10M fund has been established to support research in the humanities.

values in a meaningful and consistent manner. As one trustee cautioned, “R1 status has the potential to negatively impact the trajectory of the university’s mission. SLU has had a great impact on the Catholic intellectual life of the local church. That legacy must not be jeopardized.” A common unease among the SLU community is the effect of pursuing market success and institutional prestige while trying to maintain mission integrity. **Clear articulation and communication regarding the alignment of R1 status and the university’s mission would do much to ease the concerns of the campus community. In particular, clearly conveying how the attainment and maintenance of R1 status does not conflict with commitment to exceptional undergraduate education and the new core curriculum would be of great benefit for the entire SLU community.**

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Focus Groups

Adjunct Faculty	Jesuit Community at SLU
Admissions	Libraries and Museums
Alpha Sigma Nu	Madrid Campus Community
Alumni	Marketing and Communication
Athletics	Office of the Provost
Board of Trustees	Parents and Families of Current Students
Campus Ministry	Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching
Chaifetz School of Business	Research
College for Public Health and Social Justice	School for Professional Studies
College of Arts and Sciences	School of Education
College of Philosophy and Letters	School of Law (multiple)
Community & Neighborhood Partners	School of Medicine (multiple)
Deans	School of Nursing
Department Chairs	School of Science and Engineering
Distribution Services	St. Francis Xavier "College" Church
Division for Diversity and Innovative Community Engagement	Staff Advisory Committee
Division of Student Development (multiple)	Student Government Association
Doisy College of Health Sciences	Student Organizations & Affinity Groups
Donors	Transformative Workforce Academy
Facilities, Custodial & Maintenance Services (multiple)	Undergraduate Core Committee
Faculty Senate	University Dining Services
Graduate Student Association	University Leadership Council
Human Resources	

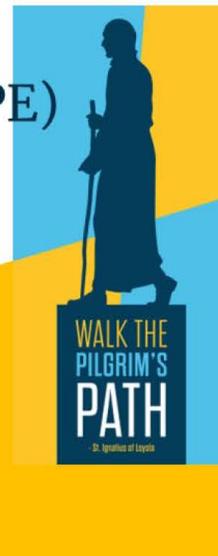
Employee Participation

	Total Census (2023-24)	# of Focus Group Participants	% Representative Turnout
Faculty	882	127	14.4 %
Staff	1711	395	23.1 %
TOTAL	2593	522	20.1 %

Focus Group Session Content

Mission Priority Examen (MPE)

- What is this? And why? And who?
- What will the process look like?
- Is there a particular focus or emphasis?
- What are the expected or desired outcomes?



Background to the past and current MPE

Overview of the approach both today and long-term

Focus: understanding the *lived* reality of the mission; not the ideal or “right answer” Emphasis: throwing the net wide; including any and every SLU community member who wants to be heard

Expected outcomes: we will not know until we have listened to everyone. This is fundamental to **discernment**

An Ignatian Examen of the life of SLU's mission



- Reflection (*review*)
- Honesty & courage
(*examination of conscience*)
- Acknowledgement
(*discernment*)
- Decision to act (*election*)

Formatted and designed around an Ignatian Examen

Text in black reflects the process we will be using

Text in blue are the terms Ignatius himself would have used to describe this process

The Mission Priority Examen



<https://bit.ly/49q37s3>

Once all details are finished, ask participants to complete the examen through the questions found at this link. Provide hard copies for those who do not have a laptop or tablet.
15 minutes

In a single sentence:

- What are the areas of strength, light, and hope when it comes to the way SLU lives out our Catholic Jesuit mission? *[each person offers one insight—or pass]*
- What are areas of shadow, discouragement, or weakness you perceive when it comes to the way SLU lives out our Catholic Jesuit mission? *[each person offers one insight—or pass]*
- What does the Spirit moving among us *right now* seem to be indicating about where our mission focus at SLU is most needed? *[brief expression of perception]*

After the private examen has been done, invite the group to a communal examen. Take each question one at a time and remind participants to keep their input brief and to the point

So now...before we go...

Please go to:

[menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

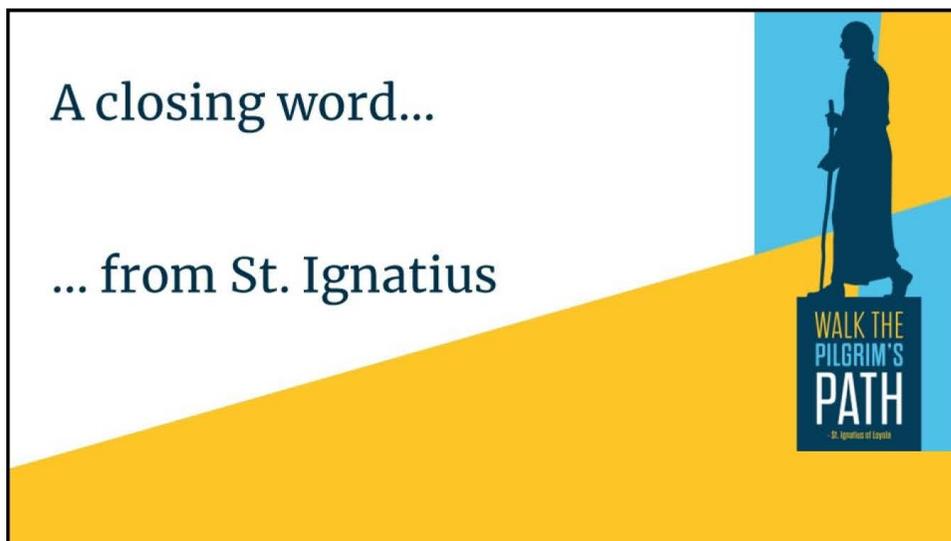
Code: 3907 0183



To conclude, ask the participants to go to this webpage which will ask them to characterize in a single word what their outlook is with regard to SLU's Catholic Jesuit mission right now. Display the results for all to see.

A closing word...

... from St. Ignatius



Conclude with the prayer card of the First Principle and Foundation.

APPENDIX B

Undergraduate Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes

<i>All SLU graduates will be able to...</i>	<i>What this means for SLU . . .</i>
SLO 1: Examine their actions and vocations in dialogue with the Catholic, Jesuit tradition	Catholic, Jesuit beliefs and traditions provide the intellectual and spiritual foundation for education at Saint Louis University. The Core exposes students to Catholic, Jesuit and other worldviews and asks them to reflect on how these perspectives inform their character, sense of purpose, and vocations in order to imagine and assess the moral and spiritual implications of their actions and life choices.
SLO 2: Integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines to address complex questions	A breadth of knowledge is the heart of a Catholic, Jesuit liberal arts education. The Core fosters creative ability and an understanding of cultures, institutions, systems, and the natural world; it introduces students to a variety of disciplinary perspectives and asks them to synthesize that knowledge for systemic inquiry and innovation.
SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions	Critical thinking—from the scientific method to the creative process, from systems thinking to complex abstractions—is a hallmark of a well-developed mind. The Core fosters a student's ability to gather source material and discern its reliability, analyze data via quantitative and qualitative methods, compare multiple interpretations of evidence, evaluate conflicting claims, and demonstrate evidence-based reasoning.
SLO 4: Communicate effectively in writing, speech, and visual media	Eloquent communication connects people and advances ideas. The Core compels students to analyze written, oral, auditory, and visual messages and their implications in order to communicate effectively with a clear understanding of audience, rhetorical purpose, argumentation, genre, and style.
SLO 5: Analyze how diverse identities influence their lives and the lives of others	Interdependent identities—such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation—shape how people move through and experience the world. The Core helps students assess how identities are constructed historically, culturally, socially, and linguistically. Students will be able to examine values and biases, empathize with others, and connect across cultures.
SLO 6: Recognize transnational or global interdependence	Many persistent challenges—from climate change to health crises to the distribution of wealth and property—transcend national boundaries. The Core gives students the intellectual tools to understand and participate in this interconnected world. Students will be able to identify the transnational impact of local actions in order to be engaged and responsible global citizens.
SLO 7: Evaluate the extent to which social systems influence equity and reflect innate human dignity	The Catholic, Jesuit tradition calls on students to envision a just society, recognize how and when injustice is institutionalized, and identify conditions that promote the dignity and equity of all. The Core enables students to consider how social, political, and cultural systems influence human interactions and well-being in the past, present, and future.
SLO 8: Collaborate with others toward a common goal	Academic, professional, and community life requires acting together intentionally toward a shared objective. The Core advances students' abilities to listen actively, cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect, delegate work fairly, exercise servant leadership, manage conflict, and invite diverse ideas.
SLO 9: Apply and acquire knowledge through engagement beyond the University	Acquiring and applying knowledge in context advances more holistic, mutually transformative education. The Core requires students to partner with and learn from those in broader communities—from internships to immersion experiences, from clinical practice to community-based research. By acting with and for others, students experience and reflect on the benefits of community engagement.

APPENDIX C

Mission Formation Initiatives Since the Last MPE

SLU's Shared Mission program is principally designed for new hires to the university. Over the course of an academic year, six Ignatian luncheons bring together small group cohorts to meet, learn, discuss, and integrate the history, impact and lived reality of the Jesuit mission and Ignatian identity of Saint Louis University. Participants in the *Shared Mission* program come from diverse academic, professional and religious backgrounds. This foundational program opens the door for deeper participation in the wide variety of mission programs offered by the Division for Mission and Identity. Although intended for new employees, all are welcome to participate as SLU forms an Ignatian “band of companions” centered on mission and building a community of belonging.

Faith in Action provides students, faculty, and staff opportunities to engage with communities at the intersection of religious belonging and the promotion of justice, celebrating cultural and religious difference. Programming includes tours of the St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum; Central Reform Congregation, the only synagogue in the St. Louis city limits; Casa de Salud, a low-cost clinic serving recent immigrants and refugees; St. Alphonsus Liguori “Rock” Church, a local Black Catholic parish; and Masjid Bilal ibn Rabbah, the mosque adjacent to SLU’s campus.

The summer immersion experience to the Navajo Nation gave faculty and staff a direct experience of Navajo people – both celebrating the richness and beauty of their history, spirituality, and culture, and learning firsthand about the sedimented issues of justice and access that continue to plague many contemporary Native communities. It also built a community of peers across a wide range of disciplines and departments through daily practices of communal prayer, work, and reflection.

ICP @ SLU, or the Ignatian Colleagues Program at Saint Louis University, is an immersive mission-formation experience open to faculty, staff and administrators of the SLU community. Cohorts of six to eight members are formed each fall and meet monthly during the academic year to discuss Ignatian scholarship, experience Ignatian spirituality and engage in Ignatian service. ICP @ SLU participants form a community of colleagues gathered around and strengthened by our common Ignatian heritage and Jesuit mission.

The Arrupe Fellowship is a two-year program open to established faculty and staff who have demonstrated commitment to SLU's Jesuit mission and identity. After spending one year of immersion in the study of Jesuit history, fellows will experience an Ignatian Pilgrimage with other Jesuit university colleagues, following in the footsteps of St. Ignatius from Loyola, Spain, to Rome, Italy. In the second year, fellows will use their pilgrimage experience to explore the legacy of Jesuit legend Pedro Arrupe, with specific application of learning to their SLU work and community.

The *Magis* Brownbag Series is a lunchtime speaker series offered monthly for faculty, staff, and students, presenting a topic that connects the Jesuit mission to SLU's current reality. Presenters are invited or nominated from within the SLU community and speak to an area of Ignatian spirituality, Ignatian scholarship, or Ignatian service.

The Mission Matters! Podcast is a monthly/bi-monthly podcast highlighting the people and initiatives that embody the Jesuit tradition and mission. Each episode spotlights the different ways that SLU's Jesuit mission is "hidden in plain sight," alive and well in the members of the SLU community. Interviews with faculty, staff, alumni, students, and other members of the SLU community allow for the full breadth and scope of the mission to emerge, demonstrating how individuals, departments, and disciplines continually strive for the "higher purpose, greater good."

The Pilgrim's Path is a mission-centered walking tour of SLU's north campus. On the two-mile, sixty-minute audio tour narrated by David Suwalsky, S.J., Ph.D, Vice President for Mission and Identity, several highlighted sites on the north campus are directly connected to the Jesuit legacy begun by St. Ignatius Loyola, a pilgrim for God. Participants from within or beyond the SLU community can visit the locations on SLU's campus that depict the university's Jesuit history and Catholic identity.

APPENDIX D**Peer Review Team Schedule***(total number of participants: approximately 300)*

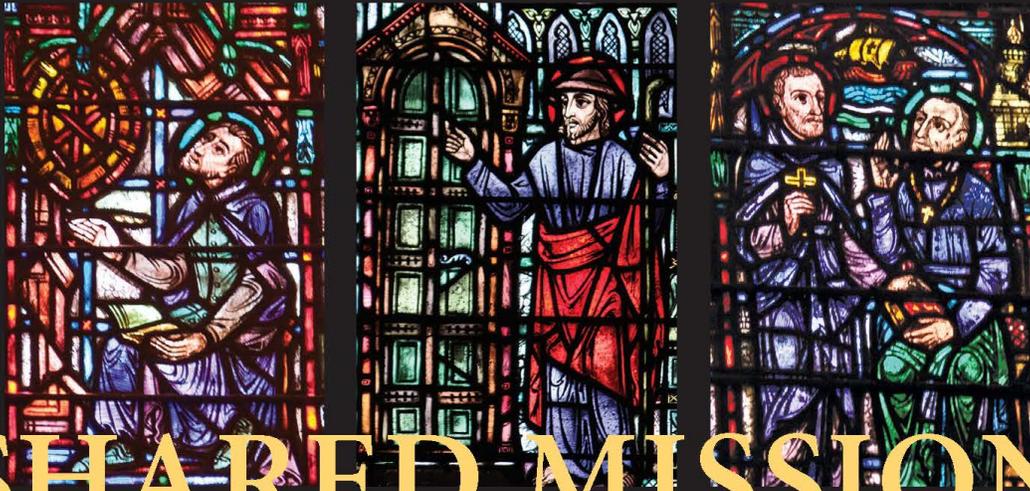
	TEAM A	TEAM B
MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024		
4:00 p.m.	Arrival <i>Jesuit Center</i>	
5:00 p.m.	Visiting Team Meeting <i>Garanzini Board Room, Jesuit Center</i>	
5:45 p.m.	Social with Jesuit Community <i>Jesuit Center</i>	
Dinner 6:15 p.m.	<i>Jesuit Center</i>	
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2024		
Breakfast 8:00 a.m.	Steering Committee Co-chairs, David Suwalsky, S.J. & Virginia Herbers <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
8:30 a.m.	President Fred P. Pestello Provost Mike Lewis <i>Schlaflly Board Room, DuBourg Hall, Room 204</i>	
9:30 a.m.	President's Cabinet <i>Schlaflly Board Room, DuBourg Hall, Room 204</i>	
10:30 a.m.	Break <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
11:00 – 11:45 a.m.	Division for Mission and Identity Leaders <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
Lunch 12:00 – 12:45 p.m.	Student Leaders <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
1:00 – 1:45 p.m.	Faculty & Staff Mission Leaders <i>Pere Marquette, DuBourg Hall, Room 240</i>	Academic Leaders (Deans & Associate Provosts) <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>
2:00 – 2:45 p.m.	Steering Committee <i>Pere Marquette, DuBourg Hall, Room 240</i>	Division for Diversity & Innovative Community Engagement Leaders <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>
<i>Break</i>	Working Session <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Faculty Senate & Undergraduate Core Committee <i>Pere Marquette Gallery, DuBourg Hall, Room 240</i>	
Dinner 6:00 p.m.	Interfaith St. Louis Gala <i>Busch Student Center, Wool Ballrooms</i>	

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024		
Breakfast 8:00 a.m.	<i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
9:00 – 9:45 a.m.	SLU Madrid (Zoom) <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
10:00 – 10:45 a.m.	Prison Education Program, Legal & Medical Clinics, Student Service Programs <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	School for Professional Studies & Jesuit Worldwide Learning <i>Bruemmer Room, DuBourg Hall 400</i>
11:00 – 11:45 a.m.	Division for Student Development <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	Athletic Department Leaders <i>Bruemmer Room, DuBourg Hall 400</i>
Lunch 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.	<i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
1:15 – 2:00 p.m.	Campus Ministry <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	Catholic Studies Center <i>Bruemmer Room, DuBourg Hall 400</i>
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Board of Trustees Mission Committee & Presidential Search Committee (Zoom) <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Working Session <i>Garanzini Board Room, Jesuit Center</i>	
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Saint Louis University Jesuit Community <i>Jesuit Center</i>	
5:45 p.m.	Social with Jesuit Community <i>Jesuit Center</i>	
Dinner 6:15 p.m.	Jesuit Community <i>Jesuit Center</i>	
7:15 p.m.	Working Session <i>Garanzini Board Room, Jesuit Center</i>	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2024		
Breakfast 8:00 a.m.	Visiting Team Report Preparations <i>DuBourg Hall, Room 102</i>	
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Preliminary Comments for President and Cabinet <i>Schlaflly Board Room, DuBourg Hall, Room 204</i>	
11:00 a.m.	Departure	

APPENDIX E

Jesuit Magazine Excerpt, Summer 2024

■ MISSION



SHARED MISSION

at SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

By Virginia Herbers

“What exactly is your job?”

It’s a question I hear on a regular basis. My title, director of mission formation at Saint Louis University, is one that conceals more than it reveals about what my peers and I do – thus the question. But my role is of critical importance in any Jesuit educational institution.

When SLU was first founded over two centuries ago, the Jesuit mission and identity were ensured by the simple fact that Jesuits were leading, guiding and correcting course for the vision and direction of the work. Even then, however, the Society partnered with lay men and women to undertake the common endeavor of educating and forming young people in the Catholic tradition. These cooperative efforts – both historical and contemporary – continue to forge the path for a profound and lasting sense of a shared Jesuit mission.

Saint Louis University and other schools in the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) commit to a collaborative process called the Mission



Dan Warner, videographer and SLU consultant, chats with Dr. Karla Scott, professor of communication, as they record the *Shared Mission* video series.

Priority Examen (MPE) to ensure they maintain their Catholic and Jesuit identities. The Jesuit provinces, including the USA Central and Southern Province, help to oversee this periodic evaluation and follow up on any resulting recommendations. One part of the MPE focuses on how well the university orients new faculty and staff on the Jesuit identity and values of the university.

In the 1990s, the AJCU offered a program called *Shared Vision: Jesuit Spirit in Education* with the intention of introducing Jesuit university employees to the history

and traditions of the Society of Jesus. It consisted of three 90-minute group sessions of instruction and dialogue, and it proved to be an extremely effective mission formation program in many universities, including SLU.

When I first arrived at SLU in late 2019, I realized early on that something akin to the *Shared Vision* program was needed. Just as I was able to devote time to imagining and planning possibilities, the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a completely different set of priorities. Upon returning to the office in 2021, designing, creating and launching such a program became one of the main initiatives for SLU's Office of Mission and Identity. The result is now called SLU's *Shared Mission* program.

Whereas *Shared Vision* entailed three sessions, each of which was centered on a 45-minute video presentation, *Shared Mission* is a series of six sessions, each beginning with a short video (6-8 minutes in length) that addresses a mission-centric topic, followed by small and large group reflection on the relevance of that topic for day-to-day work at the university. Over the course of the academic year, six *Shared Mission* lunchtime gatherings bring together small group cohorts to meet, learn, discuss and integrate the history, impact and lived reality of the Jesuit mission and Ignatian identity of Saint Louis University.

The topics for the six sessions are: St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Society of Jesus throughout history, the Universal Apostolic Preferences, Jesuit higher education, the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm and the mission of Saint Louis University.

The videos for the sessions were created in-house, featuring current students and employees who provided their own insight into the six topics, particularly how they integrate those mission elements into their teaching, their work and their study.

We originally intended the program to be part of the orientation of newly hired employees, but what happened at SLU when we first advertised the program was truly marvelous. *Current* employees didn't want to be left out of the opportunity and clamored for the program to be open to them as well. Colleges requested copies of the curriculum guide so they could incorporate the sessions into monthly department meetings. Administrative departments like



Members of the mission formation program called ICP @ SLU (Ignatian Colleagues Program at Saint Louis University) share an annual retreat together to deepen their sense of Jesuit mission, Ignatian spirituality and mission-centered community.

marketing, admissions and student development adapted portions of the videos to a variety of audiences, including parents of current students, donors and trustees. Other AJCU universities asked for access to the videos to use in their own mission formation programs. These are just a few of the examples of how the *Shared Mission* project has grown and flourished – confirming that the choice of name for the program was apt indeed.

We have just concluded the first year of the *Shared Mission* program here at SLU, but we already have plans for expansion and deeper engagement. Due to the strong response of the community, we intend to add one new video to the series each year. Starting this fall, we will add a video on the history of Saint Louis University. We hope to produce videos on practices in Ignatian Spirituality and the *Spiritual Exercises* in the near future.

The *Shared Mission* program offers an in-depth, community-based, mission formation opportunity for all SLU faculty, staff and administration. Participants come from diverse academic, professional and religious backgrounds, demonstrating that the Ignatian “band of companions” formed by the program is based on a partnership in mission, building a community of belonging and a culture of inclusion.

This foundational program opens the door for deeper participation in the wide variety of mission programs offered by SLU's mission office and offers just one way – albeit a beautiful one – of treasuring the gift that is our shared Jesuit mission.

Virginia Herbers is the director of mission formation at Saint Louis University.

MORE ▶ Learn more about SLU's Office of Mission or watch the *Shared Mission* videos at www.slu.edu/mission-identity.