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## Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States: A Reciprocal Interdependence Analysis

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*What common values do diverse Jesuit institutions share? In what ways are Jesuit colleges and universities working to maintain mission, identity, and traditions within the context of 21st-century higher education? To ground their response to these questions, the researchers first review the historical and ecclesial developments that have influenced the mission and identity of Catholic institutions of higher education (IHEs). They discuss the resulting changes in the vision of US Jesuit colleges and universities and trace the impact of the theological shift fostered by Vatican II documents and the Land O'Lakes statement on Catholic colleges and universities in general and Jesuit institutions in particular. Finally, the study critically analyzes the reciprocal interdependence of the seven AJCU characteristics to provide insights and recommendations for implementation of a reimagined articulation of Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity for member institutions, and other Catholic IHEs.*

### Keywords

Jesuit universities, Catholic universities, Jesuit mission and identity, Catholic mission and identity, reciprocal interdependence

### Background

Every March people who follow college basketball hear radio and television announcers speak of Creighton, Gonzaga, Marquette, and St. Louis Universities. Frequently enough the announcer, in mentioning one of them, will add “a Jesuit institution.” For many people that reference brings up the question, “What is a Jesuit university or college?” In using the term *Jesuit*, we refer to institutions of higher education (IHEs), both colleges and universities, that describe themselves as having some historical and juridical connection with or sponsorship by an international Catholic religious order known as the Society of Jesus. In the study that follows, we have limited our

research of Jesuit IHEs to those in the United States. By the term characteristics, we wish to denote those religious and intellectual qualities that express the main attributes of the college or university from the perspective of the undergraduate level. As Gleason (1995) so eloquently surmised, “Without understanding Catholic educators’ religious and intellectual convictions we cannot possibly understand what they did or why they did it” (p. vii).

Currently 28 such institutions exist. The oldest of these is Georgetown University in Washington, DC, founded in 1789. The most recently established is Wheeling Jesuit University, founded in 1954, in West Virginia. Between these two dates, the Society of Jesus initiated other IHEs, which both the media and the general public often associate with sports and academics (such as Boston College and Marquette University), with others most frequently known for their professional schools (such as St. Louis and Creighton Universities). Some are very small (such as the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama). Because of the diversity and variety of these Jesuit IHEs, we posed the following research questions: (a) What common values do these diverse Jesuit institutions share? (b) In what ways are Jesuit colleges and universities working to maintain mission, identity, and traditions within the context of 21st-century higher education?

When we refer to institutional mission, we mean the overarching purpose and function of an IHE. This mission is most typically evident in the granting of degrees, community engagement, student affairs, and other academic services. However, identity is a more unique concept that “refers to a shared set of ideals that represent the whole organization” (Platt, 2014, p. 9). Curiously, as Platt (2014) recently asserted, “Existing literature concerning institutional success does not directly address how an organization with a developed identity and mission, such as a college administered by the Society of Jesus, adapts to survive given environmental influences” (p. 8). Because of this lack of background on the adaptation of Jesuit IHEs to external factors, a brief review of varied histories of Jesuit IHEs is in order to provide an essential contextual foundation from which we can then respond to these two central research questions.

Each Jesuit IHE has its own rather unique history. We notice that, with the exception of five of them, most were established in the 19th century (with only Georgetown beginning in the 18th century). The five IHEs established in the 20th century were Fairfield (1942), Loyola Marymount (1911), Loyola New Orleans (1912), Rockhurst (1910), and Wheeling (1954). The founding

dates of most of these institutions correlate with times when Catholics were an immigrant minority in the US (Gleason, 2008). The students (and their families) frequently lacked the money or education to attend a prominent public institution (Zagano, 1990). Many were attracted by the religious values these educational institutions represented since these early colleges “served as staging areas for the Church’s expansion” (Gleason, 2008; Zagano, 1990). At this same time, other religions were also establishing their own IHEs (Gleason, 2008).

By the 20th century, each Jesuit IHE sought accreditation from the particular state in which it was located (Platt, 2014). It is noteworthy that each Jesuit IHE is an autonomous corporation, whose “distinctive identity . . . is important to understand when examining the larger institutional identity of a Jesuit institution” (Platt, 2014, p. 47). This autonomy precluded a single institutional plan that would fit all the needs, demands, and desires of the regional populace (Platt, 2014). In a similar vein, academic and professional needs differed from region to region (Gleason, 2008). Even so, several academic areas were common at the undergraduate level in all the institutions: religion (theology), philosophy, mathematics, English, and history. At the graduate level, schools of medicine, dentistry, labor relations, and others were established, but they varied according to the geographical area and the number of students who would enroll in these programs. Each Jesuit IHE, therefore, developed somewhat separately from sister institutions, especially if they were located in another state. No national organization united them except for the Jesuit Educational Association (JEA, founded in 1936), even though it had no juridical power (AJCU, 2013a). Most of the yearly meetings of the JEA consisted of exchanges of information (JSEA, 2014).

### **Paradigmatic Shift in Mission and Identity**

The 1960s, however, brought about major changes. As the Vietnam War, riots on campuses, and Civil Rights dominated the newspaper headlines, internally, the Catholic Church was taking a fresh look at itself with the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965 (LaBelle & Kendall, 2011). How could the Church still be relevant in light of so many changes? To respond to this question, the Council took a historical approach in viewing the contemporary world. Church leaders were curious to know what the Church could learn from her own past as well as from the present signs of the times.

After the Council ended, the President of the University of Notre Dame, Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., took the lead in confronting changes that

needed to take place in Catholic higher education (1967). He hosted a conference of 26 Catholic educational leaders, several of whom were Jesuits. The group included university presidents, lay trustees, three bishops, and religious superiors (O'Brien, 1998). The fruits of their meetings were expressed in a document titled "Statement on the Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University" (Notre Dame, 1967), usually referred to as the *Land O'Lakes* statement. O'Brien (1998) summarized the key issues involved:

Three central issues faced the participants in the Wisconsin seminar: relations with ecclesiastical authorities, academic freedom and its occasional absence, and the seriousness of their academic commitment. Were their universities first of all Catholic, carrying on university work on the basis of that identity? Or were they first of all universities, organizing research and teaching like other universities, then adding other dimensions to that work because they were Catholic? (p. 5).

According to this group, a Catholic institution of higher education should include the following characteristics:

1. To be a university in the full sense of the word, with a strong commitment to and concern for academic excellence;
2. To be a community of learners that has a social existence and organizational form;
3. To reflect the Christian spirit, and find profound and creative ways for the service of society and the people of God. (Gallin, 1992, pp. 7-10)

The document went on to encourage inner-city social action, personal aid to those educationally disadvantaged, and exploration of new forms of Christian living, of Christian witness, and of Christian service. In short, a person's Christianity should be expressed in a variety of ways and be lived experientially and experimentally.

Theological disciplines, they maintained, are essential to the integrity of a Catholic university. Thus, the theology faculty members need to be in contact with other areas of study and to dialogue with them, especially through interdisciplinary studies. This involves research as well as actively serving the Church and society.

To do all this, the Catholic university must have true autonomy and academic freedom—essential conditions of its life, growth, and survival. This final point caused many conservative Catholics to say that those who subscribe to this statement have rejected the teaching authority of the Catholic Church (Gallin, 1992, pp. 7–12). In O'Brien's (1998) opinion, "For too long Catholic universities had been Catholic first, universities second. Now they would have to reverse the emphasis" (p. 9). O'Brien (1998) then goes on to quote Hesburgh as claiming, "The Church does not have to enter this world of university life . . . but, if it wishes to do so, it must follow the established university rules of freedom and autonomy" (p. 9).

The following year (1968) the Conference of Major Superiors of Jesuits was formed. (This became known as the Jesuit Conference in 1971). Because U.S. Jesuits lived in various regions (provinces), quite frequently the men identified more with a geographical section of the United States than they did with the whole country. Thus there was often a lack of coordination and a duplication of efforts. The Jesuit Conference hoped to facilitate more interaction between and among the provinces. Almost simultaneously (1970), the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) came into existence. This Jesuit network currently defines itself as a

national organization that represents Jesuit higher education among its various constituencies, provides a forum for the exchange of information and experiences in Jesuit higher education, and encourages and facilitates collaborative initiatives among its member institutions. Those initiatives include: fostering Jesuit, Catholic identity and mission, educating for a faith that does justice, supporting national and international collaboration between campuses, sponsoring professional and leadership development programs, and offering online educational opportunities through the distance education network, JesuitNET. (AJCU, 2013a)

Nine years later (1979), Pope John Paul II addressed a gathering of educational leaders at the Catholic University of America to speak about some of the goals he envisioned for Catholic colleges and universities. He outlined what he considered the three aims of a Catholic university or college: (a) make a contribution to the Church and society through high quality scientific research, and to show concern for the complete development of the person; (b) train people so that they will be able to assume tasks in the service of the

community and society, and to bear witness to their faith; and (c) set up a community of faculty and students where commitment to research and study go together with a commitment to authentic Christian living (Pope John Paul II, 1979).

Yet another decade later (1990), an important step occurred when Pope John Paul II issued a letter on Catholic higher education. Its title was *Ex corde ecclesiae* (“From the heart of the Church”) (Gallin, 1992, pp. 413–437), and it presented the pope’s views of what a Catholic institution of higher education should be. The Pope told the world that a university should encourage research and service, be faithful to the Christian message, and teach theology and philosophy in such a way that students would gain an organic view of reality, promote social justice, and be an instrument of evangelization and cultural dialogue. He emphasized that a university should consider the “whole person” rather than just intellectual aspects.

Parts of this document included the Pope’s controversial thoughts on hiring faculty (how many should be Catholic?), the percentage of Catholics who should be on a board of trustees, and the insistence that those Catholics who teach theology be approved by a “competent” ecclesiastical authority (usually the local bishop). These views indicated that someone outside of the university would be dictating policy. Naturally with federal monies often involved, U.S. universities were—and are—somewhat hesitant about implementing these aspects of the late Pope’s wishes even though they desire to maintain their Catholic identity.

Twenty years later (2010), the AJCU published a document entitled *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of the U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities* (AJCU, 2010). They divided the material into six areas. Here we have summarized the essential focus of each thematic area. See Figure 1 for the way we see them interrelating.

1. *Defining Character: Catholic, Jesuit University.* To educate in a way that seeks God in all things, promotes discernment, and engages the world through a careful analysis of context, in dialogue with experience, evaluated through reflection, for the sake of action, and with openness, always, to evaluation (see Figure 1, Core Curriculum, Jesuit Presence, and Catholic Jesuit Campus Culture). (AJCU, 2010, pp. 3–5)

2. *Further Dimensions of our Apostolic Rationale.* To continue the historic Jesuit mission of educating first generation students; to serve the persistently poor, homeless, minorities, victims of discrimination; to consider global engagement as an essential element of education, not only educating inter-

national students, but by participating in exchange programs, and being in dialogue with different cultures and religious beliefs and values (see Figure 1, Service). (AJCU, 2010, pp. 6–8)

3. *Collaboration and Governance.* To state clearly that the board of each institution has the ultimate responsibility for its policies, governance, and operation; the board has the responsibility for maintaining the Catholic, Jesuit character of the institution (see Figure 1, Leadership). (AJCU, 2010, pp. 9–12)

4. *Jesuit and Jesuit Communities.* To seek and employ competent Jesuits in maintaining the Jesuit identity; qualified Jesuits are not limited to scholars but can serve in other capacities (see Figure 1, Jesuit Presence and Leadership). (AJCU, 2010, pp. 13–16)

5. *Presidents, Rectors, and Provincials.* The Rector (Superior of local Jesuits) is the liaison between the Order and the institution. He works with university officials in maintaining the Jesuit character. Practically that means working with higher superiors in suggesting competent Jesuit personnel to work in the college or university, and maintaining open lines of communication with the board and university officials (see Figure 1, Jesuit Presence and Leadership). (AJCU, 2010, pp. 17–18)

6. *Relationship with Bishops.* The president should maintain a friendly relationship with the local bishop since the college/university is a ministry of the Church; often the institution can provide needed resources for the local Church (see Figure 1, Service to the Local Church). (AJCU, 2010, pp. 20–21)

In light of this historical overview, we now return to our two research questions: (a) What common values do these diverse Jesuit institutions share? (b) In what ways are Jesuit colleges and universities working to maintain mission, identity, and traditions within the context of 21st-century higher education? Most recently, the AJCU Board (AJCU, 2013b) published *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-evaluation Instrument*, in which the AJCU provided corresponding examples by which we might assess each characteristic. This conceptual framework provides the criteria for evaluating the data from each IHE under discussion.

## Methodology

Since Jesuit presence (Jesuit identity) is essential to what distinguishes the member IHEs of the AJCU, we have situated Jesuit presence at the focal point of the following schematic representation of our theoretical framework (see Figure 1). For purposes of this study, we have framed our data analysis

upon three overarching thematic areas: *Leadership, Offices and Services*, and *Core Curriculum*, from which all other thematic characteristics of Jesuit IHEs are generated. The lower triangles of this schematic model (*Service, Service to Local Church, Academic Life, Integrity, and Catholic Jesuit Campus Culture*) are contingent upon the centrality of Jesuit Presence as lived out through Leadership, Core Curriculum, and Offices and Services. To the extent that an IHE embodies its Jesuit Presence, it is imbued with such historically essential Jesuit qualities as *cura personalis*, *magis*, and the *Ratio Studiorum*.

Otto (2015) described *cura personalis* in very human and contemporary terms in the following excerpt from his blog dotMagis sponsored by Loyola Press:

Our talents, abilities, physical attributes, personalities, desires, hearts, faith, and minds are all equally worthy of care and attention. The term *cura personalis* is typically heard in Jesuit universities and institutions. Why? Because their mission and purpose goes beyond the intellect of the head. When I worked at Georgetown University Hospital, *cura personalis* was a reminder to staff and patients that the hospital's mission included not just the health of the body but also the health of the entire person.

Creighton University (2015) describes *magis* as “the more” in a student’s education. The tradition of *magis* is “deeply rooted in Ignatian values and the Jesuit intellectual tradition, engaging students through intimate learning communities in critical dialogue about the ultimate questions of life” (p. 1). In 1599, the Jesuits published the *Ratio Studiorum* (A Plan of Studies) “to ensure high standard and uniform practices in Jesuit schools in different parts of the world” (O’Malley, 2014, p. 23). Over the course of subsequent centuries, the Ratio has been revised several times. Currently, following it is not obligatory in Jesuit IHEs, but it has great historical significance by showing practically how one finds God in all things, especially in curricula and environments that are rapidly changing.

We gathered our data from various sources available through printed documents and on-line publications. Some of these were historical documents such as the *Ratio Studiorum* itself, others were contemporary interpretations or analyses of that original Plan of Studies, such as *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-evaluation Instrument* (2013). We reviewed the core curricula of the 28 AJCU member institutions as presented on their

various web pages, as well as the analyses of these developed in Su's (2014) *Marquette University Core of Common Studies Self-study 2014*, a document available due to our participation on Marquette University's core curriculum review committee. This last document provided a wealth of data, some of which is adapted in the charts in the appendices of this article.

In our *Schematic Representation of Characteristics of a Jesuit College or University* (Figure 1), we have situated Jesuit Presence as central in relationship to all other characteristics of Jesuit IHEs. Similar to Thompson's (1967) description of the reciprocal interdependence of departments within an organization, Jesuit Presence affects Leadership, Core Curriculum, as well as Offices and Services, which in turn further support and enhance Jesuit Presence on the 28 AJCU campuses. In this sense, the characteristics of a Jesuit college or university function in reciprocal interdependence, with Jesuit Presence serving as the unifying or grounding characteristic. As Thompson (1967) elucidated, "Reciprocal interdependence refers to the situation in which the outputs of each [organization or department] become inputs for the others" (p. 55). Reciprocal interdependence is similar to sequential interdependence, but is characterized by its cyclical nature and mutual adjustment and communication seen among departments and organizations (Thompson, 1967, p. 64). In contrast to a sequential approach, it is precisely the cyclical nature of reciprocal interdependence that is so essential to the cohesiveness of the characteristics of AJCU institutions.

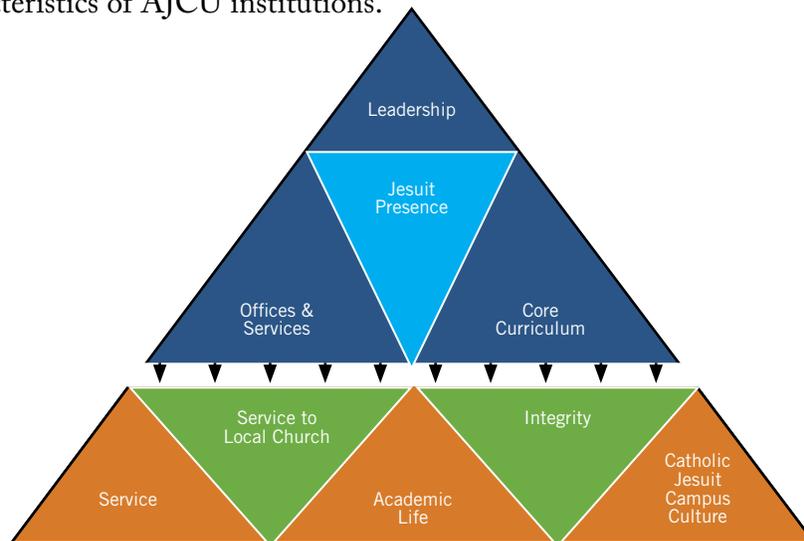


Figure 1. Schematic representation of characteristics of a Jesuit College or University.

Each of the three characteristics that reciprocally interdepend on Jesuit Presence (i.e., Leadership, Core Curriculum, as well as Offices and Services) is grounded in the Ignatian concepts of *magis*, *cura personalis*, and the *Ratio Studiorum*. This conceptual framework forms the interpretive lens through which we will analyze the data in this study. By situating Jesuit Presence as the central or focal point of the schema, we have given it the necessary emphasis, as it marks the nature of these 28 Catholic IHEs as particularly Jesuit. In addition, the pairing of a Jesuit value or concept to each of the three primary characteristics allows further grounding in the tradition of Jesuit mission and identity based upon the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Ignatius of Loyola, 1968).

### Data Analysis

The AJCU (2013b) developed the following list of essential characteristics of a Jesuit college or university as its conceptual framework: (a) Leadership's Commitment to the Mission; (b) The Academic Life: An academic life that reflects the Catholic and Jesuit Mission as an integral part of its overall intellectual commitment to research and teaching excellence; (c) A Catholic, Jesuit Campus Culture; (d) Service; (e) Service to the Local Church; (f) Jesuit Presence; and (g) Integrity. Each of these seven characteristics has accompanying factors to consider for assessing each characteristic (see Appendix A). Unfortunately, this framework—due to its linear design—fails to adequately articulate and accentuate the centrality of Jesuit Presence for the effectiveness of each of the other characteristics. Furthermore, it does not explicitly account for two essential values, *cura personalis* and *magis*, as well as the historical adaptations of the *Ratio Studiorum*. Rather, it presents a more linear depiction of characteristics, which are measureable for assessment purposes. The schematic representation developed earlier in our methodology section (Figure 1) more accurately captures the interactive and interdependent nature of each of these elements within a larger theoretical framework of three overarching aspects of Jesuit IHEs (Leadership, Offices and Services, and Core Curriculum), which more directly take into account the three core values and dispositions of *cura personalis*, *magis*, as well as the historical adaptations of the *Ratio Studiorum*.

### Leadership

At the beginning of 1990, all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities had a Jesuit as their president. Obviously those in this leadership position could strongly

influence the curriculum and campus life. They also provided a certain uniformity in all the institutions. In 1990, the University of Detroit merged with another local Catholic institution, Mercy College. The first president of this new venture was a religious woman, Sister Maureen Fay. She held this position until 2004. The University of Detroit Mercy was still considered a Jesuit institution, although it became the first one in the 20th century to have a non-Jesuit and a woman as its president (Fay, 2014). A decade later (2001), Georgetown University selected a layman as its president, John J. DeGioia.

Between 2001 and 2015, several other Jesuit institutions selected non-Jesuits to be their president. They include LeMoyne College in Syracuse, which in 2014 selected Linda LeMaura to be the first laywoman president; University of Detroit Mercy; Georgetown; Canisius College (Buffalo); Gonzaga University (Spokane), Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles); Marquette University; (Milwaukee); Rockhurst University (Kansas City); St. Peter's University (Jersey City); and St. Louis University. As of 2016, these 10 comprise more than one-third of the 28 Jesuit IHE presidents. Such a trend suggests that this number will increase in coming years. Because of this change in leadership, many have questioned: "Can an institution without a Jesuit as the president, and with almost no Jesuits in the classroom, still call itself Jesuit?"

In their recent reflections upon Notre Dame's mission as a Catholic university, Smith and Cavadini (2014) pointed to the importance of a clear, consistent vision of the unity of faith and intellectual inquiry that requires a predominantly Catholic faculty as well as a commitment by non-Catholic faculty to share as equal partners in the mission of the university. Furthermore, Smith and Cavadini's (2014) essay in that same volume underscored the importance of theology's essential role in the curriculum to foster a new "paradigm of intellectual culture as a dialogue between faith and reason" (p. 103). Such a dialogic relationship can assist in the integration of knowledge across belief systems. Furthermore, leadership training to school individuals in the spirit of *cura personalis* can enhance the style with which they direct Jesuit IHEs.

As in all organizational endeavors, the future of Jesuit colleges and universities depends largely on the quality of their leadership. If university presidents and the boards embrace and share the Jesuit vision, they will continue to influence the institutions of the AJCU. Certainly efforts are under way to provide training to promote this vision through the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP) and other workshops of the AJCU. Nevertheless, member

institutions of the AJCU are still left with a double challenge: (a) to identify and recruit presidents and board members who embrace and share the Jesuit vision and (b) to recruit Jesuits to serve in these same institutions as faculty members, administrators, and campus ministers. However, as Byron (2011) has observed:

Commitment to the mission does not necessarily imply a personal faith commitment that matches that of a faith-based college or university. It does mean, however, respect for the institution's religious identity and a desire to advance the institution's faith-based mission. (p. 29)

The vitality and strength of the Jesuit identity of the 28 IHEs in the AJCU depends upon successfully facing these two challenges. Central to responding to these concerns is Jesuit presence.

**Jesuit presence.** What is the relationship of the individual IHE to the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)? Byron (2011) argued that a decreasing presence of Jesuit leadership in colleges and universities could lower awareness of and commitment to the Catholic identity of the institution. We noted earlier that each Jesuit institution is legally incorporated in the state in which it is located. Likewise, most of the Jesuit communities that founded and serve these institutions have been incorporated separately from the institutions themselves. This process began in the late 1960s. Although the Jesuits support their own religious communities with their salaries, the question centers on their present relationship to the particular institutions that they founded. Usually one of the recruitment strategies is the claim that "This is a Jesuit College/University." Since the IHEs are growing and the number of Jesuits is diminishing, what role do they play?

"In the late 1940s and throughout the decade of the '50s Catholic Colleges began to shift governance control from members of the sponsoring religious community to lay men and women" (Byron, 2011, p. 28). This transition was seen very dramatically at Notre Dame under the leadership of Hesburgh (president from 1952 to 1987). Ironically, those who have challenged the Catholicity of Notre Dame and Boston College have conveniently ignored the fact that both have two extremely talented Catholic theology faculties as well as high endowments to sustain their faculties.

**Leadership's commitment to the mission.** With regard to this concern about the leadership's support of mission, one might pose the following two questions: "How well does the institution follow [the mission]? Does it re-

flect the current situation or is it out of date?” Currie (2011) sought to respond to these questions by looking at the “impressive consistency and coherence in the Jesuit characteristics found in the mission statements of the 28 AJCU schools” (p. 354). Currie learned that “The minimum number of times the following 10 descriptors were found in 28 AJCU mission statements was 16. Seven of the descriptors were found in more than 20 mission statements” (p. 359). Four of Currie’s (2011) 10 descriptors coincide with the characteristics outlined in this study: specifically, these are Jesuit/Catholic [Presence], service, academic excellence, leadership. Of course, the real challenge, according to Currie (2011), is “operationalizing identity and mission in terms of experiences that women and men of different faith traditions and backgrounds can share” (p. 351).

**Integrity.** An essential part of fostering integrity among faculty and staff is through ongoing education and training. Currie (2011) cited the need for “More extensive and effective orientation programs for new faculty and staff, as well as ongoing educational programs, discussions, seminars, etc.” (p. 351). This support demonstrates human resources’ commitment to school mission as well as an investment in the future of the core values of an AJCU institution. Additionally, hiring individuals who either grasp or are open to developing a sense of mission in their work is essential. Currie (2011) further recommended, “Hiring for mission initiatives that are sensitive to the particular campus culture, while helping to recruit women and men who are both fully qualified and committed to the identity and mission of the institution” (p. 352).

### Core Curriculum

What values do today’s Jesuit colleges and universities reflect in their core curriculum?

Let us look at a diverse sample of the core curricula in 2015 at nine Jesuit institutions. For this purpose we have picked three universities in eastern USA (Boston College, Loyola University Maryland, and Georgetown), three universities in the Heartland-Delta region (Marquette, St. Louis University, and Loyola of New Orleans), and three universities in the west (Regis, Gonzaga, and the University of San Francisco). First, let us look at the east.

Boston College’s core curriculum (Boston College, 2015) contains 16 courses (1 course in arts, fine arts, cultural diversity, literature, mathematics, and writing; 2 courses in natural science, history, philosophy, social science, and theology).

Loyola University Maryland (2015) demands that a student fulfill the core requirements by taking course in 12 areas (plus a diversity core). A single course is required in writing, foreign language, fine arts, mathematical science, natural science, math/science and ethics. A student must take 2 courses in English literature, social science, philosophy, and theology.

Georgetown University requires students to take 2 courses in the following areas: humanities and writing, history, mathematics/science, social science, theology, and philosophy. Foreign languages must be taken through the intermediate level. Thus a student must take 12 courses plus the language requirements to complete the core requirements (Georgetown, 2015).

Turning to the Heartland-Delta region, we discover that, in a similar manner, Marquette University requires the same number of units (36) as does Georgetown but without the language requirements. To complete the core curriculum at Marquette a student must take 1 course in mathematical reasoning, individual and social behavior, diverse cultures, literature/performing arts, histories of cultures and societies, science and nature, and 2 courses in rhetoric, human nature and ethics, and theology (Marquette University, 2015).

St. Louis University has a much broader core curriculum than what we have seen so far. According to the Arts and Sciences Bachelor of Arts worksheet, a student must take 3 courses each in philosophy and theology; 2 courses in cultural diversity, literature, natural sciences, world history, social science; 1 course in Foundations of Discourse; foreign language; Diversity in the US; global citizenship, fine and performing arts, mathematics (St. Louis University, 2015).

Students who enroll at Loyola of New Orleans face a two-tiered structure. In the lower tier, students must take a course in a First Year Seminar, English, history, mathematics, philosophy, religious studies, and science process. Depending on their major, students must take courses in the Advanced Common Curriculum that includes single courses in creative arts and cultures, engaging in science-lab, ethics, history, natural science in context, philosophy, religious studies, social science, and writing about literature. Additionally, students must show competency in a foreign language, or pass a second-semester course examination. Thus students must take all the lower tier (7) courses plus 6 or more additional courses in the upper tier (Loyola University New Orleans, 2015).

Shifting our attention to the West, Regis University in Denver divides the core curriculum into three parts: (a) the foundational core (2 courses in writing analytically); (b) Distributive Core 1 course each in economic systems;

fine arts; foreign language [2 courses]; literature; mathematics; natural science (plus a corresponding lab); history; philosophy; religious studies [2 courses]; social sciences; public speaking); (c) Integrative Core (12 units of interdisciplinary courses). This amounts to 36 units of core curriculum courses (not counting the Integrative Core) (Regis University, 2015).

Gonzaga's core curriculum is simple and clear. All students must take courses in Thought and Expression (7 units that combine English, critical thinking and speech communication), 3 courses each in philosophy and religious studies, 1 course each in mathematics, and English Literature (Gonzaga, 2015).

The University of San Francisco uses a 4-unit-course semester model. Students are required to take one 4-unit course in 11 areas that are: public speaking, rhetoric and composition; mathematics or quantitative science; applied or laboratory science, literature, history, philosophy, theology/religious studies, ethics; social sciences, and visual and performing arts (University of San Francisco, 2015).

Although titles of courses as they are listed in catalogs might sometimes be ambivalent and hard to specifically categorize, we can draw some conclusions from these data. All the institutions require students to take courses in theology/religious studies and philosophy (some schools list ethics as a category separate from philosophy or theology). Likewise, these institutions see writing (composition and rhetoric), literature (usually English), and history as important elements in the Core. Social sciences and lab-oriented sciences as well as mathematics are necessary. Frequently computer science is classified under mathematics. Courses in the arts and fine arts are not as prevalent as the others mentioned above, but are required by some of the schools. Surprisingly public speaking did not score too highly, although sometimes such courses are classified under rhetoric. We note from the data that these nine Jesuit institutions value theology/religious studies and philosophy, and promote traditional liberal arts courses as a foundation for further studies. The religious and philosophical requirements show a certain uniqueness to Jesuit studies, although other Catholic colleges and universities usually demand the same of their students. Such requirements show a consistency across the core curriculum of Jesuit IHEs and reflect the values central to Jesuit identity and presence.

Many of these values appear in the recent self-study of one Jesuit IHE's core curriculum (Su, 2014), in which data are presented regarding foreign language and diverse cultures course requirements at all 28 Jesuit IHEs. In this same study, Su (2014) compared their IHE's core requirements with those of

four similar Jesuit IHEs across the AJCU. Quite clearly theology and religious studies courses, as well as social justice/societal knowledge courses are central to sustaining Jesuit identity and presence throughout the core curricula of the AJCU institutions.

Regardless of the particular contemporary variation and adaptation of the *Ratio Studiorum* by the 28 Jesuit IHEs, their core curricula are grounded in the inspiration of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, founder of the Society of Jesus. Indeed, this school of prayer promotes a particular pedagogy that embodies the habits, dispositions, and values characteristic of Jesuit identity. As O'Brien (2015) summarized quite succinctly:

The Exercises, a school of prayer, offer a certain pedagogy that can translate to higher education settings. They teach habit of reflection that help students and others integrate experience, understanding, and moral decision-making, whether in classrooms, laboratories, residences halls, athletic fields, or community service sites. (p. 4)

**Academic life.** Not only should a Jesuit IHE be noted for academic excellence, but also the caliber of the academic life should be measured more by its explicit and overt Jesuit and Catholic character. This would entail a more critical, ethical posture toward contemporary issues grounded in Catholic thought that challenges static, perfunctory thinking. Faculty members should be encouraged to teach and publish in such cutting-edge areas recommended in Jesuit superior general Nicolás's (2010) address, in which he emphasized promoting depth of thought and imagination, rediscovering universality, and learned ministry. Intellectual engagement would necessarily involve community engagement at the local and global levels. Scholarly research would address issues of the meaning of life, quality of life, environmental sustainability, and so forth. In short, this academic life should reflect the Catholic and Jesuit mission. In addition, the *Spiritual Exercises* should shape and inform this intellectual endeavor. As O'Brien (2015) concluded, "Finally, if the Exercises are to animate the work of the university, they cannot be confined to campus ministry: they must inform academic and student life" (p. 4).

**Catholic, Jesuit campus culture.** A number of areas of concern naturally arise regarding the Catholic, Jesuit campus culture; these include (a) the development of cocurricular activities, (b) the role of campus ministry, (c) the role of student affairs or student life offices in regard to fostering Catholic, Jesuit ideals, (d) social and community engagement especially with social and

economically marginalized populations, (e) issues of inclusion and diversity, and (f) the promotion of faith and the service of justice in conjunction with the local and universal Catholic Church. The development of such a campus ethos entails “Increasing integration of identity and mission issues into the curriculum and co-curriculum (e.g., in curricular changes, living-learning courses, immersion experiences, and justice programs)” (Currie, 2011, p. 352).

Whitney and Laboe (2014) have stressed the importance of institutional mission in shaping campus culture, concluding, “As such, it is important that all members of a campus community not only understand the mission, but also have a sense of agency in determining how to live the mission through their work” (p. 136). Although their context was a Vincentian Catholic university, the centrality of mission and identity in fostering a particular values-based Catholic campus culture applies as well to Jesuit and other Catholic IHEs. In addition, Whitney and Laboe’s (2014) mention of a “sense of agency” pointed to the importance of the manner in which staff members carry out their services for students, faculty, and the general public.

### **Offices and Services**

Along with the core curriculum, most Jesuit institutions now have an office of Mission and Identity (sometimes called Mission and Ministry). People in this office examine their mission statement and provide advice in hiring faculty, recommending trustees, looking at university policies, and applying the mission goals to specific situations. Typically, Jesuit IHE catalogs published before 1970 do not mention the existence of such an office. Often people who belong to its staff sit on committees that interview prospective new faculty members and administrators. Just because a person is a good teacher in a certain discipline or can run an efficient office does not in itself provide a good reason for hiring such a person. It is important that individuals in these offices examine the mission in hiring practices to ensure the hiring of individuals who, themselves, align with goals toward which the institution is striving.

Although Jesuit IHEs have traditionally provided for the religious needs of students, frequently, in past times, the focus was only on Catholics. Just as the Catholic Church changed after the Second Vatican Council, so did the Jesuit approach in this area. What was the Office of the Chaplain became Campus Ministry. Here a team model was used not just for Sunday masses, but also for marriage preparation, discussion groups, spiritual direction,

catechesis, and seminars. A single director could not adequately respond to these diverse needs. Often such programs brought in speakers and retreats focused on specific topics. Later on, in some places, the title Campus Ministry became University Ministry. This reflected a wider emphasis: not just on undergraduate students, but also on graduate students, faculty, and staff. Even faculty learned that Adult Education was profitable for their own lives. Thus the theological aspects of the curriculum were not just theoretical, but involved activities that included non-Catholics. The spirit of ecumenism had become part of campus life (LaBelle & Kendall, 2011).

Since Jesuit IHEs provide ministers for Christian communities, most have a chapel on campus or one located near the campus that is focused on serving both students and faculty. However, the local Church often has nearby parishes where programs exist for people of many different ages and backgrounds. Thus a service requirement can also be an internship for interested students who want to become more involved.

Most college graduates have fond memories of living in student housing. Sometimes they did not always have the most ideal roommate, but they profited from living with other students and learned much about themselves and issues that they and others faced. Traditionally Jesuit IHEs have had Jesuits living in the residence halls. Since the number of Jesuits has diminished over the last three decades, the institutions have turned more and more to “resident ministers”—usually younger people who live in the residence halls but can promote religious values to those living on campus.

Immersion and Service Learning programs have become popular. They complement the classroom by providing students with hands-on experience. They also provide an opportunity to foster Catholic values when students face basic questions such as: “What obligation do we have to provide shelter and food for the homeless? How can I make the world a better place in which to live?” Such experiences can lead to reflection and action on social justice issues (LaBelle & Kendall, 2009).

The Jesuit IHE itself sometimes uses its resources to further social justice. For instance, in 2015, Loyola University of Chicago initiated a two-year associate’s degree program for motivated students who lack sufficient financial resources and academic credentials for funding and admission at four-year institutions. Arrupe College offers a liberal arts, highly structured, affordable education that will equip the students with the skills and credits to transfer into and complete a four-year program at a regular university.

Arrupe College's education model includes:

- Enhanced summer pre-enrollment orientation
- A strong cohort and holistic, integrated series of supports for students to optimize their chances for academic and social success
- Intensive one-on-one contact with specialized faculty
- Significant increase in availability of faculty and staff due to small class sizes
- A two-year associate's degree that is fully transferable to state and private options throughout the state
- A financial strategy that permits low-income students to fully finance the cost of instruction with financial aid that does not include assuming debt

The affordability of Arrupe College is a critical key to the model. All students who enroll will receive student aid, and the expectation is that students will carry little to no debt after completion of the program (Loyola University Chicago's Arrupe College, 2015).

**Service.** Part of Jesuit education is active involvement in service. This wide category can include involvement in the college or university activities, the local community (such as homeless shelters, tutoring), and even working outside of the United States. The question needs to be asked: How truly "immersed" are students who are involved in service learning projects? Do they learn the language if the people with whom they work do not speak English? As a result of their experience do they see the world through new lenses? How are service-learning programs monitored? What type(s) of reflection is demanded? Is there a variety of service-learning programs? What is the relationship of the institution to the community in which it is located? What resources does it provide? In response to these questions, Currie (2010) commented, "National and international immersion experiences are increasingly common. Jesuit campuses have moved significantly beyond the relatively simple idea of volunteerism and community service to an increasingly global pursuit of justice and solidarity" (p. 124).

**Service to the local church.** Since each Jesuit IHE is located in a diocese, questions usually arise in regard to the relationship with the local bishop. Obviously the Jesuit institution can provide resources (especially scholarly and educationally) for the wider Catholic and religious community. What type of outreach does the institution have to the local church? Is there any

mutual coordination or joint sponsorship of activities? Does the Jesuit institution see itself as educating and preparing leaders in the Catholic intellectual tradition? For instance, does the theology department provide speakers to nonstudents on faith and moral questions? Does the sociology department help with demographics and surveys, or does the school of education orient future teachers to local needs?

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon the analysis of the data we have examined through the interpretive lens of our conceptual framework (see Figure 1), which is grounded in the *Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities* (AJCU, 2013), we will now make some concluding observations in response to our two research questions: (a) What common values do these diverse Jesuit institutions share? (b) In what ways are Jesuit colleges and universities working to maintain mission, identity, and traditions within the context of 21st-century higher education?

Regarding the common values that diverse Jesuit IHEs share, we have shown how these reciprocally interdepend and interact through our schematic representation of the AJCU characteristics. Our analysis provides further support for these same characteristics as linked to historically enduring Jesuit values and traditions: *magis*, *cura personalis*, and the *Ratio Studiorum*.

First, it is quite clear that Jesuit Presence is essential to all other characteristics. Second, Leadership must be grounded in the *magis*. Third, Offices and Services must be imbued with the spirit of *cura personalis*. Fourth, the Core Curriculum must be an adaptation of the *Ratio Studiorum* that genuinely reflects the social context in which the IHE is situated. Fifth, the framework of *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-evaluation Instrument*, while perhaps serving as a linear description and listing of factors to consider for assessment purposes, does not conceptualize the essential heart of Jesuit higher education in a sufficiently integral and interdependent way.

Now we turn our attention to a response to the second research question, that is, the ways Jesuit colleges and universities are working to maintain mission, identity, and traditions within the context of 21st-century higher education. At the beginning of the 21st-century, the number of Jesuits working in colleges and universities in the United States dramatically fell—fewer Jesuits were involved in these institutions than were 30 years previously. In some IHEs, no Jesuits were teaching. However, a review of the current core

curricula at Jesuit universities and colleges indicated that the AJCU colleges and universities still value theology (religious studies) and philosophy (and ethics) as essential to graduating. Along with this course of study, a graduate should possess the ability to express thought through writing skills as well as have familiarity with literature. Knowledge of Social and Laboratory Sciences along with mathematics should also be part of one's skills. Yet one's education is also formed by the environment outside the classroom and should include immersion and service learning experiences. Campus ministry programs complement theology requirements. Offices of Mission and Identity look at the overall environment of the campus and help maintain the goals of the institution, especially in recruiting and hiring personal and administrators. If the Jesuit identity of the institution is to be maintained, it is necessary to have personnel committed to its mission and goals especially those who are involved in campus life and who influence the culture of the residence halls, activities, and clubs.

Outreach to the poor and disadvantaged is highlighted by immersion and service learning programs in the curriculum. Such cocurricular programs supplement classroom learning. Sometimes an institution will make a commitment of its personnel and physical plant to help students in these social and economic categories advance in knowledge and learning.

In this study, we have chosen to look primarily at the Jesuit IHEs as a lens through which other IHEs might assess their Catholic and foundational missions, identities, and values. According to Platt (2014), "Among the most enduring Catholic college and universities are those administered by the Society of Jesus" (p. 1). This Jesuit history of endurance and sustainability in its IHEs can serve as an excellent model for other IHEs founded upon the identities and values of different Catholic religious congregations.

The challenge for each particular Catholic IHE is to discover and recover the essential qualities and values that mark its particular religious congregation's charisms. As Platt (2014) asserted, "Carrying out the purpose and goals that align with an institution's actual mission is crucial to the longevity of a college or university" (p. 11). Furthermore, much as the entire Catholic Church studied and reviewed its essential qualities in the Second Vatican Council, Catholic colleges and universities would do well to recover their sense of unique mission, identity, and values in response to the needs of the 21st century. Finally, these mission, identity, and values must be adapted to respond to the cultural exigencies of the times in which we live. In studying the history of the Jesuit IHEs in the US South, Platt (2014) concluded, "The

interaction between Jesuit institutions and their surrounding social milieu presents a unique opportunity to examine the effects of institutional identity, mission, and environment on higher education survival” (p. 1). Ultimately, Jesuit IHEs (and Catholic IHEs, for that matter) need guiding elements of effective administrative planning, such as these AJCU characteristics, to “ensure the sustainability of the institution” (Brown, 2012, pp. 28–29).

Clearly the need is greater than ever in US Jesuit IHEs to adapt to the changing signs of the times with regard to leadership, services, and curriculum. Such adaptations are essential to fostering and sustaining the mission and identity as Jesuit, Catholic institutions that are imbued with the core spiritual values of the *magis* and *cura personalis* in carrying out the *Ratio Studiorum*. In order to sustain and thrive as institutions, the member IHEs of the AJCU would do well not only to strengthen the ways in which leadership development reflects the *magis*, but also to train and educate faculty and staff who serve their constituents in the spirit of *cura personalis*. Finally, since students and their learning are central to purpose of any IHE, Jesuit IHEs must revise their core curricula in the light of the *Ratio Studiorum* to respond to the needs of the 21st century. Furthermore, referring to the increasing spiritual complexity of faculty and staff and the popularity of Pope Francis’s style of Catholicism, Russell (2014) suggested that these two elements, “raise fresh opportunities for Jesuit universities to reclaim the best of their Catholic and Jesuit tradition without returning to the isolation that once kept them at arm’s length from the rest of American higher education” (p. 8).

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## Appendix A

### Seven Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

1. Leadership's Commitment to the Mission
  - Mission articulation
  - Board of Trustees
  - University president and cabinet
  - Academic deans
2. The Academic Life: An academic life that reflects the Catholic and Jesuit Mission as an integral part of its overall intellectual commitment to research and teaching excellence
  - Core Curriculum
  - Faculty policies in teaching, research, promotion, and tenure
  - Centers and institutes
  - Other Catholic initiatives
  - Professional schools
3. A Catholic, Jesuit Campus Culture
  - University Ministry and liturgical life
  - Building a culture committed to relationality and responsibility
  - Athletics
  - Community characterized by diversity of thought
  - Vocational discernment
  - Campus events
  - Church calendar/academic calendar
4. Service
  - Solidarity
  - Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm
  - Community Outreach
5. Service to the Local Church

- Programs and Resources
  - Relationship with Local Ordinary
  - Preparation of the next generation of Catholic intellectual leaders
6. Jesuit Presence
- Jesuits active in the university as faculty, administrators, campus leaders and campus ministers
  - Relationship with the Society of Jesus at the local, regional, national, and international levels
  - Vocation promotion
7. Integrity
- Human resource policies that demonstrate a commitment to mission
  - Formation for mission and leadership
  - Hiring practices that demonstrate a commitment to mission
  - Financial management that gives evidence of a commitment to mission
  - Physical resource management that gives evidence of a commitment to mission (AJCU, 2013b, pp. 6–24)
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