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Introducing the Ignatian Organizational Culture Framework for Student-Facing Staff at Jesuit Universities

Patrick Furlong

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Introducing the Ignatian Organizational Culture Framework

for Student-Facing Staff at Jesuit Universities

By

Patrick Furlong

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

In partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2022

Introducing the Ignatian Organizational Culture Framework

for Student-facing Staff at Jesuit Universities

Loyola Marymount University
School of Education
Los Angeles, CA 90045

This dissertation written by Patrick Furlong, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

April 12, 2022

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Date

Dissertation Committee

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Karen Huchting, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair

_____

John Sebastian, Ph.D., Committee Member

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Jesus Rodriguez, Ed.D., Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I don't recommend doing a doctoral program in the middle of a pandemic, trying to be a good parent to two kids under five years old, while dealing with the demands of a new leadership position. But if you do, may you be as blessed as I have been to have a support network that helps get you across the finish line. There are not enough words in the English language to convey the depths of my gratitude to my academic, professional, and personal village.

Thank you to my committee. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. John Sebastian for the coffee chats throughout, and the wide-ranging and sometimes humorous topics we covered. Dr. Jesse Rodriguez, you have taught me so much about Jesuit education at the secondary level. I'll be forever grateful for the early morning and late-night responses to my rambling text messages about Jesuit education, and the way you gently but firmly pushed me to keep on writing. And to my chair, Dr. Karie Huchting, there truly are no words. The weekly chats. The editing. The encouragement. The laughter. You helped me feel like I belonged in a world I felt I was an imposter in. You cared about me, my family, and my research and I am grateful to call you a mentor, colleague, and friend.

My boss and mentor died unexpectedly when I was in year two of the program. Pam Rector was the very embodiment of community. Losing her just weeks before COVID-19 would turn society upside down was hard. But my colleagues in Student Affairs and in particular the team in the Center for Service and Action gave me reason to laugh, do, and hope. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us all how precious time is, and I am grateful for the ways in which you share of your time so freely with me. Thank you!

I want to thank the participants in my study. These nine individuals were generous enough to give me hours of their precious time discussing their work, their approach to leadership, and the lessons they have learned throughout their careers. To preserve anonymity, participants are identified by pseudonyms in this study. To be honest, I feel a tension in keeping their identifies anonymous. On one hand, anonymity was agreed upon at the start of this research and I of course honored that. And yet, I am in awe and full of gratitude for each of you, and the way you lead and love your teams. Knowledge and leadership like this should be celebrated, honored, and attributed directly to these leaders who have not only guided my research, but also helped foster my own sense of professional development. You each know who you are. Thank you!

I have immense gratitude to every person who identifies as a student-facing staff member at a Jesuit university. We talk often about these Jesuit traditions of *cura personalis*, being people for and with others, and more. . . . You embody that. You are actively making the world a better place through your care and devotion to the students we are trying to help grow in education and compassion. You also deserve that same care. May those of us in positions of leadership do right by you.

DEDICATION

I am grateful to my amazing wife Laura, and our two kids Matthew and Maya. When I transitioned from saying "When I finish in spring of 2022" to "If I finish by spring of 2022" my wife Laura began to kick me out of the house on Saturday and Sunday mornings to write. And so it came to be that I would spend early morning hours writing while she held it down in the morning with two kiddos. I was prepared for the sacrifices I would make when I signed up for a doctoral program. I never imagined the sacrifices my loved ones would make. Laura, I owe this degree to you and your selfless love. Thanks for believing in me when I lost that belief in myself.

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ABSTRACT

Introducing the Ignatian Organizational Culture Framework for

Student-Facing Staff at Jesuit Universities

By

Patrick Furlong

This study looked at the impact of Ignatian spirituality and Ignatian pedagogy on staff in student-facing units at Jesuit colleges and universities. It also explored how leaders of student-facing departments and divisions operationalize components of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy to create an Ignatian organizational culture.

Qualitative data were collected through multiple semistructured interviews with nine leaders of student-facing units at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. Key findings were organized into four thematic sections. The findings map onto different components that derive from, or are connected to, Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy. The thematic sections are: (a) leadership's commitment to human excellence; (b) subsidiarity; (c) showing the way to God through the spiritual exercises and discernment; (d) *cura personalis* and a commitment to well-educated solidarity off *and* on campus. These findings create a framework for leaders and student-facing staff to consult for engaging more meaningfully with Ignatian values in their attempts to build strong and positive organizational cultures for their units. Recommendations for addressing obstacles and opportunities are provided for staff leaders of student-facing units throughout the Jesuit network in the United States.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In higher education, a variety of staff work together to keep the business of a university functioning. Whereas faculty interact with students and teach courses, university staff support students with a variety of needs: financial aid, housing, registration, and even campus employment to name a few. Although some staff work behind the scenes, many interact directly with students, contributing to their growth and development. The term "student-facing staff" specifically focuses on staff whose work is directly created to service student needs. Examples might include staff in student affairs, staff in campus ministry, and staff in academic affairs like academic advising, first generation student support, and study abroad. These are just a few functional areas where university staff interface and work closely with students, directly supporting student needs.

Jesuit Universities are a distinct subset of higher education. The Jesuits, more formally known as the Society of Jesus, are a group of Catholic priests. The order was founded by a Spaniard, Ignatius of Loyola, in 1534 in Montmartre, France. Although the Jesuits began in France, they are most often thought of for their educational ministries, and are in fact the largest missionary order in the Catholic Church (Jesuits Worldwide, 2020). Jesuit education is part of the greater mission and operation of the Society of Jesus, which today includes work in diverse spaces such as education and hospitals, work with refugees and migrants, and running Catholic parishes around the world.

The Jesuits have worked in education for more than 450 years. Starting with the first Jesuit school in 1548, the Jesuits established an entire network of educational institutions that today includes elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities (O'Malley, 2000). In North America, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) is a network comprised of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities located across the United States and in Belize (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities [AJCU], 2019). Thus, Jesuit Higher Education is a robust network with a rich a history and tradition of commitment to social justice.

The mission of Jesuit education prioritizes a commitment to justice (DeGioia, 2002). This commitment is explicit among Jesuit institutions. The Jesuits' decision-making body is an assembly of Jesuit representatives from around the world who serve as the highest authority in the Society of Jesus. A historical moment for the Jesuits occurred at the meeting of representatives at the General Congregation 32 in 1974. At this meeting, it was determined all Jesuit ministries must be committed to work in justice as well as faith. This commitment has been reaffirmed in subsequent general congregation meetings (Currie, 2011). Yet, this commitment to justice is not always easy to uphold in higher education. The commitment requires Jesuit universities to centralize justice; they cannot engage with service and justice on the periphery. Most Jesuit colleges and universities maintain a central focus on justice and embed it in their core educational model (Buckley, 2007).

Given that student-facing staff interact with students on a regular basis, the commitment in Jesuit universities to centralize justice is inherently part of the job description of student-facing staff. Yet very little is known about how these central players, in the core functioning of a university, operationalize their commitment to justice. This study focused on student-facing staff

members in Jesuit universities. The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of organizational culture in student-facing staff units at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, Jesuit colleges and universities were predominantly operated by Jesuit priests, including staff, administrators, and faculty. As the number of Jesuit priests declined, nonreligious or lay staff, faculty, and administrators were increasingly relied upon for leadership in Jesuit higher education. In fact, the first lay president at a Jesuit University was not appointed until 2001, when John J. DeGioia became the president of Georgetown University (Winters, 2019). In of 2019, 16 of the 28 AJCU universities were led by lay presidents (Winters, 2019).

Worldwide, there are 200 Jesuit universities serving more than 500,000 students (Vivanco, 2016). Jesuit education is a significant global network in an increasingly globalized world. It is well positioned to advance the goals of Jesuits while bringing about a more just, humane, and sustainable world (O'Keefe, 2011). However, as staff, faculty, and administration roles are increasingly filled by lay leadership, there is concern about how the decrease of Jesuits will impact the mission and identity of Jesuit education. If, as Buckley (2007) argued, justice is central to Jesuit education, a weakened or misunderstood approach to mission and identity could have profound impacts on the way staff, faculty, students, and alumni of Jesuit universities engage with social justice. An example of this tension can be found in ranking systems for higher education. Jesuit universities are competing for enrollment and must pay attention to ranking systems, from Carnegie Mellon to U.S. News and World Report, which force institutions to chase rankings. In that scenario, research often becomes prioritized more than teaching, and

mission drift can become a problem (Zemsky & Shaman, 2017). The current environment of higher education is complicated and difficult to navigate. Universities focused solely on mission may not be able to fully adapt to survive in changing environments (Fjortoft & Smart, 1994). For as much as mission should matter, university administrators must navigate a tension that often comes back to how a university is able to fund its operation.

In Jesuit education, an interesting dilemma exists. Jesuit education is at once widely known and at the same time vaguely defined. If you walk around a typical Jesuit university campus and ask a variety of stakeholders "what constitutes Jesuit education," the answers would most likely be varied. What a student says might differ from a faculty member, who would have a response that is at odds with an alumnus, whose understanding would vary greatly from a staff member. How then do we talk about Jesuit education if we struggle to articulate what exactly Jesuit education is? The AJCU (2021) published a document that identified seven areas of focus, found in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Leadership's and public commitment to the mission	The academic life	The pursuit of faith, justice, and reconciliation	Promoting an Ignatian campus culture

Service to the church	Relationship of the Society of Jesus	Institutional integrity
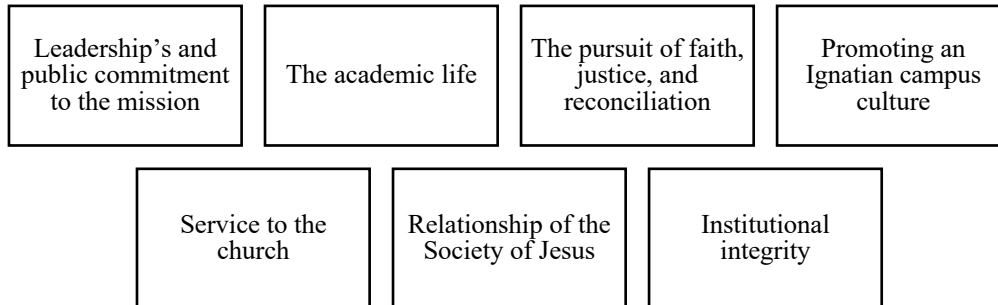
Note. Adapted from *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-evaluation Instrument*, by The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2012 (https://www.ajcunet.edu/missionexamen). Copyright 2012 by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

This document emphasized, among the AJCU, there is a large variance between schools in their size, scope, and relative emphasis placed on teaching, research, and service (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities [AJCU], 2012). Nonetheless, the instrument was endorsed by every Jesuit college and university president. Seven years later, the International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (ICAJE), an advisory council focused on K–12 sector education and serving the Secretariat of Education for the Jesuits, published another document. This document outlined features of a Jesuit education, which played a formative role in shaping Jesuit education at the elementary and secondary level. The ICAJE cautioned schools not to treat the document as static, but rather as a living document attempting to keep pace with a changing world. There is also a particular emphasis placed on the context of each school (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education [ICAJE], 2019). ICAJE highlighted 10 identifiers, found in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Ten Identifiers of Jesuit Education

Jesuit schools are committed to being a Catholic and to offer in-depth faith formation in dialogue with other religions and worldviews	Jesuit schools are committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for all	Jesuit schools are committed to global citizenship	Jesuit schools are committed to care of all creation
Jesuit schools are committed to justice	Jesuit schools are committed to being accessible for all	Jesuit schools are committed to interculturality	Jesuit schools are committed to being a global network at the service of the mission
	Jesuit schools are committed to human excellence	Jesuit schools are committed to life-long learning	

Note: Adapted from *Jesuit Schools: A Living Tradition in the 21st Century. An Ongoing Exercise of Discernment*, by International Commission on the Apostolate for Jesuit Education, 2019 (https://www.educatemagis.org/documents/jesuit-schools-a-living-tradition-in-the-21st-century/). Copyright 2019 by The International Commission on the Apostolate for Jesuit Education.

Although these documents aid conversations about what constitutes Jesuit education, confusion remains. Therefore, understanding what it means to be Jesuit-educated is not only a matter of pedagogy or spirituality, but also a matter of organizational culture. The concept of Ignatian pedagogy is derived from the early teachings and Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. ICAJE described Ignatian pedagogy as a continual interplay of experience, reflection, and action that is grounded in Ignatian spirituality (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education [ICAJE], 1993). Ignatian spirituality is a term engaged with frequently in Jesuit education, but O'Malley and O'Brien (2020) pointed out that the construction of the term is a fairly recent phenomenon. Traub (2008) described six dimensions of Ignatian spirituality: (a) it sees life as a gift that deserves our gratitude; (b) it is informed by imagination and emotion as

much as intellect; (c) it seeks to find God in all things; (d) it fosters critical awareness of personal and societal challenges or evil, but sees God's love as more powerful than any evil; (e) it places an emphasis on freedom, discernment, and responsible action in response to discernment; (f) it is a spirituality that empowers people to act in solidarity and become people for and with others in the building of a world that is more just, humane, and loving. Ignatian spirituality informs Ignatian pedagogy and is a part of the ethos of Jesuit colleges and universities. Yet, very little is known as to how these concepts inform student-facing staff and contribute to organizational culture.

One of the most cited definitions of organizational culture comes from Schein (2017) who defined it as a process of accumulated and shared learning that produces "a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions" (p. 6). As interest in the study of organizational culture has increased, so too has the interest in organizational culture in higher education. The study of *staff* organizational culture matters because studies have shown organizational culture influences employee behavior, which in turn impacts organizational effectiveness (Adams-Manning et al., 2020; Cameron, 1985; Deem et al., 2015).

The presence of staff has increased significantly on college campuses around the United States. In 1980–1981, institutions of higher education spent $20.7 billion on instruction and $13 billion in the areas of academic support, student service, and institutional support (Simon, 2017). In 2014–2015, instructional costs climbed to $148 billion, and the same grouping of staff support spending had risen to $122.3 billion (Simon, 2017). This increase in various staff support positions reflects the modern landscape of higher education: There are increased government

regulations that require more staffing to help universities comply with rules, increased commodification and competition among schools, and increased student needs and expectations to complete their college studies (Simon, 2017). The increase in spending resulting in more staff being hired to support the operations of colleges and universities makes it even more perplexing that limited research exists on organizational culture among staff. As students, staff, faculty, and administrators wrestle with what Jesuit education is and why it matters, understanding how student-facing staff interpret their positions and engagement with students will assist in achieving outcomes that graduates from Jesuit universities develop.

Mission and Identity in a Modern Context

The Superior General of the Jesuits Adolfo Nicolás gave a speech in Mexico City to delegates representing Jesuit Higher Education institutions (2010). Nicolás (2010) challenged those gathered to reflect on the challenges posed by what he called "the globalization of superficiality" and the danger it posed to "thought, vision, dreams, relationships, and convictions" for students in Jesuit universities. He warned: "Shallow, self-absorbed perceptions of reality make it almost impossible to feel compassion for the suffering of others" (Nicolás, 2010, p. 3). This challenge forced many to consider the words and work of the former Superior General Pedro Arrupe, who in 1973 advocated for Jesuits to constantly reflect, respond, and recognize the dignity of all humans and the universal mission to be of service to one another to transform the world (Meyo, 2014. What must Jesuit education look like if it is to fulfill the charge given by Arrupe in 1973, echoed by Nicolás in 2010?

Mescher (2018) emphasized Jesuit education cannot be reduced to professional preparation alone, as Jesuit education has a focus to both "form and integrate" whole persons.

Kolvenbach (2000) indicated that the true measure of Jesuit education is not the financial success

of Jesuit alumni, but rather who they become as human beings and how they are educated to see

themselves as members with a sense of a "well-educated solidarity," allowing them to see their

skills as part of and for the greater society and culture. He provided a suggestion on how to

educate students in a whole person approach:

> Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into
> their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and
> engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for
> the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed. (Kolvenbach, 2000,
> p. 11)

Tensions and Challenges in the Present Context

The call of a Jesuit education is to think of the other. Yet, tensions exist. For example,

Sagendorf et al. (2016) highlighted the challenge for Jesuit faculty who want to teach in the spirit

of this Jesuit pedagogy of service of faith and promotion of justice, but are often unable to amid

a variety of challenges such as pleasing students accustomed to a different educational model or

tackling new ventures. Stringer and Swezey (2006) highlighted the failure of many Jesuit

universities to adequately educate students to use their talents for items outside of themselves in

the various graduate school programs housed in Jesuit universities. A diverse group of university

leaders at Regis University, a Jesuit university in Colorado, also wrote about the need to better

incorporate graduate and professional students and university employees into this work

(Sagendorf et al., 2016). Interestingly, the similarities between the mission of student affairs and

the mission of Jesuit education are noted, as graduates of student affairs programs in Jesuit

schools are encouraged to have increased awareness and commitment to respond to injustice

inside and outside the academy (Stringer & Swezey, 2006).

Arrupe College, the first Jesuit community college in Illinois, ran into a unique challenge as the affordability they worked hard to make possible served as a stigma, making prospective students suspicious of their academic offerings (Katsouros, 2017). As higher education becomes more commodified, there is a fear that Catholic or Jesuit education will not sell well to students shopping around and comparing universities to attend. As a result, Catholic and Jesuit identity can often be minimized in the advertisement and branding of a university to prospective applicants (Rausch, 2010). This then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in which students learn little of the institutional mission and are unable to speak to its importance. Balestra (2008) worried that universities would spiral further into a marketplace mentality in which loyalty of staff and faculty resembled that of professional athletes selling their skills to the highest bidder and threatening the integrity of the educational system. Jesuit Dean Brackley, a former theologian at the University of Central America in El Salvador, emphasized the promotion of justice should be a factor that distinguishes Jesuit universities. He went on to argue such universities should stop trying to measure their excellence against the likes of universities that do not have the same commitment to justice (Brackley, 2008). Brackley urged a greater inclusion of economic diversity and provided three suggestions to achieve this: (a) create a culture of simplicity on campus; (b) maximize scholarships that are need-based rather than academic or athletic; (c) include money for scholarships in the next capital campaign. Amid the challenges and the opportunities, where can one find moments of incredible innovation or intrapreneurship for those working at a Jesuit university interested in carrying forward a mission-oriented approach to education?

Research Questions

Educational leaders in Jesuit higher education must navigate various challenges to keep the mission and identity of Jesuit education relevant, which can be challenging. As the number of Jesuit priests declines, more than ever it is important to investigate the ways in which Jesuit higher education can train lay staff for mission to maintain and create anew an Ignatian organizational culture. This study is an attempt to operationalize and better understand the importance of organizational culture in Jesuit higher education. The study sought to form an understanding of the ways in which department and division leaders in student-facing units at AJCU colleges and universities in the United States understand *and* operationalize Ignatian pedagogy and Ignatian spirituality. The research questions were as follows:

1. What Jesuit values or principles are most often found in student-facing departments and divisions at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States?

2. How do leaders of student-facing departments and divisions operationalize components of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy to create an Ignatian organizational culture?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to form an understanding of the ways in which department and division leaders of student-facing units at Jesuit colleges and universities understand and operationalize their work through an Ignatian lens. This study focused on the concept of Jesuit education. It focused on the lived experience of staff to better understand a population vital to the delivery of Jesuit education to students, yet seldom researched. The study focused on staff leaders in student-facing units who are invested in the concept of Jesuit education. These leaders, through the organizational culture they create, have a chance to influence the interpretation of

what makes a Jesuit education special for the students they serve. Yet importantly, they also have the chance to impact the staff who report to them—particularly young professionals—in a way that will lead to greater impact and delivery of Jesuit education no matter where those professionals work.

In looking at Jesuit education through an organizational culture lens, the study sought to operationalize common used language and terminology about Ignatian values and translate that into an Ignatian organizational culture framework. One goal of this study was to provide scholarship about staff in Jesuit colleges and universities that is useful to other staff leaders and university administrators throughout the AJCU network. Finally, this research centered the experiences of a demographic of the college and university community that is often disregarded: university staff. By centering staff and the role they play as educators outside the classroom, the study contributed to the research literature on higher education organizational culture, and might lead to further research on staff, their lived experience, and the important parts they play in supporting, mentoring, and intentionally shaping the educational experience of students.

Methodology

To address the research questions, a qualitative study was implemented, designed with the intention to look at leaders of student-facing staff divisions and departments. The study attempted to better understand what Jesuit education means to staff leaders, and how they can create an organizational culture that helps to animate the mission and identity of Jesuit education for students they serve and staff that turn to them for leadership. Specifically, the study was focused on staff in positions that engage with and impact student experience. Nine participants were selected for interviews through purposive sampling. Five of these staff members were

senior-most leaders of larger student-facing divisions such as student affairs. Four of these staff members were leaders of one or more smaller but still significant student-facing departments, such as service-learning centers, campus recreation, multicultural affairs, residence life, campus ministry, study abroad, or university advising. I met with participants twice. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, a web-based video conferencing service (www.zoom.us) and transcribed via Zoom's cloud transcription. Otter.ai (www.otter.ai), an artificial intelligence software that provides speech to text transcription was then used to further transcribe the interviews which were then loaded into Dedoose version 9.0.17. Dedoose is a cloud-based application used for analyzing qualitative research (www.dedoose.com) to aid in analysis of the data. Interviews were conducted in between late September and early November of 2021.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

COVID-19 Impact

This study was conducted in a time of great uncertainty for higher education. COVID-19, a global pandemic had altered society in previously unimaginable ways during the calendar years 2020 and 2021 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). It led to the physical closure of many universities and forced many students, staff, and faculty to work and learn remotely for over a year. It altered the operations of universities throughout the United States. At universities that have managed to offer in-person education and support, it has altered the way work is done and how human interactions take place. In those universities, COVID-19 altered the delivery of cocurricular programming and created added stress and anxiety for numerous students, staff, and faculty.

Interviews took place in the fall of 2021, as universities resumed in-person instruction and increased services and engagement after having been remote due to COVID-19. What was not labelled at the time of interviews, but became apparent toward the end of the study, was that interviews took place during a time of great upheaval and transition in employment referred to as "The Great Resignation" (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022). Though better than 2020, it was still a difficult period of transition for student-facing units when these leaders volunteered multiple hours of their time to participate in this study. COVID-19 undoubtedly disrupted higher education as most people knew it. In this study, it was important that leaders reflected on the relevance of Jesuit education during a crisis they were in the midst of navigating. Participants were also encouraged to recall the value of Jesuit education prior to COVID-19 and to imagine what Jesuit education will look like as the world emerges from this pandemic. Although this seemed daunting to imagine, it is worth remembering that Jesuit education is an educational model that has sustained and evolved for over 450 years. It has navigated and sustained other pandemics and global challenges. Once again, it will evolve and adapt. The question is: how to best maintain the important elements of the mission and identity of this model to help aid adaptation?

Population Studied

I chose to interview department and division leaders of student-facing staff at Jesuit Universities for this study. In the review of literature on organizational culture, it became clear that in organizations, formal and informal leaders have significant opportunities to shape culture. Formal leaders intrigued me as individuals who lead significant departments or oversee divisions with multiple departments in their reporting line. I wanted to know how people with formal

power viewed culture and their role in cultivating a culture informed by Ignatian pedagogy and Ignatian spirituality. I also intentionally chose not to interview students, or even focus on the obvious role staff in student-facing roles have in caring for students. Watkins (2013) explained that organizational culture is not what an organization does, but how an organization does something. Care of students is what student-facing units do. According to Dewar and Doucette (2018), high performing or successful organizations differentiate themselves in an industry based on how they do what all the entities in that industry have in common. I wanted to understand how leaders in Jesuit student-facing units focused on the construction of a culture that might be seen as differentiated from what one might find at a public university or a private non-Jesuit university.

Sample Size

Participants in this study were leaders of student-facing staff departments and divisions at some of the 28 colleges and universities that are part of the AJCU in North America. As with any qualitative study, every leader of a student-facing division or department in the AJCU could not be interviewed. That was also not the goal of this study. The goal of this study was to secure a sampling of leaders in student-facing divisions and departments who are invested in Jesuit education and therefore committed to creating a work environment inspired by elements of Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. Invitations were extended to 15 potential participants. Ultimately, nine leaders were interviewed, which is an appropriate size for phenomenological research (Creswell, 2009). Participants were selected based upon compatibility with the participant selection criteria, availability to interview at the time of data collection in the Fall of 2021, and interest to participate in the study. This, combined with the exhaustion (known as

Zoom fatigue) people experienced after more than a year of nonstop video conferencing

meetings suggested it would be difficult to get the exact amount of participants wanted for this

study. Nine participants exceeded the goal of having at least seven or eight individuals agree to

participate from the 15 invitations extended.

Bias

I am both the researcher for this study and a student-facing staff member of a Jesuit

University. I have worked for Loyola Marymount University on and off for over 10 years and

have been engaged in work and conferences with several specific Jesuit networking and

collaboration spaces. Participants who accepted the invitation to speak in the study were my

colleagues in the AJCU. The AJCU is a small network. Many of the participants were

individuals with whom I have a professional relationship in my current role as the Director of the

Pam Rector Center for Service and Action at Loyola Marymount University. Even if a

participant did not have a prior relationship with me, we often had common associates in the

intimate Jesuit education network. It stands to reason that participants might have felt reluctant to

fully divulge their thoughts and methods of operation with someone in my position. They might

have been anxious or at least cognizant of how it might reflect on their individual leadership or

the work of their unit or institution. I believe the phenomenological interview approach helped

me to gain the trust of participants and limit this concern. Conducting multiple interviews

allowed me to establish a rapport with participants. Two interviews allowed me to get to know

them better, but also allowed participants to better get to know me. The time spent together

allowed participants better understand my intent with this research and open up more fully.

In my role as a researcher, it is important to acknowledge possible areas of bias I brought to this study that could have informed my interpretation of the data collected. First, at the time of publication, I am a department leader of a student-facing department in a Jesuit university and have been employed in Jesuit education for over 10 years. I am deeply invested in Jesuit education. I believe it is special and I worry about how to keep it relevant and impactful amid multiple challenges Jesuit colleges and universities are currently facing. I was aware of this potential for bias and worked to allow themes in the data to emerge without influence from my preconceived notions. Throughout the process of analyzing the data, I practiced reflexivity, member checked themes with participants, and frequently discussed findings with my advisors to mitigate any potential bias influencing the interpretation of findings.

Definitions of Terms

Jesuit Higher Education is full of terminology often unfamiliar to readers unfamiliar with Jesuit education. The following is a list of terminology often used throughout the literature.

***Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (finding God in all things):** Ignatius believed we should search for and find God not only in prayer or church, but in everything (Dunfee et al., 2017)

AJCU: An acronym for Association of Jesuit College and Universities. Officially, the AJCU is a consortium for all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities located in the United States and in Belize. In the United States, there are 27 Jesuit colleges and Universities but the AJCU network also includes one school from Belize to make a total of 28 AJCU member institutions.

Arrupe, Pedro: 28th Superior General of the Jesuits. He held the position from 1965–1983. He was dedicated to leading the Jesuits to commit to the needs of the poor, and his work

resulted in the famous Jesuit decree "The service of faith and the promotion of justice" in the 32nd General Congregation (Arrupe & Burke, 2004).

Contemplatives in action: A phrase dating back to the 16th century meant to bring together the two traditional forms of religious life in the Catholic Church. Contemplative religious orders usually retreat from the world to support devotion solely to God, whereas active religious communities engage in the world through teaching and other forms of ministry (Dunfee et al., 2017).

Cura personalis **(care of the person):** In Jesuit higher education, *cura personalis* has come to mean a recognition of the whole complexity of a student and their being. It originates from a retreat known as the Spiritual Exercises which are personalized to fit the needs of individual retreatants (Dunfee et al., 2017).

Ignatian: A term used to describe something inspired by the spiritual and educational practices of the Jesuits. The word Ignatian is derived from the name of the founder of this organization, Ignatius of Loyola.

Ignatian pedagogy: Ignatian pedagogy is grounded in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, particularly the Spiritual Exercises and the emphasis on humanist education. The early Jesuits were aware of the limits of practicality to humanist education, and thus worked to incorporate professional training into the student experience (O'Malley, 2000). By 1599, the *Ratio Studorium* provided a guide for the strategies and tactics of Jesuit education (O'Malley, 2000). A practical understanding of Ignatian pedagogy can be derived from the ICAJE's Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm (1993), which provides a method for educators to accompany learners through a unique paradigm. First, educators must consider the context for which a learner enters

a space. Next, educators rely on the experience of students and what is happening around them in the creation of content. Third, reflection must be incorporated into any educational experience to help students make meaning of the experience. Fourth, educators must provide learners with tools to translate their learning into real world action. Finally, evaluation helps the learner and educator make meaning of action and continue in the cycle of the paradigm. Jesuit educators must help learners engage a depth of imagination and critical thought that better helps them engage with the complex reality of the world (Nicolás, 2010).

Ignatian spirituality: Ignatian spirituality is a term frequently used in spaces of Jesuit education; yet, until a few decades ago the term was largely unknown (O'Malley & O'Brien, 2020). Ignatian spirituality has become a common way of expressing Jesuit cultural identity and distinctiveness. Traub (2008) highlighted six key modern day elements of Ignatian spirituality: (a) life and the universe are a gift; (b) imagination and emotion matter as much as intellect; (c) Ignatian spirituality seeks to find the divine in everything from people to areas of study and most especially in Jesus; (d) it develops critical awareness of personal and societal evil while highlighting how God's love is more powerful than evil; (e) it emphasizes the need for freedom, discernment, and acting responsibly in accordance with well-reasoned discernment; (f) it is an empowering spirituality that encourages people to become leaders for and with others in an effort to build a more just and humane world (Traub, 2008).

Jesuit: A member of the Society of Jesus, an order of Catholic priests that trace their roots back to the 1500s when Ignatius of Loyola founded the group.

Kolvenbach, Peter Hans: The 29th Superior General of the Jesuits. He served from 1983–2008.

Magis: An often-misunderstood phrase. *Magis* is Latin and means "the more" but is often interpreted to mean "striving for excellence." Its use in Jesuit terminology is more complex and better understood as Mescher (2018) described it: "*Magis* implies a call to work for the fullness of life for all, the conditions that allow individuals and communities to flourish."

Nicolás, Adolfo: Served as the 30th Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He served from 2008–2016.

People for, and with, others: A phrase that originated from a speech Pedro Arrupe gave to Jesuit alumni in 1973. The "with" was added later to better incorporate the idea of solidarity (Dunfee et al., 2017). In more recent times, the phrasing has been changed to say "people for others" to be more inclusive of a wider variety of gender identities.

Proyecto social **(social project):** Term used by Ignacio Ellacuria, president of the Universidad Centroamericana in the 1980s. In this understanding of a university, the aim and purpose of the school is to become a social project inspired by the commitment to the Jesuit mission "service of faith and promotion of justice," thus seeking to engage with society not solely to train professionals but to be a force in greater culture advocating for and promoting truth (Nicolás, 2010).

Society of Jesus: The official name of the religious order Ignatius of Loyola founded. Members of this group are more commonly known as Jesuits.

Student-facing staff: In a large university, a wide variety of staff work together to keep the business of the university functioning. Student-facing staff is a definition created for the purpose of this research to specifically focus on staff whose work is to service student needs. Examples might include staff in student affairs, staff in campus ministry, and staff in academic

affairs like academic advising, first generation student support, and study abroad. These are a few functional areas where staff interface with and work to directly serve student needs.

Superior General: The head of all Jesuits worldwide. Well known and often discussed modern day superior generals include Pedro Arrupe (1965–1983), Peter Hans Kolvenbach (1983–2008), Adolfo Nicolás (2008–2016), and Arturo Sosa (2016–Present).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is organized into two parts. First, I provide a historical overview of Jesuit education to help readers more fully understand the ways Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality have historically been delivered through Jesuit colleges and universities. The second part of this chapter provides a review of literature on organizational culture in higher education, student affairs, and more specifically Catholic higher education.

The Jesuits, a religious order of Catholic priests, were founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in Europe in 1540 (Rausch, 2010). Their mission was to be "available to go anywhere and do anything to 'help souls' especially where the need was greatest" (Traub, 1998, p. 9). Jesuit mission existed long before American Jesuit Universities were created in 1789 (Traub, 2008). These universities became a place for the Jesuits to practice their apostolic mission. In 1548, the first Jesuit school opened. As of 2016, there were 28 North American Jesuit colleges and universities and 189 internationally, serving over 500,000 students (Vivanco, 2016). Jesuit higher education does not originate from a prior philosophy or model of education. Jesuit education is derived from the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits and is therefore initially seen as a pathway to engage with education to reach the divine (Buckley, 2007).

History of Jesuit Education

Origins: Jesuit Education Between 1540–1599

According to Dunfee et al. (2017), the Jesuits were not founded with the express intent to work in the field of education, but by the time Ignatius of Loyola died in 1556, they oversaw the operation of 34 colleges in Europe. The origins of Jesuit Higher Education have a distinct focus on theology, specifically forming theologians who would be educators (Buckley, 2007). In the second half of the 16th century, the educational model evolved to focus on what Buckley (2007) described as an appropriation of what it means to be human while keeping a focus on human ability to reflect on matters of the divine. According to multiple articles, the Jesuit educational philosophy was considered unique and perhaps innovative at the time for combining professional studies with humanist studies (Dunfee et al., 2017; Kainulainen, 2018; Rausch, 2010).

Ignatius of Loyola developed the Spiritual Exercises: guidance and instructions for an individual to deepen their relationship with God (Donnelly, 1994). The Spiritual Exercises were important in the founding of the Jesuits and some 480 years later they remain equally important when reflecting on what it means to be Jesuit-influenced. This guidance is a popular spiritual tool in the Catholic church and beyond. For example, Santa Clara President Kevin O'Brien (2015) noted that the Spiritual Exercises should be central to Jesuit higher education.

Ratio Studiorum: Jesuit Education Between 1599–1773

In 1599, the *Ratio Studiorum*, or "Plan of Studies of the Society of Jesus" was completed. The document was frequently revised in the early years of the Jesuits but was primarily written by a group of scholars from the Collegio Romano, the Jesuit school in Rome (Codina, 2017). The document attempted to produce procedures and pedagogy for the two educational

institutions that dominated this time period: the university and humanistic primary and secondary schools (O'Malley, 2017). Universities quickly became sophisticated and complex institutions that professionalized learning through the creation of what today would be called professional disciplines like medicine or law (O'Malley, 2017). The humanistic schools were created during the Renaissance in Italy, and in many ways were the opposite of universities. Rather than using scientific texts as the basis of curriculum, these schools relied on ancient literary texts. They focused less on the professionalization of the student, and more on forming the character of the student (O'Malley, 2017). After years of starting and stopping on similar documents, the *Ratio*, as it is often referred to in Jesuit education, became the first document of pedagogy approved by Jesuit leadership for all Jesuit educational establishments. In this document, a firm structure of the curricular, administrative, and pedagogical principles was codified.

The *Ratio* is sometimes misunderstood. It is not a comprehensive educational philosophy. Instead, it represents best practices in school administration (O'Malley, 2017). The *Ratio* laid the groundwork for what could be considered modern-day liberal arts education. Jesuit education attempted to train students who could speak, write, and communicate original ideas while also fostering in students a capacity and desire to reason, feel, and express oneself (Codina, 2017). The pairing of practical dimensions like writing and more complex ways to engage with feeling was innovative at the time.

Suppression of the Society of Jesus: Jesuit Education Between 1773–1814

Jesuit education would prove popular worldwide, and by the late 1700s there were more than 800 Jesuit colleges (Dunfee et al., 2017). In 1773, the Jesuits were ordered to shut down by Pope Clement XIII. The Jesuits had agitated different governments, most significantly those in

Spain and France (Padberg, 2017). The suppression of the Jesuits had profound implications on the future of the society. Around the world, their works were destroyed. This included more than 700 schools being closed (Padberg, 2017). Their many libraries were either destroyed or confiscated. Their many churches were handed over to others to manage. Perhaps most important of all, 22,000 men who had been part of the Society of Jesus were suddenly no longer priests in the Catholic church (Padberg, 2017). The only place the Jesuits were not suppressed was in Russia (Padberg, 2017).

Over the years, incremental steps were taken that allowed the Jesuits to maintain a modest presence and gradually rebuild. Between 1770 and 1773, a few important events happened to assure the survival of the Jesuits. A Jesuit novitiate, or school to train future Jesuits, was allowed to open. Most importantly, the Pope gave verbal approval of the Jesuits and the work they were doing in Russia (Padberg, 2017). Finally, on August 7, 1814 a new Pope, Pius VII, reconstituted the Jesuits to operate not just in Russia, but once again worldwide (Padberg, 2017). Interestingly, before Pope Pius VII reconstituted the Jesuits, Georgetown University was founded in 1789 in the United States (Dunfee et al., 2017). Georgetown, considered the first Jesuit university, was established under the leadership of Bishop John Carroll.

The Beginning of a New Society of Jesus: Jesuit Education from 1814 to 1962

The Jesuits reentered an educational world that again had been altered. Humanism was prominent. Humanist education originated during the Renaissance to describe a Greek concept of educating a person more fully to see the perfection of human nature in such a way to better prepare them to participate in the life of the city-state (Rausch, 2010). Humanist education focused on curriculum designed to address concerns considered practical or scientific.

Integration in mainstream U.S. culture was anything but easy, as Rausch (2010) noted Harvard in 1898 expressly banned graduates from Jesuit colleges and universities from gaining admission into their law school. Whereas the early history of the Jesuits was dedicated to virtue and ethics (Kainulainen, 2018) and the period of the 1800s and much of the 1900s was focused on infusing Catholic faith into educational offerings (Rausch, 2010), the latter portion of the 20th century would introduce a dramatic shift in how social justice was integrated into the educational offerings.

Seeds of Transformation: Jesuit Education From 1962 to 1989

In the second half of the 20th century, the Catholic Church began to undergo a radical transformation. The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) took place from 1962 to 1965 and radically altered the focus of Catholic education. In years prior, the focus of Catholic education was to resist Protestant evangelization (Denig & Dosan, 2009). Vatican II shifted the focus of Catholic education to be centers for social justice and liberation (Denig & Dosan, 2009). In 1971, at the Synod of Bishops, the church reaffirmed a stronger focus on social justice as a way of preaching and living gospel values. Structures of society needed to respond to human needs, and Catholic educational institutions at all levels needed to engage in care for the pain and despair of the most vulnerable and marginalized in society or risk being seen as a false Catholic educational institution (Buckley, 2007).

In 1973, Pedro Arrupe gave a speech to alumni of Jesuit universities in Spain where he first introduced a concept of "men and women for others," acknowledging this had not been emphasized in years prior in Jesuit education (Meyo, 2014; Rausch, 2010). This dramatic emphasis for Jesuit colleges and universities—to put justice at the center of their pedagogy —

would be seen further in 1975 when the Jesuits gathered for General Congregation 32. A General

Congregation is a gathering of Jesuits from around the world and is the highest legislative body

in the society of Jesuits (Yonkers-Talz, 2013). General Congregation 32 began with an

acknowledgement that, although faith had always been an important component of the Jesuit way

of proceeding, the Jesuits repented for failing to uphold justice. For much of the history of Jesuit

education, there had been a focus almost exclusively on educating the wealthiest in society

(Buckley, 2007). At General Congregation 32, the Jesuit delegates decided that the previous

purpose of the Jesuits, "the service of faith" must also add a new clause: "the promotion of

justice" (Buckley, 2007; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). General Congregation 32 would emphasize

that every Jesuit and every Jesuit institution must commit to "a faith that does justice" (Padberg,

2009). The promotion of justice, the Jesuits affirmed, is not one apostolic work among many but

rather must be a central part of all Jesuit apostolic endeavors including every institution of higher

education (Buckley, 2007). This commitment has been reaffirmed in every subsequent General

Congregation (Currie, 2011).

In the years that followed, some would reflect on the statement as radical. Criticism was

fierce: Once known for educating the wealthy, some felt the Jesuits' shift in language and

emphasis was problematic. A British politician and prominent Catholic Peter Anthony Grayson

Rawlinson (1990) argued that Arrupe had led the Jesuits into Marxism. Buckley (2007) noted

that some critics felt the emphasis on justice was particularly problematic for Jesuit institutions

of higher education, believing it limited the ability for humanism to flourish. Nonetheless,

Arrupe persisted. Arrupe thought the Catholic church, and specifically the Jesuits, had a moral

obligation to rethink its ministry in response to the socioeconomic situation of much of Latin

America and beyond. In 1982, Father Ignacio Ellacuria, the president of the Universidad

CentroAmericana (UCA) in San Salvador, in a convocation address at Santa Clara University,

pushed the notion of social justice among higher education further:

> A Christian university must take into account the Gospel preference for the poor. This does mean that only the poor study at the university. It does not mean that the university should abdicate its mission of academic excellence- excellence needed in order to solve complex social problems. It does mean that the university should be present intellectually where it is needed . . . to be a voice for those who do not possess the academic qualifications to promote and legitimate their rights. (Ellacuria, 1982)

The change in manner and emphasis would have grave consequences for the Jesuits,

particularly Ellacuria and his fellow Jesuits at UCA in El Salvador. Ellacuria and UCA decided

to use the resources of the university to respond to the demands of the situation in El Salvador

during the Civil War (Valiente, 2015). Ellacuria focused on the well-being of the poor, aligning

everything from instruction and research to the size of enrollment around this focus (Valiente,

2015). On November 16, 1989, members of the Salvadoran military forced their way into the

Jesuit residence on the UCA campus, killing six Jesuits, a female employee, and her teenage

daughter (Currie, 2011; Rausch, 2010; Valiente; 2015). The murder of the Jesuits in El Salvador

represented the commitment to solidarity and helped to set the stage for contemporary work to

keep mission and identity as the forefront of Jesuit education (Valiente, 2015). That call to action

can still be seen in the modern interpretation of Jesuit mission and engagement today.

Social Justice: Mission and Identity in a Modern Context

Each Jesuit university has a unique mission statement, and yet all these schools share a

commitment to social justice (Traub, 2008). In 2010, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and

Universities (AJCU) released a document titled *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit

Colleges and Universities.* This document provided consensus from the 28 Jesuit university

presidents that "our primary mission is the education and formation of our students for the sake of the kind of persons they become and their wide influence for good in society in their lives, professions, and service" (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities [AJCU], 2010, p. 3). Jesuit education, therefore, is interested in a whole-person education that encourages students to be engaged active citizens advancing social justice for people and their communities.

What then does a Jesuit university look like today? What does it mean to support Jesuit Mission and Identity? Mission generally speaks to the overall purpose and function of a college or university. It is most often seen in the goals, purpose, and educational products such as types of degrees conferred (Platt, 2014).

Today, there are approximately 188 Jesuit colleges and universities, 27 of which are in 17 different states in the United States. There is also one AJCU school in Belize. (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities [AJCU], 2019). The first Jesuit university in the United States was Georgetown, founded in 1789. The youngest Jesuit university in the United States is Le Moyne College, founded in 1946 (AJCU, 2019).

Certain terms and phrases carry great meaning in Jesuit spirituality and education. Most alumni of Jesuit high schools or universities are familiar with common vernacular like *cura personalis* (care of the person) or *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God). Even though this language is important and helps to create a shared sense of culture, Mescher (2018) reminds us: Easily marketable jargon can pose a certain risk by shifting focus away from a critical lens on the true meaning of these philosophies constituting so much of Jesuit education. Related to mission, identity is a shared set of ideals that represent the entire organization. It could include the mission, and symbols. In Jesuit education, phrases and imagery associated with *Ad*

Majorem Dei Glorium (AMDG) would be considered a universal symbol of Jesuit identity. According to Platt (2014), mission and identity help to define an institution's goals and how it engages with its environment and context. Organizational identity often serves as justification for strategies and tactics employed in relation to financial, human, and material resources (Platt, 2014). The organizational identity of Jesuit universities is at once local and global, in which Jesuit leadership often helps to provide guidelines for strategy and tactics.

In 2010, then Superior General Adolfo Nicolás gave a speech in Mexico City to delegates representing the majority of Jesuit higher education institutions. Nicolás (2010) challenged those gathered to reflect on the challenges posed by what he called "the globalization of superficiality" and the danger it posed to "thought, vision, dreams, relationships, and convictions" for students in Jesuit universities (p. 3). He warned: "Shallow, self-absorbed perceptions of reality make it almost impossible to feel compassion for the suffering of others" (Nicolás, 2010, p. 3). Meyo (2014) wrote that the work of former Superior General Pedro Arrupe should lead to a reflection and response to the recognition of the dignity of all humans and the universal mission to be of service to one another to transform the world. What must Jesuit education look like if it is to fulfill the charge given by Arrupe in 1973?

Jesuit education cannot be reduced to professional preparation alone as Jesuit education has a focus to both "form and integrate" whole persons (Mescher, 2018). Kolvenbach (2000) indicated the true measure of Jesuit education is not the financial success of Jesuit alumni but rather who they become as human beings. Importantly, they must be educated to see themselves as members of a community with a sense of a "well-educated solidarity" that allows them to

dedicate their skills to greater society and culture. He provided a suggestion then on how to educate students in a whole person approach:

> Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed. (Kolvenbach, 2000, p. 8)

This aspiration to be of and for the world has been a guiding force in many areas of Jesuit education for the first part of the 22nd century.

Tensions and Challenges in the Present Context

What then would such solidarity look like in action, and where is it challenging to implement it? Jesuit education is at a critical reflection point in its history. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven incredibly challenging to higher education. COVID-19 is a respiratory coronavirus that led to global lockdowns and hundreds of thousands of deaths in the United States alone in 2020 and 2021 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). Prior to COVID-19's disruption of higher education, the main area of concern was known as an approaching "demographic cliff" (Grawe, 2018). The demographic cliff is tied to the decline in birthrates in the United States in 2008 related to the economic recession resulting in decreased rates of enrollment beginning in 2025 (Grawe, 2018). All of this context is profoundly challenging, in addition to an already complex challenge in navigating a growingly competitive marketplace of higher education.

Literature contains diverse examples of challenges mission driven institutions of higher education have faced in recent years. Stringer and Swezey (2006) highlighted the failure of many Jesuit universities to adequately bring the Jesuit mission of educating students to use their talents

for ideals outside of themselves to various graduate programs in Jesuit universities. They noted the similarities between the missions of student affairs and Jesuit education. Student affairs often has a whole person approach to education that values the support systems and activities students benefit from outside the classroom. Jesuit education, with a focus on *cura personalis* or care of the entire person, has a similar approach to education. Graduates of student affairs programs in Jesuit schools should have an increased awareness and commitment to respond to injustice inside and outside the academy (Stringer & Swezey, 2006). A diverse group of university leaders at Regis University also wrote about the need to better incorporate graduate and professional students and university employees into this work of Jesuit mission (Sagendorf et al., 2016). The literature reflects that gap, focused often on the experience of undergraduate students or faculty in Jesuit education, and rarely on graduate students and staff.

Sagendorf et al. (2016) highlighted a modern-day challenge of educating for mission amid commodification. Jesuit faculty often want to teach in the spirit of *cura personalis* but sometimes report feeling unable to do so. They must navigate competing demands of pleasing students accustomed to a different educational model and other demands on their service to the university they feel limit their ability to engage Ignatian pedagogy in the ways they would like. Additionally, innovation can lead to unintended consequences schools must then navigate. Arrupe College, the first Jesuit community college, ran into a unique challenge as the affordability they worked hard to make possible served as a stigma, making prospective students suspicious of the quality of their academic offerings (Katsouros, 2017). As education becomes more commodified, there is a fear that Catholic or Jesuit identity does not "sell well" and therefore must be minimized in the advertisement and branding of a university (Rausch, 2010).

Balestra (2008) worried that universities would spiral further into a marketplace mentality in which loyalty of staff and faculty would resemble that of professional athletes selling their skills to the highest bidder and threatening the integrity of the educational system. Jesuit Dean Brackley, shortly before his death, emphasized the promotion of justice should be a factor that distinguishes Jesuit universities, and such universities should stop trying to measure their excellence against the likes of universities without the same commitment (Brackley, 2008). Brackley (2008) urged a greater inclusion of economic diversity and provided three suggestions to achieve this: create a culture of simplicity on campus, maximize scholarships that are financially or need based (rather than academic or athletic), and include a significant amount of money for scholarships in the next capital campaign. As the Jesuit higher education model continues to evolve, there is increased urgency to highlight the impacts of Jesuit education and showcase the ways in which both faculty and staff can further contribute to the impact students experience as a result of engaging with this educational model.

Impacts of Jesuit Higher Education

Though the mission has changed and evolved over the 480-year history of the Jesuits, the Ignatian way of proceeding has been a clear guidepost for leaders of Jesuit educational institutions. It is clear a profound shift occurred in the 1960s under the leadership of Arrupe to focus all Jesuit apostolates on fostering social justice. Presently, amid global challenges to higher education and increased competition, commodification is a real and significant challenge to the continuation of this social-justice-inspired educational model. Currie (2011) contended a Jesuit university's ability to live up to its mission could be judged by its ability to strengthen the faith of its students in a way that serves society. Currie, the former president of AJCU, believed

universities had a unique opportunity and obligation to provide experiences that strengthen students' relationships with God, which he believed would naturally lead them to transform the world with good works.

Faith and Justice

Looking to El Salvador for Guidance

The Universidad Centroamericana (Central American University or UCA) stands out to many as having pushed Jesuit higher education into a greater commitment to the Ignatian understanding of promotion of justice (Brackley, 2008; Currie, 2011; Rausch, 2010; Valiente, 2015). Although Jesuit education is frequently identified through its commitment to social justice, the push for justice is also found more broadly in the Catholic church. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II (1990) stated that Catholic universities must "demonstrate the courage to express uncomfortable truth, truths that may clash with public opinion but that are also necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society" (p. 32). UCA in El Salvador serves as one model, as does the sister campus in Nicaragua, also known as UCA, that has been caught up in the social unrest of recent years and has been challenged for supporting protests against cuts to social security funding.

What Should Immersion Do in a Jesuit University?

A unique element of organizational culture in Jesuit higher education is in the commitment to experiential or immersion learning. Work done in El Salvador through a semester long study abroad program called *Casa de la Solidaridad* is one strong example of a program created in the memory of the Jesuit martyrs in El Salvador. This program allowed students to live in praxis with low income and marginalized communities in El Salvador while having a

complimentary academic experience (Yonkers-Talz, 2013). Almost all Jesuit universities have short-term immersion programs. Clark et al. (2019) measured the impact of these programs 5 years later for student participants at John Carroll University. They focused on the following key areas: cognitive growth, emotional growth, finding value in being a good citizen, increasing desire to do service, and spiritual growth. However, their study was limited by the demographics of the respondents, who were mainly white and predominantly people they had relationships with. Perhaps the best research on the short-term influence of immersion was in a dissertation by Savard (2010), who surveyed over 300 students from 13 Jesuit institutions and focused on student transformation in seven categories: compassion, cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, vocation, spirituality, social justice, and a well-educated solidarity. They found growth in these areas as a result of participation in immersion programs.

Reaching Those Most in Need

Another impact of Jesuit Higher education is seen in reaching those who otherwise could not afford tuition, in alignment with the preferential option for the poor (Labelle & Kendall, 2016). Arrupe College, founded in 2015, was the first Jesuit community college in the United States. The educational model is highly structured and provides students intensive hands-on support to assist a student population with limited access to resources many of their peers have in other Jesuit institutions. Arrupe is located in Chicago. In the city's community college network not including Arrupe, only 7% of students graduate in 2 years (Katsouros, 2017). In contrast, 84% of the first class of graduates from Arrupe College were estimated to have their bachelor's degrees by the end of 2019 (Ignatian Solidarity Network, 2019).

Universal Apostolic Preferences

On February 19, 2019, Jesuit Superior General Arturo Sosa announced four new

universal apostolic preferences (UAPs) meant to guide the Jesuits in the prioritization of their

work from 2019–2029 (Sosa, 2019). The four preferences are found in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences
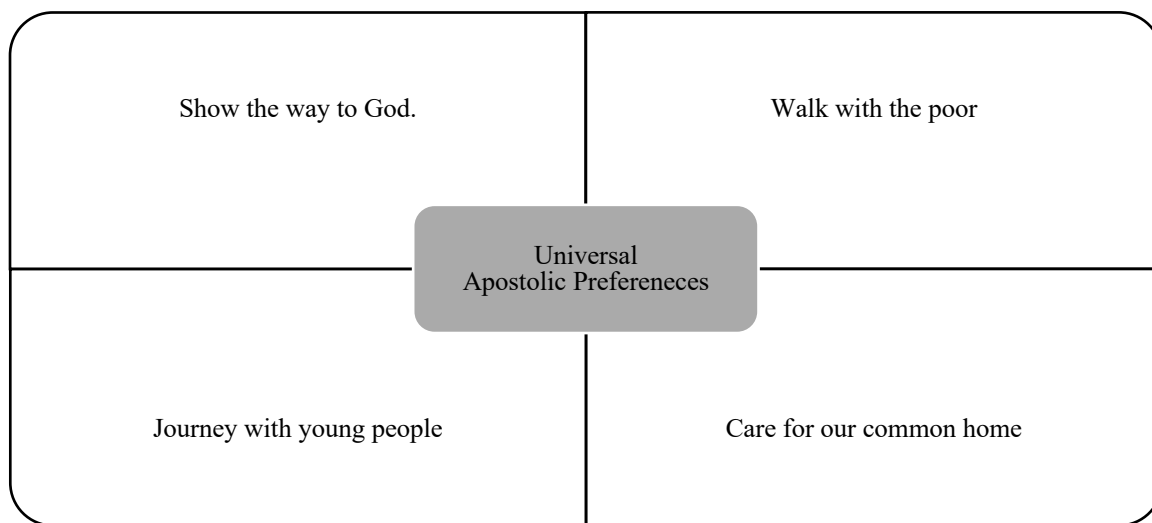
In their simplest form, the preferences are aspirational statements that speak to the

purpose and intent of the work of the Jesuits for the next decade (Endean, 2019). In each of these

areas of impact, university staff play a crucial role. Although Jesuit education has been looked at

through the lens of faculty and students, it is also important to look at the staff that engage

students through their educational experience and better understand the organizational culture of

these staff units.

Organizational Culture

Culture has been studied by anthropologists and sociologists alike. There have been several definitions and models of what exactly culture is (Schein, 2017). The study of organizational culture can often be traced back to Pettigrew (1979) as the first-ever research on business organizations, analyzed via the principles of anthropology. Over the years, the study of organizational culture has evolved, and one of the most cited definitions comes from Schein (2017) who defined organizational culture as a process of accumulated and shared learning that produces "a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions" (p. 6). Schein's (2017) definition indicated the basic assumptions are invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, help a group cope with external and internal factors, and have worked well enough to be taught as valid to new members of the organization (Deem et al., 2015; Lund, 2003; Schein, 2017; Tierney 1988). Tierney (1997), who wrote extensively on organizational culture in higher education, defined culture as "the sum of activities, both symbolic and instrumental, that exist in the organization and help to create shared meaning" (p. 3). Cameron and Sine (1999) described four distinct types of culture. First, clan culture is like a family and best managed through teamwork. The next type of culture, according to Cameron and Sinn (1999), is adhocracy: a type of culture that often finds success through innovation. Third, a hierarchy culture is built around structure and stability. Finally, a market culture strives for the achievement of goals with a desire to outperform the competition (Cameron & Sinn, 1999). A seminal study of business culture in 1981 linked the success of Japanese automakers over their counterparts in the United States to the culture of those companies rather than advanced technology (Ouchi, 1981).

Most organizational culture studies focus on organizational culture as a way to improve performance (Ouchi, 1981; Smart & John 1996). The study of organizational culture is often a means to address basic problems adapting to external environmental factors, or integrating internal processes that contribute to greater productivity and success of individuals and the larger organization (Smart & John, 1996). Strong institutional culture can become a source of competitive advantage for organizations (Barney, 1986). Institutional culture has been linked to brand equity: Strong cultures often facilitate positive external relations (Toma et al., 2005).

The Three Levels of Culture

What does the structure of culture look like? Multiple studies highlight the importance of shared membership traits that benefit an organization's performance (Dill, 1982; Smart & John, 1996; Stringer, 2002). Several frameworks exist, but one of the more often cited frameworks describing the structure of culture again comes from Schein (2017). Schein (2017) described three levels of culture as seen in Figure 4: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions.

Figure 4

Three Levels of Culture

Artifacts	• What you would see, hear and feel when you encounter a new group • This can include the physical environment, language, style, emotional displays. • The myths and stories, published list of values, and the observals rituals and ceremonies are all artifacts.
Espoused Beliefs and Values	• This includes the ideals, goals, values, and aspirations of the group. • It also includes idelogies and rationalizations and may or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts.
Basic Underlying Assumptions	• The beliefs, thoughts, feelings and values that are often taken for granted. • These are widely shared and often unconscious.

Note: Adapted from *Organizational Culture and Leadership* by E. Schein, 2017, 5th edition, pp. 23-35. Copyright 2017 by John Wiley & Sons.

Within the structure of culture are various subcultures (Schein, 2017). The three levels of culture are useful in analyzing organizational culture, subcultures in an organization, and individual perceptions and engagement with each of these cultures (Schein, 2017).

Culture in Higher Education

The study of organizational culture in higher education matters because studies show organizational culture influences employee behavior, which in turn has been shown to impact organizational effectiveness (Adams-Manning et al., 2020; Cameron, 1985; Deem et al., 2015). However, in higher education, organizational culture is not just about effectiveness; it is often about the emphasis on mission and values (Vallett, 2010). If a university internally displays

compassion and benevolence, it is much more difficult for faculty and administrators to be forced into scenarios where they compete for resource allocations (Vallett, 2010).

In higher education, the focus on culture, if existent, has traditionally focused on student culture (Deem et al., 2015; Tierney, 1988). A historical review of campus culture studies by Pal and Jones (2020) noted that campus climate and culture studies about women have focused on female faculty members, neglecting the staff experience. Cameron (1978) provided nine dimensions of organizational effectiveness in higher education. Those nine dimensions are listed in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Dimensions of Organizational Effectiveness in Higher Education

Student educational satisfaction	Student academic development	Student career development
Student personal development	Faculty and administrator employment satisfaction	Quality of faculty
Professional development	System openness and community interaction	Organizational health
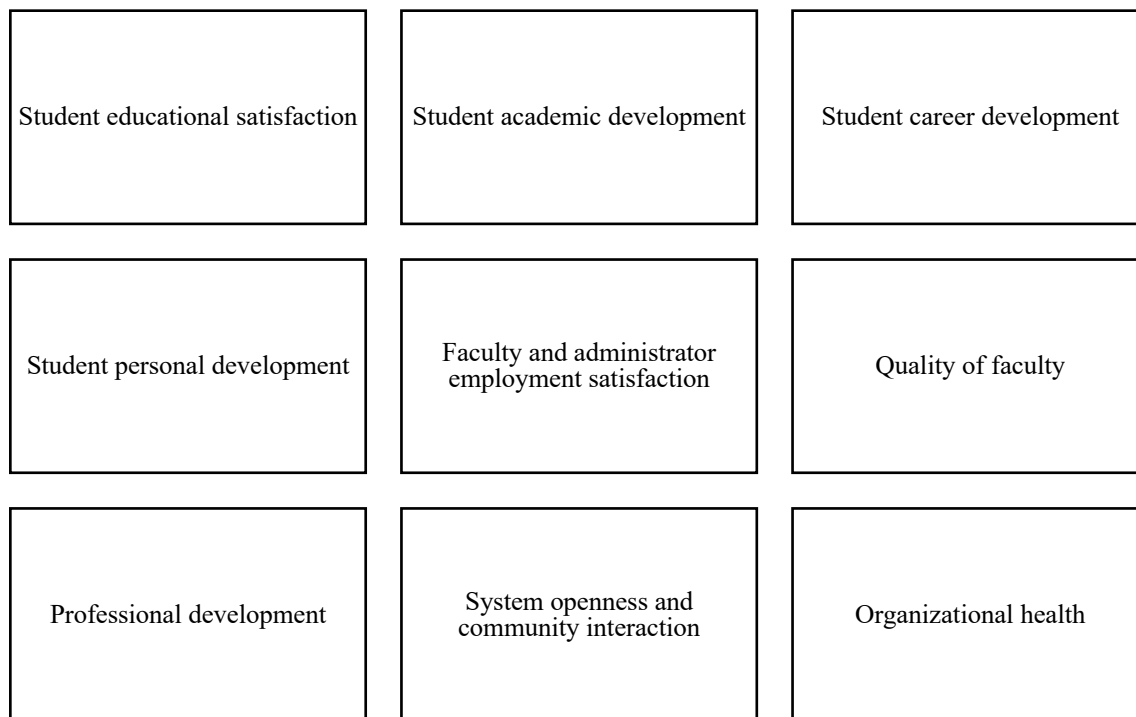
Note: Adapted from "Measuring Organizational Effectiveness in Institutions of Higher Education" by K. Cameron, 1978, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23(4), pp. 620-624. Copyright 1978 by Administrative Science Quarterly.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) described culture in higher education as something collective that influences norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions, and that helps to shape the behavior of individuals and collective units to interpret and make meaning of external and internal factors impacting a campus. This collective culture is an important force that acts almost as a glue to hold an organization together in four distinct ways: (a) it provides a sense of identity, (b) it helps to enable a sense of identity beyond oneself, (c) it improves a group's social system, and (d) it serves as a sense making devise that helps to direct and shape behavior (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Their analysis was particularly framed around faculty culture, noting the culture of the academic progression is centered upon three basic values: the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, autonomy in academic work, and a collegial atmosphere (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Tierney's (1988) article on organizational culture in higher education provided a useful framework to look at culture through a lens that can apply to students, staff, and faculty. An organization's culture, according to Tierney (1988), is "reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level" (p. 3). Influences on culture occur at many levels from the department all the way up to the larger system a university might be a part of (Tierney, 1988). Understanding the culture of an organization is important according to Tierney (1988), as it allows leadership to spot and more adequately resolve potential problems. However, administrators tend to recognize or dedicate attention to an organization's culture when a problem arises which leads to organizational culture often only being addressed in an atmosphere of crisis management (Tierney, 1988). Tierney provided a framework for organizational culture

in higher education that includes: mission, environment, leadership, strategy, information, and socialization (Tierney, 1988, 2008).

Why Culture Matters in Higher Education

Academic institutions of higher education have always been in a state of change (Tierney, 2014). Even in the 1980s, many institutions of higher education were in decline and faced challenges that threatened their way of proceeding (Dill, 1982). In the early 2000s, it was acknowledged that an institution of higher education faces multiple external challenges made evident through the commodification of higher education (Roberts, 2018; Rogers et al., 2020; Silver, 2003; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009). A recent study by Roberts (2018) with vice presidents of enrollment at 11 Jesuit universities highlighted the complex challenge university leaders often navigate: "space between" a strong desire to forcefully commit to mission and a need to ensure sufficient resources to run a private university.

External challenges and complexities are often out of the control of university leaders. Both increased global competition and the rising popularity of university ranking systems have reshaped the mission and culture of universities (Köse & Kormaz, 2019). Institutional leaders must be aware of outside factors shaping culture while also addressing internal factors. Socialization to an organization is of fundamental importance when seeking to address issues an organization face (Tierney, 1997). Much of what is learned about an organization leads to how one is socialized to it. Tierney (1997) suggested this socialization happens less through big dramatic speeches and moments, but instead happens through day-to-day occurrences. Organizational culture is a manifestation of the emphasis on values that support an organization (Vallett, 2010). Trust is a factor important in organizational culture that can either help to enable

organizational change or serve to block organizational change (Tierney, 2008). Although big speeches and moments might not shape culture as much as one might think, the higher-level leadership of an institution has an important impact on the shaping of organizational culture.

Organizational culture is among the most important elements that impact university effectiveness (Köse & Korkmaz, 2019). For organizational culture to contribute to high levels of performance, it needs to be strong and have distinctive traits or "particular beliefs, values, and shared patterns of behavior" (Smart & John, 1996, p. 220). Importantly, a successful strong culture is one in which there is alignment between the culture that is proclaimed to exist and the actual management practices (Smart & John, 1996). Even though much of organizational culture can be applied to various sectors, it is worth noting research that suggests management techniques from the private sector often lead to long term conflicts in institutions of higher education (Köse & Kormaz, 2019; Roberts, 2018; Silver, 2003). University leadership must determine values that will shape and guide their institution. As Roberts (2018) indicated, the current higher education landscape creates what he called "space between:" a space of tension between the espoused values and desires of staff and faculty and the neoliberal reality of a commodified educational market.

Mission is how a university's participants come to define the ideology and drive of the university (Tierney, 2008). To understand mission, participants must first be socialized to a university to determine what is important (Tierney, 2008). Organizational culture is dynamic and is often actively created rather than serving as something to be discovered or duplicated (Tierney, 1997). As such, it is often not coherent (Tierney, 1997). Lacking coherence, organizational culture requires an engagement at multiple entry points. Leadership must be

invested in crafting organizational culture. As participants become socialized to organizational culture, they must have pathways to further contribute and share this culture with other participants.

Organizational Culture in Catholic Higher Education

Catholic higher education changed dramatically in the 1960s. Declining numbers of ordained religious leaders resulted in Catholic colleges and universities turning to lay staff and leadership more often. In 1967, Saint Louis University became the first Catholic university to establish a lay (or nonreligious) board of trustees (Blanton Hibner, 2018). Approximately two weeks later, Notre Dame also created a lay board of trustees (Prusak, 2018). To understand the origin of these boards, it is helpful to understand the financial environment surrounding Catholic higher education. Geiger (2000) reported that 85% of the Catholic colleges and universities that opened between 1890 and 1910 ultimately were forced to close. A significant reason for these closures was the lack of resources to maintain Catholic colleges and universities (Geiger, 2000).

The same year that Saint Louis University introduced a lay board of trustees, a prominent group of Catholic educators gathered at Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin. A primary aim of the gathering was to affirm the religious identity of Catholic universities in a way that would satisfy Catholic Church leadership in Rome while still committing to and achieving the academic excellence expected of modern U.S. universities (O'Brien, 1998). The group produced a seminal statement for Catholic higher education, declaring for a Catholic university to achieve its research and teaching functions, it required autonomy and academic freedom (International Federation of Catholic Universities, 1967). Structurally, the sponsoring religious communities of

Catholic colleges and universities began to separate themselves legally and financially from the institutions they founded (Appleyard & Gray, 2000).

Debates about autonomy and academic excellence continued in the decades that followed, leading up to the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, a papal document by Pope John Paul II that further defined the importance of mission and identity in Catholic institutions of higher education while also helping to set norms on how to achieve that mission (John Paul II, 1990). Opponents of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* see the intended Church laws and norms as a threat to academic freedom and institutional autonomy (Russo & Gregory, 2007). Catholic colleges and universities work to navigate academic freedom alongside what Roberts (2018) described as a space between the tension of honoring mission and needing to finance the operations of Catholic colleges and universities.

Appleyard and Gray (2000) provided a summary of mission and identity programs at U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities. They traced the history of moving from a control model, in which the Jesuits were in full control and mission was presumed to be practiced, to a professional model that often relegates mission and identity to retreat and community service programs. A third model they pointed to is the permissive model, in which core curriculum is abandoned, faculty advising focuses on a narrow academic topic, and all decisions can be considered good ones. Appleyard and Gray (2000) argued for a fourth model they believed was in development at the time: a mission model of education that investigates how faith and learning enrich one another.

In the literature on culture in higher education, colleges and universities are often described as open systems that navigate complexity and unpredictability (Scott & Davis, 2016).

A perspective on open systems focuses on the role of environment and the importance of loosely coupled organizational subgroups that align (Scott & Davis, 2016). A convergence of factors such as the declining number of individuals joining religious orders, the inability of religious organizations that founded Catholic colleges and universities to adequately govern them, and the increasingly complex nature and tension between academic freedom, mission, and commodification can be connected to the increase of lay people in various elements of college and university governance (Dosen, 2009).

Organizational culture studies have been limited in Catholic higher education. Janosik (1999) conducted an analysis of higher education literature and created a framework on Catholic identity. Janosik (1999) argued that culture and identity emerge and are reinforced in three significant ways, beginning with external factors, such as an institution's setting and location in the United States, the overall system of higher education in the United States, and the relationship between an institution and the church. Second, internal factors play a significant role, including core curriculum and academic offerings, the level of involvement of the founding or sponsoring religious order, governance structure, and general support of the mission of the sponsoring religious congregation's mission. The third and final impact is cocurricular programming, like programs outside the classroom related to religious formation, spirituality, and social justice (Janosik, 1999). Cocurricular engagement is frequently provided by areas on campus like campus ministry and student affairs.

Organizational Culture in Student Affairs

The field of student affairs in the United States originated in the late 19th century with the development of Deans of Students (then known as Deans of Men) to investigate student

conduct and help to enforce university rules and policies. As colleges and universities became more complex and fragmented, student affairs was created to help provide formation support that previously was only exercised by faculty (Thelin, 2019). In the 1960s, student affairs developed beyond deans who helped to keep order on campus to include more professional staff to support other elements of student life outside the classroom. Many faculty juggling increased responsibilities in teaching and research were keen to be relieved of advising duties and responsibilities related to student behavior, as those responsibilities shifted to student affairs professionals (Sandeen, 2001). Today, student affairs offices vary in their oversight and provision of student services, leadership development, and academic collaboration.

In reviewing the best practices for student affairs in Catholic Higher Education to build capacity for mission, James and Estanek (2012) identified eight principles of good practice in Catholic student affairs. These are: (a) welcome all students into a vibrant campus community that celebrates God's love for all; (b) ground policies, practices, and decisions in the teachings and living tradition of the Church; (c) build and prepare the student affairs staff to make informed contributions to the Catholic mission of the institution; (d) enrich student integration of faith and reason through the provision of cocurricular learning opportunities; (e) create opportunities for students to experience, reflect on, and act from a commitment to justice, mercy, and compassion, and in light of Catholic social teaching to develop respect and responsibility for all, especially those most in need; (f) challenge students to high standards of personal behavior and responsibility through the formation of character and virtues; (g) invite and accompany students into the life of the Catholic Church through prayer, liturgy, sacraments, and spiritual direction; (h) seek dialogue among religious traditions and with contemporary culture to clarify

beliefs and to foster mutual understanding in the midst of tensions and ambiguities; (i) assist students in discerning and responding to their vocations, understanding potential professional contributions, and choosing particular career directions.

A study of student affairs professionals shows that altering the student affairs work environment can lead to changes in individual staff behavior (Adams-Manning et al., 2020). In Catholic universities, James and Estanek (2012) argued that a student affairs professional must be what they call "transcultural" so that the professional knows both the professional literature of student affairs and at the same time develops a sophisticated understanding of the Catholic tradition and that both should inform practice. Unfortunately, little research exists on student affairs professionals at Catholic colleges and universities and how they become transcultural. Schaller and Boyle (2006) conducted a qualitative study to identify student affairs professionals at Catholic universities who brought together a philosophy grounded in student affairs with an ability to navigate Catholic spaces of higher education. They found that professionals with more than 10 years of experience in student affairs at a Catholic college or university had increased focus on mission. As leaders advanced in their career, if they remained in Catholic institutions they began to see themselves as leaders for the mission and believed they best advanced mission through hiring, orientation, and creating space for dialogue and reflection about difficult topics (Schaller & Boyle, 2006).

In 2010, leaders from the two most predominant student affairs professional associations, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), formed a joint task force to analyze challenges faced by the field (Grund, 2010). The final report highlighted impending challenges due to the

environment of higher education, and urged a rethinking of roles, structures, collaboration, and innovation. Challenges indeed exist for the field to navigate. Kuk et al. (2010) spoke of the challenge that exists when academic affairs and student affairs find themselves at odds with one another:

> Over time, student affairs units have become viewed as more critical for ensuring the overall success of the students served by the institution. At the same time, these units are not consistently viewed as partners and colleagues with faculty in the teaching and learning role of the institution. Student affairs is rarely considered an essential part of the fabric of the institution's organizational structure and has increasingly been placed outside the executive decision-making structure of the organization. (p. 13)

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and the reckoning in the United States with racial justice have all impacted the field of student affairs. Student affairs has always been a field with odd and long hours but unfortunately, due these factors in combination with the challenges mentioned by Kuk et al. (2010), many student-facing employees are becoming burnt out and disenchanted with their work (Ellis, 2021). In recent years, higher education has begun to encounter a growing morale problem (Conroy, 2022; Ellis, 2021; McClure, 2021; Walton, 2022). As Conroy (2022) observed, it is still not uncommon to find job listings for positions in different areas of campus that require three to five years of experience, a master's degree, for which the pay is less than $40,000 annually. Simultaneously, existing staff and faculty who remain at their institutions are often becoming less enthusiastic and more disengaged in their work (McClure & Hicklin Fryar, 2022). As the field of student affairs continues to face significant external environmental challenges, leaders will need to navigate the internal tensions of academic freedom, mission, and commodification to create environments where students are positioned for personal, academic and professional success. At the same time,

leaders will work to address long standing challenges impacting the very employees that contribute directly to that student success.

Conclusion

What Jesuit higher education represents today is the accumulation of over 450 years of contributions to Ignatian pedagogy and Ignatian spirituality from all around the world. Jesuit education is well known. In the United States, there are 27 Jesuit colleges and universities, 68 Jesuit high schools, and 17 Jesuit elementary and middle schools (Jesuit Schools Network, 2021). Yet, there is no clear consensus of what it means to be a Jesuit school.

To assist the process of operationalizing a Jesuit education, AJCU (2021) published an evaluation tool with seven key areas to use in an evaluation of Jesuit education (see Figure 1): (a) leadership and public commitment to the mission; (b) the academic life; (c) the pursuit of faith, justice, and reconciliation; (d) promoting an Ignatian campus culture; (e) service to the church; (f) relationship to the Society of Jesus; and (g) institutional integrity. This tool has been widely endorsed by presidents of Jesuit colleges and universities for self-improvement and alignment with what it means to be a Jesuit institution of higher education. Similarly, in 2019, Secretariat for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education as part of ICAJE (2019) published a document (see Figure 2) with 10 global identifiers of Jesuit schools to use as an ongoing exercise of discernment about what makes a Jesuit school, Jesuit. These documents began to describe elements of a Jesuit education.

Jesuit education has a robust history spanning over 450 years. Throughout this history, the educational model has adapted and changed with the times. There is a great deal of literature on Ignatian pedagogy and Ignatian spirituality. Many articles speak of the importance of Jesuit

education. Yet, the literature reveals a lack of consensus on what exactly constitutes a model or framework for Jesuit education. Different governing bodies like AJCU or ICAJE have tried to provide a basic framework. Scholars like John O'Malley, a professor of theology at Georgetown University and longtime historian of Jesuit education, have contributed to the conversation. Superior Generals of the Jesuits over the generations have also sought to provide further guidance and context.

The literature also revealed that Jesuit education can mean different things to different constituents. What it means to engage in Jesuit education varies on positionality: Faculty might have one understanding that contrasts with students, which is different than what alumni and donors believe is important, which then contrasts with administrators, and looks different for staff. The literature also revealed a lack of research about the experiences of staff members broadly engaged in work in higher education. Research was even more sparse when focusing on the staff experience at Jesuit universities. An insight into how staff came to understand Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality and see it in their work as staff members at Jesuit universities is important to form a better understanding of what Jesuit education is, why exactly it matters, and how to make it as impactful as possible for all constituents. This was a crucial group of people contributing to generating organizational culture in Jesuit universities, but are overlooked in academic literature.

At the same time, there has been a gradual evolution in literature about organizational culture, specifically in higher education. Different scholars have created frameworks for what culture in an organization looks like. Over the last several decades, scholars who study higher education have built upon the idea of organizational culture in a business setting and found ways

its' study is applicable to higher education. Strong organizational culture is a prerequisite to effectiveness in universities (Tierney, 1988). For example, when student affairs professionals have believed their organization values professional development and it is embedded as a cultural norm, employees are more likely to participate in trainings that enhance their professional skills (Adams-Manning et al., 2020). Tierney (1997) found that the ways new employees are socialized formed their understanding and incorporation of symbolic and functional activities of the organization into their own engagement with the organization. In literature on organizational culture, similar to literature on Jesuit education, there has been less information about organizational culture for college and university staff in comparison to students, senior administrators, and faculty. Many colleges and universities increasingly attempted to institute managerial and hierarchical structures more commonly found in the private sector (Tierney, 2008). Even though that literature can be somewhat helpful, organizational culture in higher education with multiple constituencies requires a more varied approach.

Anyone who has spent time working in an institution of higher education knows the cultures of students, staff, faculty, and senior administrators vary greatly. The current study contributes to the definition of an Ignatian organizational culture for Jesuit college and university staff who work directly with students, and describes what Jesuit education is for this group of professionals. This study contributes to an understanding of this important work and the significance that it might have in socializing staff to be leaders for Jesuit mission.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

As illustrated in Chapter 2, there is a significant amount of literature on Jesuit education and organizational culture. Previous research has contributed to conversations of what is necessary in Jesuit education. At the same time, a growing body of literature continues to explore the meaning and impact of organizational culture and an increasing number of scholars have conducted studies about organizational culture specific to higher education.

This study expanded upon previous work in Jesuit education and higher education organizational culture by examining an under-researched group of professionals in Jesuit higher education: student-facing staff. Furthermore, the current study gathered data to more generally describe the organizational culture of student-facing staff in Jesuit higher education. Thus, this study begins to fill the gap in literature by exploring Ignatian organizational culture and why it matters. The purpose of this research was to speak to staff leaders of divisions or departments whose work primarily interfaces and serves student needs in Jesuit universities in the United States.

Research Questions

This study uplifted the lived experiences of student-facing staff at Jesuit colleges and universities. To understand and potentially define the features of an Ignatian organizational culture framework, the following research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What Jesuit values or principles are most often found in student-facing departments and divisions at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States?

2. How do leaders of student-facing departments and divisions operationalize components of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy to create an Ignatian organizational culture?

Method

The research design was qualitative, using phenomenological semistructured interviews (Seidman, 2006) to gather data from leaders of student-facing staff departments and divisions at colleges and universities that are a part of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) in North America. Multiple interviews were conducted, with the belief that a trusting relationship would help participants answer questions about their personal narratives and leadership style with candor (Gay et al., 2014). Phenomenological research allowed for a more intensive study of a small group of participants to better understand the emergence of themes and meanings contributing to a definition of Ignatian organizational culture framework. In university settings that prioritize student and faculty narratives and contributions, staff can often feel as though their stories, experiences, and leadership are not as meaningful. A qualitative study sought to capture and understand their experiences and leadership philosophies. The study was rooted in the belief that their narratives matter.

Sampling and Participants

As a qualitative study, purposeful sampling was determined appropriate to yield a representative group of participants best equipped to provide data to address the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Gay et al., 2014). A goal of the study was to learn from leaders whose leadership is influenced by Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. As a department leader of student-facing staff departments in an AJCU school, I am connected to similar leaders through various

professional organizations that have an Ignatian component, including the Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN), AJCU service-learning and international education affinity groups, and the Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators (JASPA). I relied upon those professional associations to identify participants.

To recruit participants, I used my professional network and either emailed senior leaders directly or asked for email introductions to senior leaders from colleagues at my home institution. If a colleague provided an email of introduction to a potential participant, I then replied to that email introduction and outlined the intended nature of the study and shared the Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval from the Research Advancement and Compliance office at Loyola Marymount University. In that email I offered to speak on a telephone call if the leaders wanted more information. If a leader indicated they were interested in participating, I worked to schedule the first and second interview at the same time.

For department level leaders, I relied on my own network established through ISN and JASPA. I reached out to various leaders via LinkedIn or email, explained the purpose of the study and what it entailed, and asked each leader if they might be interested in participating. Like my contact with senior leaders, I offered an opportunity to speak on the telephone if anyone had additional questions before agreeing to participate and provided the IRB approval documents.

Thirteen potential participants were identified through this process of purposive sampling and nine ultimately agreed to participate. All participants identified as leaders of student-facing units at a Jesuit University. All nine participants identified as staff, not faculty. Six of the nine participants were leaders of multiple student-facing units or the primary leader of large student-

facing divisions. Three participants were leaders of smaller student-facing departments. Their titles ranged from Director to Assistant or Associate Vice President or higher as noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Gender	University size	University region	Role
Santi	Male	Medium	Midwest	AVP or above
Kevin	Male	Large	Midwest	AVP or above
Kirsti	Female	Small	Northeast	AVP or above
Grace	Female	Large	Northeast	Unit director
Drew	Male	Medium	West	Unit director
Molly	Female	Medium	West	AVP or above
Anthony	Male	Small	Northeast	AVP or above
Saj	Male	Small	West	Unit director
James	Male	Large	Northeast	AVP or above

The participants were purposefully sampled to represent a diverse cross section of Jesuit institutions. I interviewed representatives from institutions that were small (< 5,000 enrolled students), mid-sized (between 5,000–10,000 enrolled students), and large (> 10,000 enrolled students). Further, I wanted to learn from leaders at schools in every part of the country. As seen in Table 1, participants from Jesuit universities located in the northeast, midwest, and western United States were represented.

Learning how these leaders understood Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality provided an opportunity to operationalize and explain what an Ignatian organizational culture framework is for student-facing staff. Each of the nine participants were strong proponents of Jesuit education. Though leaders represented units and institutions that varied in their delivery of services to

students, each leader was committed to and inspired by Ignatian ideals that inform the tenets of Jesuit education.

Study Procedures

An in-depth, interview series created by Seidman (2006) was employed. Schein (2017) indicates interviews are an important way to study the culture of an organization and more closely look at its norms, values, and philosophies. Thus, the participants were invited to participate in two individual, semistructured interviews for a combined maximum of three hours. Each interview lasted between 45–80 minutes. I used the interview guide approach. According to Patton (2002), topics and issues to be covered are shared with participants in advance, and the interviewer decides the sequence and wording of questions as the interviews progress. The first interview focused on the professional background of the participants including how they became leaders of their respective units in AJCU. This was an opportunity to gain trust and create connection with the participants. The first interview was critical for participants (who I consider colleagues) because I wanted to ensure they felt safe to openly share their experiences as leaders with me. Conducting the interviews over Zoom felt slightly impersonal, but was necessary due to the continuing COVID-19 global pandemic. It was important to spend the first few minutes of each interview casually chatting with participants, getting to know them, and establishing comfort and connection via the virtual chat. The second interview provided participants a chance to share details of their lived experiences as staff leaders in AJCU in terms of Jesuit organizational culture. These questions focused on their experiences as staff members in Jesuit education, and their experiences transitioning into leadership roles and the ways they have or have not connected their personal understanding of Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality into their

leadership in an Ignatian setting. Prior to the second interview, I emailed each participant to follow up and thanked them for their time and reflections in our first interview. I included Jesuit documents that I hoped would help to guide their reflection and our conversation in the second interview about concrete ways to operationalize Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. The third connection with participants was done via email. I emailed participants to member check what I had heard in our interviews, and to provide each participant a chance to reflect on the interview process and make meaning of their leadership through an Ignatian lens. Participants were invited to respond with any corrections, edits, or additions to the preliminary summary of the first two interviews.

Interviews were conducted via video conferencing platform Zoom. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using features available in Zoom. Data was transcribed using Zoom cloud recording. I then uploaded those interviews to Otter.ai, a speech to text transcription service that offered more reliable transcription. Throughout each interview, I took abbreviated notes for an analytical memo. I read each transcript within 48 hours of the interview and notated anything that stood out in the initial analysis. I later listened to each interview and edited the transcripts for any major transcription errors from the Zoom and Otter.ai transcription service tools. As I spoke with participants, I also asked them if they had any documents or websites that they felt would be useful in understanding their unit institutional culture. I uploaded each edited transcript and any documents participants shared with me or suggested I look at into Dedoose, a web application used to analyze qualitative data and generate initial codes and subcodes (Saldaña, 2016). This resulted in a total of 18 interview documents and 19 additional documents provided by participants to highlight the ways Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality were

operationalized for my review of data. Examples of these documents include: (a) department or division values and mission statements; (b) texts of past speeches leaders had given; and (c) the self-study reports and external reports of the Mission Priority Examen, a process each Jesuit university is asked to undertake by the Superior General of the Jesuits to reaffirm each institution's Jesuit mission (AJCU, 2021).

Categories to synthesize initial codes focused on similarities and differences, frequency of actions, and shared practices. I paid particular attention to moments when participants operationalized terminology frequently mentioned in Jesuit education but often unexplained in action. After initial themes were developed, I vetted themes with my dissertation chair and committee members who have expertise in Jesuit education.

Analytical Plan

The data analysis was inductive. Immediately after an interview, I recorded initial thoughts and ideas about potential emerging themes through a process of using memos to reflect on what I had heard. I used a six-step approach to data analysis provided by Creswell (2009).

*Step 1: Organize and Prepare Data for Analysis*I visually scanned all the material and organized it into folders categorized by interview on my computer. Interviews were conducted on Zoom and transcribed using Zoom's cloud recording service, powered by Otter.ai (Chen, 2020).

Step 2: Read Through All the Data

Reading through all the data and watching each video as I read through the transcripts aided in reflecting on their overall meaning (Creswell, 2009). In addition, reading and viewing

the data helped create a general understanding of the depth, credibility, and usefulness of the information (Creswell, 2009).

Step 3: Code the Data

Coding is the process by which data are categorically assigned and given a word or words to represent meaning (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) recommends three categories of codes that assisted in this study. First, the study used codes based on past literature and often used Ignatian terminology. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of this work provided a useful review of concepts and terminology frequently used in Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. Some of those terms emerged in elements of the findings. Second, this study used codes to capture data that were surprising or unexpected (Creswell, 2009). Using a thematic analysis approach as seen in Figure 6, I generated initial codes and subcodes. I then used qualitative analysis computer software Dedoose (Saldaña, 2016). I organized the codes into categories looking at similarities and differences that emerged with particular attention paid to frequency of comments or shared practices.

Figure 6

Illustration of Saldaña's Thematic Analysis Approach
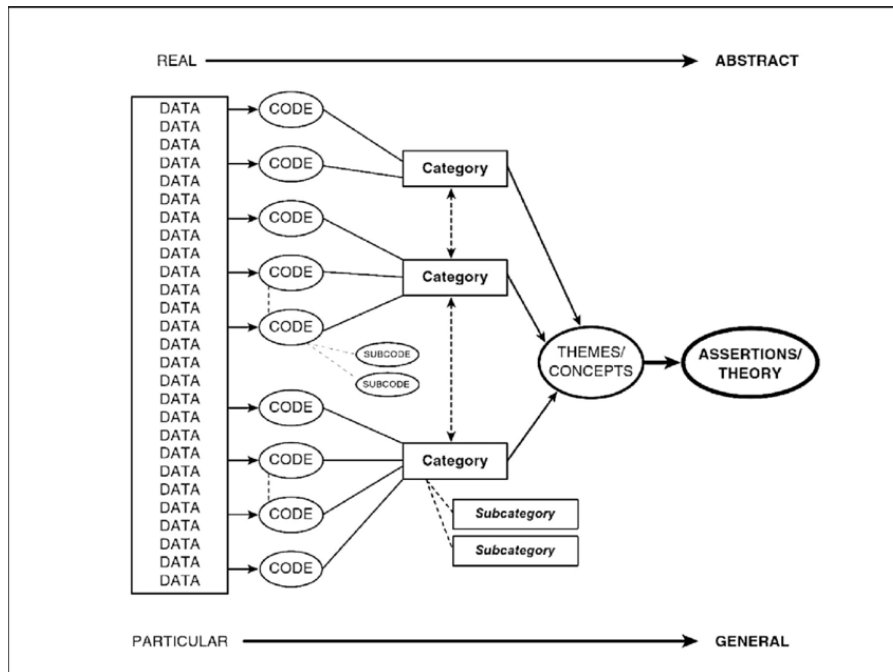
Step 4: Identify Themes and Descriptions

This study generated four themes, which contained multiple subthemes that were used in the findings about what an Ignatian organizational culture framework looks like for student-facing staff at Jesuit colleges and universities. Each theme captured multiple perspectives supported by direct quotations from multiple participants (Creswell, 2009). Then, I developed initial themes before returning for a member check to build further trust with participants and enhance the credibility of the research. According to Creswell (2009), member checking is a validation tool to help determine the accuracy of qualitative findings by taking specific themes back to interview participants to determine if they feel the themes are accurate.

Step 5: Determine How Themes Will Be Represented in the Study

I ultimately chose to have a detailed discussion of themes and how they were interconnected as Creswell (2009) suggested.

Step 6: Interpret the Meaning of the Themes and Descriptions

The final step of Creswell's six-step approach was to interpret and make meaning of the themes that emerged.

Limitations and Delimitations

Sample Size

Participants in this study were leaders of student-facing staff departments and divisions at 9 of the 28 colleges and universities that comprise the members of the AJCU. Accounting for everyone's past and present employment at Jesuit colleges and universities, the participants had experience working in 13 of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in AJCU. As with any qualitative study, every leader of a student-facing division or department could not be interviewed, nor was that the goal of this study. The goal of the study was to secure a sampling of leaders in student-facing divisions and departments who are invested in Jesuit education and therefore committed to creating a work environment inspired by elements of Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. Nine leaders were interviewed, which is an appropriate size for phenomenological research (Creswell, 2009). Participants were selected based upon compatibility with the participant selection criteria, availability to interview at the time of data collection in the fall of 2021, and interest to participate in the study.

Bias

Creswell (2009) indicated a researcher must explore their own bias in qualitative research. This includes identifying values and personal background aspects of one's identity such as gender, history, culture, and other aspects of identity that might shape the researchers interpretation of data from a study. Moustakas (1994) said a researcher must explicate their own intentional consciousness in phenomenological research before they can understand someone or something.

I have worked in Jesuit education for 10 years now and, as a result, the individuals interviewed were colleagues in AJCU. Three of them had a prior professional relationship with me as the director of the Center for Service and Action at Loyola Marymount University. The other six were referred by mentors of mine in Jesuit education and are individuals I anticipate having future engagement with. Even if a participant did not have a direct working relationship with me, our interactions in a network as small and intimate as the AJCU means we no doubt have shared relationships with other colleagues and know of each other through those relationships. I was worried that participants may be initially reluctant to fully divulge their thoughts and methods of operation for fear of how it might reflect on their individual leadership or the work of their unit or institution. I was worried that conducting these interviews over Zoom would make it harder to personally connect with each participant and gain their trust. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, in-person interviews were not viable or responsible options to explore. Yet, the phenomenological interview approach helped me to gain the trust of participants and limited these concerns.

In my role as a researcher, it is important to acknowledge possible areas of bias that could form my interpretation of the data collected. First, I am a department leader of a student-facing department in a Jesuit university and have been employed in Jesuit education for eleven years. I come to this research with my own ideas of what an Ignatian organizational culture might entail as someone who strongly believes in the value of Jesuit education and its potential to impact students, faculty, and staff. I am aware of this potential for bias and have worked to allow themes in the data to emerge without influence from my preconceived notions. I believe the work to create an interview script and member checking were important checks on this potential bias. It was also helpful to engage with my chair and a member of my committee who has expertise in Jesuit education throughout data collection and analysis.

COVID-19 Global Pandemic

The COVID-19 global pandemic greatly modified the operation of the universities each of my participants worked at during the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 academic years. These interviews occurred in the fall of 2021—a time when many universities were increasing or altogether returning to in-person instruction and providing increased services and program engagement. During the course of this study, an unfolding phenomenon was labeled "The Great Resignation" (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022), referring to upheaval in employment. The leaders interviewed were navigating a global crisis and wrestling with the impacts it was having on their operations and culture of their units. As such, a principal question emerges and can only be answered in time: Are we witnessing shifts in employment in higher education as it pertains to the impacts of COVID-19, or are the increased resignations witnessed in higher education emblematic of a paradigm shift impacting how institutions operate moving forward? No matter

what the future reveals, the topics captured by this study are timely, of the moment, and have not been studied prior.

Conclusion

To address the research questions, a qualitative study using in-depth phenomenological interviews with nine participants was conducted. I chose to interview department and division leaders for this study. Watkins (2013) explained organizational culture is not what an organization does, but how an organization does something. Care of students is what student-facing units do. How student-facing units engage in their work in Jesuit universities is what I wanted to learn more about. The method allowed data to be collected about the lived experiences and leadership practices of leaders in student-facing departments and divisions at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. University staff often feel as though their narratives and the work they do is not valued to the same degree as the contributions of university faculty. This research allowed their stories to be told, their work creating an Ignatian organizational culture to be analyzed, and their impact on staff and students to be better understood. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, there is little research on staff, particularly in Jesuit universities. This research revealed how crucial staff are to the identity of an institution and the development of its students. This study can be a catalyst for future research on the organizational culture of university staff and the impact they have on student formation and development. Future research focusing on the lived experiences of student-facing staff, or a study to understand how students view the impact of student-facing staff on their lives and college experiences, would be relevant to explore.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was two-fold. First, the study was an opportunity to document and describe the attributes of Jesuit education most often engaged by leaders of student-facing departments and divisions in a variety of Jesuit colleges and universities across the United States. Second, the study sought to not only identify which attributes were cited most often, but to go a step further and investigate how these leaders operationalize components of Ignatian pedagogy or spirituality.

Using qualitative, phenomenological research design, I interviewed nine student-facing leaders at Jesuit colleges or universities from across the nation. Including their prior experiences of employment at other Jesuit universities, the collective experience among the sample represented 13 of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the AJCU. The nine individuals served at different Jesuit institutions in various senior level roles such as directors, associate-vice presidents, vice presidents, and senior-vice presidents. Though their areas differed slightly, all identified as leaders of units that engaged in student-facing work. All of the participants worked in university divisions like student affairs or a university mission and ministry office. Collectively, offices like campus ministry, residence life, campus recreation, athletics, service and justice, student conduct, student development, career services, student health, substance abuse and recovery, student psychological services, student success, and student media were some of the units these individuals led. The work of these offices included supporting students beyond academics. Common activities that participants led and participated in included

organizing student retreats, providing career preparation workshops, counseling services, and much more. The diversity of student-facing units was wide ranging.

Additionally, there were some commonalities across participants. All identified as staff, not faculty. A mix of small, medium, and large universities geographically dispersed throughout the northeast, midwest, and western United States were represented. In this study, a small university was defined as 1–4,999 students; a medium university had a student enrollment between 5,000–9,999 students; and a large university indicated a student enrollment of 10,000 or more.

To illuminate the data found in Table 1, Santi had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 15 years. Ten or more diverse departments reported to Santi. Santi was educated by the Jesuits for one or more of his degrees before working at a Jesuit university. Santi's highest level of education was a doctoral degree.

Kevin had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 15 years. His work experience stemmed from both in and outside the Jesuit network, and he had experience in leadership at two different Jesuit universities. Ten or more diverse departments reported to Kevin. Kevin did not have experience being educated by the Jesuits at any level in college. Kevin's highest level of education was a doctoral degree.

Kirsti had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 10 years. She had prior experience at other Jesuit universities before landing in her leadership position. Ten or more diverse departments reported to Kirsti. Kirsti did not have any experience being educated by the Jesuits at any level in her college studies. Kirsti's highest level of education was a doctoral degree.

Grace had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 10 years. She had no prior experience at Jesuit universities prior to her current role. She was the leader of a large and influential unit on her campus. Grace's highest level of education was a doctoral degree and she had experience working as a staff member and faculty member in Catholic higher education.

Drew had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 10 years. Drew had experience being educated by the Jesuits for one or more of his degrees prior to his work at a Jesuit institution. Drew was the leader of an influential department on his campus. His highest level of education was a master's degree

Molly had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 10 years. Molly managed a division with a small but significant number of departments. Molly had experience being educated by the Jesuits in one or more of her degrees prior to her work at a Jesuit institution. Her highest level of education was a doctoral degree.

Anthony had been engaged in student-facing work for more than 10 years. He had experience at Catholic universities that identified as Jesuit and other Catholic universities outside the Jesuit network. Anthony managed the efforts of 10 or more areas. He had experience being educated by the Jesuits in one or more of his degrees prior to his work at a Jesuit institution. His highest level of education was a doctoral degree.

Saj had five or more years of experience in student-facing work. He was the unit leader of a prominent department on his campus. He had experience being educated by the Jesuits in one or more of his degrees prior to his work at a Jesuit institution. His highest level of education was a master's degree.

James had 10 or more years of experience in student-facing work. More than 10 diverse areas of student life reported to James. He did not have experience being educated by the Jesuits in one or more of his degrees prior to his work at a Jesuit institution. His highest level of education was a master's degree.

Taken together, these participants worked in Jesuit colleges and universities for many years and were experienced professional staff. Their work positioned them in leadership for student-facing staff and direct support to students. Thus, their collective wisdom and experiences highlighted the components of Jesuit organizational culture and provided answers to the research questions.

Summary of Findings

The key findings of this study are organized in thematic sections that map onto different terms and components connected to Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy. In my interviews with leaders, I asked them to focus on staff specifically. Students are a vital part of the mission and identity of an institution and the vocation of anyone in higher education, but I wanted to move beyond what these leaders do and learn about how leaders did their work, especially to address components of organizational culture such as, staff morale, staff culture, and staff benefits. During data analysis, several concepts emerged as potential findings at first, but upon further reduction these were ruled out as major themes. For example, the notion of burn out and mental health as it related to the organizational culture of staff in student-facing units was sometimes discussed by participants. Reflection on those comments revealed that any discussion of mental health was always tied to culture, morale, work-related benefits that were not provided, and

feelings of underappreciation. As such, these comments became examples of larger and more consistent themes.

The thematic sections are: (a) leadership's commitment to human excellence; (b) subsidiarity; (c) showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment; (d) *cura personalis* and a commitment to well-educated solidarity off *and* on campus. In some cases, findings spoke to the ways participants experienced and created culture. At times, the findings indicated the ways participants identified challenges and opportunities in various aspects of organizational culture.

What emerged as findings are themes that will not be unfamiliar to anyone working in Jesuit education. Although no new terms or concepts emerged, what did become obvious were the ways particular themes—some prominent, others less known—were significant in the creation of an Ignatian organizational culture. The casual reader of Jesuit pedagogy and spirituality research would be familiar with terms and concepts like *cura personalis* or solidarity. However, human excellence, a commitment Kolvenbach (1989) urged for Jesuit education, might be new to many readers. Additionally, subsidiarity is not unique to Jesuit education. It is a concept discussed throughout Catholic spirituality and pedagogy and emerged as a somewhat surprising but important finding. Other topics I anticipated might arise like commodification did not rise to the thematic level. Instead, it became clear commodification was a subtheme limiting subsidiarity from being exercised fully in some student-facing spaces. The four themes that did emerge, in addition to the subthemes for each thematic area, are discussed more at length in this chapter.

Theme One: Leadership's Commitment to Human Excellence

The value of leadership and the cost of bad leadership has always been true, but it has become sort of front and center. You can talk about what is possible when there is good quality leadership, and what the real legitimate costs and negative impacts are to poor leadership.

—Drew

The first theme that emerged as a key finding was the important role of quality leadership, which was expressed by participants as a commitment to human excellence. This commitment to human excellence unfolded in the way student-facing staff experience Ignatian organizational culture. In the Ignatian tradition, a commitment to human excellence has nothing to do with traditional societal notions that often associate excellence with wealth and power. Instead, human excellence is focused on what Kolvenbach (1993) described as forming people of competence, conscience, compassion, and commitment—the four Cs as they are known in Ignatian pedagogy. Kolvenbach (1993) ratified Pedro Arrupe's formulation of people for and with others and expanded its meaning, introducing the four Cs. Evidence of the four Cs clearly emerged in the interviews as student-facing staff discussed the corresponding actions and behaviors of leaders and how those positively contributed to building Ignatian organizational culture.

Competence

Kolvenbach (1989), in a speech to Jesuits in higher education, described competence as "a knowledge that is broad and deep and constantly being updated" (p. 8). He went on to say, to establish Jesuit identity, "we must link our work in education with the Ignatian spirituality that inspires it" (p. 3). Therefore, one of the qualities of human excellence is experiential: Leaders must have an experience with Jesuit education. It might have happened in their formal schooling

at the secondary level, during undergraduate studies, or in advanced studies. It may have occurred through employment in one of the Jesuit ministries outside of education. No matter where the encounter occurred, participants noted that it often started through direct contact with a Jesuit or someone who is Jesuit educated, leading to further inquiry and more formal exposure to Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality.

For example, a common finding highlighting the notion of competence was that many leaders had developed their knowledge and skills in Ignatian pedagogy long before they assumed the leadership positions they occupied at the time of their interviews. Eight of the nine participants learned about Jesuit education prior to starting their professional careers at Jesuit colleges and universities. Six of the nine participants traced their first clear memories about Jesuit pedagogy and spirituality back to a specific person or group of people they encountered who helped them understand the meaning of Jesuit education. A theme that emerged often when participants spoke of their early experiences with Jesuit education was "I didn't realize it at the time," as they reflected on the meaning of what was revealed to them and the meaning it would have in their lives. For example, Santi reflected on his early introduction to Jesuit education: "I got introduced to Jesuit education before I knew I was being introduced to Jesuit education." These experiences culminated in a broad and deep knowledge base, showcasing their competence.

For a few of the participants, their first exposure to Jesuit education came in a predictable way: by receiving education from a Jesuit high school or university. Saj first encountered Jesuit education when he went to a Jesuit university to complete his graduate degree. Saj shared:

> From the start, [the Jesuit University] felt like I was at home, just the approach that they had to formation education. We actually had what were called discernment groups . . .

there's a group of students with a staff or faculty member who was kind of a facilitator, a guide along the way. And through that process it was like there's something here about this approach to education that really resonates with me.

The experience of discernment groups in graduate school was Saj's first encounter with Jesuit education. Similarly, Anthony recalled his experience looking into graduate degree programs in student affairs. In conversations with mentors, they urged him to look at larger public institutions. He applied to mostly large public institutions, but at the last minute, he submitted an application to a program at a Jesuit university as well, where he wound up attending. He reflected on what made the Jesuit school different from the other institutions:

I just knew right then, like, this is where I needed to be. And I didn't necessarily know why or what. But it wasn't the buildings, it wasn't like the money offer. . . . It was the people. And it was that culture. I remember, coming here and going through that day, and just feeling that sense of community.

Whereas Anthony and Saj indicated feelings of belonging and sense of community as their first encounter with Jesuit education, Grace described her experiences in a liberation theology class at a Catholic non-Jesuit university as the first time she developed an awareness of the Jesuits. She explained the experience was all academic. It was not until after she graduated college and became a teacher that she met a Jesuit priest who founded a Nativity School. Nativity Schools are Jesuit K-8 schools designed to serve primarily low-income students. Reflecting on this particular Jesuit, Grace said: "He changed my life. Of course, I didn't realize it at the time, as all good Jesuit education goes."

James spoke about the influence of informal conversations and shared meals with the Jesuits and what those meant to his own sense of differentiation between Jesuit education and other colleges and universities. According to James:

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In the early days here, the Jesuit residence was in a building that was much bigger, we had many more active Jesuits and the community was much more open than the current community which is much smaller, fewer Jesuits, it's much more of a closed community. But in the early days of my tenure here that Jesuit residence was open, and we used to go there, I used to go over there with Jesuits on campus on a fairly regular basis . . . for drinks before dinner, have dinner. And I had the good fortune of meeting several Jesuits over there that I would not have met in my day-to-day professional life.

That experience was formative for James. It was there, in an informal setting, he was able to have discussions with the Jesuits about his own life and family while learning about their life, the values of the Jesuits, and their philosophy on education.

Similarly, Kevin spoke passionately about a friendship he developed in graduate school. Kevin had gone to large public institutions previously. While completing his master's degree, he became friends with someone who would often ask to borrow Kevin's car to do community service. It perked Kevin's curiosity into the motivations of his friend. As he explained:

I asked him why? Why he was doing this. I didn't know anybody at the time that was engaged in that type of selfless service and no one of his age, when we were 22 years old, who was focused on the other rather than focused on their own progress, gain, and opportunities. I found it interesting. And I wanted to know more. Why did he seem to be more guided, reflective, focused and intentional at 22, when I was still trying to figure out where the bathrooms were. And he told me he was Jesuit educated, and that got him into service.

This friend inspired Kevin. As their friendship grew and he began to reflect more on his vocation, this relationship guided him to Jesuit education; He shared:

I didn't have the language at the time, but [my friend] had been formed by an experience, multiple experiences. And he was the product of that formation. And then he was out in the world making a difference. And one of the few in that space doing it. . . . He talked to me about how he was formed. He did something very Ignatian, he pointed out qualities in me that he felt would fit well, with the same experience. And so he encouraged me to seek out Jesuit education when I graduated. And that's exactly what I did.

Kirsti had a similar experience. Like Kevin, she had attended a large public institution for her undergraduate studies. And like Kevin, it was through encounter with members of her cohort

in her graduate studies at a large public institution that came to know about Jesuit education.

Kirsti said:

> In my cohort of 16, three students, 3 out of 16 had graduated from Loyola Maryland, all different years, but they all had attended the same institution. And when they spoke about their undergraduate experiences, I would find myself kind of noting in the margins, you know, that sometimes it was what they said, sometimes it was about how they reflected on their undergraduate experiences. And what that meant to me and how that was, you know, speaking to me.

Like Grace, Kevin, and Anthony, Kirsti did not have the language to understand what she was hearing and experiencing. At first, she did not know this could be called Ignatian. She began to understand witnessing and reflecting on the experience of her peers was inspiring and informing the way she reflected on her own sense of career aspiration or vocation, saying:

> But over time, you know, I actually was entering into this, this process of discernment, and I didn't have any language for it at the time, but noticing in a very Ignatian way, noticing that what they were describing was what I wanted from my professional life, you know. I wanted to be able to interact with students in the ways that they were describing their undergraduate education really influenced and shaped them.

> Molly also spoke of encountering Jesuit education before she was studying or working at a Jesuit school. Once again, this theme of not realizing what was happening or what she was processing emerged in our conversation. She shared:

> I didn't realize it at the time, but I think I was starting to pick up on something distinctive about the charism. I think it's this incredible fusion of interior life. And the actual concrete lived, like the choices, the actions, the implementation, that fusion, and wanting to figure out what, what that rhythm is, and maybe also the sense of leading as I am lead, that there's something bigger and beyond me that I'm trying to respond to in the way that I lead.

> Each participant spoke movingly about their early experiences with Jesuit education.

Whether through formal Jesuit education, informal conversations, or interactions with others, these encounters were often not known as Ignatian to the participants in the beginning. Yet, each

leader shared how important those formative experiences were to developing their competence in an Ignatian approach to pedagogy and spirituality. In fact, participants shared formative experiences that centered around a sense of community, the sharing of meals and importance of friendship, the process of discernment, and the importance of giving back through service—all hallmarks of Ignatian culture. These leaders continued to share how such competence resulted in a better ability to implement elements of a Catholic and Ignatian organizational culture due to awareness of the other, or conscience.

Conscience

Superior General Adolfo Nicolás in a speech to the *Congress World Union of Jesuit Alumni* in 2013, defined a person of conscience as "as individual, who besides knowing himself, thanks to the development of his capacity for internalization and his cultivation of spirituality, has a significant knowledge and experience of society and its imbalances" (p. 4). Conscience is a strong awareness of self. This awareness specifically makes a leader more mindful of their capabilities and limitations as a leader in their specific context. This awareness of self is strengthened in the Ignatian tradition when leaders are able to and seek to understand the capabilities and limitations of others. Leaders of conscience thus seek to understand the strengths and needs of their staff through an analysis of context, competencies, and limitations.

The leaders I spoke with all had a strong awareness of self. They were candid in speaking about what they perceived as their strengths and limitations. Crucially important, they were aware of the realities at an interpersonal, unit, and university level and how those realities impacted the people they lead. Reflecting on the challenges of being a leader during a pandemic, Molly articulated the reality of competing demands that is part of leadership:

I feel like there's a lot of pressure sometimes to be all things to all people at all times. And realistically, sometimes you have to say like what's going to be the better good right now. And I mean, really inviting people into really critical discernment of the magis. I think it just takes time and leadership and facilitation.

Molly acknowledged these limitations, while at the same time recognizing the larger context that permeated the realities of the people she leads: "In our context, we're up against a fair bit of fear, actually. So, I think part of it is how do we create spaces, where people feel like they can explore, where they can venture a thought aloud?"

That fear and frustration was present for Santi as well. Throughout our interviews, he spoke passionately about his desire to lead with care and compassion. Yet, he also was conscience of a dilemma other leaders also reckoned with: How do you acknowledge the struggles of the people on your team, and acknowledge they are real, while not feeding into a narrative you might perceive to be harmful? He said:

I think Student Affairs, if I'm honest, can have a little bit of a complex sometimes as a, as a field. People can spend a little bit too much time in the space of feeling underappreciated, especially relative to like faculty, and I am concerned how higher ed can at times treat staff like second class citizens, and I'm very concerned about that. And I'm also very concerned about sometimes student affairs folks could sometimes give too much energy to that.

Anthony was intimately aware of the struggles and limitations his staff were facing. He spoke about the challenges of and the need for this staff to increasingly do more with less. His awareness of the challenges of that environment were personal. For example, he indicated that they he and his team had not had an administrative assistant in their area and shared a story of how that impacted his daily work, saying:

I haven't had an administrative assistant in our area. . . . If you are committed to the mission, and for my role, in particular, committed to student success and retention, first year experience, accessibility, tutoring, advising all that . . . if that's going to be effective, then your leader needs to be focused on projects, vision, management of staff, stuff like

that. And sometimes I'm like ordering water. So, I know the vendor. . . . I think that impacts the mission because you have talented folks who are really deeply committed, and they get burnt out because they're trying to do their work, plus the work of others.

He later spoke about what he believed staff wanted in their workplace, and that it was something he wanted as well, saying:

What's our vision? What are our values? I think for me, it would be important that values of belongingness, of inclusion, of social justice . . . and then adding in some of our *cura personalis*, Magis, people for and with others . . . will be some kind of guiding light of how we would do our work.

Anthony reflected on the overarching shared values and the need for systems and structures that empowered people to feel important to the work of the unit. As he navigated his first year, he was focused on putting together structure where it was absent. Only later, when he was able to start collaborating and brainstorming about bigger picture questions did he realize the challenges his staff was facing. He said:

When I came into this role, it was not structured at all, everything was sort of all over the place. So, I had to focus on the structure first, but then after that first year, be able to work with folks. After creating that culture to work with folks . . . say, what is our mission? What is our purpose? And hear from folks, you know. They didn't see themselves in a current mission statement of our area.

These examples highlight how leaders were conscience of the challenges their staff were facing. They witnessed the exhaustion. They were aware of the increased challenges, frustration, sadness, even anger their staff were facing as they wrestled with everything from reckoning for racial justice in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in 2020, to the long-term impacts of the ways their universities functioned during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. These leaders, so formed and committed to Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality, also realized how important it was to empower their staff to recognize their own importance to the operations of their unit and thus their invaluable contributions to advancing the mission.

These leaders feared the impact unsustainable demands would have on employee morale and burnout. Equally concerning, they were also experiencing that burnout. Throughout my interview with Santi, I kept hearing his email notification chime. It was a near constant background noise in our conversation. As he shared in the following short reflection, it chimed twice.

> I don't think I'll be a chief student affairs officer in 10 years. I actually know I won't just because it's so consuming as you can imagine, like the emergency response stuff. There's emergency response stuff on campus and then there's like the administrative emergencies and those that just like I don't know . . . it takes a lot of mental space, psychological space. I'm not really good at compartmentalizing. So, I sometimes find myself thinking about hard stuff for example, when I'm with my kids. And I don't like that.

As seen in Santi's example, an awareness of the position in relation to his personal strengths demonstrates conscience. Overall, the leaders understood Jesuit education and the notion of conscience. Their direct experience having been impacted by that model inspired them to take on increasing levels of leadership at their respective institutions. This, paired with their efforts to be conscience of themselves, the responsibilities of the position, and the experiences of their staff, was important for the next step of the journey to human excellence: being compassionate.

Compassionate

Leaders of competence and conscience are important, but those traits mean little if not executed in a way that is compassionate. Nicolás (2013) described compassionate leaders as individuals who were "compassionate, because they're capable of opening their hearts in solidarity and taking on the suffering others experience" (p. 4). In 2015, Jose Mesa, the Secretariat for Education, authored a letter that emphasized this notion: "Compassion that leads to solidarity should move us to shake the structures of our schools, so that our educators and

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students can become agents of change and collaborate with God's dream" (p. 7). In student-facing units, there is a focus on the student experience. Given the mission and intended outcomes of units, it is understandable that there is an expectation to engage face to face with students and serve a diversity of their needs. In multiple conversations, compassion was first seen in how these senior leaders reflected on the impact of their efforts on the students they serve. A strong student-centered approach to the work was common across interviews. Santi shared:

> Something that's so wonderful about our Jesuit tradition is there is a clarity of purpose. And it's other-oriented. It requires a deep investment in oneself and understanding oneself to be other-oriented. I think when I can try to embody that, as a leader . . . through practices I do . . . my hope is that, you know, people on campus are like, [Santi] cares about students, you know, he cares about this place. He cares about our mission, it's not about him. Like, that's the kind of stuff I aspire to.

Santi's example highlights the Jesuit notion of being other-oriented as an example of compassionate leadership. That notion of being there for others was also found in an example Saj shared when he reflected on a time when a student needed his support right away. He processed the experience of having to move all his meetings and other agenda items around to meet that student and support them in their time of need, reflecting: "I have to pause and recognize that that is one of my first and foremost roles; is to be a compassionate presence for others and a pastoral presence."

As seen in the examples by Saj and Santi, the default for many leaders was to reflect on students because of the work in these units. Yet, these leaders also recognized the need to be compassionate with their professional staff. This notion was illuminated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a clear impact on many of these leaders. They wrestled with honoring the mission of student support while also balancing that with how they cared for their professional staff and the challenges they experienced. In addition to Saj, who indicated needing to be a

"compassionate presence" for his "professional staff," Grace similarly reflected on the need in

her leadership to model *cura personalis* for her staff, so they might be better equipped to do that

with students. She was conscience of the need for leadership to put students first and apply

compassion in interactions with students and one another.

> [Staff] are full people. They are full human people, you know. We have to respond to that. Like it's always about the students and no, people bring with them all of their previous job experience and life experience. We have to attempt to model what it is that we are trying to create in the world at all times. You know?

Her frustration and exhaustion were apparent. She lamented the way decisions were

being made that had a negative impact on her staff, who in her eyes, kept the university

functioning and met the needs of students. "We're predominantly White. Elite. Catholic. We

used to be all men, right? All of these things have a common denominator: hierarchy." Grace

believed the university needed less hierarchy and more flatness. She reflected on that through a

lens of servant leadership: "I was out there yesterday delivering furniture to Afghan refugees,

right?" She spoke about a book she had read about Ignatius, and how when the Jesuits first

started creating school staff, and the care of the staff (*cura personalis*) was important. Staff

needed to be cared for and receive adequate professional development. She did not believe that

her university was modeling what they are trying to create in the world. It was wearing her

down:

> I think, unfortunately, what I try to do is shield my team and my students who work here from it. That's a tiring strategy. It's unsustainable. It's not realistic. But it's like this protectress identity that overcomes me and because of the work that we do, the social justice work we do, in the world and of the world, there's already so much dissonance.

She was frustrated by the expectations and messaging that her unit portray the "always

for the students" approach and the way it seemed to create a false dichotomy with the idea of

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cura personalis for staff. She spoke about hierarchical decisions made with little input from

stakeholders at multiple levels. She reflected on the challenges of compensation and how it made

it challenging, if not impossible, for staff to have a placed-based approach to their work by living

close to the university. She articulated the challenge of being a middle management leader in a

hierarchical culture and how she felt helpless sometimes to support her staff in the ways she

wanted. She concluded that all she could do was try and shield them from some of the decisions

she knew would further jade them and create a greater sense of dissonance. This protection was

her demonstration of compassion.

Santi reflected on a similar sense of the way staff were feeling as they tried to support

students amid their own reckoning and coping with COVID-19 and systemic racism. Santi got

emotional as he spoke about the professional staff under his care:

> I feel like a lot of our people aren't feeling seen, not feeling like some of their difficulties they've experienced in the last couple years are being really appreciated, being understood, does that make sense? And they feel like some of the things that we're doing institutionally, some of the things we do to respond [to the pandemic] have been helpful but some have been like, you know, that ice cream social wasn't exactly what I needed, you know?

Santi continued to discuss the disconnect between decisions made by senior leadership

and the reality experienced by his staff. The idea of being a compassionate leader emerged as

Santi described his recognition of what his staff wanted:

> They want the action. . . . There has to be the combination of some kind of action, even if it's symbolic, that has to be tied to some real sense that people really appreciate the challenges of their work and the importance of that work.

The impact of COVID-19 and the ways many the United States wrestled with and tried to

respond to systemic racism cannot be understated in this section. If ever compassionate

leadership was needed, it was during this unprecedented time. Each of these leaders reflected on

their leadership through the lens of the large-scale challenges they were facing that all their peers were facing simultaneously. Drew spoke about what it was like to lead in the early days of COVID-19:

> I got to just like put cards on the table [with my staff]. Being in a leadership position to be able to say like, look, let's just start this with 'nobody knows what the hell's going on…. Here are some options.' To have that be received in such a way and to have folks feel supported, even in the uncertainty, was a really great experience.

As seen in Drew's reflection, his leadership evolved and he was more transparent with his staff. He not only adapted, but he found a new leadership style that he believes will guide him in the years to come:

> For me, I'm like, "Oh, this is how you can be like authentic and vulnerable and really lead by example. This is how you can be a servant leader." I think previously, I might have tried to articulate . . . to exude confidence and make people think that you know what you're doing, when that's, it's just . . . no. So, I think that that has shifted a lot over the last year and a half.

The notion of servant leadership was another theme that was evident throughout my conversations and connected directly to compassionate leadership. These leaders had made conscious decisions to build careers in professions that emphasized the ability to impact students. That was a guiding motivation for their work. That same sense of servant leadership so often directed toward students, was also directed toward their staff. Kevin spoke about servant leadership and how he embodies it in his work with his staff:

> I like to think that I model for my staff [servant leadership]. That how they see me work, why they see me focus on particular things, how they see me lean into them when I know that they need care, and feeding, literally. I hope that they see that. I hope that they feel that. I need to do 10 times more than what I'm actually doing…. But it seems like there can't be enough of this right now.

The compassion these leaders have for students and staff was evident throughout our conversations. As Kirsti and I began to wrap up our final conversation together, she reflected on what it would mean to her to one day read this research: "I hope you're able to share your work product, because I am looking forward to learning from your writing, but also the experiences and the approaches my colleagues have. Because we do not sit around and have these conversations." These leaders led with compassion. They were servant-leaders who recognized the importance of channeling their competence and compassion into commitment to move beyond interpersonal care and toward systems implementation.

Committed

Nicolás (2013) described committed leadership as working for social and political transformation that is anchored in a leader's compassion. Commitment is best seen through action. Committed leaders will seek to create work environments that encourage both care and transformation. Jose Mesa (2015) reflected on the importance of creating structures that are sustaining and environments that embody the kind of commitment Jesuit schools want to see in their alumni.

Each of the leaders I spoke with articulated various ways in which their philosophy about leadership and Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality translated their vision into elements of organizational culture that were meaningful to the units they led. They helped to develop a shared vision for the other elements of organizational culture. They were able to educate their staff on the big picture ideas and goals in a way that increased their awareness and investment. If the purpose of Jesuit education is to create alumni who are committed to a compassionate form

of leadership, these leaders recognized how important it was to lead by example in the organizational culture they were creating for their employees at all levels.

Committed leadership therefore included more than interpersonal care and servant leadership for students and direct staff reports. Commitment included a recognition of the structures and governance, related to mission, that contributed to organizational culture. For example, issues related to hiring and onboarding new staff emerged as ways in which Ignatian leadership was operationalized by leaders. As Molly articulated:

> Something that I like to do when I talk about mission identity is not just talk about the values of the institution, but actually talk about the structural relationships, because there are these kind of governance components to this too.

Molly was aware that her role in leadership and dedication to mission was more than just on an individual level. She acknowledged that students, staff, and faculty alike were looking for systemic changes and impacts, in addition to interpersonal impacts. She concluded that it is not enough to show care for a staff member. Now, staff members crave systems, processes, and procedures that codify a culture of care or *cura personalis*.

Similarly, Grace spoke at length about the way she tried to make hiring a process guided by her understanding of Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. She shared her frustration about the lack of salary range accompanying job postings. She created her own work-around: "So as soon as someone applies, we send them what the salary is. I share immediately. I share immediately. It's a lot of administrative work, but it's really necessary." She modeled her own understanding of *cura personalis* by explaining the way she negotiated salary the same way on every single posting she manages: "I tell them, the salary is so funny looking because it's like down to the penny. Because I don't negotiate, I give you the highest I am possibly allowed to give you." She

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elaborated about the procedures they put in place for the search process: "I feel like I've attempted to do [the hiring process] in an Ignatian and Jesuit way. Who gets to be the search chair? Who's on the committee? We always have students, you know." These examples demonstrate her commitment to Ignatian leadership, recognizing how the structures sometimes conflict with the mission and genuine relationship-building.

Beyond hiring, the leaders I spoke to recognized the importance of strong onboarding into new roles. These leaders expressed that onboarding was not just a chance to make sure a staff member was clear on the functions of their job. It was also a chance to reveal the various artifacts, values, and basic assumptions that relate to an Ignatian mission and values. According to Kirsti, onboarding was important especially in an environment where staff turnover can sometimes be high: "When you have staff turnover, which is just happening at much faster rates now than then maybe had been before, onboarding becomes really important." Turnover due to the COVID-19 pandemic and overall national statistics about changes in employment during this time, illuminated the need for these student-facing leaders to be committed to still providing mission-oriented and Ignatian leadership in their roles. Drew also spoke about the cyclical nature of the work, because of how students come and often leave after four years, and how staff also turnover:

> The cyclical nature of this [work], of we're going to do something, and then we're going to intentionally make sure that we take the time to figure out what worked and what didn't, to be able to improve and move forward. That's not unique to Jesuit education. But it's certainly that idea of like, we should constantly be learning, of getting better of thinking about this.

In this quote, Drew highlights how turnover is a real issue faced in his unit but that there is an opportunity to practice the Ignatian principle of reflection to continually improve. The

notion of being intentional about what works and what does not work is clear in Drew's

leadership. Grace agreed, and spoke about the work she does to supplement the very basic

Human Resources training about Jesuit education:

> How is the Jesuit mission [and] Ignatian values within the workplace, described if at all, to new employees? I don't know if your university has this new employee orientation? I run a parallel thing for Ignatian values and Ignatian pedagogy. Because I don't know what more they get.

In this quote, Grace indicated the need to offer specific Ignatian exposure during

onboarding of staff through new employee orientation. This supplemental support of staff

demonstrates Grace's commitment to Ignatian leadership, practicing the very notion Kolvenbach

(1993) referenced. Kevin also had an example related to hiring. He stressed the importance of

screening for an openness to mission in the interview process:

> You get buy in from Human Resources the institutional level, that this is something that we are asking, mission questions, even if they're not equally across the university being employed, but it is an expectation that people understand or want to understand what our mission is and how it differentiates us from working anywhere else.

He spoke about forming interview questions that give people the chance to articulate the

mission through their own unique lens. He then talked about other ways he has systematized his

own commitment to Ignatian values:

> We do a university mission orientation. I do a divisional mission orientation. My leaders, you know, in my leadership realm, understand these pieces and I have it written into [job descriptions]. They keep an eye on and kind of drive mission initiatives. . . . That just helps habitualize that type of work, for folks to expect it.

Kevin also had prominent examples of how Ignatian values had been translated into

action, particularly during the pandemic. "This pandemic has changed me as a leader, the

experiences or things I've had to do, things I witnessed," he said early on in our conversation. He

went on to describe the way the pandemic had drastically changed the student experience,

sharing that student experiences are different from his lifetime of understanding exactly what a college experience should look like. He pivoted and brought his reflection back to the organizational culture he is trying to build for his team:

> We're the last to take care of. And it's one of the things I preach quite a bit. And I say the word preach, because it's from that space . . . that self-care, caring for each other, and caring for yourself. It is the way that you enable yourself to care for others. Without that self-care first, you're really no good to yourself or anybody else. How are you going to help pull somebody out of a hole or off the floor if you're on the floor with them? You got to be standing up on your two feet. Or you got to be supported by systems that support you when you stagger, or when you fall, to help you get up.

Although most leaders reflected on the way Ignatian pedagogy has helped lead them in their work, there were also moments of reflection about the challenges encountered in changing systems in Jesuit institutions. Anthony spoke about shortcomings of Jesuit educators and reflected on what could be learned from others, mainly women religious, or sisters and nuns, in how to move beyond words to systems change. He reflected on the response to the murder of George Floyd, and what he perceived as a difference in response between nuns and priests:

> In my experience, the sisters are just a little more humble. They just do the work. And I am generalizing here. They're not as good as the Jesuits at the marketing. . . . When we think about diversity, equity, and inclusion, I see the sisters being a little bit more behind it consistently. Whereas the Jesuits play the political piece, and they kind of tiptoe in general. Jesuits tiptoe around it. Whereas the sisters, you know, they just, they're like "this is who we are, right?"

Anthony felt that there were lessons to be learned from the nuns about how to change systems, mainly by just showing up and doing the work. James similarly spoke about the role of top leadership in implementing systems change, which for him, was focused on mission-oriented work. He shared what it was like to witness the decline of Jesuits on campus and the rise of lay leaders. Reflecting on various units in the institution he said: "Some folks will say that we do more Jesuit things now with a lay Vice President than we ever did with a Jesuit Vice President."

He went on to talk about the importance of everyone, at every level, being committed to the mission.

> I think everybody has a responsibility to support the mission. And I think the people that do the day-to-day work, the reality of the day-to-day work in student life, as an example, and some of the Student Services, it's even more important that they have an understanding of the mission and be able to carry that out.

James clearly highlighted how commitment to the mission is required in all student-facing positions. Ignatian principles must permeate all levels and all units, especially as more lay leaders are in positions of leadership. Overall, these leaders demonstrated deep commitment to their work.

Taken together, human excellence in student-facing positions at Jesuit institutions was clearly found among these leaders, who demonstrated competence, compassion, conscience, and commitment. Throughout my interviews, it was made clear that leadership was critical. As Kevin so aptly stated: "Leadership matters. It's always mattered. Yeah, you know, you don't feel it when it's going well, you definitely know it when it's not there." The leaders interviewed were competent in Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality. They were servant leaders who desired to be conscience of the hopes, challenges, opportunities, and needs of the people they lead—students and staff. Their curiosity into the lives of the people they lead often resulted in a compassionate approach to their leadership. They exhibited the ability to combine their compassion and leadership to create cultures committed to moving beyond an interpersonal commitment to justice and *cura personalis* to one that was ingrained in the systems they created. Like James, they exhibited a humble awareness of the importance of their own leadership. Importantly, they also realized how crucial it was that the people doing the day-to-day work, as James described it,

feel their own sense of connection to the mission and an empowerment to be leaders in their own

areas of the university.

Theme Two: Subsidiarity

> When I say mission, it's not what other people are thinking. During the pandemic, they were only going to allow for hires that were "mission-critical." I put my positions forward and [they] were rejected. [My unit] is the conscience of the university. We are so "mission-critical." And I realized we were talking about two different missions. I am talking about Jesuit mission. And they were talking about the financial side a higher education institution. I didn't get that memo.
>
> —Grace

In addition to the strong sentiment that student-facing leaders are committed to human

excellence by being competent, compassionate, conscience, and committed, there was a strong

agreement in the Ignatian principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity in Catholic education is best

described as the ability to solve problems at the lowest possible level (Uhl, 2020). As it pertains

to organizational culture, Stackman and Conor (2016) urged educators to reflect on this question:

"Is my decision-making empowering others and promoting leadership development in my

organization?" (p. 44). Leaders in student-facing units at Jesuit universities agreed that practicing

subsidiarity was required to create Ignatian organizational culture.

Commodification's Impact on Mission-Driven Leadership and Service

As seen in the quote by Grace representing this theme, many of the senior leaders I spoke

with talked about how they navigated what was sometimes perceived as a tension between

mission and the commodification of higher education. How do you push mission forward while

also addressing the economic realities of higher education during COVID-19? For years, higher

education experts have discussed an approaching demographic cliff, an anticipated drop of

college applications by up to 15% due to a decline in birth rate that started during the 2008

recession (Schroeder, 2021). This anticipated drop in college applications and enrollment has

often discussed in higher education circles, and it was a reality the leaders I spoke with also

navigated in their planning and strategizing for the future. The reality of commodification

complicates subsidiarity. Decisions, primarily about resource allocation, get made at the highest

levels, and if your unit is not deemed critical to the financial goals of the institution, that has

translated into less resources to do your work. To be fair, some of the leaders I spoke to did not

appear worried about commodification. They acknowledged the existence of it. They had been

part of conversations about demographic cliffs, declining enrollments, rising costs, and

decreasing resources. Yet, not every leader felt their work was dramatically impacted by these

realities.

For example, Drew did not face the challenges of commodification in his day-to-day

work. Drew worked at a university he described as financially healthy and with a satisfactory

endowment. As a result, he acknowledged not having to think about the big picture financial

challenges that higher education as an industry is facing compared to some of his colleagues in

other institutions.

> I don't particularly run into lots of issues around the tension points of the competitive
> nature, trying to compete with other elite institutions. And so, for me, the idea of having
> to spend a billion dollars on an athletic facility to try and recruit students, and, therefore
> your rankings go up, and therefore you're more competitive, and therefore, your
> graduates get a reputation . . . that, for me is part of the game. And so, I think that it's a
> worthwhile intellectual exercise periodically to consider: What could our role be to try
> and shift some of that?

He was aware of the revenue model, and he felt he was in a place to really advance

mission. He shared that he was less interested in the tension because it did not present as

prominent at his institution, yet he was aware that it was an issue in other Catholic and Jesuit

colleges and universities. As a result, he was more interested in learning about new and innovative models to address financial challenges for students and universities alike. He pointed to alternative models like Arrupe College (the first Jesuit community college that has attracted a lot of attention in the Jesuit higher education sector since it opened in 2015), as the best way to keep advancing mission as colleges and universities face increasing financial challenges.

Kirsti also reflected on the perceived conflict between commodification and being a mission-driven institution. She, too, was blunt in acknowledging that higher education is indeed a business. Yet, she was hopeful, even inspired, by what she felt her institution and Jesuit higher education were selling:

> I absolutely get higher ed is a business. We have a ton of competitors. And there are a finite number of students, and we are tuition dependent. I get the business. I happen to believe that the product we are selling is our mission. The product that we are selling is a sense of hope, a sense of freedom, and a sense of direction. . . . One of the four Universal Apostolic Preferences is to accompany young people toward a hope-filled vision of the future. And I do believe that is what we are doing right 100% of the time. So, if that's what we're commodifying, you know, if that's what we're selling, I'm okay with that.

She went on to reflect her belief that Jesuit education occupies a unique space in the higher education landscape. When asked what made Jesuit education so special and why she believed Jesuit colleges and universities would still thrive despite the challenges of COVID-19 and the approaching demographic cliff, she spoke about the educational model present in Jesuit higher education as applying a creative lens to problems: "The Jesuit ideal of liberal arts education is that place where science and art meet. That you can engage these deep ideas through artistic expression. And sometimes that's the best way."

Kevin also spoke about these realities and how he addresses them. He believed mission created a pathway for educators to handle the realities of commodification or "the business aspect of higher education" in a way that aligned with mission:

> There's a whole phrase you know: mission creates margin. And I think it's a differentiator for us and Jesuit education. There are some practical things that every institution needs to do in order to be viable. That's real. That's very much business and practically driven. But how people come, why they come, how they are treated, when they are there, how they are retained . . . the mission has a large part of doing that. And the ability to appeal to something besides just the dollars and cents around mission and meaning and purpose. That's important.

Another aspect of commodification is the competing demands in an institution for dollars. What programs get funded? Which programs get cut? Which programs get some funding, but not as much as they might need? Kevin also spoke to the challenges of that reality. What do you do when you do not have the full amount of funding you need to create all the programs you want or compensate people to the level you want? He emphasized he did not want to diminish the very real need to fund mission-driven programming and compensate people appropriately. Yet, he also recognized the power of staying true to Jesuit mission and what impact that might have on the culture of his unit:

> It's a differentiator. When I can't appeal to anything else, and I can't give raises, and I can't give time back. . . . What we can do is treat people with respect. Appeal to how to basically support them in their soul, not just physically. Those are the things that get people through.

James acknowledged that the perceived tension between mission and what he described as the "day-to-day operations world" was indeed a challenge. "There are certain populations on campus that believe they're somehow the keepers of the mission, and without them the mission wouldn't be alive. I don't agree with that. I think everybody has a responsibility to support mission," he told me. He saw student-facing units as the staff doing the day-to-day work, and

stressed how important it was that they not only understood the mission, but understood their role in advancing the mission. "Because if they don't do that, then the keepers of the mission are not going to be that effective in advancing their part of the mission." James struggled with the way mission seemed to mean something different to everyone.

Saj spoke about how he navigated the tensions between mission and commodification on a near daily basis. "The current context of higher ed, shifting dynamics, financial realities that are difficult to engage. Tough decisions need to be made. How do you enter into that?" He reflected on his role overseeing university resources that can also be of value to community partners. He shared that higher level administrators told him he needs to keep financial considerations top of mind when he is engaging with lower income community partners who are hoping to use those resources or space available on campus.

> I am supposed to charge them for use of a space, but that butts up against my purview as a mission-oriented individual. My view is that we're part of a family and that we should share our resources more as opposed to building up silos and walls. But the institution is looking at the bottom line. Where is the income coming from? Where are we losing a potential revenue stream due to giving facilities or spaces or time or human power?

Throughout the conversations that touched upon the financial model of Jesuit higher education and its alignment with the mission of Jesuit education, the leaders I spoke with were adamant that Jesuit education was a model of education built on evolution. Kirsti spoke of the way Jesuit education has changed throughout the centuries. She did see one constant from the beginning until now: "Our mission to go out and meet the world where it is. It is about what we are called to do in response to a world in need. . . . And I still very much believe in the work we are doing." She paused as she reflected about the challenges society faces when we met in September of 2021:

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At no moment has the world not been in need. But I think, right now, if you could stop anybody on the street and ask them, in what ways do you see a world in need? I think the ways in which people would answer that question, the list is probably longer, they could probably enumerate for much longer then even maybe 10 years ago. I think that just underscores the need for, for what it is that we're doing.

Santi also was adamant that "we have to think about how we engage our mission in ways that are relevant to this moment in time we're living through in higher ed, and on our campuses." He spoke about the bigger picture goals of launching students into successful careers in and around the world to make a change. He paused, his voice cracking as he reflected on the responsibility he felt to his team:

We really need to think about solidarity, about service, about finding God in all things, meaning making. We have to think about that on campus with our people. What does that look like in practice that's experienced as real amongst our people? And like university leadership, we really need to dive in to say like, what is in our employees' lives? What's on their minds? There's fear right now. We need to be conscious. . . . It's important we treat people as adults and we need to be real about the context that we're living in and understand things like demographic cliffs, increased cost of higher ed, systemic racism. We need to be real about that. But how do we do that in a way that, how do we address the fear people are feeling?

As I listened to these leaders speak about the challenges they were navigating, I was struck by what might seem like a paradox: Each of these individuals were strong and confident leaders. They sat at the top of their units and directed teams big and small. They wrestled with larger issues out of their immediate control, like commodification. Yet, they used these seemingly insurmountable challenges to reflect about what was in their control as well. What decisions they could make, what structural norms could they challenge, to have an impact on the day-to-day life of both students and staff alike? The leaders I spoke with were at once at the top of their respective hierarchies, while also passionate about empowering others and promoting leadership at all levels of their organizations.

Wrestling With Hierarchy

A few of the leaders I spoke with really wrestled with the culture of hierarchy they saw as engrained in their institutions. Grace had worked at a low-income Catholic Nativity school earlier in her career. She reflected on the lessons learned in that type of Catholic school environment and how it influenced her work in higher education:

> I think I understood subsidiarity in a way I've never understood out of a textbook, Catholic Social Teaching textbook. I mean, the way that the schools ran, and even the decisions they gave, or rather they didn't always make decisions for the kids. That's a family decision. Right? You know, I understand subsidiarity is not just Jesuit, it's larger than that, but they actually practiced it. . . . We muddy it so much people have no idea what they're talking about. But when you see it in action, you know it, you see it, you get its value.

She went on to talk about how she practiced it in her own environment. She spoke about embodying an ethos of servant leadership. She tried, where it makes sense, to be on the front lines with her team. She created a cultural expectation that nothing was below doing for anyone on the team. She really worked to get to know each of her team members, their strengths and limitations, and to empower them: "I see as Ignatian, in creating a more just environment. One way to do that is attempt to be flat. Create a flat space, everybody has expertise, and they are called on to live out their expertise in that space." Throughout our conversation, as Grace wrestled with challenges in other areas, she frequently returned to the value of subsidiarity in leadership. She spoke about how it empowered her staff to learn and grow. She spoke about the positive impact it had on students when they were interacting on a daily basis with staff who felt empowered to make choices that had an impact on their lives. She lamented the ways in which other units around campus seemed to ignore or disregard subsidiarity. As she put it, "Subsidiarity

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is such an important part of social justice for me, so important, but like what I hear from some of my colleagues at the University is just that it's just not how their units operate whatsoever."

Often, our conversation returned to the challenges and lessons learned navigating COVID-19 and a renewed focus on the negative impact systemic racism had on people of color. Santi reflected about multiple challenges that had always been present but felt top of mind for many of the staff he leads. He spoke about the historical divide between the way staff and faculty at the university are viewed by senior leadership and subsequently treated:

> I do believe there's a kind of autonomy, the kind of trust we put in faculty and the trust we put in staff is often quite different. And that that comes out in terms of like flexible work arrangements and whatnot. But I think there is and there has been some of an imbalance in terms of that.

Grace spoke about the changing views around workplace dress code. Being on the East Coast, she spoke about the dress code through a lens of hierarchy. People at the highest levels for generations had set an expectation for what constituted appropriate clothing, and what did not. She spoke about how she changed dress code expectations in her unit. One thing that stood out was the way she mixed a spirit of subsidiarity, encouraging her staff to wear what they felt best matched the needs of their work, with strong leadership in how she modeled that even when it might come at political cost for her:

> Our dress code, and I model it, is you dress for the day that you have? Two Fridays ago, I took our new team member to our storage units, which are disgusting. So I wear like, sneakers, leggings and a t-shirt. But then I have like, Zooms later, right? And I just say, this is what I did today. I will show up at Provost Council in things like that. Monday's, I volunteer at my kids' school. I'm not going to wear my best dress, you know? I remember I did stand up at a town hall one time, that the President gave pre pandemic and I was wearing a t shirt and a pair of jeans. And I was like, "I'm so screwed." And then you know, people are like, "No, that's your job." But I am telling you, it is rough around here to change that.

People had a strong desire to be trusted to do their jobs. This desire no doubt existed prior

to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic led people into work that was more independent

in nature than they had experienced prior. At the same time, many of the leaders recognized the

excellent work their staff did during the pandemic. In ways big and small, staff were seeking

greater autonomy in aspects of their work. At the same time, it became clear that one size did not

fit all for every unit, division, or university. Different spaces had different needs that were best

addressed at a local level.

Honoring the Unique Contexts of Different Units and Schools

James spoke about the challenge, often found in student-facing units, of just how diverse

the work is under the umbrella of a division like Student Affairs compared to other divisions on

campus:

> When you're working in Jesuit higher education, when you work in Student Affairs, it's a
> much more diverse area than say, Enrollment Services. I don't know if it's a blessing or
> curse, but they have admissions, financial aid, registrar functions, and everything is
> organized around admissions metrics, and, you know, applications, acceptance rate, yield,
> census count, discount rate, you know, retention. But when you sit around a Student
> Affairs table, we have monthly meetings with our dean's and directors, we have offices
> that provide a tremendous diversity of services. Our counseling center is different from
> our health centers, dining services is different from residential life. I don't think there's
> an area that's probably more diverse than Student Affairs in terms of the services we
> provide.

The diversity of services and the wide range of goals and metrics speak to that need for

subsidiarity. This was a theme present with other leaders as well. Two leaders I interviewed had

10 different departments or centers that reported up to them. One leader had 14 different units

under their supervision. Another leader had 15 diverse units they were responsible for. With that

many units that often represent a diverse cross-section of university life, the practical need for

subsidiarity was apparent. Leaders needed people they could trust to be experts in their field. In

addition to the diversity of contexts that might be present in one division, the leaders I spoke with also acknowledged how diverse Jesuit education is.

The components that make up the diverse environments that Jesuit schools operate in range from geographic location, size of school, educational areas of emphasis, leadership, financial realities, even the local competitive environment with other institutions of higher education in each school's area and how that might impact enrollment. Subsidiarity provides a mechanism to give people the latitude needed to address the highly localized context that they are uniquely positioned to see. As Santi pointed out, "We have 27 Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States. We educate really different populations. Georgetown and John Carroll are really different. Canisius, Boston College, LMU, and Rockhurst, there's a real difference." Grace reflected on the global nature of Jesuit education, and how valuable subsidiarity was in addressing different global realities: "You have [Jesuit University she works at], and you have this little school in Mozambique that grows all its own food. This subsidiarity of what the greatest needs are and where they are, and to be present to them, that is the mission."

Kirsti also reflected on the diversity of contexts. She spoke about the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), and how the one she works hardest to operationalize might be different than what a different university might choose:

> In terms of the UAPs, I went to the accompanying young people, my guess is at the UCA (Universidad Centroamericana in El Salador), they would go to standing with the poor and marginalized as their primary. Right? I love that, because it's demonstrating that each of us is responding to our context out of a shared mission.

Kirsti understood subsidiarity was beneficial to staff members seeking a greater sense of autonomy. Subsidiarity also allows for the diversity of different institutions to be honored thus better serving students, staff, and faculty. Though the mission is shared, the pathways to execute

the mission vary based on so many aspects of context. When diverse contexts are honored and respected, it creates a space where people at all levels have a better chance for mission alignment and therefore feel empowered to engage in mission and identity work.

Empowered to Live the Mission

Many of the leaders I spoke to presented confidence in their own strengths as they navigated management of fields as diverse as Student Affairs. For example, their confidence led them to hire people they trusted to be empowered and do the work. Molly articulated this balance in reflecting on the work of leading multiple units:

> How do we cultivate this system where we have all these different prongs and all these different areas, so we have people who are located in places where they can kind of see enough of the bigger picture that they can kind of set the table for people to come together and be exposed and hear more of that bigger picture?

The desire to empower people was seen as practical too. Santi spoke about the increased challenges of retaining staff who were experiencing burnout and perhaps rethinking if higher education was indeed the space they felt provided a sense of belonging and vocation:

> I've got a couple people who are so damn good, like, more than a couple. They're so talented. They're so driven and driven for the right reasons. They're the ones that get so much done, they get work done that matters. We have got to keep those people and, and that requires thinking about things like going forward with some more flexibility. . . . As a leader, I feel fortunate to have a bunch of really smart people who I get to work with. I offer people a lot of latitude. And that, on average, that serves the division and our ability to serve students.

These leaders also realized that committing to subsidiarity not only made sense for their staff, but it benefitted them. Kirsti was adamant that leading through a spirit of subsidiarity not only would help staff feel a sense of purpose, it also would contribute positively to how they addressed different problems. "I feel like people need to know that their expertise is needed," she

said at one point to me. Later, as we talked about what it was like to manage a large unit, she

reflected proudly on her team:

> Maybe this is overly idealistic, but I just have it in my heart when you bring a group of people who are creative and talented and so incredibly educated, and have a heart for this work together, if we bring them together and set the table in the right way, we could come up with these incredible interventions. They're not going to happen overnight. But I just think there's a lot of potential there. . . . Because I think naming, naming what the work is, and then you say, okay, you tell me what's the best way to capture how you did this?

These leaders were also aware that even though they were committed to subsidiarity and

saw the benefits of empowering their staff, it was not necessarily always an easy process. It took

time. It took trust. It took a willingness to arrive at a problem truly willing to depart with a

solution that might have been different than what you might instinctually wanted to do. Molly

spoke about this communal approach to problem solving:

> I think another thing that that happens a lot for us, and I have to say it can get frustrating, is sort of communal discernment approach. Particularly when we're trying to figure out direction or course, or understand what's happening. There are enough people on my staff who've been involved in Jesuit higher ed for a long time, that I don't even think it's conscious at this point. It's the way a session might be outlined, it follows a communal discernment kind of approach. So, here's the issue. What are the pluses? What are the minuses? What are the possibilities? Without having a predetermined, you know, end point in mind, and then sorting through all the data to figure out well, where does this lead us?

Each of these leaders, in their own unique way, tried to create a culture of subsidiarity.

They were aware of the challenges commodification posed. They wrestled with the culture and

structure of hierarchy that permeates the staff experience in higher education. They seemed to

constantly be seeking to better understand how elements of their environmental context should or

could influence the way they operated. Ultimately, the leaders believed that one of the most

important offerings they, and by extension work in student-facing units of Jesuit education could

offer people, was a sense of purpose. They wanted to lead in a way that empowered their staff to

live out the mission of Jesuit higher education, but to also feel a sense of meaning in doing that.

As our conversations continued, I ultimately realized that many of these leaders were in very

practical terms talking about the work they felt responsible for: to lead people to God through

discernment, reflection, and meaning making.

Theme Three: Showing the Way to God Through Discernment and the Spiritual Exercises

> We're all on fire. And we're all thirsty. I think we are on fire because we are thirsty. We thirst for the knowledge of God's love. And that has sort of fallen away. It's not a part of our lexicon anymore. It's not a part of our shared concept. I'm not talking about a particular religious orientation or ascribing to particular religious tenants. Regardless of how you name it, our souls are longing.
>
> —Molly

On February 19, 2019, Superior General Arturo Sosa wrote a letter to Jesuits around the

world to share the results of a 16-month journey to identify four Universal Apostolic Preferences

(UAPs): (a) to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment; (b) to walk

with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of

reconciliation and justice; (c) to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;

(d) to collaborate in the care of our common home. In that letter, he urged that these UAPs be at

the center of the work of all Jesuit groups and organizations in and out of education from 2019 to

2029. When speaking about the UAP to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and

discernment, he described what he perceived as an opportunity and need to create spaces in

secular society for people to ask profound questions and engage in personal and communal

encounter of God.

The data indicated that a significant portion of Ignatian organizational culture would be

focused on showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment. These

leaders not only believed there was a need to talk about God and faith in their units, but they also made the space to do just that. These leaders also recognized that sometimes, doing so might be difficult for someone arriving at the university with little experience having conversations about faith, religion, and spirituality in the workplace. To that end, many of the leaders spoke about the ways they created processes and systems related to reflection, retreats, and access to pastoral care and tools to engage in discernment. Finally, a common theme in these conversations was the strong desire of staff at all levels to engage in meaning making. They believed that their teams got into this work because they are passionate about students and impacting their lives. Student-facing staff clearly saw themselves as educators, even if that term is often only designated for faculty at their institutions. Many of the interviews conducted spoke to that reality, and these leaders shared why they believed meaning making was important, and how they felt a responsibility to guide staff in their formation as crucial.

Engaging in Conversations About God

Some of the leaders found conversations about God to just be what should be expected at a Jesuit university. Others reflected on how in an increasingly secular world, it was sometimes a difficult path to navigate, even at a Jesuit Catholic school. James spoke about faith frequently. He believed when you spoke about mission, you had to talk about God:

> And the mission is broader than simply an academic mission. [It] is broader than the transmission of knowledge. It is a faith-based form of education that focuses on important elements that are sometimes foreign in other higher education places, character formation, leadership development, how to be an ethical person.

He saw the path to talking about God as a differentiator when people compared Jesuit higher education to other models of higher education. He also saw a competitive advantage in being a place that was confident and comfortable in talking about and incorporating faith into its

culture. As he explained it: "We have a huge Muslim population, we have a huge Jewish population. And that is not because we're Catholic. That is because we're a place that values religious and spiritual diversity, we talk about world religions." Kevin had an almost identical reflection when he was speaking about what made Jesuit schools unique:

> And particularly where many different faiths come and all are welcome at Catholic institutions, and they choose [us] whether they're Muslim or Jewish. And they choose us because they know that faith is important to us. It matters not as much how we pray, or to whom we pray, but just that we pray. And that's the thing that bonds.

When James made this point, he had students in mind and why being a faith-based institution created a competitive advantage in the recruitment of students. In contrast, Kevin was thinking specifically about what it meant in the recruitment of staff and faculty:

> Particularly in this world that we live in now, it's a differentiator. When I can't appeal to anything else, and I can't give raises, what we can do is treat people with respect, appeal to how to basically support them in their soul, not just physically.

Saj also spoke about the added value of being at a Jesuit school as making it more simple to speak about complex matters of faith and religion. He felt the Jesuits were particularly well suited to engage students with a wide range of beliefs about God. "I think the Jesuit mission identity seeks to meet people where they are, embraces where they are, and strives to try and show them a way to God to an experience of the living God in our in our lives."

Kirsti saw talking about God and faith as a pathway to talk about and address different challenges present in society. She spoke about a divide that can sometimes occur on Jesuit campuses, where students and staff might be more comfortable with "Jesuit" than they are with "Catholic." As she put it:

> I think people resonate with Jesuit a whole lot more deeply than they resonate with Catholic. They say I can get behind the Jesuit piece, but totally reject the Catholic. So part of the work there is to help people understand that there is no Jesuit without

Catholic. We are part of the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith and that the Jesuits hold a really unique position in terms of the Catholic world. Our mission to go out and meet the world where it is.

One thing that was striking was the way in which each of these leaders, lay people who were not themselves Jesuits, used the word "our" when speaking about the Jesuits and the mission of the university. Not long ago, the very idea of lay leadership needing to take on more prominent positions in Jesuit colleges and universities was a controversial topic. Over the years, leadership has gradually transitioned to include a significant number of lay people. These leaders spoke about the Jesuit mission as their own. They also provided a pathway for why and how these conversations were relevant to societal issues they found themselves navigating when we spoke in 2021.

Kirsti spoke about the way she leaned on her own faith in God, and her own understanding of Catholic Social Teaching in the ways she engaged prominent social issues on campus:

> When I see people standing up for the needs and the perspectives of anyone who is marginalized, and right now, I'm particularly thinking about our LGBTQIA plus students. They are enacting the best of our Catholic Social Teaching. It's about seeing the inherent worth and dignity of each and every person. What is important to me, is connecting them back to that, like this too, is part of our tradition.

Similar to how Saj, Kevin, and James spoke about the Jesuit lens on faith and spirituality as uniquely suited to meet students and staff where they are at in the world, Kirsti also saw an ability to lean on Catholic tradition, her understanding of God through a lens of social justice, as tools that helped to provide students and staff support in how they navigated the complexities of the world. After she reflected on how she has used Catholic Social Teaching in her work to support LGBTQIA students, she reflected on the reality of structural racism in our world:

When I talk to students about what's really going on, the racial disparities and racial justice that have long been present in our nation. But people having more, and I'll just say white people, having more awareness. The thing that that I reflect on, all of this is just evidence of sin in our world. And we don't talk about it as such. In part because we don't have shared faith language. It's also almost a little bit taboo, I think it is taboo.

She reflected about the stories she had heard from students and staff and the ways these larger societal issues were having a negative impact on their individual lives. She also reflected on how she saw these larger societal issues impacting the individuals in her campus community, but also proving challenging to how she and her team were trying to bring the campus community together and build it up. You could hear the exhaustion and frustration in her voice as she tried to figure out how to engage in these sensitive topics through a faith-based approach:

So, I'm left with this: Where do we go from that? If you can't get at this, if we can't name it for what it is: We're experiencing a complete distortion of the human being, in its full beauty and glory, the human being fully alive kind of thing, and fully flourishing. So, if we can't talk about racism and economic disparity, as complete distortions of that, then how do you even begin to tackle it?

It became clear throughout these interviews that leaders not only felt comfortable talking about God, and their relationship with faith and spirituality; they felt responsible to do so. Multiple leaders talked about interfaith traditions present in their communities, and how they believed being an institution that both allows for and values the contributions faith can make in a person's life might well translate into those people coming to study or work at those very institutions. Finally, each of these leaders saw opportunities to engage faith traditions in the ways they spoke about and addressed societal challenges regarding the treatment of people because of one part of their identity. They acknowledged the shortcomings historically tied to faith in those spaces, but they presented a new way forward. They saw an opportunity to share about a God that is loving, a chance to educate people about Ignatian spirituality as one that knows no

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boundaries in meeting people where they are. As Kevin and I concluded our time together, he

spoke about faith, and how it was a foundation for the ways in which he tried to create a culture

grounded in love:

> Something that's very necessary for us to lead through anytime, but particularly difficult times is this: You have to love the people that you're leading. And that love can manifest itself in God's love or just love person to person. You have to be present and allow yourself to be present. A ministry of presence is as important a value of your organizations, as anything else. So, showing up where you supposed to show up, building time in for you to communicate with consistency and transparency, having enough trust in how you have engaged people earnestly and with authenticity, so that when you do sit down with them to speak, they're able to tell you the truth without fear.

The leaders I spoke to were all comfortable and even confident talking about God and

faith. They spoke about their own journey. They spoke about the culture of it on their campus.

They spoke to me about politically charged realities and situations with a confidence that was

inspiring. It was clear how faith had formed each of these leaders and helped in large part guide

them to their positions of influence. It was also clear how that same faith guided them through

their own discernment and how they actively led their teams in a loving and compassionate way.

Once again, the interrelated structure of human excellence and subsidiarity discussed prior

became evident. For an Ignatian organizational culture to flourish, it was crucial to have leaders

familiar with and at ease navigating and speaking about faith and spirituality. An element of

subsidiarity became evident as well: Staff members needed access to tools, training, and habits

that would help them grow in their own awareness of faith and spirituality present perhaps in

themselves but most certainly in other individuals they will engage with.

Operationalizing Faith and Spirituality: Reflection, Discernment, and Retreat

Throughout my conversations, many of the leaders spoke about the value of starting a

meeting with a simple prayer or reflection. Saj spoke about this practice in his staff meetings:

"When we have our staff meetings, we always enter into some form of prayer as a way of gathering. And more often than not, it has some roots in Jesuit Ignatian spirituality." Kevin had a similar practice, although with less frequency: "Not every meeting, but maybe once every three or four meetings, we have mission and ministry come in and start the meeting off with a reflection. It never fails to recenter." Collaborating with colleagues from a unit focused on faith and spirituality was important. First, it gave his team and these colleagues a chance to form community with one another in ways that can prove meaningful to their work. Second, even though he showed himself in our time together to be incredibly comfortable navigating conversations about faith and spirituality, it modeled to his team his own openness to learn from people who might approach the work of faith and spirituality different than he did. That diversity of viewpoints was important to Molly as well. She spoke about a similar practice she engaged in, and why it was important to her to distribute the work of leading reflection throughout her entire team:

> We start all of our meetings with a reflection of some sort and everybody takes turns, so people come at it from very different places. But without saying we're gonna follow some of the Ignatian pedagogy here. What I noticed happening is people pulling and naming context. It might be, it might be around our students' mental health, or it might be around our own ability to care for ourselves. And part of the reflection is connecting that to people's personal or professional experience, and having some moment of quiet around what does this mean? Some meaning making time.

She paused as she reflected on it. The ability again to connect what was happening in the world around her and her team to what was happening within each of them as they reflected or prayed was important. Like other leaders, she felt being at a Jesuit institution made this reflection easier to engage, saying "I do that because I think I can access that at a Jesuit institution

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differently than I would access it if I was someplace else. We are operationalizing a way of being."

The operationalizing here is important. Throughout my conversations with Molly, she would come back frequently to the importance of systematizing and operationalizing this work of discernment and reflection. The structures were important, and she felt as though we were witnessing the lack of structure around mission in years prior and how it was proving problematic for Jesuit colleges and universities throughout the United States:

> I think we have assumed that our mission would be integrated without actual attentiveness to the work of integration and the science of organizational development and integration. And I think we're finding ourselves in an interesting moment, right now, there's all this emphasis on formation, we need formation, we need to understand better the stories and the traditions that shape us, we need a common language.

As she spoke, she referenced a common experience at Catholic and Jesuit institutions where the number of priests, in this case Jesuit priests, was in decline. That translated into less Jesuits engaged in campus life, but also less Jesuits able to serve in prominent positions of leadership. She spoke about how that impacted the work of mission today:

> I think that, that we relied for a long time on the fact that people would maybe kind of pick it up by osmosis, or just by kind of being in relationship with people who seem to get it or because we had numbers, higher numbers of Jesuits in the community, and we pick up on it. And then I think we've entered a stage where there's still attention, I see it in different geographic regions, or this the sense of the symbolic power of the figurehead. That if you have a Jesuit symbolically in a certain leadership role, that that is how we're going to preserve a sense of integration of mission.

We spoke about the decrease of Jesuit priests, the challenges that posed, and I asked her why, then, did she believe Jesuit education still mattered in 2021? Her response speaks to the need we have to operationalize how we show the path to God:

> We need intellectual depth, and spiritual depth and holistic character formation, we need places to discern what does a meaningful life look like in our time? We need Jesuit

education because we need social transformation. We need hope. And where I want to see us grow, is I think that we need to be preparing for systems change. In all of its dimensions, so the kind of resilience and the spiritual fortitude that that takes, but also the tactical, tangible tools to actually create change within systems.

Drew also focused on how they worked to operationalize the tools that contribute to their ability to integrate Ignatian values into their culture. As they began to create systems related to their programming, he was able to reflect on how that also created a culture of caring for one another in the workplace:

If I think about that, operationally, then I do think that a lot of these themes come about as we think about how we run our programs. I think there's a high degree of intentionality. It's not just how do we run the most effective program? But like, what's the language that we use so that we can be inclusive? How do we invite people to be considering some of these broader questions, even though it might not be their default? How do we talk about God in a way that doesn't turn people away, but invites them into a conversation? If somebody is not following through on commitments, I think the default stance for us here is, let's go check in on that person, and see what sort of what challenges they're having.

Drew flagged as important how closely the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Vice President of Mission worked together at his institution. Staff were craving and often demanding better DEI work. Sometimes, what that looked like operationally is difficult to describe. Drew saw an opportunity to connect the mission of being a Jesuit institution to the important DEI work universities and organizations around the country were focused on: "We do DEI because we are a Jesuit Catholic institution. And we can't do DEI work successfully, if it's not ingrained within the Jesuit Catholic piece, and vice versa."

The opportunities to provide staff at all levels opportunity to engage in retreats often emerged in these conversations. Saj spoke about a policy supported by his team but implemented campus wide to allow all staff the opportunity to engage in community service or a retreat as part of their work at the university:

It's 24 hours a year that we are granted. So essentially three days' worth of our work time we can go and participate in some service, or something for the community beyond University. . . . As long as it's something that is doing something for others or formation for oneself, that they can help them to go deeper in their own faith journey or their own sense of their role here or in life it counts. The one caveat is that the supervisor does have to approve it. But I haven't heard of anyone getting denied.

Kevin spoke about how countercultural Jesuit education is in 2021. He believed it was relevant because of some of those countercultural elements of Ignatian values that he was hoping his students and staff were engaging with:

What happens in silence is that you allow for God moments to occur, you allow for God to enter, you quiet yourself enough to hear what God is trying to tell you. There are not many times with technology and noise and how fast social media is that allows for people to be silent. And that's why retreats are so important. . . . It is trying to teach habits of reflection, discernment, grace and forgiveness, but also being still so you can determine your direction. That is countercultural now.

As faith is on the decline nationally, these leaders saw an important opportunity to help their teams see faith as something worth maintaining. They recognized the impact faith and spirituality practiced intentionally could bring into the lives of their staff. They seemed to be working to create a culture where the best aspects of faith and spirituality could flourish and be seen as meaningful and worth sharing.

As will be discussed in Chapter 5, many of these leaders provided concrete tips and suggestions about how to engage staff in a process that honored the Universal Apostolic Preference to Show the Way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment. Retreats, reflections at meetings, allotment of hours to be used for community service or spiritual reflection, and making space for stillness and silence, were all suggestions provided by these leaders. Each of these processes spoke to the desire leaders were seeing in their staff to have tools to make meaning of their professional experiences.

The Importance of Creating Space and Place for Meaning Making

Throughout my conversations with Kevin, Santi, and Kirsti, the concept of meaning making frequently was discussed. Meaning making is the process through which individuals interpret events and situations in light of their previous knowledge and experience (Reid et al., 2021). The process of meaning making is one where the individual then assigns personal value or significance to the experience they are interpreting. Crucially, meaning making is influenced by context and social constructs (Jarvis, 2014). As individuals seek to make sense of their motivations for employment, an organizational culture that encourages people to ask important questions and connect to their inner most motivation is important.

Now more than ever, meaning making is needed. Kirsti spoke about the challenges people in the field of Student Affairs are facing. She sighed deeply, paused, and reflected on the following:

> The work in Student Affairs is 24/7 and it is emotionally taxing. It's s so valuable, but really undervalued, you know, and nobody wants to do the work. You need a master's degree to do it. And then you got to sit with people who've been sexually assaulted or people who have you know, someone's yelled the N word at them or whatever, or sit with the people who did those things. And to get paid $40,000 a year?

She paused, appearing visibly frustrated. She then referenced an article that had been a source of discussion among other student support professionals titled *Higher Ed, We've Got a Morale Problem—And a Free T-Shirt Won't Fix It* by Kevin McClure. The author proposed that employees in higher education were no longer merely burnt out; They were demoralized. Demoralization was described as moving away from the individual focus that accompanies burnout and instead the focus and frustration shifted to organizations and professions more broadly (McClure, 2021). Kirsti continued, her frustration growing as she referenced the article

by McClure: "We do have a problem in higher ed and a free T shirt will not fix it." She sat quietly for a moment, and then her tone completely changed. Her voice grew strong again: And yet, here's the thing. We cannot give up. Because these young people, how else are they going to figure out how to navigate? How else are they going to figure out how to make good choices?"

It was clear then and throughout my conversations with Kirsti that she had chosen her professional field because she felt compelled to use her skills in a field she felt she would be able to positively impact people's lives. This was the lens through which she viewed her personal commitment to this work and how she oriented her leadership. She was interested in finding people who wanted to positively influence the next generation. She was confident that such a desire was important to do the work that required such difficult tasks.

Kevin was equally passionate about his work. Throughout each of our conversations, he connected leadership traits or different efforts back to what motivated him in the first place: the students and staff he led. He spoke about the challenges of morale he also was witnessing. He acknowledged the complexity of the challenges faced in 2020 an 2021. Yet, he too spoke about what had motivated him to start a career in higher education, and what he believed would ultimately guide his colleagues forward through the challenges they are facing: "We're only here for one reason: To educate these students. So, you put that back at the center of the work, then that starts to make more sense. . . . They're the reason we do this. And sometimes people can forget."

Santi also reflected about the complex balance between what he perceived as an intense passion that drives people to do work in areas like Student Affairs, coupled with the increasing

external challenges these staff members were facing as they sought to keep their internal

motivation engaged in the work.

> I think COVID has been really hard on Student Affairs. And lots of people in higher ed, not just Student Affairs. We were so meaning and purpose driven, like it was just kind of in our DNA. Now, I think we have to think about it more, we have to be more deliberate, we have to create more deliberate spaces for it. When life is really, really hard, people naturally go inward a little bit. How do we help people?

> Similar to Kirsti, the emotion in his voice changed. He stared off at something off screen.

He paused as he gathered his thoughts, and then looked back the screen:

> When you go in and recenter on mission that can help you go out in ways that are healthy for you and for the world. But I just think the meaning making that purpose seeking, I think that's God, I think that's gonna be really important.

> We sat quietly for a moment. He again focused his sight on something away from his

computer screen. I asked him what his greatest hope was for the people he led. His sight came

back to the screen, and similar to Kirsti when she spoke about the meaning she found in this

work and how important it was, Santi's voice grew strong again:

> We want to engage you in meaningful work through which you have a chance to make a radical difference on students' lives. After getting caught up in their lives, they will then get caught up in other people's lives, in ways that is generative, for our world, and through which hopefully, they will also develop lives that are healthy and meaningful. And that's just good stuff to be a part of. And that I would hope that through the community we work to build, that they would have colleagues who inspire them and support them. And that through those relationships, they would grow and be able to do their own meaning making and that ideally, we'd be creating communities through which they can they can grow as people, as well as professionals.

> Drew reiterated the way the people he worked with arrived at this work because they had

a belief that the work they were doing was meaningful:

> Overwhelmingly, for folks within our area, they view their work as beyond just some form of job. There's some vocational piece to it. There's some other attraction, even if it can vary to the degree. . . . There's this piece about how my presence here am I coming in is more than just a paycheck.

Molly felt the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic had brought to the surface important questions that leaders had to respond to. She spoke about the challenges she was seeing in staff and faculty throughout her institution. She focused on her hope that the pandemic might be an opportunity to step back and evaluate the work they were doing for students, but also with one another:

> We have to do this really meticulous work of naming, like, why are we here? What are we trying to accomplish? What are the core functions that we provide, and the non negotiable activities that have to be done within them? There's a tremendous amount of flexibility there. . . . But like really naming all of those things, and then creating portfolios. So really mapping people's jobs to that.

I asked her what she thought was preventing that meticulous work of asking questions about meaning to make sense of the work in each person's work portfolio. "I wonder sometimes, how willing we are to actually go into the depths of our own experience, and trust that to lead us" she told me. Her excitement seemed to increase as she carried on, she reflected about why it was she felt Jesuit education was well suited to help students, staff, and faculty alike navigate through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism that had been so prominent in her life, and the lives of the people she was leading: "We need intellectual depth, and spiritual depth and holistic character formation, we need places to discern what does a meaningful life look like in our time? We need Jesuit education because we need social transformation. We need hope." Molly, like the other leaders who spoke about meaning making, had arrived at her own sense of purpose in this work. She believed the work she and her colleagues were doing was profoundly meaningful. Each of the leaders articulated how the weight of stress and anxiety they experienced leading students and staff through difficult societal moments constantly came back to their desire to be agents of change.

Meaning making, it became clear, was an intractable part of an organizational culture that is committed to showing the way to God. The idea that this work with students matters, and is sacred as Kirsti described it, was a foregone conclusion for these leaders. Yet, their sense of deep purpose was tempered by their reflections on the challenges they reflected on. Again, I cannot state enough what a profound impact the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, and rising economic insecurity had on them, and their staff. It also made clear the fourth element of Ignatian Organizational Culture: *cura personalis*, a latin phrase to describe caring for the entirety of each person.

Theme Four: *Cura Personalis* and Solidarity for All Off *and* On Campus

> It's about modeling for my team, by how I do [*cura personalis*] with them. Seeing the whole person is so that they can then do that with their students. . . . They are full people, they are full human people, and we have to respond to that. Because then, they have a model for what that looks like for working with students. . . . We have to attempt to model what it is that we are trying to create in the world at all times.
>
> —Grace

This theme is a combination of two areas of focus that are prominent in Jesuit education: Solidarity and *cura personalis*. Solidarity is an often-used phrase in Catholic theology. For the Jesuits, former Superior General Peter Hans Kolvenbach spoke at length about his understanding of solidarity and he gave a prominent speech at Santa Clara University in 2000. The talk, titled *The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in Jesuit Higher Education,* marked a renewed commitment to justice in Jesuit colleges and universities throughout the United States. He saw an important opportunity to more fully ground Jesuit works in justice, into faith. This harkened back to the Jesuits General Congregation 32 in 1975. A General Congregation is a gathering of Jesuits from around the world and throughout the Society of Jesus. General Congregation 32 began with an acknowledgement that although faith had always been an important component of the Jesuit

way of proceeding, the Jesuit delegates decided that the previous purpose of the Jesuits, "the service of faith" must also add a new clause: "The promotion of justice" (Buckley, 2007; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). Kolvenbach, building upon this concept of "the service of faith and the promotion of justice" outlined his view on what he considered a well-educated solidarity as a guiding force for Jesuit higher education for generations to come (Kolvenbach, 2000, para. 7). He spoke about the work of the Jesuits as seeking to educate the whole person for close to 450 years. He acknowledged the whole person in 2000 looked very different than the whole person centuries prior. He said "Tomorrow's whole person cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously in the real world. Tomorrow's whole person must have, in brief, a well-educated solidarity" (Kolvenbach, 2000, para. 39). Solidarity, he explained, was best learned through contact and relation rather than through concepts. He described solidarity as fomenting intelligence, responsibility, and active compassion. In contemporary Jesuit education, solidarity is most often associated to the work a campus does to educate and connect their campus community to challenges off campus. As Sebastian (2021) explained: "These programs often understand solidarity as a pedagogical instrument: direct contact with human suffering provokes a desire to think and act differently in order to redress various forms of social inequity" (p. 31).

And how can *cura personalis* be defined for the purpose of this theme? *Cura personalis* is described in a variety of ways, but Geger (2014) described the three most common definitions given to *cura personalis* in Jesuit mission documents and promotional materials the Jesuits created and distributed. The first definition was *cura personalis* as a form of holistic education that was attentive to both spiritual and moral dimensions of a person in their intellectual

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development. The second definition suggested an education that was aware of and supportive of the unique needs and identities of individual students. The third definition highlighted the obligation of Jesuit leaders to be attentive to the needs of the individuals working in their institutions. To many working in Jesuit education, that third definition of *cura personalis* might have caught them by surprise. When administrators and university staff and faculty have spoken of *cura personalis*, they typically had in mind the care given to students. Geger (2014) asserted that for Ignatius, the term would have applied first and essentially to the care given to staff and faculty.

When I speak of solidarity moving forward, it will be anchored in the historical significance of 1975's General Congregation 32, and its working definition as outlined by Kolvenbach (2000) will be to describe an organizational culture that has an educated awareness of the real-world context our work is surrounded by, and the desire to be agents of active compassion. An Ignatian organizational culture in 2022 and beyond must be a philosophy large enough to include solidarity off *as well as* on campus. When I speak of *cura personalis* moving forward, it will include our need as educators to care for the whole person and the multiple identities our students we work with present. Importantly, it will honor Ignatius' focus on care of staff and their individual and complex needs. Throughout my many conversations, the challenges, successes, and obligations to be driven by justice and care for all members of a campus community emerged. Again, it must be emphasized, this idea of a culture that is attentive equally to the needs of staff as they are to students has ran counter to the dominant narrative that *cura personalis* is solely focused on students, and that solidarity is only engaged with problems beyond campus, not in campus.

Being in "Right Relationship"

It is also important to highlight the interconnectedness of this theme and the third theme, showing the way to God through the spiritual exercises and discernment. Looking back to the interconnectedness of themes one and two, the leaders I spoke with were strong leaders, formed in the Ignatian concept of human excellence. They were aware of the need to empower their teams and spoke often of subsidiarity and the increasing role they saw it playing in their units. The combination of their strong sense of value-based leadership, paired with their belief in the value of their staff, could not help but lead them to the third theme of showing the way to God. There is a Christian concept of "right relationship" that is important to understand as it relates to *cura personalis* and solidarity. According to Bishop Thomas Olmsted in a video message he uploaded on YouTube for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix (2021):

> Righteousness means right relationships. Good rapport with your wife, your neighbor, your parents, your children, your coworkers, and with God. Right relationships take work, daily efforts of honesty and patience, forgiveness, and perseverance.

Looking forward for this concept, it is important to understand leaders who have been in right relationship with God are liberated in their leadership. They have recognized, according to Brown (2019), "there is enough attention, care, resource, and connection for all of us to access belonging, to be in our dignity, and to be safe in community" (p. 367). When one falls out of "right relationship," they have fallen out of balance. Getting back into right relationship can be a process of reconciliation, refocusing on the dignity of each person, committing to the common good of all, advocating for justice and creating a culture where compassion is the centerpiece to community.

Each of these leaders, in their own way, sensed that at an organizational level, there was often an absence of right relationship and a need for reconciliation. Molly spoke about the absence in terms of an incongruence between what was stated and what was lived:

> I hear more from staff that they feel like the lived experience of work and study and life here is incongruent with some of our stated values. What do you do when that happens? Where can you go? How is the institution working on transformation from within? And that can show itself in a lot of different forms, everything from integral ecology, labor issues, to just basic treatment of people as human beings. And so sometimes it's very fundamental things.

The focus on *cura personalis* and solidarity as a primary theme for Ignatian organizational culture did emerge from some of the great things happening at each of the university's participants worked at. Yet, it is also important to emphasize that much of this theme arose from the articulation of what was absent, and desperately needed to be present. This section was one of the more difficult ones to navigate, and I was impressed with the humility and vulnerability of many of the leaders who not only shared what was working in this regard, but also what was not. Their honesty and bravery helped provide a more robust understanding of what *cura personalis* and solidarity are, and could be, as part of organizational culture for student-facing staff.

The Role of Social Justice in Jesuit Mission

It was not surprising to have heard reflections about social justice off campus emerge as a key finding of what makes up the organizational culture of student-facing staff at Jesuit universities. Often, the connection to social justice was made in discussing the work takes place through curricular and cocurricular opportunities on campus that helped educate and form students to be conscientious citizens. Molly spoke about it when I asked her how she would describe Jesuit education to someone unfamiliar with the concept:

Jesuit higher ed is a near 500-year-old tradition of educating human beings and forming people. Because it's not just about what people learn in the classrooms. . . . It's really about forming, forming the character of the students so that we are growing responsible adults and people who are compassionate people who are competent, and people who see themselves as, as part of a larger framework with a responsibility to the community. So, the purpose of our education is, yes, it's for the individual student, but it's actually for society, and for what the student then does for society.

Drew had a similar way of talking about Jesuit education. When I asked him to recall one of the first times he realized what Jesuit education was, he spoke about off campus social justice work he took part in as a student.

I would phrase it as the cycle of Praxis. You got to get your hands dirty, and kind of be doing stuff, and then you got to stop and think about it. And then you got to do some more stuff. And then you got to stop and think about.

What mattered most to him, was the integration of head and heart through the way the activity was structured with an opportunity to do something and then reflect about it after. Those early experiences he would later explain impacted the way he designed programs and how they engaged with participants.

Limited *Cura Personalis* for Staff

Grace was the first person who highlighted that *cura personalis* was not always as student focused as we have made it out to be in Jesuit higher education. One of my favorite things throughout my interviews were the times a participant would say "Are you familiar with" or "have you read" when talking about an article or book that was formative. Whenever I was not, they would often swivel around to their bookshelf, and pull it out. Or they would quickly find the online link and put it into our Zoom chat. When Grace spoke about *cura personalis* as being something Ignatius would have been keenly interested in for the staff and faculty of Jesuit schools, she did just that. "I first read this article, that when Ignatius started creating schools, the

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staff was a huge part of it. He saw how important they were and how they needed to be professionalized and needed to be cared for." She went on to describe the different ways she focused on staff learning. She highlighted workshops and activities. She focused on immersive learning and how important it was to get her staff outside her unit and often off campus to be in contact and relationship with a variety of communities. When I asked her why she worked so hard to do this, she spoke of her interpretation of Jesuit values:

> The Jesuit mission from the beginning was to go to where the need was most present. The Jesuits made this explicit decision not to be monastic, not to separate themselves from the world and hide in the monastery and say, we are going to pray for all you heathens out there. No, no, no, the Jesuits said, we are going to live with you, rightly, we are going to accompany you, we are going to be by your side.

She saw this concept as crucial to Jesuit education. If the early decision of Ignatius was to not be cloistered away in a monastery and instead be very much into the day-to-day realities of the world, Grace saw the translation of that century's old decision in the goals and outcomes of Jesuit higher education:

> I had one parent say it to me a couple years ago, she's like my kid graduated from, I think it was UPenn. And the kid said, "What is the world going to do for me?" And my kid graduated from [Jesuit University Grace works at] and said, "What am I going to do for the world?" And that's the responsibility we have to kids who are getting every other message, but that one, including from their families.

As our conversation continued, her frustration became evident when she spoke about the challenges she felt she faced in implementing that vision and these values. This was a theme I saw in other conversations as well, and one I imagine is not unique to Jesuit education, but nonetheless important to highlight. The tone of their voices would often change, I often would detect a level of energy in their speech rise as the words came more quickly to them. I would detect their excitement through the change in facial expressions as they smiled more. All these

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changes in behavior and body language, they were most prominent when these leaders would speak about the espoused values of Jesuit higher education, and how that gave them a sense of meaning and purpose in their work. Every leader I spoke to had been in Jesuit higher education for at least five years, but some had been active for decades. It became clear how important mission was throughout their journey.

When leaders did feel there was a misalignment of mission at larger levels, their frustration also became evident as the tone of their voice changed, and their facial expressions alternated between what appeared to be frustration and tiredness or exhaustion. Grace paused after telling me about this parent and the gratitude they expressed for helping her childcare so deeply about the world. "I think sometimes we're [her unit] the last bastion of Jesuit education at our Jesuit university. And that's exhausting." When I asked her what she meant, she elaborated:

> I never thought my job was going to be about doing so much advocacy on campus ever. I never thought that that was going to be my job ever. And that's what I spend most of my time doing and probably should spend all my time doing. Without a doubt. That is so much of what I do. I never thought that would be the case.

That sense of frustration was not exclusive to Grace. Santi articulated it as well: "I think, over the years, other parts of our experience, our mission has become more front and central for me. Like solidarity understood not just externally, solidarity understood internally." Anthony felt a similar sense of disappointment with the larger institution he worked at. He did not want to dwell on those things, because he did not have hope there was much that would change: "I can't control everything that's happening in the institution. I can't control those external things, but what I can control is a culture within our unit." Kirsti did not have as much a sense of frustration with larger issues related to mission enactment on her campus. Leaders passionately remarked about their continued belief in the value of the work they did. I was impressed, whether they felt

a sense of frustration with the way mission was engaged or not, the way they remained

committed to enactment of the mission. They thought about elements in their control as Anthony

did, but they also spoke about a desire, present in them and their staff, to challenge larger

institutional narratives. Molly spoke about the way she was seeing certain assumptions

challenged:

> I think because we have these incredible values, because we articulate a desire to integrate faith and justice, reason and justice, that maybe we've assumed too that our systems themselves, our university systems are just when we have some things inside we have to look at. I see that assumption being challenged now. And I see our students, this generation of students being like, focus on what is justice from within look like?

> We joked about the speed with which change often occurs or does not occur in higher

education. I pressed her on if she was hopeful that the types of change she was alluding to in the

assumptions being challenged might indeed be possible. Without hesitating, she said yes, and

suggested it is our cultural values that will make that change possible, even if not easy:

> I mean, that to me is Ignatian pedagogy. It's letting our lives speak. It's process-oriented, letting ourselves be led, letting things unfold. Sometimes all we know is the next right step, not the ultimate end of the journey. And I think that's what I would love to see us working on cultivating a capacity for a discerning unfolding journey. I think it takes a lot of fortitude. I think it gets messier before it gets clearer. And that's where I think if we had committed communities working over time, if we were working on some of those building blocks, it'd be amazing to see what we can accomplish.

Employment Benefits

Grace was adamant that Jesuit colleges and universities had to connect their mission and

identity to the real world challenges of the staff she lead and worked with. She laughed, and

remarked how interesting it would be if the commitment focused on student retention was

applied in a similar way to staff retention. When I asked how she would do that, she focused on a

challenge that I heard frequently: pay and benefits. "Our retention is so low for a lot of staff

because they have to find higher paying salaries. It sucks but I mean they absolutely have to." I

asked her if she could expand upon that point, and she connected the current salary challenges as

being incompatible with those earlier Ignatian tradition that was focused on creating an order of

priests that would be with and for the community:

> For the staff, who, with whom I generally work and the staff on my team, the salaries are
> completely incompatible with place-based living. I mean, from the earliest of Jesuits, it
> was like, get to know where you are in enculturate, know the surroundings, know what
> the local history is, know the local context. My staff can't do that because they can't live
> within miles and miles of here.

Other staff agreed. Anthony spoke at length about staffing that was both underpaid and

not to the levels needed to complete the work being asked of the staff. He reflected on that, along

with trends of largescale resignations in 2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic entered a stage where

more employment opportunities were opening up. He believed many employees were leaving

higher education for jobs that were better paying, less stressful, and with more predictable hours.

He was fearful of what that would mean for universities like his:

> I think we are going to have a really tough, tough battle over the next 5 or 10 years
> because we know burnout in Student Affairs is high and we know about this great
> resignation happening nationwide. And especially the smaller Jesuit schools can't pay as
> much. So how do we recruit people that want that small school experience?

What inspired me as I spoke to these leaders was the ways they looked at the challenges

in a solution-oriented approach. Anthony was always quick to highlight that some challenges

were outside his scope of control. Yet, he also knew other elements of creating a culture where

people wanted to stay were within his control: "The other piece is that retention of your staff, and

I think creating campus culture, a team culture of belongingness and inclusion in feeling that

there is support, leading that is so important for folks like me to actually do."

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Saj highlighted the way the COVID-19 pandemic forced his team to move away from a productivity mindset to a presence mindset in their work. The productivity still mattered, but in that time of social isolation, he saw his role as a leader as one that moved people away from focusing on program metrics, and instead focusing on the ways they could leverage their work, and the mission they subscribed to, to be present to students and colleagues alike:

> *Cura personalis* really hit home in light of the pandemic, for our office in particular. Last year we were in a real restrictive experience. We had a number of times, especially last fall, in which students either were quarantined due to exposure, or were in isolation, because they were positive for COVID. So, we really had to shift a lot of our focus to really pastoral care and to help care for students. But not only students, but also faculty staff, and just seeing the stress of folks in our Student Affairs Division. They were short staffed, having to provide for the real physical needs for students who are in isolation. So made a decision as a staff to jump on board and in help, in a way we could like delivering meals to dorm rooms for students who are in isolation, and just trying to be present. So instead of doing a lot of programming like we would normally do, we did a lot of pastoral care.

Drew also spoke to this sense of pastoral presence for staff. Throughout much of our conversations, he highlighted the programmatic elements of the work his team does, and the successes they have had in delivering innovative and transformative programs. Yet, he also felt as a leader, he was trying to navigate and discern the proper balance between what I will again call productivity and presence:

> One of the things that's come up a lot over the last year and a half in particular, is how we use our time as a group or as a team, and how that influences culture and how that speaks to values. And so, we really started to identify priorities. We have to constantly be in some form of a formation for ourselves as a group in order to best do our work externally. So, we need to be doing Ignatian reflection exercises. . . . It's not just doing work anymore. We need to feel like we're being formed and growing.

Kirsti spoke at great lengths about the ways she believed her leadership modeling *cura personalis* was a way to empower her staff to do the same for one another and the students they engaged with. She was concerned with larger systemic issues and working to address them. Yet,

she felt it was important as a leader, as she worked on those larger issues, to never lose sight of modeling care and solidarity so that others might not lose sight of it as a cultural element of the unit.

> We work really hard for our students, because their formation and education is so important, right? Not just to them and for the price tag of the education, but it's important to society. At the same time, recognizing each of each of us is a complete human being is really important. So, we engage with one another. . . . I want folks to work with students in that same way. And so, we need to work with each other recognizing the dignity of each of us and what we bring and the gifts that each of us brings.

Santi had several thoughts on this topic. Throughout our talks, he spoke at length about various conceptual frameworks, his understanding of broad mission-based values and the importance they had to him personally. Near the end of each conversation, he would talk about how he either felt he was practicing some of these values and concepts through his leadership and creation of culture, or how he was discerning ways he or the institution might do that better. He consistently brought back his actions and desired actions about *cura personalis* and solidarity to the broader concept of the mission and identity of Jesuit education:

> We have to think about how we engage our mission in ways that are relevant to this moment in time we're living through in higher ed, and on our campuses. I hope our mission is about a big piece. It's about launching students into the world to make change. I don't ever want to lose that. And at the same time, like we really need to think about solidarity, about service, about finding God in all things, meaning making. We have to think about that on campus with our people. What does that look like in practice that's experienced as real amongst our people? I think about this intersection of, we need like an intersection of Human Resources with mission and identity.

I asked him if he could provide any concrete examples of issues of injustice or challenges to a culture of *cura personalis* for staff that might be on his mind. Similar to Grace, Anthony, Molly, and Kevin, he too reflected on the challenges with salaries that were becoming increasingly challenging for him as a leader, and for the staff frustrated by their salaries. "I think

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certainly pay renumeration. If you look at the gap of between the pay of people at the higher

levels of the institution, and on the frontlines, I mean" and his voice trailed off for a moment. He

went on:

> We have folks who are professionals, who have master's degrees who are making
> relatively speaking very low salaries and struggling to make ends meet. We also have
> folks on the staff who make the wheels go round, who fix things, who clean things.
> People who keep the place not just working, but really beautiful. And their renumeration
> is pretty limited. I think that's a justice issue.

Santi eagerly talked about possibilities to evolve and experiment with the way work was

done, in light of the lessons learned from COVID-19. Because of COVID-19, a number of staff,

Santi included, found themselves working from home for different periods of time. Although

many had been eager to return to full in-person work, Santi recognized that many of his staff

wanted to integrate some of the lessons learned from COVID-19 into their work moving

forward:

> The big thing on our campus right now, some flexibility like people want. We were
> remote (at the start of COVID-19) for a good chunk. And then when we came back, we
> allowed some flexible work. So, in Student Affairs, for example, we allowed people to
> work 20% of the time remotely. We need people on campus, but we still give that
> flexibility.

Throughout our conversations, Santi spoke a lot about social justice. He spoke about his

understanding of it through his faith. He spoke about the application of it. He spoke about his

understanding of justice issues that were prominent to students and staff alike. As we neared the

end of our conversation, I asked him about justice on campus, if this was something he was also

so tuned into:

> I've really seen a shift to have this in my time in higher ed particularly. It feels very
> different today than if you go back, you know, 15 years where our justice focus was
> almost all external. Our students have been key players in this and staff here and I'm sure
> at other institutions too are saying we have to focus those commitments more internally

as well to have a more coherent, integrated, consistent approach. I think our previous kind of external approach came from a good place. Right? It was about the world. It's just that there appropriately has been an invitation to think more in a more integrated and coherent fashion, which requires us also looking internally. And I think that's a good thing.

One of the conversations that remained with me in the months after I spoke with these leaders was a conversation I had with Kevin about furloughs and Ignatian values. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many institutions were put into situations where budgetary constraints required them to furlough or lay off staff. I saw this occur at my own university, and I saw the impact it had nearly two years later for the staff impacted by those furloughs. It impacted both the people furloughed, who were without employment for varying lengths of time, and those who were not furloughed, increasing their workload, and sometimes leading them to feel guilty that they remained while beloved colleagues did not. These conversations at every level of institutions in my personal experience were difficult to have, and many remained reluctant to have them. Kevin was not reluctant. He spoke honestly about the challenge of that time, the impact it had on people he cared for, and the impossible decisions he was forced to make as a leader during that time. He also spoke about those decisions as being rooted in his training in Ignatian leadership. His explanation of that time is lengthy, but deserving of being posted in its entirety as it provides a potent example of how Ignatian values can be applied to leadership in times of crisis:

> My goal was to make sure that if anyone got furloughed from my area, that the unemployment benefits would meet or match or exceed what they were currently making. So, all my people underneath $53,000 or $55,000, whatever that threshold was for the state, there was no person that I furloughed, that didn't make at least their salary or better than their salary during furlough.

He continued to discuss more examples, specific to student-facing staff who often live on

campus and work in Residential life. He shared the real concern for these staff not only losing

their jobs but also their housing:

> The next thing is that we all of a sudden didn't have residential students. So, the first place they look for furloughs was Residential Life. Now, this is the same Residential Life team that was busy moving people out of the halls that left their things when things shut down. [They are] on the front lines, you know, meeting families and students and others to get their things when no one knew what COVID truly was . . . literally like firemen. So, I use that as a shield to say that there they are not to be touched. . . . And that was a social justice issue for folks whose jobs are where they worked. And when they were fed, it was everything, there was zero separation between their institutional role and their personal role and their livelihood. They're a very specific and separate group of people. So, I made sure that the university treated them as such, and they were retained, none of them were furloughed.

Kevin's leadership during this difficult time could be summarized by his own words on what

leadership is: "That's what leaders do. That's what they're supposed to do. It wasn't easy to do

it." He discussed his approach during this time:

> What I tried to do is use my leadership role and understand the social justice issues and the injustice that would happen if they were laid off, you know, help keep our university operational and balanced. I'm not saying I'm some sort of genius. I'm saying I did the right thing. And then there was a group of people that weren't impacted by furloughs. But again, I said I was committed not to laying off people who made less than that also wasn't going to lay off people who made double that. So, if you're a long-term director for the institution, and served us for 30 years, you weren't going to get laid off and then cut to less than half pay by unemployment benefits when you have a family too. So, I found work for them to do. My rec sports people, which was decidedly closed they were turning over rooms, changing out curtains, doing conference services type stuff, during the height of that summer of the pandemic as we tried to get ready for the fall. I'm not some sort of miracle worker. I'm just a person who sees and understands issues of justice. I was able to do that. Because I was in a pivotal role. I could use other examples about how we leaned into protecting those who are food insecure and housing insecure, really digging into protecting those programs as well, making sure they're running in there. All those things are real, I could go on and on. But it's usually around 'have nots' and how we have an understanding and appreciate and acknowledge our privilege, vast privilege in this particular case.

The honesty and vulnerability with which leaders navigated an increasing need and desire articulated by their staff for benefits was insightful. It was a moment where the research mirrored what I am witnessing in my own professional orientation as a staff member in a student-facing unit at a Jesuit university. The articulation of the desire for concrete benefits such as increased pay, are important. Yet, equally important and illuminating were the ways in which leaders spoke about fighting for the larger systemic needs of their people, while also working to pivot and learn from the COVID-19 pandemic to create cultural changes around time, focus, and commitments to one another and the projects or programs that mattered most. There was a recognition, highlighted because of COVID-19, that the physical and mental health of staff were something that required greater attention, creativity, and focus. This was tied to staff morale, the strength of a positive organizational culture, and the benefits available to staff. The insights that emerged set the foundation for practical implications for practice more thoroughly discussed in chapter five.

Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The notion of university and unit level commitment to diversity, inclusion and belonging emerged across interviews with student-facing staff. Diversity has been described as the representation of different characteristics and identity markers such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity (Harvard Human Resources, 2021). Inclusion has been articulated as ensuring all people are included, visible and heard (Harvard Human Resources, 2021). Belonging has been described experience of being accepted, included, and valued, a motivation that has positive impacts on an individual's health, abilities, relationships, and general sense of well-being (Roberts, 2020). Leaders were able to reflect on the implications a lack of diversity

often present in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) was having on their organizational

culture. Molly spoke about this early on, when discussing the ways in which racial injustice

impacts us all, but particularly staff of color: "Racial justice is touching all of our populations.

We hear from staff of color how challenging it is to navigate this system." Understanding how

pervasive Jesuit values of *cura personalis* are, it did not surprise me that much of the initial

conversation on racial justice started first with an emphasis on creating a culture of inclusion and

belonging specifically. According to Saj, the work of creating inclusive spaces was important,

and sometimes, difficult:

> Something we've really been working on the last couple years is our focus on inclusion, and trying to be more attentive to where our biases are. And that's had some difficult growing pains for some on our staff to fully enter into that process.

> Drew said, "Without a doubt, the premiere social justice issue on campus right now is

racial justice and what we need to do." Santi spoke about the lack of representation of people of

color in senior levels of leadership at his institution:

> With staff, you can look at the diversity of our workforce, you can look at the retention of our workforce, you can look at the advancement of underrepresented staff from underrepresented populations. Many of the justice issues out in the world are reflected in our own campus.

> The leaders I spoke with were aware of the desire of students and staff they led to see real

progress in racial justice off and on campus. Importantly, they also had their own experience

with racial justice at times, and a desire to see the improvements the students and staff they were

leading were demanding. Kirsti reflected on what George Floyd's murder meant:

> The racial reckoning, I mean where we are at right now in the racial reckoning, we need to acknowledge for many of us this is a long story. The George Floyd piece is a chapter, and it is the same damn story. The context is there to invite people into their own experience and to reflect on how that experience, the personal experience, contributes, or is an example of a society where a police officer can kneel on a man's neck and, you

know, suffocate him to death. You're in front of a crowd of people, slowly and deliberately, I mean! So it is that way of kind of using these landmark experiences, right as context, drawing people to it, helping them connect so that it's not totally cerebral and, and theoretical. It's got some connection to the person's lived experience.

She went on to talk about the ways she was encouraging people to connect their own lived experience to what happened to George Floyd. "How does my neighborhood or where I grew up fit into all of this? Super powerful. This is how outside of the classroom we're using these moments and thinking about them."

There was near consensus that issues and ideas related to racial justice, inclusion, belonging, that these were all topics that mattered through the context of the mission of higher education. As James put it:

> Social justice and racial justice are very much a part of our mission. Those are things that we've been doing for a long time. We're not always great at communicating that stuff. But I think there's important work to be done in the current landscape that can be done uniquely in a place that has a faith-based element. And I think that those are things right now that I think the world is in dire need of.

Anthony agreed that the faith-based element created a unique opportunity for Jesuit higher education to really engage more fully in the work of racial justice. He spoke about the different statements from various Jesuit colleges and universities. He lamented a difference he saw in the ways the Jesuits were engaging in the actual work of racial justice compared to religious orders of nuns:

> I feel like in the Jesuit schools we always were doing the justice work, but I feel like you see it captured through marketing a service trip, or something like that. Whereas, for example, with the Black Lives Matter movement, the Sisters of Notre Dame, the sisters of this or that, the Sisters of St. Joseph, I saw them at the protests, I saw them with the people. And so I think that that's something and it's not as common with the Jesuits.

I asked him how he thought the Jesuits could do better at moving beyond the marketing

of their justice work. He expressed a desire to move beyond neutrality and, as he described it, be

radical in the mold of Jesus Christ:

> I feel like there's a lot of tiptoeing around things. We'll get these public statements when
> something like George Floyd happens. And you can tell that it's been carefully put
> together by the chief of staff in the president's office so that it doesn't affect trustees. It's
> just like in the middle so that everyone can only kind of relate to it. . . . And I think that
> we, as Jesuit education need to change that. Because if we think about Jesus, like Jesus
> would be with those at the margins.

He expressed a desire to move beyond neutrality in statements and the work on racial

justice. He saw it as important and benefitting staff, but he also felt it helped Jesuit universities

remain authentic to their mission of educating students through a whole person approach that

prepares them to address the most pressing challenges in their context:

> If we're looking at Jesuit education, we want them to be authentically themselves, by the
> time they graduate. We want them to come through our programs and services, to be
> formed to develop so that they're authentically them. When I'm seeing institutions make
> decisions that are aligned more with money, or they're aligned more with power versus
> who they are, and refusing to take responsibility if they make a bad decision, trying to
> sweep things under the rug, that is where I would say I get angry with the organization,
> but also lose motivation to be inspired by that founding mission.

Anthony acknowledged that "while we are all Jesuit institutions, each has a different

flavor" but he saw the work of racial justice as aligned with the mission, crucial for the work of

educating young people, and important to keeping employees like himself motivated. An

organizational culture that takes diversity, inclusion, and belonging serious is about more than

just words. It is about systems and structure change. As Kirsti described it: "The expressed

institutional values are not neutral. And yet it feels sometimes like our policies, kind of mandate

a certain kind of neutrality. So, we've got to make it easier for people to figure out how to

navigate that." Molly also focused on structures and systems when talking about the work she

was doing to address systemic racism and create a culture of inclusion and belonging. "How do we look at everything from recruitment, the kinds of experiences you have in a hiring process, to what is the onboarding that happens in a centralized way here, but then also in your particular unit?" Drew also spoke about structural changes, and how important it was to quickly make structural changes, but also how sometimes the fruit of those changes takes more time to be apparent than we may want in a cultural accustomed to instantaneous satisfaction:

> There's an interesting piece there about pace of change. I think there have been a couple of fairly significant structural change issues that have been made. There was some short-term pieces. They specifically fundraised a whole bunch of money to be able to support scholarships specifically for black students. They made some concerted efforts to be able to recruit an incoming faculty class, which is like the most diverse it's ever been. These were not all just within the last year. A lot of it is sort of like bearing fruit of efforts that have been going on for a long time.

As Drew put it, "We already had this class division, race division, inequity, and it was hyper present within us. And all that happened with COVID, is to spread that out further." The efforts to begin addressing that were put in motion at his university prior to COVID-19 because of some specific instances on his campus. He was able to reflect on the structural changes, and the way that made tangible progress, even as COVID-19 and George Floyd's murder pushed them to make even more changes that would create a culture of inclusion and belonging for members of their community that did not always feel that sense of inclusion and belonging.

A Culture of Fear and Hope

Another challenge identified was a culture of fear. Saj reflected on a culture shift at his university over his tenure where there has been an increasing demand for quantitative data to evaluate performance of individuals and units. He was not opposed to data collection and saw the

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importance. Yet, he emphasized how challenging it was when it felt like the only thing that

mattered to senior leadership were numbers:

> I just submitted my monthly report. There's all these quantitative things that we want to try and get in the report because then our Vice President will then present it to the President and it all gets built into our annual report. And ultimately there's this feeling we have to prove ourselves, that we're doing all this work and that we're worthwhile, and that we hopefully won't lose any more staff do the budget cuts or anything

Saj was not alone in this observation. Molly reflected on the impact fear was having on

the ability for some of her colleagues to engage problems with creativity and new ideas: "We're

up against a fair bit of fear, actually. So how do we create spaces where people feel like they can

explore where they can venture a thought aloud?"

And yet, a constant theme often discussed alongside the culture of fear, was what could

best be described as a theme of hope. Right after Molly spoke of fear, she spoke about why she

worked so hard to dispel fear and create a space of hope in her leadership:

> One person's voice could change the whole trajectory of a department or division. But creating that space where people can really dialogue and debate with one another, and then actually make choices.

Although Saj spoke about the fear he and his team faced to prove themselves to upper-

level administrators, he also spoke about the culture of concern for one another and connection

he saw in the actions of his colleagues:

> If there's someone we encounter on campus or within the community, what is the opportunity for connection now? That's something our team does a good job on. It's embedded in our culture of genuine concern for everyone that we encounter.

Kevin also saw this culture of fear at times, but he felt he had an opportunity as a leader

to address the fear people were experiencing, and hopefully help move into a better space where

they can be less fearful, and more present to their work:

Showing up where you are supposed to show up, building time in for you to communicate with consistency and transparency, having enough trust in how you have engaged people earnestly and with authenticity that when you do sit down with them to speak, they're able to tell you the truth without fear. That's how I lead. That's how I lead every day.

I asked Kevin what that experience was like? Does it come naturally? Does he find that part of the job easy? Or is it a more difficult part of the job to sit with people when you have so much else that is demanding your attention as a senior leader. He was honest, in confessing it was indeed challenging:

It's hard to put yourself as a leader in that space, because you hear things that you necessarily don't expect to hear, when you hear things that are hard to hear. . . . But as a leader, you need to be able to hear that a person is struggling, and then try to work with them to then find solutions on how to get them to flourishing. That can be done in community that can be done one to one. But the answers are usually within that community.

I was struck by the coexistence of fear and hope. In reviewing the data, it was often the leaders who spoke of a culture of fear, who were often the most passionate about the work they believed was necessary to create a culture of hope and connection. I was trying to look at the data to understand how someone could find themselves in a space where they acknowledged a culture of fear existed, and yet they also spoke of that same space as one where hope and connection flourish. What it appeared to come down to was this: The leaders who believed they were change agents, and that they were surrounded by people at all levels to be change agents, were the ones most confidently working to dispel fear and create spaces of hope. Drew exemplified this concept when he reflected on the power of administrative assistants around his campus:

In general, the people who are around as a default want to help out. They want to be useful, and they want to provide a good service, to whoever that is. People are gonna pick up a call, they're gonna call you back, they're gonna try and be helpful. I find that

particularly true in the phone a friend among the administrative network. They're like oh, call Steve over here. He's the one that gets shit done. And he'll know how to kind of navigate through this. It's that sense of, I have knowledge and experience in that game that I really want to help you out and be of service. So, there's a sense of like, how do we best kind of help one another kind of make our way through this? Because I might not be doing the same work as you. But in the end, we're all trying to do more or less the same thing.

It was exciting to hear these themes of generosity, a desire to be of service, in multiple interviews. When I asked Molly if she thought there was anything that we would see on her campus that she would imagine would also be seen at every other Jesuit college and university in the United States, she too spoke of generosity:

> The sense of generosity and pursuit of excellence in depth, a tremendous care and a desire for community. I think the pursuit of truth, the pursuit of justice, those would be things, I think that we would all kind of maybe recognize in each other as we visited each other's institutions.

Molly spoke to what had led me to embark on this endeavor of trying to uncover an Igantian organizational culture for student-facing staff in the first place. I knew what Jesuit education looked like from where I entered it and now worked. I realized my experience really diving deep into the culture of Jesuit education beyond my particular institution was limited and needed to expand. Throughout my time with these leaders from Jesuit institutions across the United States, I indeed saw patterns and themes emerge that could highlight the artifacts, values, and basic assumptions taken for granted that made up this organizational culture.

Conclusion

Throughout the research, the goal was straightforward: What might a framework for organizational culture look like for student-facing staff at Jesuit universities? I wanted to move beyond the language of Jesuit education and hopefully identify tangible ways in which language was translated into action that became so routine as to contribute to the culture of the space. My

time spent with these leaders revealed core components of this organizational culture. I had originally imagined this research might uncover new themes. Instead, it seemed to navigate the multitude of themes found throughout Catholic and Jesuit spirituality and pedagogy, and helped to identify the most salient for the purpose of identifying an organizational culture focused on student-facing staff.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Chapter four presented data from interviews with nine leaders of student-facing departments and divisions at Jesuit colleges and universities throughout the United States. Participants described a variety of aspects of their leadership, and the ways in which they worked to operationalize Jesuit pedagogy and spirituality into the culture of the organizations they led. The research questions were:

1. What Jesuit values or principles are most often found in student-facing departments and divisions at Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States?

2. How do leaders of student-facing departments and divisions operationalize components of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy to create an Ignatian organizational culture?

Qualitative research methods were employed in this study because the research on organizational culture suggests that interviews are effective when attempting to better understand culture. Schein (2017) indicated interviews are an important way to study the culture of an organization and more closely look at its norms, values, and philosophies. As a student-facing leader at a Jesuit University, my desire to engage in this research study was to understand which themes were prominent in student-facing staff leadership at Jesuit colleges and universities. I wanted to understand how leaders came to interpret and then implement Ignatian concepts and language in the crafting of the culture of their teams. I wanted to understand the themes, grounded in Catholic and Jesuit values, they felt were important to an organizational culture for the staff they led. I was looking for examples, or the lack thereof, of ways in which Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality were operationalized in staff units.

From the interviews, I identified four themes for an Ignatian organizational culture for student-facing staff in Jesuit colleges and Universities: (a) leadership's commitment to human excellence; (b) subsidiarity; (c) showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment; and (d) *cura personalis* and solidarity for all off *and* on campus. The data from the interviews were reduced through the analytical process to narrow in on these themes. These themes are not new to Catholic or Jesuit theology. Rather, through the process of analysis, it became apparent that the themes of an Ignatian organizational culture for student-facing staff were aligned with topics in Catholic and Jesuit higher education, suggesting the need to elevate these four themes in crafting Ignatian organizational culture.

Discussion of Findings

To recap, the findings showcased the importance of having senior leaders who embodied "human excellence," defined here as competence, conscience, commitment, and compassion, or the four Cs (Kolvenbach, 1989). It also became apparent how much subsidiarity provided a pathway for empowering staff at all levels of a unit to live out and thus educate others about Ignatian values. When a unit had a leader who embodied human excellence, and a staff empowered to lead at all levels, it created a sort of right relationship between people and the space they inhabited that naturally led the way to God when staff were provided opportunities to engage in discernment. That connection with God then led to a desire and commitment to create spaces dedicated to the practice of solidarity off *and* on campus, paired with a desire to see *cura personalis* through an interpersonal and institutional lens as a method of engaging *all* members of an educational community (not just students). Overall, the research uncovered these answers of what student-facing organization culture looks like in Jesuit colleges and universities. See

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Figure 7. Ultimately, these findings created a framework for leaders and student-facing staff to reference to engage more meaningfully with Ignatian values. To that end, the following section is organized by key finding, followed by specific implications for practice aligned to that finding.

Figure 7

An Original Illustration of Ignatian Organizational Culture for Student-Facing Staff.
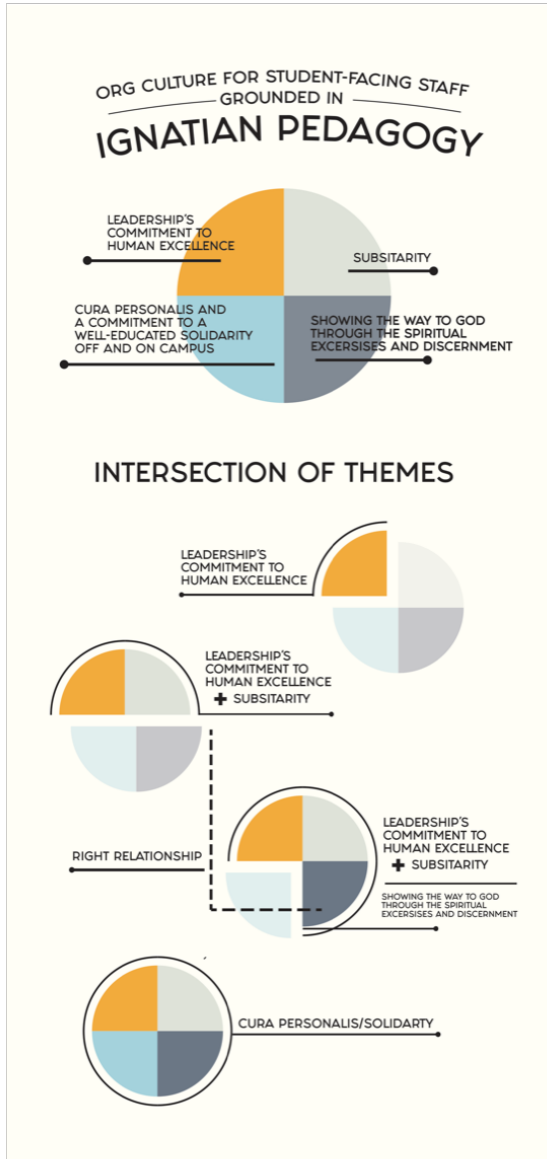
Human Excellence

Human excellence in Ignatian Organizational Culture can be best understood as the ways in which senior leaders exhibited and practiced being people of conscience, competence, compassion, and commitment. Leadership can shape culture, and culture can often shape leaders at multiple levels in a unit. The findings made clear the importance of good leadership for student-facing units. Bass and Avolio (1994) explained how transformational leaders understand the culture they are leading. They pointed to how good leaders can leverage that understanding to present a new vision to build shared assumptions, values, and norms. Leadership of student-facing units matters more than ever. Throughout the interviews, senior leaders were able to quickly highlight the multitude and diversity of departments and total number of staff that reported to them. Simon (2017) highlighted how in 1980, colleges and universities nationwide spent an estimated $13 billion on academic support, student service, and institutional support. In 2014, that number increased over 800% to $122.3 billion. That finding was evident in my conversations as well, as many leaders spoke about navigating the complexities of leading units that have everything from Campus Ministry to Housing to Dining Services to Student Psychological Health in their vast portfolios. James in particular spoke at length about the complexities of leading a division with many moving parts that often were not naturally aligned around the same mission. He cited an example to provide contrast. Enrollment management, he explained, might have several units, but they are all aligned on attaining and retaining students. In Student Affairs, he felt it was more difficult to juggle how to get psychological services to see their goals in alignment with campus dining.

It was also evident in my conversations how aligned these leaders were with the mission and vision of their institutions. The impacts of this alignment were seen in the choices they made on everything from resource allocation, where to invest their personal time and energy, and even in the ways in which some leaders wrestled with how to address furloughs during the early months of the COVID-19 crisis. Organizational culture in higher education has often focused on mission and value alignment (Vallett, 2010). Having leaders who are aligned with the mission and values of the institution and unit makes it easier for leaders to identify and adequately address potential problems (Tierney, 1998). Leaders who not only understand the mission of their Jesuit institution but are excited to engage it were best positioned to be leaders in creating an Ignatian organizational culture.

Implications for Practice

Several practical implications related to human excellence emerged from the research. Utilizing the address then Superior General Peter Hans Kolvenbach provided about human excellence (1989), I will discuss practical considerations for two specific areas of human excellence: competence and compassion.

Competence

If institutions are committed to Jesuit mission, hiring senior leaders who are competent in the mission is both practical and important. Here, Schein's three levels of culture (2017) might be useful. For many years, the basic underlying assumptions of Jesuit education were taken for granted because of the presence of Jesuit priests in positions of leadership. As more lay leaders take on positions of leadership, it is important to focus on what Schein (2017) described as espoused beliefs and values (ideals, goals, values, and aspirations) and cultural artifacts (myths

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and stories, language, and published list of values). Competence in Jesuit education is one goal that fits can be achieved in several ways: (a) identifying candidates who attended a Jesuit institution at some level of their studies; (b) identifying leaders who have previous work experience in a Jesuit ministry in or outside of higher education; (c) asking deliberate questions during the hiring process that assess the level of familiarity and knowledge leaders have navigating Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality can only be done if the units hiring senior leaders have put in the work to publish their list of values (Schein, 2017).

The study of organizational culture has often focused on effectiveness (Adams-Manning et al., 2020; Cameron, 1985; Deem et al., 2015). In higher education, special attention has been paid to the emphasis on mission and values (Vallett, 2010). Moving forward, all senior leaders of units that are student-facing should receive priority consideration to participate in Jesuit mission and identity programs on and off campus. For example, the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP), sponsored by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, is a program designed to educate and help form senior administrators in the Jesuit tradition of higher education (Ignatian Colleagues Program [ICP], 2020). The ICP is a transformational program that has served and helped to form over 500 senior administrators and faculty members since it was founded in 2009. It requires a substantial time commitment of approximately 18 months, and can be costly for some institutions to sponsor participants. ICP says at the completion of the program, participants will be better situated to: (a) integrate Ignatian heritage into their work in a way that helps to deepen their institutions Jesuit identity; (b) use the Ignatian heritage to mentor other leaders in their care and thus develop a greater concentration of mission centered leaders on their campus; (c) exercise leadership and decision making that reflects Ignatian values that in turn advance the

school's Jesuit mission (ICP, 2020). Based on the interviews with student-facing staff, I would add a fourth, critical dimension for student-facing unit leaders: Participants will be better able to create an Ignatian organizational culture that shapes staff and students alike with Ignatian values. Participation in a program like this helps ensure senior leaders focus on what makes the mission and values of their unit in a Jesuit college or university unique. At the same time, it will help these leaders reflect and build important dimensions of organizational effectiveness that Cameron (1978) outlined such as professional development, organizational health, and employment satisfaction. As McClure (2021) has noted recently, disengaged staff and faculty can have adverse impacts on student personal development, student academic development, and student career development, other areas Cameron (1978) highlighted as important dimensions of organizational effectiveness in higher education.

Given the cost and time commitment of this off campus ICP experience, on campus programs might be a strong alternative. For example, if a participant is for any reason unable to participate in an ICP cohort, institutions should enroll that individual in a campus mission development program that mirrors ICP if present. Additionally, it might be beneficial for new senior leaders in a student-facing unit to be connected to a staff or faculty mentor who is well versed in and a champion of Ignatian mission.

Finally, Kolvenbach described competence (1989) as "a knowledge that is broad and deep and constantly being updated" (p. 8). Senior leaders should commit and be expected to engage and reengage with opportunities for professional development aligned with mission. Examples would include: (a) participation in workshops on campus related to Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality; (b) participation in immersion experiences, among peers if offered (staff and

faculty immersions), and as a staff chaperone or leader in student-focused programs like Alternative Breaks (programs designed to provide college students with service and community experiences during their traditional spring or winter breaks); (c) engage speakers and resources off campus who might be able to offer professional development for leaders and their staff; (d) finally, alignment with mission requires leaders who are well versed in the historical significance of the Jesuits, and equally bold in understanding where that historical significance leads today. For example, such knowledge today compels senior leaders to engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to better understand how mission can and should support efforts to enhance DEI on campus. For example, at Loyola Marymount University, the Vice-President of DEI and the Vice-President for Mission and Ministry worked together to create a workshop entitled *Hiring for Mission and Inclusive Excellence* (Abe & Sebastian, 2021). The collaboration provided opportunities for hiring committees at all levels of the institution to understand and reflect on our commitment to Ignatian values and DEI together.

Compassion

When speaking of the concept of "engagement" with students, Jesuit colleges and universities have often focused on the ways in which programs must be designed to give students a chance to engage their compassion with people on the margins. This has been done knowing that such engagement ultimately leads to solidarity that is meaningful. The same can be true with staff. Leaders who are given opportunities to place themselves in spaces where they can exercise their compassion will inevitably be more in tune to the opportunities and challenges their staff face. The senior leaders I spoke to who were most aware of and attentive to the lived experience of the staff in their care were the ones who intentionally designed pathways to interact with staff

at all levels of their units. Such awareness can lead to better leadership through the ability to become aware of problems in the organizational culture and quickly rectify them.

There are a few simple ideas to engage compassion more fully. Leaders at all levels should practice "skip-level" meetings. Skip-level meetings are meetings between a higher-level manager and their non-direct reports. These meetings can happen on a monthly or quarterly basis. They provide employees a chance to receive unfiltered access to senior leadership. Senior leaders should not only meet with department heads but make it a point to attend a department meeting for every unit in their division at least once a semester or quarter. Meetings should be a chance for senior leaders to share directly with staff, but most importantly, structured in a way where staff have a chance to have real and honest conversations with senior leadership. Senior leaders should engage with the division in regular communication practices such as division-wide listening sessions and meetings and regular and consistent open office hours that any staff member can use. Taken together, these implications for practice embody the Jesuit notion of compassion so that it becomes part of the organizational culture of student-facing staff.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity emerged as a second theme of Ignatian organizational culture for student-facing staff. Kuh and Whitt (1988) highlighted how organizational culture in higher education is a collective engagement of staff at all levels to influence the norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that in turn shape the behavior of the individuals and collective units. Through that lens, subsidiarity becomes vital to the development of a healthy and vibrant organizational culture. Operationalized, subsidiarity presented an important counterbalance to human excellence in leadership in the study. Even though identifying and having in place

transformational leaders who were aware of and able to shape institutional culture was important, it also became clear how important it was that units have staff members who feel empowered to live out and operationalize the institutional Jesuit mission.

My interviews took place in the Fall of 2021. COVID-19 created an economic environment with widespread job loss in the early part of 2020, followed by a tight labor market in 2021 (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022). According to a Pew Research Center survey, low pay, limited opportunities for advancement, and feeling disrespected at work were the top reasons Americans quit their jobs in 2021 (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022). This survey asked workers, who had changed jobs, about their experiences in their new jobs. More than half indicated they were earning more money, had better opportunities to advance, and had more flexibility to choose when to put in their work hours (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022). This phenomenon is happening throughout the labor market, and higher education is not immune to it. Student-facing units that require long and odd hours for limited pay and that offer limited to no hybrid remote opportunities to complete work seem particularly susceptible to losses moving forward.

Tierney (1988) also looked at the influence members of an organization at all levels have on the creation of culture. When culture is collective, it has served as a metaphoric glue that Kuh and Whitt (1988) described as providing a sense of identity, particularly beyond oneself, that improves a group's social systems and helps participants engage in transformational meaning making. The amount of work required to operate a university continues to expand, and with that expansion, staffing numbers increase. Therefore, it is crucial to have leaders who trust and engage their staff and staff who feel empowered to lead from where they are positioned.

Implications for Practice

In student-facing roles, employees have historically dealt with long and odd work hours, and lower salaries, because they have been fueled by a sense of purpose and connection to the mission of the work. For years, that connection to the mission has been in slow decline. According to Köse and Kormaz (2019), increased global competition and the rising popularity of university ranking systems have reshaped the culture and the mission of institutions of higher education. Administrators and staff alike have been caught in the tension between a desire to more forcefully commit to mission and a need to acknowledge and respond to increasing commodification of higher education in such a way that ensures a university has sufficient resources to run a university.

It is in this environment that a culture that practices subsidiarity has become essential. To be clear, practiced subsidiarity will not be a substitute for adequate pay, healthy work environments, and meaningful benefits. However, subsidiarity can help to make positions in student-facing units more competitive to potential job seekers, and aid in the retention of such employees even as some of the unique demands of higher education indeed fall outside the normal nine-to-five schedule to which many white-collar workers are accustomed. In higher education, organizational culture has been seen as dynamic, sometimes fluid, and actively cultivated by the individuals in that culture (Tierney, 1997). As leaders wrestle with how to keep staff engaged, a few opportunities have emerged.

Balancing Hierarchy and Empowerment

University culture is one of the most important factors in determining individual and unit effectiveness (Köse & Kormaz, 2019). In my interviews, multiple division leaders spoke about

how important it was for them to get to know all their employees, not just their direct reports. They visited department staff meetings regularly. They hosted office hours or other engagement opportunities to meet with staff at various levels. Importantly, they used what they learned to empower the people more fully on their team to complete their work. Leaders need to structure their work in such a way that they are familiar with the work of each team under their supervision and therefore are better able to provide gratitude to staff at each level of their operation. At the same time, systems need to be structured in such a way so that people at all levels of the unit feel a sense of respect, trust, and ability to do work that makes an impact in relation to their skillset and training.

Address the Factors of Staff Churn in Student-Facing Units

Higher education leaders are well familiar with the concept of "student churn," or the percentage of all students transferring into or out of a school in a given school year (Shelly, 2017). Churn, or attrition, is also a real factor in the staffing of student-facing units. Experts in higher education point to overwork, low pay, and few opportunities for advancement as reasons cited by employees when leaving a position (Ellis, 2021). The commodification of higher education has resulted in a culture that might be described as one focused more on perfection and less on learning. If students are treated like clients, the focus shifts from providing a worthwhile educational experience to providing excellent customer service to students and their families. The tension or space between mission and the need to finance the operation of the university is real (Roberts, 2018), but leaders can start by creating a culture that values the work of the people on their teams. "Other duties as assigned" can often become the most significant part of a staff member's position in student-facing units. Helping to create structures that are aligned to unit

priorities and that empower staff to tackle those priorities and have some amount of input in the shaping of both goals and execution is vital.

Employee advancement to positions of increasing responsibility is another challenge that must be addressed. In higher education, there is an often-used phrase "move out to move up" indicating the only way to advance in one's career is to leave their current institution for a new institution. This notion of "move out to move up" creates a culture where individuals who are committed to student-facing work must make hard choices that require frequent moves, yielding considerations such as distance from family, among others. At the same time, higher education often has limited investment in professional development. Speaking personally, I left higher education and spent two years in the corporate world before returning to higher education in 2018. The opportunities for growth and learning were massive in my brief time in the private sector. I was encouraged to attend conferences and provided ample funding to do so. Feedback and review processes were done more than once a year and in a 360-degree manner allowing me to hear feedback from my supervisor, my peers, my direct reports, and my clients. I not only knew what was expected of me, but I was given coaching, feedback, and access to tools to excel further, and incentives to do so. Higher education needs an investment in similar tools and infrastructure: Staff need more consistent access to professional development programs and tools. Staff need supervisors that do not just manage their tasks but coach them in their professional growth and development. All of this requires commitment and buy-in from leaders to make such tools available and a desire at all levels to use those tools for personal and professional benefit and growth.

Honoring Context, Promoting Transparency

Throughout this research, it was clear that each Jesuit school is unique. Jesuit universities are small, medium, and large. They are in every geographic region of the nation. Some are in large cities; others are situated in small towns. The diversity of academic programs is broad, and the financial health of each institution varies. The notion of subsidiarity therefore runs two ways: Leadership at once must do a better job of recognizing where they can more fully empower and support staff. At the same time, it is important for staff to understand the context and circumstances of their institution more fully in comparison to other colleges and universities in and out of the Jesuit network.

To assist in creating that two-way understanding, transparency was a major theme throughout the interviews. Leaders spoke about the growing demands for transparency in decision making after the initial impacts of COVID-19 and the death of George Floyd. Most of the leaders I spoke with were actively trying to practice transparency. Many felt they were committed to transparency prior to 2020, but almost all spoke about a renewed urgency to exercise more transparency. Specifically, staff desired more transparency about budget and salary, resource allocation, and decisions that might impact student, staff, and faculty experiences. Moving forward, leaders who are unwilling to provide such transparency risk cultivating a culture of mistrust that will negatively impact organizational culture. Transparency is about accountability. Transparency also provides opportunities for growth, understanding, and leadership development that must not be overlooked. Exercising transparency provides staff at all levels of the institution an understanding of the challenges senior leaders grapple with. Experiencing transparency is educational and formative, particularly for young leaders who

might one day aspire for senior leadership positions. Transparency about the challenges that senior leaders are wrestling with, such as their commitment to mission coupled with the vexing challenge of commodification, provide pathways for staff to understand the problem, appreciate the complexity, and perhaps contribute solutions. Absent transparency, staff are often unaware of the complexity of multiple issues and therefore are better situated to complain about a challenge rather than contribute to meaningful work to address the challenge.

There exist networks, such as the Association of Jesuit College and Universities (AJCU) and the Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators (JASPA), that are positioned to be spaces to help leaders share, learn, and grow together. Speaking personally as someone deeply interested in Jesuit education, I have yet to find ways in which to meaningfully connect with likeminded colleagues and learn from them by hearing about the challenges they are facing and the creative solutions in their spaces to address those challenges. Staff committed to Jesuit education would benefit from spaces to learn about the culture, the challenges, and the opportunities present in other institutions as they work to improve their own institutions.

The challenges facing student-facing units in higher education are profound at this moment. The phenomena of "The Great Resignation" seen among student-facing staff in higher education is something that is still being explored and studied; research is limited as of 2021 due to its infancy. It will most likely be something discussed in the years to follow. Understanding this context, bold and confident leadership is needed. Strong leaders have an opportunity to trust and respect the teams they lead through the creation of pathways, through providing needed resources, and by contributing what they can to build a culture where all people feel connected to

the mission, respected by leadership, and empowered to make a difference in the lives of the people they care most about: their students.

Showing the Way to God Through Discernment and the Spiritual Exercises

A clear theme that emerged from the interviews was that people are looking for meaning in their work. They were looking for a connection to God. I think about an idea Kirsti first shared with me, that then became something that emerged surprisingly frequently across interviews. Kirsti shared: "We don't talk about God enough."

Jesuit universities have a chance to position themselves as beacons of diversity in all its forms. They can create a culture that celebrates diversity of race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, religious practice, and more. Importantly, Jesuit institutions have a chance to leverage their commitment to religious diversity and personal and communal discernment to attract and retain staff members seeking such intentionality and opportunity for discourse and reflection in their own lives.

Implications for Practice

Jesuit higher education is uniquely positioned to engage staff around crucial questions about the meaning and importance of their work. Unfortunately, many student-facing employees are becoming burnt out and disenchanted with their work (Ellis, 2021). To be clear, what is not needed is what Marci Walton (2022) described as "mission-based gaslighting." Pointing to a sense of purpose and mission should not be used to make staff feel foolish for advocating for higher pay and better benefits. Appropriate compensation and benefits, paired with strong engagement with mission, can lead to important culture developments. How new employees are socialized to an organization can form their understanding of and incorporation of symbolic and

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functional activities of the organization in their own understanding of how they fit into the organization (Tierney, 1997). Student-facing units can use their institutional Catholic and Jesuit identity to be sources of meaning making for all staff members (not just Catholics) seeking opportunities to reflect and make meaning of their work.

Reflections, Retreats, Pastoral Support

Nearly every leader interviewed spoke about various ways they incorporate reflection or prayer at the start of a variety of meetings. Staff meetings and other large gatherings can be spaces where a cultural norm is to start the meeting with some sort of opportunity for private or group reflection. Additionally, collaborating with units such as, Campus Ministry or Mission and Ministry, to lead reflections, and to help educate staff at all levels on the practice of leading a reflection, will ensure norming of this kind of practice and help everyone fully benefit.

Another opportunity to create an organizational culture that allows student-facing staff to find meaning in their work is through retreats, as mentioned by the leaders in this study. Division leadership should have at least one annual retreat together. Such a retreat is a chance for leadership to come together and brainstorm and ideate, but it also should have elements of team building, reflection, and pastoral support to help leaders connect with one another, reflect on their own identity, and more freely explore their own understanding of faith and/or spirituality. At the same time, opportunities for retreat should be made available to staff throughout student-facing units. Not only should such opportunities be made available, but staff should be actively encouraged and incentivized to attend retreats on campus and beyond. To do this, staff should receive funding to attend retreats and participate in spiritual development on and off campus.

Pastoral and personal support are also something that should be readily available for staff. This can include bringing in religious leaders on campus to make staff aware of opportunities to receive pastoral counseling, engage in the Spiritual Exercises, or know where they can go to talk to someone navigating an unexpected challenge. At the same time, leadership can get creative in benefits offered off campus that support staff. For example, staff can be encouraged to access free meditation applications on their phones or computers. Leaders can work to advocate for staff to receive free counseling resources.

Cura Personalis and a Commitment to a Well-educated Solidarity Off *and* On Campus

In addition to human excellence, subsidiarity, and showing the way to God, the notions of *cura personalis* and solidarity emerged as key findings among student-facing staff. Geger (2014) reviewed a range of Jesuit documents and concluded that the concept of *cura personalis* was most commonly referred to as an individualized education focused on students. Historically, the focus on *cura personalis* has been at an interpersonal level: Faculty are encouraged to care for students in a way that facilitates students' intellectual and spiritual growth (Claywell et al., 2014). However, some have argued to expand the definition of *cura personalis* to not only include interpersonal relationships and development. Rather, *cura personalis* can and should be seen through an institutional lens when reflecting on the policies, procedures, and systems. As Bninski and Wozniak (2020) argued, institutional policies shape interpersonal interactions. They highlighted various opportunities to institutionalize *cura personalis*, from providing holistic support services to students to designing work conditions for staff and faculty to form personal relationships more easily.

At the same time, the intersection between *cura personalis* and solidarity is manifesting in new ways. Students, staff, and faculty alike are beginning to look at commitment to solidarity as an active practice to improve society and address injustices off *and* on campus. Not surprisingly, students are leading the way. For example, the President of Loyola Marymount University referred to the generation born after 1996, commonly considered Generation Z, as "the solidarity generation" (Snyder, 2021). Snyder highlighted the intersection of *cura personalis* and solidarity, pointing out that the current generation of students is focused on caring for one another, seeking purpose, and being committed to racial and economic justice.

Implications for Practice

There is an urgent need to implement *cura personalis* and solidarity in the organizational culture of student-facing staff at Jesuit colleges and universities. While writing this study in the early months of 2022, there was scant literature on "The Great Resignation" and its impact on higher education. Yet, the phenomenon is real. Limited research has focused on the impact of COVID-19 on higher education, particularly Jesuit higher education. I suspect in the months and years to follow, we will see more. Until then, this final tenet of Ignatian organizational culture feels urgent. My interviews, paired with my own lived experience as a Director in Student Affairs at a Jesuit university, highlights the unique challenges, needs, and opportunities to reflect on the meaning of *cura personalis* and solidarity beyond interpersonal practice. What is needed now is a reflection and implementation of *cura personalis* and solidarity as institutional practice. In most colleges and universities, the focus on organizational culture has traditionally focused on student culture (Deem et al., 2015; Tierney, 1988). This study focused specifically on staff and the environment that they exist in. Students are often the inspiration for staff who work in higher

education. The literature on organizational culture reveals that effectiveness improves when culture improves (Köse & Kormaz, 2019). Colleges and universities are beginning to realize focusing on staff satisfaction and retention has impacts on student satisfaction and retention (Walton, 2022). The next section includes some practical suggestions for implementation. Admittedly some are easier to achieve. Others offer nuanced challenges in the intersectional complexity of how mission is exercised and lived out amid the complicating challenges of higher education in the United States in the 21st century.

Institutional Commitment to Racial Justice

The murder of George Floyd, alongside the racial inequities COVID-19, have had a profound impact on the field of higher education, and the way all members of an educational community (student, staff, and faculty) respond to such challenges. *Cura personalis*—this practice to care for the complex and varied elements of each individual's identity—provides a pathway to address these issues in Jesuit colleges and universities. Many institutions have begun the work. What feels important to note is that interpersonal commitment and effort to address racism is not enough in these moments. Trainings like implicit bias are important and should be part of the overall strategy for institutions committed to addressing racial inequities and supporting the full diversity of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community partners connected to Jesuit colleges and universities. Alongside those interpersonal efforts to address racism, institutions, divisions, and departments must throw support behind institutional changes. What barriers, seen and invisible, prevent a university from fully addressing the needs of their educational community? In what ways can we adapt our structures to be more equitable and inclusive? A few ideas come to mind.

First, every student-facing division and department should commit to completing a systemic analysis for unit level self-reflection. At Loyola Marymount University, divisions and departments have been completing such efforts beginning in the summer of 2020. As units make strides and improvements, they report on this progress through a written report to the DEI office and are asked to do public report outs that can be attended by any member of the university community (Loyola Marymount University Office of Intercultural Affairs, 2020). According to the Loyola Marymount University Office of Intercultural Affairs website, there are eight steps to guide this reflection:

- Listen to members of your department--faculty, staff, students--whose identities are socially marginalized.

- Review your infrastructure, approaches, policies, and processes.

- Review the scope and content of your programs, activities, and work.

- Evaluate structural diversity of staff and populations served.

- Analyze your strategic partnerships in supporting efforts to educate students for justice.

- Evaluate the values reflected in your department's vision/mission statement.

- Identify training needs and opportunities.

- Engage in accountability and assessment.

Completing this review, or similar equity audit, not only assists units in making changes but also further encourages and solidifies individual level growth and development. It allows individuals with various identities to be empowered to make structural change that improves immediate services and builds capacity for longer lasting change. If student-facing departments

and divisions practice a shared commitment to systems change, there will be an institution-wide level impact. As students, staff, and faculty engage in structural changes, other units are likely to take note and demand equal action in their own spaces and at a larger institutional level.

Pay and Benefits

One important area to address in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion as it pertains to student-facing staff is pay and benefits. Pritchard and McChesney (2018) point out that 71% of student affairs positions are held by women compared to 58% among all other higher education professionals. At the same time, racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in student affairs when compared to college students in the United States (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). According to research, the intertwined nature of COVID-19 and the 2020 racial uprising pushed many staff of color to rethink whether it was worth remaining in higher education after experiencing inflexible work arrangements among other challenges (Donaldson, 2022). As institutions of higher education increase commitment to various DEI initiatives, having significant percentages of staff of color and having staff of color in high level leadership roles will become important. Although the challenges of pay are particularly salient for women and people of color, it is a problem throughout student-facing positions that needs to be addressed.

Higher education was facing a morale problem in 2021 and 2022 that was significant (Conroy, 2022; Ellis, 2021; McClure, 2021; Walton, 2022). In 2022, it was still routine to find job postings for positions that require three to five years of experience, a master's degree, and the pay is under $40,000 a year (Conroy, 2022). College and university staff have been exploring opportunities outside of higher education, as they began to realize they can often garner significantly higher salaries and no longer work long and odd hours. At the same time, many

staff and faculty who remained in their positions began approaching their jobs in different ways, becoming less enthusiastic and more disengaged (McClure & Hicklin Fryar, 2022). All these recent articles point to an alarming trend: Higher education, with a history of high turnover rates, is facing even faster turnover, at a time when institutional memory and employee engagement are most needed.

Jesuit higher education has opportunities to act. First, address possible solutions related to low pay. The challenges are indeed real with limited budgets to increase employee compensation. Yet, something must be done. Although staff members report overwork, it is worth investigating if creative solutions might make sense for different units. In Student Affairs, for example, could a division leader offer staff contracts that range from 10 to 12 months with pay in accordance with what is selected? For some staff, the opportunity to have summers off and be with children for example, might be enticing enough to forgo one to two months' pay. At the same time, salary savings generated from moves like these could be used to boost salaries of staff members at the bottom portion of a pay grade.

Other salary related changes are needed to retain and attract new talent. First as Walton (2022) argued, institutions need to make staff retention as important as student retention. Utilizing available data when advocating to university leadership for increased salaries and benefits can help to convince decision makers that these changes are necessary.

Next, institutions need to review hiring processes. Private sector hiring often moves much more quickly than university hiring. Jesuit colleges and universities need to work to create systems that screen for bias, move more quickly, and ultimately reward competency through promotion opportunities. All three of these concepts can and should coexist. There is a growing

movement in higher education and elsewhere to also include salary postings with every job posting (Walton, 2022). Such changes may convey a real commitment to *cura personalis* and solidarity.

For benefits, there are ample opportunities to act creatively. Remote or hybrid work opportunities elsewhere are attracting some of the best and brightest in higher education. Over a large portion of the COVID-19 pandemic, white collar workers in and out of higher education became accustomed to the benefits of remote work. These same workers also found a way to accomplish most, if not all, their work in a remote capacity. As higher education rushes to push staff back into five-day weeks on campus modality, they gamble both with retention and attraction of new talent. What can be done? Create systems that allow for hybrid work that produce benefits to the employee and university alike. Many staff might be in positions where their work can not only be done, but done better, in a structured system where they are in the office three or four days a week while being remote one or two days a week. Those one or two remote days can become project days, whereas the time on campus is more focused on being present to students and colleagues. If a unit believes such a remote arrangement is not possible during the academic year, where can units get creative? At many Jesuit colleges and universities, the flow of campus life recedes for a period in the summer. Student-facing units might be able to move all work and meetings for a set period of the summer to be remote. Doing so would ensure staff presence during the school year, while providing staff the benefit to complete their work remotely for four, six, or eight weeks wherever they desire. This benefit would be comparable to organizations outside of higher education that offer staff the chance to be remote 1 day per week.

Finally, student-facing units must reckon with what matters most: productivity or presence? As student engagement professionals, we are encouraged to prioritize our presence, our conversations, with students. However, in a commodified environment, staff exhibit impact not through interpersonal connections and mentorship of students, but in the quantity of programs or activities they produce and the quantity of students who are recipients of those services. If leaders proport to value *cura personalis*, then they must create structures to protect and encourage interpersonal engagement and find new and innovative ways to show the impact such engagement has on areas like student retention.

Social Justice in Action: Solidarity On and Off Campus

Student-facing leaders in Jesuit colleges and universities have a chance to improve the culture of their units as it pertains to solidarity. Although Snyder (2021) emphasized the importance of social justice and solidarity to members of generation z born after 1996, it is important to realize the oldest members of generation z are now the entry level employees in many organizations. According to Pew Research Center, generation z has started to join their millennial counterparts in the workforce—counterparts in their 20s and 30s who share similar views on key social and political issues (Parker et al., 2020). Thus, there is a need to attend to solidarity among the entering workforce, especially at Jesuit colleges and universities.

One way to create a culture of solidarity is to consider making mission-specific opportunities accessible to all staff. First, many Jesuit institutions offer service or mission hour compensation for staff who engage in community service and/or mission-related work. Saj spoke about this at length, reflecting on the ability of his staff to be able to use a set number of work hours each year to attend a retreat or do community service and not dip into their vacation hours.

Every Jesuit institution should have a similar policy. Speaking from my professional experience as the director of a center focused on community service, social justice, and advocacy, we know that engagement with injustice creates a pathway for greater empathy and understanding. Kolvenbach (2000) famously said: "When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change" (para. 41). Student-facing units can and must lead the way. Advocate for a human resources policy to allow and encourage anywhere from 16 to 40 hours for mission-related reflection or community service. Staff should also be given opportunities to visit community partners where students engage in community service or community engaged learning. Such experiences are intended to encourage a culture of solidarity with the marginalized.

Advocacy is important to address here too. Throughout my interviews, several participants spoke of a tension between a culture of hope, so often present in Jesuit higher education, and a culture of fear. This culture of fear is particular to certain subgroups of populations in higher education, namely nontenured faculty and staff in all positions. Staff are not afforded the same protection of tenure as some of their faculty colleagues. Yet, staff are also on the front lines of student engagement around issues of injustice. It is often staff who students come to for support and advice. Many of the issues prescient for students also impact staff. Yet, staff worry about speaking up. They fear such actions might have repercussions on them and their standing in the university, or they fear the impact speaking up might have on their department. Snyder (2021) believes Jesuit higher education is not only equipped to meet the needs of students in this moment, but that Jesuit higher education must evolve with the moment. He believes intergenerational solidarity between students and the university personnel on campus

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can drive meaningful and transformational impact in our pursuit of the Jesuit notion of *ad majorem dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God). To do this, institutions should work on crafting free speech policies for the staff that work alongside students. Staff need pathways to exercise their own conscious and voice for and with students. If there is a culture of fear present in many areas of higher education, staff will be limited in their own abilities to support student advocacy *and* to feel confident and comfortable raising their own concerns to university leadership. Such a policy must not look exactly like the policies most schools have in place for student free expression. They should create pathways for expression around social justice that allow staff to more fully be companions in mission alongside activist students. Overall, such efforts may increase the organizational culture of *cura personalis* and solidarity among staff.

Toward an Ignatian Organization Culture Framework for Student-Facing Staff

The implications for practice as described highlight the organizational culture of student-facing staff at Jesuit colleges and universities. Certainly, not all of the recommendations can be easily implemented. Yet, the value of Ignatian Organizational Culture is the desire to improve, to reflect, and to create change, and then change again. In other words, as a starting point to address the implications for practice, we can consider a process for engaging the work.

When I first started researching organizational culture in Catholic education, I often came across the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP). This tool was created for and primarily used in Jesuit K–12 education. The model has helpful implications for higher education as well, including elements that can be incorporated into modes of operation for student-facing units in Jesuit higher education.

Specifically, the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) is a way of learning and a method of teaching taken from the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola (Tardiff, 2019). The Spiritual Exercises offer guidance and instruction on how to deepen a relationship with God (Donnelly, 1994) and this guidance is a popular spiritual tool, noted by Santa Clara President Kevin O'Brien (2015) as central to Jesuit higher education.

IPP was designed to make the defining characteristics, principles, and orientations of Jesuit pedagogy more accessible and practical to incorporate into K–12 instruction (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education [ICAJE], 1993). Yet, this framework remains applicable to higher education as well. IPP has three main elements: experience, reflection, and action. Additionally, a pre-learning focus on context, along with a post-learning focus on evaluation, are important to the success of the paradigm (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education [ICAJE], 1993). From the viewpoint of the IPP, the most important aspect of learning is focused on how to learn (Savard, 2010).

In the IPP framework, the focus is on how the learner can incorporate a mix of experience, reflection, and action to move them closer to a deeper understanding of what they have learned. Applying this concept to student-facing staff in Jesuit colleges and universities, we find that learning remains at the center but shifts away from students to staff constantly engaging and assessing their student-facing work and how it does or does not move them closer to truth or right relationship with God (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education [ICAJE], 1993).

Five Steps of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

According to ICAJE (1993), IPP has five steps: (a) context of learning, (b) experience, (c) reflection, (d) action, and (e) evaluation.

Context of Learning

The first step in IPP focuses on adapting to the context. For example, in the Spiritual Exercises*,* Ignatius makes the point that a retreat director must modify and adapt the retreat exercises to make them directly applicable to the retreatant. This can be applied to Jesuit higher education as well, which does not take place inside a vacuum. In general, there is little research that highlights how colleges and universities with a strong mission and established sense of identity navigate challenges such as the commodification of higher education and other societal changes (Platt, 2014). Although each Jesuit institution is unique, there is a shared context rooted in the mission and identity of Jesuit higher education that provide the governing ideas about what a Jesuit university is, and what it seeks to do.

Experience

The second step in IPP is to experience the moment. Ignatius described experience as something to taste internally (ICAJE, 1993). Experience can be direct or vicarious and it can refer both to the experience prior to the moment or after through reflective analysis. Experience creates the formulation of all the data each human is processing to begin to ask, "What is this?" and "How do I react to it?" as a way of proceeding (ICAJE, 1993). Student-facing staff interviewed in this study certainly experienced the moment, reflecting on what was going on for them, the staff who reported to them, and how to react to the moment.

Reflection

In Jesuit pedagogy, reflection is often rooted in the notion of discernment: What moves one toward good or as the Jesuits would word it, God? What moves one toward bad or evil? Similar to the theme that emerged from student-facing staff on showing the way to God, reflection in Ignatian pedagogy is a chance to engage memory, understanding, imagination, and emotions in a way that captures the meaning and essential value of what is being studied or experienced (ICAJE, 1993). Reflection becomes the tool that helps to make meaning of the experience and ultimately inspire everyone to action. Thus, student-facing leaders engaging in reflection will assist their unit in finding meaning and their way to God and reflection in their own work.

Action

Reflection and experience are only a part of IPP that contribute to action. For example, the focus of the Spiritual Exercises is to empower an individual to know the love of God more fully and how to live more freely in the will of God. Action in the IPP is focused on interiorized choices and choices that are externally manifested (ICAJE, 1993). Interiorized choices represent a cognitive understanding of the experience and personal choices to be made. Choices externally manifested translates the meanings, attitudes, and values of the interiorized choices into external actions consistent with interiorized conviction (ICAJE, 1993). As student-facing leaders, both interiorized choices and externally manifested choices impact the organizational culture. Engaging in actions that change the system has the ability to impact Ignatian organizational culture. A major focus of Jesuit education is to form young people who can reflect on their experience with the world, particularly difficult realities, to contribute meaningfully to society (Kolvenbach, 2000). Thus, the implications for practice as outlined offer concrete ways for

student-facing staff to engage in action in alignment with Ignatian organizational culture, while lovingly grappling with the realities of the world.

Evaluation

Evaluation in Ignatian pedagogy focuses on analyzing if growth is well-rounded and human centered. Evaluation not only focuses on what has been achieved but also seeks to produce an awareness of needs unmet, and to better understand each individual's personal and moral growth (ICAJE, 1993). This sentiment emerged clearly from the interviews with student-facing leaders who constantly strove to understand their staff and assess areas of unmet need. Thus, evaluation is an essential process of implementing Ignatian organizational culture.

Relevance of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

Although IPP was a framework created primarily for K–12 classroom teachers, it was later adapted for a quantitative analysis that studied the impact of immersion learning on students in Jesuit universities (Savard, 2010). Given the popularity of IPP among K–12 instruction and the growing implementation of it for higher education, the central tenets may provide a process to follow when examining how student-facing staff experience Jesuit higher education, how they then reflect on their experience, and what action looks like for staff at multiple levels in their daily praxis.

Borrowing from the IPP Framework as a process for implementing the central themes identified by student-facing staff at Jesuit colleges and universities, a new organizational culture framework emerges: Ignatian Organizational Culture for Student-Facing Staff. In other words, the themes from this study suggest that student-facing organizational culture in Jesuit colleges and universities includes elements of human excellence, subsidiarity, ways to find God, and *cura*

personalis through solidarity. As such, these themes describe the work of student-facing units in Jesuit schools, addressing the first research question. Combining those themes with the IPP process of context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation, we find a way to operationalize and implement Jesuit organizational culture in student-facing units, responding to the second research question. In that way, the experiences and stories shared by the participants in this study, highlight the process of IPP, contributing to its relevance in higher education as a process for operationalizing Ignatian organizational culture for student-facing staff.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study is among few that have attempted to unpack organizational culture among student-facing staff at Jesuit colleges and universities. There is more work to be done to fully understand the intricacies of this work. Whereas this study focused on student-facing staff who were leaders of various Student Affairs units, future research on Ignatian organizational culture should examine experiences of staff at all levels related to current and needed culture for student-facing units in Jesuit universities. The conversations with department and division leaders in this study helped to create an understanding of this culture. Future qualitative research might center the voices of staff throughout student-facing units in the AJCU that report to positions like those interviewed for this study, to learn about these staff member's lived reality. Studies are needed to better understand the impact of "The Great Resignation" and all the complexities that have revealed themselves because of our health and racial justice pandemics. As I searched for research on these topics, the information was limited to articles in popular publications like *The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education,* and *Forbes* to name a few. Specifically, systematic studies should be conducted to better understand how staff see Ignatian

organizational culture, and what it would look like to move that culture beyond buzzwords and interpersonal efforts into process, procedure, and systemic change.

Another potential study might be to ask students what their experience is like working with student-facing staff. How do students view the role of student-facing staff members? What impacts would students articulate as having experienced thanks to these staff? Where could staff better engage students? The perspective of students may further contribute to the understanding of student-facing staff culture.

A study that more fully delves into the tensions between mission and commodification is needed. Throughout my research, I saw this tension arise in multiple areas. The shift in U.S. higher education is complex. Exorbitant tuition fees are needed to fund the type of universities students and their parents have come to expect. At the same time, these astronomical tuition fees have created a dynamic where students are often treated more like clients. The outcome of higher education, whether verbalized or not, is less and less about educational aims and more and more about a return on investment. I have witnessed this firsthand in my own work. When I am on a panel for events with parents or prospective parents, I am often paired with colleagues in areas like career development. Parents primarily want to hear from career development about the work that will be done to secure their children top internships, and how their work throughout college will result in a high paying job at the completion of their studies. I do not want to minimize the importance of success post college. Such success is important, and as many students and families take on increasing levels of debt to attain a college degree. I understand the importance. At the same time, I believe we fail students when we treat them solely as clients and less and less as learners. The approach to higher education has impacts on funding priorities inside an institution,

and unfortunately, mission becomes something easy to diminish unless speaking with older alumni who find value in it as they discern their philanthropic priorities. A study about this tension between the aspiration of mission and the reality of the economic climate of higher education is needed.

Finally, a quantitative study that examines the impact of Jesuit mission on staff retention is needed. This study makes an argument that mission is important in the cultivation of culture for student-facing units at Jesuit colleges and universities. In the era of commodification, a study that could analyze the economic impact of mission-based activities is needed.

Conclusion

Jesuit universities have for hundreds of years responded to the needs of the moment. Their mission is prophetic and is rooted in supporting people to become more fully engaged in a faith that does justice. Although Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality have long been studied, little research has been done on the ways Jesuit mission might inspire organizational culture for staff at Jesuit colleges and universities. Through this study, I wanted to better understand if such a thing as Ignatian organizational culture existed and if it did, I wanted to describe what exactly such a culture might look like. What was discovered is important for the future of student-facing units in Jesuit higher education. How will student-facing units attract and support leaders committed to Ignatian values? How are staff at all levels of the institution empowered to be agents of Ignatian values? And particularly in this moment of Jesuit higher education, colleges and universities grapple with their third academic year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, what does it look like to operationalize the Universal Apostolic Preference to show the way to God? Ignatian organizational culture is therefore about moving beyond buzzwords and

interpersonal goodwill, intent on creating systems, processes, and procedures that bake *cura personalis* and solidarity into the espoused values, artifacts, and processes of a unit's organizational culture.

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