

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Fairfield University is one of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States, organized into a network known as the AJCU (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities). At the behest of the Society of Jesus, the AJCU is asking all Jesuit colleges and universities in the US to undertake, at some point during the next five years, a year-long process to re-affirm their Jesuit, Catholic mission. This will be done through the completion of a self-study that responds to the guidelines provided by the AJCU: “Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument.”

The following text is our self-study document. As directed by the Provincial Assistant for Higher Education for the USA/Northeast Province of the Society of Jesus, it is a short text that gives an overview of how we currently address the “Characteristics” and, most importantly from the AJCU perspective, identifies a few – 3 in this case – “mission priorities” that will be actionable over the next five years.

How was this text developed? In fall 2015 self-study teams of faculty, staff and administrators assembled draft reports in response to different sections of the “Some Characteristics” AJCU self-study guide. These draft reports, each of which ended with suggestions for mission priorities, were the focus of the President’s Retreat in November 2015. At that retreat – a day-long event attended by over 50 members of the faculty, staff and administration – each of the reports were presented and the combined total of 21 suggested priorities were whittled to three institutional mission priorities. Additional opportunities for comment were offered to the student and academic affairs divisions, and the sections on academics and campus culture were discussed with students from FUSA and Campus Ministry. This input was drafted into the document below, which follows the chapters and major headings found in the “Some Characteristics” guide (the words and phrases in bold italics below refer to the subsections of the “Some Characteristics” guide). This text was then presented to the University in April 2016 for a three-week comment period and, on May 9th, to the Academic Council.

The final copy, with links to our numerous mission-related programs, will be posted on the Fairfield University website. In fall 2016, an external team from the AJCU will visit Fairfield, conduct their own discussions, and offer their impressions in a report to the Provincial of the USA/Northeast province.

As Fairfield completed an institutional strategic planning process (*Fairfield 2020: The Way Forward*) in June 2015, and will begin with the NEASC re-accreditation process in Fall 2016, it has worked well for us to undertake this mission self-study during this 2015-2016 academic year, during the first wave of the five year AJCU cycle. After all 28 schools have completed the self-study process (several will do so each year, over the next five years), the AJCU will evaluate this procedure, which should yield some interesting insights about how “Jesuit, Catholic” is understood by Jesuit schools across the United States in a rapidly changing higher education context.

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1942, Fairfield University, while a fairly “young” institution, inherits a 500-year tradition of Jesuit and Catholic education. This powerful identity is lived in our vibrant institutional mission, which seeks to educate our undergraduate and graduate students so that they become not merely skilled professionals but, as the Jesuit tradition requires, “men and women for others.”

This identity is lived in the deeply engaged work of our faculty and staff. Faculty teaching, enriched by ongoing scholarship, is the heartbeat of mission-driven university education. Students also encounter this education in the context of Fairfield’s residential and community life, with its co-curricular program of activities, athletics, service and reflection. This interplay is named well in the Vision Statement that opens our recent strategic plan, *Fairfield 2020: The Way Forward*:

As Catholic, we carry forward a rigorous intellectual tradition in our teaching and research; as Jesuit we take great pride in the Ignatian educational model that prizes cura personalis — the development of the whole person — as the foundation of just and vibrant communities.

This mission lives on in our graduates and alumni, as their lives and work give evidence of Fairfield’s commitment to serve as a learning environment that, true to the early Jesuit vision of pedagogical mission, has as its ultimate goal “the transformation of the whole world.”

The Society of Jesus – with its roots in the early modern world and its global reach in our own day – understands well that the mission of Jesuit Catholic education must continually adapt to address its changing societal context. The Society, too, is changing, with fewer members to carry forward its apostolates. In this situation, the ability of Jesuit colleges and universities to take charge of their mission-driven identity, and to live this in new ways, is essential.

Thus the AJCU has asked for the reflection we offer below, and the affirmation of our continued energies for mission found in its closing articulation of three mission priorities. We look forward to the discussion of this document that will occur as we receive an external visiting team from the AJCU in Fall 2016.

CHARACTERISTIC 1: LEADERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION

Recognizing how mission and identity are institutionally perpetuated, the AJCU self-study guide asks whether “the University’s leadership competently communicates and enlivens the Jesuit, Catholic mission of the institution.” At Fairfield, this mission is communicated with intention across the enterprise, in explicit ways via public institutional signs and in implicit ways that enliven the work of each division.

The starting point for *mission articulation* at Fairfield is our University mission statement, which has stood for decades as a singular point of agreement in an otherwise appropriately lively academic conversation about identity. This statement clearly sets forth what it means to be part of this “community of scholars,” in an institution that is shaped by the norms of Jesuit education and the “promotion of justice.” Fairfield’s high expectations for the faculty, as the heart of this mission-driven community, are set forth in the faculty handbook’s norms for teaching, research, and service.

Fairfield has understood its Jesuit and Catholic identity in broad terms, welcoming, since its 50th anniversary celebration in 1992, centers for Judaic Studies and Catholic Studies and the Center for Faith and Public Life as well as interdisciplinary programs that focus on race, gender, regions and nationalities. Campus Ministry has offered inter-faith programming, with part-time chaplains for Muslim and Protestant students, as well as partnering for Shabbat services and the recognition of Jewish holidays. The President’s Seminar on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition has sought to place Catholic questions in strong dialogue with secularism and post-secularism.

Faculty and staff have a variety of mission formation programs, featuring both the story of the Society as well as the animating themes of Catholic thought – the goodness of creation, the dignity of the human person and the value of both faith and reason. The magazine *Conversations in Jesuit Higher Education* has been the subject of panel discussions that bring together faculty, staff and administrators from across campus. In all this conversation, we reflect the understanding of “Catholic” as put forward in the University mission statement: “*Fairfield is Catholic in both tradition and spirit. It celebrates the God-given dignity of every human person. As a Catholic university it welcomes those of all beliefs and traditions who share its concerns for scholarship, justice, truth and freedom, and it values the diversity which their membership brings to the university community.*”

The *Board of Trustees* is keenly appreciative of the Catholic and Jesuit identity of Fairfield University. Article II, Section 1 of our by-laws, which establishes the Board of Trustees, states it plainly: “The Board of Trustees shall preserve and promote the educational objectives of the University within the context of a Jesuit and Catholic commitment.” The Board includes Jesuits among its members; our by-laws call for 10-40 trustees (including the President), adding that at “least six (6) of the Trustees shall be members of the Society of Jesus in good standing.”(Article II, Section 2)

New trustees receive a one-hour orientation to the mission of Fairfield, and the Vice President for Mission and Identity visits each of the committees of the Board once a year. Notably, in Spring 2015, the Board underwent a more intensive period of conversation about mission,

supported by a \$10,000 grant from the Council of Independent Colleges NetVUE initiative, which included Rev. John O'Malley, SJ's short book on the history of the Society as well as presentations by Rev. Roger Haight, SJ and Rev. Matt Malone, SJ. The short text by Superior General Rev. Adolfo Nicolás, SJ, "A Call for Spiritual Leaders," has been in good use by the Board as well as the University's senior leadership team.

The University's Center for Ignatian Spirituality, a recent initiative supported by the Fairfield Jesuit Community, has done extensive outreach to the senior leadership, as part of their more general practice of offering the Spiritual Exercises to administrators, faculty and staff. At the June 2015 meeting of the Board of Trustees, several members of the senior leadership shared their own experience of being directed through the Exercises, as a way of introducing the opportunity offered by the Center for Ignatian Spirituality to the Board. This outreach has been well-received.

The leader of Jesuit and Catholic mission at Fairfield is our *University President*, the Rev. Jeffrey P. von Arx, SJ, who also brings a deep understanding of the academy as a former faculty member, chair, and dean. Fr. von Arx is a tenured professor in the department of history, and welcomes the chance to teach as his schedule allows. His vision for Fairfield shapes those he brings into its leadership. Supporting these administrators, particularly when current events raise challenges between the discussion appropriate to University life and the Catholic identity of Fairfield, is a positive relationship between members of the administration and our Jesuit Director of Campus Ministry, the Director for the Center for Catholic Studies and the Director for the Center for Faith and Public Life.

An additional strong partner in this task has been the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP). Fairfield has been an active part of the ICP since its inception, and has found this to be a valuable formation program for administrators and faculty that seem poised to make a strong contribution to Jesuit education, both at Fairfield and elsewhere in the AJCU. As the newest Executive Director of the ICP was already serving in student affairs at Fairfield, we were happy to have that program move its national office to our own campus.

The *Academic Deans* at Fairfield offer clear support for Jesuit education in their understanding of the purpose and work of their academic units. A typical statement of this is drawn from the mission statement of the Charles F. Dolan School of Business, which claims that it is "committed to the Jesuit tradition of educating the 'whole' person to be a socially responsible professional." The door of justice and the common good, championed by the Society, forms the entry point for many of these units. Courses in engineering, business and nursing ethics are required components of each of these professional tracks, as they are for the programs in counseling and education that are among the programs in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP). In the College of Arts and sciences, the liberal arts tradition that is the ground of Jesuit education is presented as a holistic and integrated body of study that offers a broad, multidisciplinary approach to the world.

Through the leadership of the Deans, service learning programs are present across the Schools, with an emphasis on "community engagement" driving the school and community based work of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions in particular. This element of skilled,

reflective service is also clearly present when Deans speak to students and parents about carefully developed study abroad programs with service learning components in our nursing and engineering schools.

Questions about the nature and role of mission certainly are in play as we shape an institutional identity that responds to the changing needs of our students and offers courses and programs that recast the venerable questions of the humanities in a day that increasingly values technical expertise. On the one hand, issues of faith and spirituality arise regularly in conversations with students. They also emerge in the academic division. Courses in the School of Nursing and the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions, for example, acknowledge spirituality as a reflective component in the work of practitioners and a valuable resource for some of the clients they serve, all of whom are understood to have the “God-given dignity” mentioned in the University’s mission statement. The Department of Religious Studies offers depth in this area as well, presenting courses that are clearly in the field of “religion” alongside courses that are explicitly theological in methodology. The mission of the institution is also engaged in the core curriculum’s focus on the liberal arts.

Nevertheless, in terms of *personnel*, the issue of “hiring for mission” can evoke tensions about the Jesuit Catholic mission. Fairfield’s approach when hiring for mission has been to emphasize interest in questions of social justice and the turn to the marginalized that mark the focus of the more recent decades of the Society. We value and promote the profoundly reflective approach to education and the person that characterizes Jesuit pedagogy. And finally, we are able — grateful for the opening made by Pope Francis — to raise the question of the common good to perhaps a more profound degree than before. These are the most fruitful avenues as we seek to hire those who will advance the Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity at Fairfield.

CHARACTERISTIC 2: THE ACADEMIC LIFE

As at all Jesuit schools, Fairfield University's division of Academic Affairs is the heart of the university as an institutional force.

At Fairfield, the commitment to the academic exploration of the history and significant cultural achievements within the humanities, the social and natural sciences, and the arts is codified in our ***core curriculum***, currently one of the largest core programs among those of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. As currently structured, the study of religion, philosophy, and ethics represent 5 courses in the core. The introductory course for our department of religious studies acquaints students with the breadth of scholarship in religion, asking that they take a step back from their own experience to critically examine religious texts, practices and beliefs in a scholarly manner. The second course in the core for our students will often focus on a particular tradition, with many offerings in Catholic Christianity, but also choices in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and now, courses that study religion in America. The academic energy for our mission is also found in other areas of the core, most clearly as courses in history, literature, and the fine arts that address themes and events that mark not only Christian, Jewish, and Muslim history and culture, but also other various religious traditions found across global history and culture.

This material is certainly taught with passion. Our Faculty Handbook states the criteria for teaching, service and research that are the benchmarks for tenure and promotion. It is central to our Jesuit Catholic mission as a university that, by ***faculty policy***, these benchmarks are set high, finding, for example, "conspicuous success in teaching to be of paramount importance" in consideration for tenure. In addition, in 2015, the Carnegie Foundation again selected Fairfield for the Advancement of Teaching for its prestigious 2015 Community Engagement Classification (2008 was the first time), which recognized, among other things, that 42 faculty members are involved in service learning. Following our first year of recognition through this award in 2008, we revised our rank and tenure guidelines so that they now explicitly recognize the value of community-engaged teaching and scholarship.

The academic mission is significantly supported as a mission-driven enterprise by the work of the intentionally restructured Office of Academic and Career Development, a key component in Fairfield's person-centered pedagogical approach. Combining the efforts of several programs — Academic Support and Retention, Disability Support Services, Project Excel, and the Career Planning Center — this office prepares students for a meaningful life by offering comprehensive and integrated academic support and professional development services.

Several ***Centers*** support and promote aspects of our Jesuit and Catholic mission to the University community. The Center for Faith and Public Life stands out as the academic unit that crosses all the schools at Fairfield University. It is the home for service learning informed by the principles of Ignatian pedagogy (detailed in Characteristic 4, below), as well as the driver for our community engaged scholarship and research, work that is often rooted in Catholic Social teaching. An example of its grant-funded research initiatives is the substantial funding received from the Teagle Foundation for JUHAN (Jesuit University Humanitarian Action Network), an umbrella project for humanitarian action efforts linking Fairfield, Georgetown, and Fordham students. At Fairfield, this initiative led to the development of the minor in Humanitarian

Action, which serves all the schools of the University. The Hagedorn Foundation supported another project, developed by the director for the CFPL and three faculty members, a research project called “Strangers as Neighbors: How Religious Dialogue Can Help Reframe the Issue of Immigration.” In addition, the Carnegie and Ford Foundations supported faculty-led research on undocumented students in Jesuit higher education, which led to a white paper publicly endorsed by 26 Jesuit college and university presidents. This research was completed in conjunction with Santa Clara University, Loyola Chicago University with additional assistance from St Peter’s College, Detroit Mercy University and Loyola Marymount University. The Center also offers support for a biennial event for the local chapter of CAPP (*Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice*).

The Center for Catholic Studies offers a lively round of lectures across the spectrum of Catholic thought, including academics such as Shawn Copeland and Rev. John Padberg, SJ, novelists such as Alice McDermott, and public voices such as Bishop Frank Caggiano (Bridgeport) and Catholic University’s Stephen Schneck. The CSC has also produced major conferences, on Catholicism and the media, same-sex relationships and, in fall 2016, on the future of Catholic theology. In summer 2014, the CSC hosted the third international conference on Receptive Ecumenism. Most importantly, the Center for Catholic Studies supports a variety of courses across the humanities, which students take individually or as part of the Catholic Studies minor.

The Center for Ignatian Spirituality trains lay directors to work alongside Jesuits as they offer introductory and short-term prayer experiences, as well as leading experiences in the Spiritual Exercises for students, faculty, administrators, trustees as well as neighbors in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Further service to the academic mission is found in the permanent collection and travelling exhibits at the Bellarmine Museum of Art (recently renamed the Fairfield University Art Museum). Fairfield’s institutional support for this “jewel” is testament to the importance of the arts in Jesuit education.

Additional *Catholic initiatives* include extending our academic programs in service of the Diocese of Bridgeport, including coursework and degree completion for seminarians and religious women, and graduate courses for certification for teachers in the parochial system.

Finally, our *professional schools* have embraced the vibrancy that mission-related service and justice work brings to their many areas of competence (only a few examples can be listed). The commitment to student diversity as a key component of mission has become a focus for the School of Nursing in its new ZAM (Zero Attrition Mission) effort. Nursing also continues its work on spirituality in nursing as well as a new initiative in palliative care. The School of Engineering, in March 2015, opened a student chapter of Engineers without Borders, focusing on water and sanitation projects in Bolivia. Students in the Dolan School of Business assist a variety of non-profits in the Bridgeport area with strategic planning and tax issues. The Bridgeport area is also the focus for students in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions, which has numerous partnerships, most recently initiating a broad-based interprofessional effort around the many educational and psychosocial needs at several high-need public schools.

The graduate and undergraduate programs offered by Fairfield University’s College of Arts and Sciences and the four professional schools anchor themselves in the tradition of Jesuit education, and express the Catholic tradition as they seek the common good, including the development of

an ethical framework that focuses on care for the environment and the concerns of social justice. Thus we do not see the ***quest to remain competitive*** as requiring a trade-off between a deep education in the arts and sciences *and* the skills and competencies of the trained professional.

The self-study group that discussed Characteristic 2 developed three mission priorities for their division: 1. Ensure that the Catholic Jesuit tradition remains an integral part of our academic mission and identity. 2. Identify and prioritize a common intellectual experience that articulates our Catholic Jesuit mission to our undergraduate students. 3. Continue our commitment to diversity and the promotion of multicultural competencies.

All three of these priorities has been incorporated in the overall mission priorities that form the actionable outcomes of this self-study process.

CHARACTERISTIC 3: A CATHOLIC, JESUIT CAMPUS CULTURE

Through its campus culture, Fairfield University explicitly and implicitly expresses a Jesuit and Catholic identity in co-curricular programs, engagement opportunities, policies and physical structures. Through these diverse touch points, community members are able to intersect with our Jesuit and Catholic identity while making meaning of their educational experience.

The Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola, located at the center of the campus, supports the full range of *Catholic liturgical life*, with a vibrant community of students serving as Eucharistic ministers, lectors and musicians. Members of these groups develop a deep awareness of the *Church calendar*, meeting monthly for formation in addition to their Sunday service. Weekly meetings for the RCIA program prepare students for reception into the Roman Catholic Church. Times for adoration, confession and daily mass are well publicized, though the numbers of students participating in these practices are small. On the other hand, over 400 students attend Sunday mass, with non-Catholic students drawn to the experience of community with their Catholic classmates.

The staff of Campus Ministry, located in the lower level of the Egan Chapel, also serves other faith traditions, organizes domestic and international service trips, and offers retreat experiences throughout the year. Most importantly, the spaces available in Campus Ministry invite all to reflection and connection, both with peers and ministry staff.

Fairfield is intentional about building a healthy *culture of community ties and respect for others*. Starting with the initial freshman orientation experience, students and families are introduced and welcomed to a community committed to *cura personalis*, the care for the whole person that is the hallmark of Jesuit education, and to the correlative concepts “*magis*,” “men and women for others,” and “contemplatives in action.” Residence hall programs encourage an exploration of questions of identity, including questions of intimacy and relationality, and a critical examination of the context for their academic study and personal growth.

With the support of a 1999 grant from the Lilly Endowment, Fairfield University opened the Ignatian Residential College, a living and learning program for sophomores. Since then, two other sophomore residences have been added, Creative Life and Service for Justice. Half of the sophomore class now has the experience of these residential college programs, which include courses that take up the question of *vocation* as well as monthly mentoring groups. An introduction to Ignatian spirituality is frequently a component of these programs, programs which may also serve as a first stop, for some of our students, for deeper conversation about a life of service to the Church as a clergy member or vowed religious. Our active chapter of Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit honor society, often finds that its inductees, as sophomores, were members of a residential college. For all students, however, our very intentional advising process and comprehensive case management system express the deep care of Fairfield for all members of the community.

Fairfield students are *active in intramural, club and varsity sports*. These activities develop community and individual healthy habits. Beyond the formal norms for our NCAA teams, all athletes at Fairfield sign on to a very specific code of behavior that supports their identity as

student athletes at a Jesuit school. We value the energy and broad comradery encouraged by the team sports and fitness programs at Fairfield, and are vigilant about ensuring that our students are supported in their own development as young adults.

The physical structure of campus lends itself to this development, as it covers 200 acres with room for walking, running and playing fields. This physical structure speaks as well, as students “absorb” the mission via its appearance in word and symbol on our buildings — that incorporate Jesuit saints and their stories, as well as other messaging — and the intentionality with which these symbols and messages are placed. *Campus events* may use this environment as a point of reflection as we, for example, remember in word and song those who died on 9/11 or, during our January celebration of the vision of Martin Luther King, Jr., we march through the campus, pausing at various sites to remember our own failures as a community. Our current building plan explicitly incorporates a concern to have the Jesuit Catholic mission speak through the built environment.

At Fairfield, the undergraduate population is influenced by the social culture of Twitter and Instagram, a culture that can work against the development of sustained reflection. Fairfield students across the socio-economic spectrum are also part of a culture of consumerism, in which material goods define identity. They are often overly self-interested and many have not been challenged to see their connections with those experienced as other, or to think through their own privileges. Some students see the years of college as a “bubble” disconnected from the responsible interactions they imagine will characterize their future selves. At the same time, their selves are actively under construction, as they face questions about their sexuality, sexual orientation, family patterns and cultural biases. Technology does not merely “impact” our campus culture, in many ways it serves as the conduit for it, albeit via constantly changing channels and platforms.

The self-study group that discussed Characteristic 3 recognized that even as our campus culture is positive, university campuses need to continually re-calibrate their strategies. It identified first year programming as an important component in *culture formation*, and the need to push back against the forces that would tell our students that they are consumers – and finally, commodities. It identified support for diversity programming and the development of multicultural competence as necessary for our students, faculty and staff. Finally it identified the need to hire for mission and recognized, importantly, that hiring committees need support as they develop appropriate language through which to do so.

CHARACTERISTIC 4: SERVICE

Within many departments and programs throughout the University, community service is the strongest expression of our students' connection to the Catholic and Jesuit mission. This activity, regardless of the rationale for participation (sports team, residence hall program or dean of students sanction, etc.), resonated as the single specific experience that our community felt fostered the deepest connection to our identity.

Fairfield is concerned to develop a sense of solidarity throughout our institution. Through such initiatives as the President's Council on Institutional Diversity, internal divisions and areas of friction of all kinds are named and efforts — both formative and systemic — are made to address them. Racial and socio-economic divisions continue to challenge that claim to solidarity. Efforts to address these divisions can be undercut by discourtesy or a too-rigid distinction between "faculty" and "administration," "staff" and "service workers." While our students may treat faculty with an attitude of (sometimes excessive) deference, those same students will approach student affairs staff or dining service workers with an attitude of entitlement. Throughout the institution, an attachment to the "culture of busyness" also works against the kind of patient engagement that solidarity and community require.

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm provides a teaching strategy that is of broad interest to the Fairfield faculty, particularly as it presages many of the principles for effective teaching espoused in the field of teaching and learning today. Our Center for Academic Excellence offers workshops in Ignatian pedagogy, and an introduction to this is part of the new faculty orientation every year. In these orientation sessions, we have made good use of a collection that emerged from a Fairfield University national conference on the meeting of Ignatian and feminist pedagogical strategies, *Jesuit and Feminist Education: Intersections in Teaching and Learning for the Twenty-First Century* (Boryczka and Petrino, eds., Fordham University Press, 2012).

Service learning, shaped by Ignatian pedagogy, plays a significant role in the curriculum, though in some areas more than others. Over 40 service learning courses are offered annually at Fairfield, enrolling over 700 students. The strongest concentration of service learning experiences tends to be in the College of Arts and Sciences. Further, data indicates that high numbers of students enrolled in the education minor, the psychology major, the software engineering major and the School of Nursing take service-learning courses. More broadly, justice-based student development is facilitated through critical reflection that is integrated into courses as well as co-curricular student engagement.

Direct service is organized through Campus Ministry, which sends 200 students weekly to 18 community partners, for a total of 12,000 hours of community service. Other students volunteer once a year: in 2014-2015, 1190 students contributed an additional 3570 hours of community service. Spring break immersion trips form faculty, staff and students at both national and international locations.

While service learning and direct service have been an important part of Fairfield's community outreach, we have also sought to engage community voices in developing mutually beneficial campus-community partnerships. The Carnegie Foundation recognized our efforts in these areas

in 2010 as we received the Community Engagement Classification, a recognition that was renewed in 2015. This classification recognizes work that has been done, but it also calls us to renewed efforts, which we are now in the process of quantifying through the development of a cloud-based database.

The self-study group that discussed Characteristic 4 recognized that service can become ***detached from the narrative of faith*** that grounds the institutional mission at Fairfield. They recommended a more strategic integration of meaningful community service into our curricular and co-curricular programs. This group also observed that over-commitment is too often seen as a badge of honor, leading to a diffusion of attention that can undermine the time-intensive character of high quality service, thus they wondered if our Jesuit, Catholic mission might call us to give up our attachment to some commitments in favor of a more service-driven institutional narrative. Such an approach, they suggest, would be a significant factor in building a culture of respect and solidarity on campus and in the community. To start on these far-reaching suggestions, mission priority 3 recommends a more intentional and integrated approach to service across all sectors of Fairfield University.

CHARACTERISTIC 5: SERVICE TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

Fairfield University is located within the Diocese of Bridgeport, which maps onto the borders of Fairfield County in Connecticut. This county, with its mix of cities, suburbs and rural areas, is the immediate context for our work as a Jesuit Catholic school — a context we share with the fifth Bishop of Bridgeport, Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. While independent of formal diocesan control, Fairfield University actively seeks to support the local church and we value our positive collaborative relationship with Bishop Caggiano.

Fairfield supports the work of the diocese in a variety of ways, both as a resource for skilled and critical insights and as an animator of the Catholic faith. (Departing from the “Some Characteristics” structure, we list below the ways that this animation has flowered in our local situation.)

Members of the Fairfield Jesuit Community routinely serve in parishes of the diocese. Twelve of the 17 current members offer weekly masses on Sundays or weekdays at one or more of the 87 parishes in the Diocese, and are also frequently called upon as confessors and retreat leaders in parish settings. Similarly, the early success of the recently-launched *Center for Ignatian Spirituality*, and the enthusiastic endorsement of its work by Bishop Caggiano (and the generous service of a deacon of the diocese as the Chair of the Advisory Board), foretells further and more extensive engagement in parish life. There has been a groundswell of interest in the Center’s work as a resource for spiritual direction as well as presentations and workshops on Ignatian spirituality. Led by a highly qualified Jesuit, the Center not only offers spiritual direction, it serves as a vital resource for local lay people and clergy to train as spiritual directors. There are currently 15 trained Spiritual Directors offering this ministry from the Center, and several others are in training through the Center’s program. This corps of experienced directors enables the Center to offer broad-based introductions to directed prayer for Catholic laity, with the cooperation of St. Mary’s parish in Ridgefield and St. Anthony’s parish in Fairfield.

As a University, Fairfield’s primary form of support for the work of the diocese is in our *broad slate of educational offerings*, which bring theologians, liturgists, historians and spiritual writers to our campus in evening lectures that are free to the public, and are well-patronized by a strong group of adult learners. An important benefit of Fairfield’s offerings is the fact that the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Center in Judaic Studies makes the culture and wisdom of Judaism available to this diocese, joining with Catholic Studies to offer an annual joint Lecture in Jewish-Christian Engagement, and the recent addition of a professor of Islam brings the riches of the Islamic tradition to the public lecture offerings. Other education support includes our hosting of the local chapter of Voice of the Faithful’s annual conference.

Through the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies, Fairfield’s reach into the future of the Church is extended as our graduates have gone on to graduate study to become college professors, parish directors of religious education, priests and vowed religious, and informed members of Catholic communities elsewhere. With the assistance of a funded initiative by the Catholic Theological Society of America, the theologians of Fairfield, joined by diocesan colleagues, hosted Bishop Caggiano for dinner, on the subject of “synodality.”

From 2012-2014 Fairfield University received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to bring leaders of local parishes to campus for a 5 day workshop dedicated to a Catholic approach to the science-religion debate, directed by a Fairfield biology professor. Over the ensuing two-year period monthly meetings continued while the participating parishes developed programming in the area of science and religion for their own parish populations.

Members of the Fairfield faculty, staff and administration also offer skilled consultation and *support for diocesan initiatives*. Through our Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions, we offer teacher certification pathways for teachers in the parochial system. We have worked closely with the diocesan seminary to welcome and support and advise seminarians who seek the bachelor's degree or who need coursework that fulfills the requirements for the program for priestly formation. We also offer support for members of Catholic religious orders who study in our undergraduate and graduate programs. Members of our administration and faculty are actively serving in significant leadership roles, at the request of the Bishop, on planning commissions and search committees.

Finally, many members of the Fairfield University faculty, staff, and administration are *members of local parishes* in their home communities around Southeastern Connecticut and are active as religious educators, Eucharistic ministers, lectors and members of parish councils.

Fairfield University values our strong relationship with the Diocese of Bridgeport and Bishop Caggiano, and looks forward to continuing and strengthening these ties.

CHARACTERISTIC 6: JESUIT PRESENCE

The Fairfield University Jesuit Community, in their “presence, work and witness” as Jesuits, is a central animator of Fairfield University’s Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity. As of November 2015, 11 Jesuits were active in the University. Of these, four are full-time faculty members. Seven are staff or administrators: three work in student life or campus ministry, three in specialized projects, as faith and justice, alumni relations, or spirituality, and one is an administrator; four of this latter group of seven also teach at least one class per year. In addition to these 11 fully employed Jesuits, three other Jesuits provide valuable services and assistance to the University as semi-retired scholars or spiritual directors.

The ability of members of the Society to “go anywhere,” has also meant that they bring the narrative of the mission to every corner of the University. Jesuits join our students as they serve on immersion trips abroad and at home. They serve as chaplains to athletic teams and student clubs, and can be found travelling with our teams to conference finals as well as accompanying our Glee Club students to Europe on tour. Jesuits are there to officiate as our students marry and to console them as they fall ill or face serious failure. They are available to our alumni, faculty and staff in formal and numerous informal ways.

There is active conversation with the Society of Jesus in several ways. One notable way is that Fairfield is active in many of the AJCU networks — for chief academic officers, for mission and identity representatives, for student affairs professionals and leadership, for financial and technology leaders and in numerous conferences for academic deans and department chairs. Through these, mission formation is ongoing in ways that are targeted to the inner workings of our institutions of higher education. The Jesuit Provincial has addressed the Board of Trustees each of the last two years, and has visited for conversations on other occasions as well. The secretary for higher education has also been welcome in an annual multi-day visit. These activities provide a window on the national AJCU sensibility — with a strong vision of common purpose — to our campus. While there are some programmatic and faculty ties internationally, the international scope of the Society is less visible at Fairfield. One strategy to address this could be to invite Jesuits on campus with international postings in their background to share their experience.

The self-study group that discussed Characteristic 6, composed of campus Jesuits and one lay person (formed by the Ignatian Colleagues Program), had an extensive conversation about the future. They recognized that the declining number of Jesuits could well have an impact on the Jesuit identity of Fairfield, a concern shared by the local Jesuit community, which actively seeks vocations to the Society from among the young men on campus. The self-study group observed that Jesuit presence is likely to have a very different face in the years to come, suggesting that, in the future, the mission at Fairfield might be carried to a great extent by people of “Jesuit identity,” who are not “Jesuits.”

Lay formation has been an important theme at Fairfield for some time. Our participation in the Ignatian Colleagues Program is robust, as is our participation in the Jesuit Leadership Seminar each June. Many faculty and administrators take advantage of the offering of the Spiritual Exercises on campus, as well as ongoing programming in mission. Nevertheless, exactly what

constitutes a “better educated laity” that will be *received* as “mission-bearing” is a conversation that has yet to find its footing.

The self-study conversation about the Jesuit Presence (individual and corporate) at Fairfield University suggested two approaches to strengthening that presence. The first approach called for a sustained effort to recruit Jesuits to Fairfield as faculty, staff and administrators, including the identification of a “mechanism” that would aid this recruitment (such as the position of a “Jesuit Visiting Scholar”). The second approach called for a more expansive and deliberate program of “hiring for mission” and “orientation/formation for mission” (post-hire). Strategies to address the first approach, seeking to think in new ways about our recruitment effort, are under discussion. This second approach is set into motion by the first of the mission priorities listed at the end of this text.

CHARACTERISTIC 7: INTEGRITY

Fairfield University demonstrates integrity through our leadership, operating systems, environment and culture.

In our concern for the holistic development of faculty, staff and administrators, we provide **formation for mission** by offering programs that introduce the values of the Society of Jesus and a variety of opportunities to engage in Ignatian spirituality. Our practice thus far has been to emphasize this formation for faculty, administration, and student affairs staff. We also provide **formation for leadership** by offering professional continuing education to our faculty and staff, and find that many take advantage of the opportunity to take classes or attend conferences that will advance their careers. As an institution, we need to more clearly embed our values into a formal set of leadership competencies. We also need to more clearly establish a more formal approach to grow high potential talent and plan for leadership succession.

Fairfield's **hiring practices** and **deployment of resources** aim for equity, fairness and inclusion. The University offers a set of benefits to faculty and staff that provide for their health, wellbeing and financial security; the value of these benefits has consistently ranked above average when compared to our regional peer institutions. We seek to attract and hire the most qualified people who understand our mission and are committed to help us achieve business and social objectives. Our Catholic and Jesuit identity is communicated in job postings as well as the various publications shared with the external world through digital and print media, though we do not currently have institution-wide practices for hiring for mission. As part of our broader operating system, we contract with hundreds of service providers who work on our campus. They are valued and respected business partners, and as such, we set expectations regarding professional conduct and fair treatment of their employees. Fairfield has long sought to improve the ethnic diversity of its students, faculty and staff. Further attention is needed on this front, as the percentages of persons of color on our faculty and staff, and among our students, has remained below desired levels the last several years.

The **physical environment** of our campus provides nourishment for body, mind and spirit. Fairfield University is an aesthetically pleasing campus spanning 200 acres with 2.1 million square feet of building space. There are ample areas for rest and reflection as well as the opportunity to participate in social and spiritual activities that underscore our commitment to a healthy and engaged community. Continued facilities' expansion may create tension as the need to expand infrastructure competes with our goal of maintaining an uncompromising balance between nature and utility.

The self-study group that considered Characteristic 7 concluded that our workforce needs to diversify, and recognizes that this would support our recruitment of a more diverse student body, a need that is addressed in mission priority 1 below, which **links mission and diversity in the hiring process**. This self-study group also suggested more intentional approaches to our leadership development and evaluation. Strategies for these are currently being implemented in the office of human resources.

SUMMARY

At Fairfield, we recognize that explicit attention to mission is necessary to ensure that the Jesuit Catholic identity of our university continues to be received as lively and relevant. We also recognize that strategies to do this must be continually re-thought, as Jesuit staffing patterns shift and assumptions about formation or acquaintance with religious traditions no longer hold. The guidelines for the structure of this self-study text, “Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument,” are forthright in their recognition of these changes, and they clearly identify the tensions that exist in mission-driven higher education and the challenges that persist as a result.

As a Jesuit school, we can count on the Ignatian “way of proceeding,” which has always had an experimental, outward-facing and even entrepreneurial cast. Jesuits were sent into the unknown from the first days of the society, a society marked by significant change during its 450-year history. This reinvention process, ignited by the foregrounding of the poor by Superior General Pedro Arrupe, SJ and continued by Superior General Hans Peter Kolvenbach, SJ, has been emphasized as an imperative for Jesuit higher education moving forward, with Superior General Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, having called for Jesuit schools to vigorously counter the “fundamentalism,” “fanaticism” and “self-absorption” that signal the “globalized superficiality of thought” that threatens cultures and peoples.

As Jesuit schools, our search for justice is fed by the world-affirming vision of Catholic Christianity, in Ignatius’ language, the call to “find God in all things.” As Catholic, our schools are intentionally open to those of all faiths (and no faith in particular) as we find that justice requires recognition of the absolute dignity of the other.

As a University, we do all this the smart way — we seek to develop habits of rigorous thought, careful and objective approaches to data, historical perspective, insightful engagement with cultural forms and a practice of reflection that gives rise to real change. We will bring this same pro-active approach to the vigorous engagement of our mission as we live the future of Jesuit education. Continuing the energetic policies, activities and programs outlined above, we offer the following mission priorities as specific initiatives that further speak to this commitment.

FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY MISSION PRIORITIES. November 2015

The AJCU has asked that we consider a five-year timeframe as the horizon for our proposal of a few mission priorities. Through our self-study process, particularly as this served as the focus for at the President's Retreat in November 2015, we have identified three mission priorities that will more clearly foreground our Jesuit, Catholic identity and have a significant impact on our culture as mission driven. Our next step will be to name the specific actions we can take over the next five years with regard to these priorities, and to identify which office will take ownership of each of these steps.

1. Hiring for Mission/Recruiting for diversity. Emerging from the self-study team on Jesuit Presence, the highest ranked mission priority was this: *Emphasize the Mission Statement of Fairfield University as an integral component for any search for University personnel.* Several self-study teams mentioned the value of a diverse student body and workforce. We already are committed to both hiring for mission and recruiting for diversity. But there is a sense that these efforts are not as coordinated, integrated and visible and they should be. We need a stronger process for hiring for mission, so that search committees will elicit meaningful reflection on candidates' interest in our mission as a Jesuit, Catholic institution.

2. Mission Visible in Academics. The Academics self-study team articulated a priority that was closely linked, at the President's Retreat, with the need to hire for mission. It called for Fairfield to ensure, going forward, *that the Catholic Jesuit tradition remains an integral part of our academic mission and identity.* This "integral part," the self-study team suggested, would be best introduced through the following objective: *Identify and prioritize a common intellectual experience that articulates our Catholic Jesuit mission to our undergraduate students.*

3. Stronger Institutional Structure for Service. Finally, there was strong support for an initiative that would *invest in the infrastructure to support a sustained, integrated approach to service, bringing service learning and community service together for coordination.* The centrality of these efforts to our identity as a Jesuit and Catholic institution should, we agreed, be coordinated and highlighted.

“Jesuit. By Design.” Fairfield University’s Mission Examen Self-Study
ACTION SUMMARY: FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY MISSION PRIORITIES 2016-2020

Our self-study process, undertaken during the academic year 2015-2016, resulted in a text – *Jesuit. By Design* – that responds to the AJCU guiding document “Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.” That text concludes, as the guiding document suggests, with three short-term “mission priorities:” actionable, targeted steps that will positively impact our campus culture by more clearly foregrounding our Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity. At the President’s Retreat (14 November 2015), we identified three “mission priorities:”

1. Hiring: we will strengthen our process of hiring for mission and diversity. Emerging from the self-study team on Jesuit Presence, the highest ranked mission priority was this: *Emphasize the Mission Statement of Fairfield University as an integral component for any search for University personnel.* Along with this was the affirmation that hiring for mission must now include the commitment to attract, hire and retain a more diverse pool of candidates across the board (faculty, staff and students).

2. Academics: we will design initiatives to make mission visible in academics. The Academics self-study team called for Fairfield to ensure, going forward, *that the Catholic Jesuit tradition remains an integral part of our academic mission and identity.* This “integral part,” the self-study team suggested, would be best introduced through the following objective: *Identify and prioritize a common intellectual experience that articulates our Catholic Jesuit mission to our undergraduate students.*

3. Service: we will create a stronger institutional structure for service. Finally, there was strong support, at the President’s Retreat, for an initiative that would *invest in the infrastructure to support a sustained, integrated approach to service, bringing service learning and community service together for coordination.*

[Update, ratified at the 9-22-2016 inaugural meeting of the Mission Leadership Council, and affirmed by President Jeffrey P. von Arx, SJ:] In the spirit of the adoption of the *Statement of Shared Purpose* (signed 29 September 2016), we have formulated two additional priorities:

4. Mission Leadership: we will form a Mission Leadership Council. To coordinate and amplify both standing and new mission efforts, a Mission Leadership Council should be formed, chaired by the Vice President for Mission, to bring mission activities into closer integration.

5. Jesuit Presence: we will seek a more intentional engagement between the University and the Fairfield Jesuit Community. Supported by the Mission Leadership Council, and based on the self-understanding of the Jesuit Community at Fairfield University, a more distinctive role for Jesuits on campus, including a more thoughtful dialogue among all parties about this role, should be sought. Overall, the University needs to nurture a more visible and forward-looking engagement with the Fairfield Jesuit Community.

A mechanism to assess our progress in these five areas will be put in place by September 2017, so that 3 rounds of annual assessment will be available by September 2020.