

An aerial photograph of a university campus. A central walkway with red brick stripes leads towards a fountain and a statue. The scene is surrounded by green trees and paved areas. A yellow-bordered box is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the title text.

Mission Examen & Reaffirmation 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

University Mission Examen and Reaffirmation

John Carroll University

A Self-Study

2015-2016

Executive Summary

Below is an executive summary of a 44-page mission self-study document (plus appendices) that itself is available at jcu.edu/mission. Included in their entirety are the following brief but important sections of the original document: Introduction, Mission Strengths, and Mission Priorities. For the sake of convenience, the main part of the document is summarized in terms of the seven defining characteristics of the self-study.

Introduction

In 2012, the president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), in collaboration with the Jesuit Provincials of the United States, released a document titled *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Assessment Instrument*. The document “is intended to be used by Jesuit universities and colleges in the United States as a tool for self-improvement, particularly with regard to their fulfillment of their Jesuit and Catholic identity” (from the Preface).

John Carroll has been invited by a Coordinating Committee of the AJCU and Provincials to be one of three pilot schools to undergo a process of mission examen and reaffirmation in 2016. Distinct from a process of accreditation, the mission examen and reaffirmation begins in gratitude, reviews past and present moments of achievement and challenge, and looks forward in the hope of advancing the university’s Jesuit Catholic mission. Although the process is still under development, the Coordinating Committee suggests it includes:

- Writing a self-study informed by the Some Characteristics document
- Identifying existing mission strengths and forward-looking mission priorities
- Hosting a peer-review site visit to affirm and explore the above
- Submitting a final report with an appropriation of the visiting team’s comments

Our story is one of intentional and integrated university-wide collaboration to animate Ignatian principles and pedagogy in the service of faith and the promotion of justice, while striving toward inclusive excellence. We are grateful to play a significant role in embracing and furthering the Jesuit apostolic mission of the 21st century. In a complex globalized world, the timeless values of commitment to academic excellence, care and attention to educating the whole person, and equipping students with the capacity to find God in all things, provide essential compasses for our students and who they become. Many of our recent key documents such as our Integrated Core Curriculum and our strategic plan, *Promise and Prominence*, are demonstrably and visibly informed by our commitment to Jesuit mission and values, to a faith that does justice in service to society.

In addition to such key documents, our practices reflect this mission intentionality. Whether expressed in our hiring procedures, our faculty and staff development efforts, or our institutional response to justice issues, the common thread is an emphasis on the defining features of Jesuit education. We would go so far as to claim that many members of our faculty and staff, as well as our students, can speak in a meaningful way about the promotion of justice, solidarity with the poor, care for the whole person, and a

commitment to the common good. Our aspirations around these values are succinctly encapsulated in our University Learning Goals of *intellect, character, leadership, and service*.

As part of this mission examen and reaffirmation process, we look forward to welcoming peers from the AJCU network who will provide us with an opportunity to reflect deeply on the mission achievements and priorities expressed in the full reaffirmation document. The following is a brief executive summary of the content of this document, the crux of which is to establish our Mission Strategies and point forward to our Mission Priorities.

Characteristic #1: Leadership's Commitment to the Mission

This section describes the ways in which the university leadership demonstrates its commitment to JCU's Jesuit Catholic Mission. These leaders, including the Board of Directors, President, Senior Leadership, Academic Deans, and others, articulate and integrate the mission in major planning initiatives and documents such as our strategic plan, *Promise and Prominence*; participate in continuing mission formation and development opportunities such as the Mission Leave opportunities or the Ignatian Colleagues Program; and pursue consistent institutional advancements in areas designated as mission priorities, such as diversity and inclusion efforts.

Characteristic #2: An Academic Life that Reflects the Jesuit Catholic Mission

This section explains how the university's mission-driven commitment to a faith that does justice, combined with *cura personalis* (care for the whole person), have enhanced academic life through the development of a new integrative curriculum and academic programs, redesigned university learning goals, ongoing faculty development efforts, support for mission-driven academic institutes and initiatives housed on campus, and the integration of learning across the entire student experience.

Characteristic #3: A Jesuit Catholic Campus Culture

This section explores our uniquely Jesuit, Catholic character, "based on the integration of faith and culture that welcomes people of all faiths and people of no faith" which is understood holistically, in that all pieces of university life are integrally connected with the mission. Evidence of this culture is sited in terms of: campus ministry and liturgical life; wellness, student care and leadership programming; athletics; diversity and inclusion efforts in student affairs and academic affairs; vocational discernment for faculty, staff and students; campus events and planning.

Characteristic #4: Service

As a primary learning goal of a JCU education, all students are expected to graduate with the ability to "advocate for social justice through responsible service to their local, national and global communities." This section describes how JCU cultivates a sense of solidarity in our students through high-quality programming across the college experience; honors our community members who excel in service for social justice; encourages the development of genuine relationships of solidarity and concern; integrates service into the curriculum through intentional service-learning courses and participates in community outreach around the Cleveland area. These efforts have earned JCU national accolades for its mission-driven commitment to service.

Characteristic #5: Service to the Local Church

This section describes the many ways that JCU serves the local Church as one of several Jesuit apostolates in northeast Ohio: through educational partnership with the diocesan seminary; collaborative programming; partnerships throughout the region; hospitality for Church organizations and events; lectures, liturgies and spiritual offerings open to the public;

preparation of the next generation of Catholic intellectual and pastoral leaders (lay and ordained); and many hours of volunteer service and support to ministries throughout the region.

Characteristic #6: Jesuit Presence

This section describes the relationship between the Society of Jesus and John Carroll University in terms of the active presence and ministry of Jesuits on campus; the multi-tiered relationship of the university to the Society of Jesus in terms of service, hospitality, targeted recruitment, fiscal support, collaboration with Campus Ministry and university leadership; our close partnerships with other Jesuit educational institutions in the region; our presence among national and international Jesuit networks and conferences; and our role in the promotion of vocations to the Jesuits.

Characteristic #7: Integrity

This section shows how our mission values are not only articulated in our statements and documents, but also embodied and reflected in our structures, policies and proceedings. Some of the policies and practices discussed here are those in Human Resources; the Office of Mission and Identity; hiring practices generally; financial management; and physical resource management.

In addition to providing evidence of the University's mission strengths relative to each of these characteristics, each of the above sections includes a current tension that challenges us to respond by establishing strategic mission priorities in order to continue advancing our mission. Our mission priorities, therefore, are to continue to develop our mission strengths and, as part of our university strategic planning efforts, to build upon these strengths by developing creative ways to achieve our strategic mission priorities, both sets of which are presented below.

Mission Strengths

As a Jesuit Catholic University, John Carroll claims the following mission strengths that are enduring mission priorities:

1. *A commitment to academic excellence through a new integrative curriculum rooted in Ignatian pedagogy, guided by a dedicated faculty and staff, and relevant for the 21st century.*
2. *A well-established culture of service and solidarity that exemplifies the essence of a Jesuit Catholic education.*
3. *Comprehensive opportunities to promote holistic student development and thriving.*
4. *A commitment that places mission at the heart of all strategic planning and institutional decision-making.*
5. *Demonstrated success addressing access and affordability issues in our region for those normally excluded from higher education.*
6. *The engagement and formation of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni, which has earned the University significant respect locally and regionally.*

Strategic Mission Priorities

As a Jesuit, Catholic university dedicated to the *Magis*, John Carroll commits to advancing the following strategic mission priorities. These priorities emerge from our ongoing reflections on

the tensions and challenges of living our Jesuit Catholic mission. The first four priorities are the objectives associated with Goal 2, A Faith that Does Justice, of the university's strategic plan, *Promise and Prominence*. The fifth priority emerges from the Office of Mission and Identity under the direction of the Mission and Identity Committee of the Board of Directors.

1. ***Deepen the University's commitment to peace, justice, and sustainability.***

Through this mission priority, John Carroll desires to deepen its commitment to the Jesuit Catholic values of peace, justice, and sustainability through academic programs, student engagement, and institutional practices.

2. ***Integrate an Ignatian pedagogy of experience, reflection and action more fully into the student learning experience and across the broader campus community.***

John Carroll desires to integrate student learning by using the dynamic pedagogy inherent in Ignatian spirituality to develop a common framework for reflection. We also desire to develop a set of processes by which students, faculty, and staff can synthesize their reflections and apply them to who they are becoming and what they will do in the world.

3. ***Enable all members of the University community to explore, deepen, and share their faith or worldview in dialogue with people of all cultural and faith backgrounds.***

John Carroll desires to develop opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage in meaningful and fruitful interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Our students will enter a far more globalized and interconnected world as agents of positive change who are capable of building bridges across faith and culture.

4. ***Improve the diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body in order to foster a culture of inclusive excellence.***

John Carroll desires to deepen its maturing commitment to inclusive excellence by developing programs and institutional practices that diversify the community and build respect for others. Further, we desire to enhance people's abilities to understand, discuss, and respond as leaders to issues related to diversity and inclusion on campus, in the region, and in the world.

5. ***Continue to establish and engage a vibrant community of companions in mission who animate the University and train and mentor others for mission.***

John Carroll desires to engage those who have been formed for mission to establish a series of self-perpetuating programs for faculty, staff, and board members that welcome and prepare them to advance the mission through their own work.