

Executive Summary

Saint Peter's University
Mission Statement: **Self-Sacrifice**

A Journey of Gratitude and
Recommitment to Catholic and
Jesuit Identity and Mission



Saint Peter's University Examen Journey

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

As part of the Mission Examen process of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), Saint Peter's University (SPU) participated in a year-long "Examen Journey" to determine how the campus community can maintain and bolster its Catholic and Jesuit identity and mission. This executive summary provides a synopsis of the self-study process, its findings and the mission priorities that the University community has identified to continue its growth and development as a Catholic, Jesuit institution.

The "journey" theme was selected for the self-study to acknowledge the process as an integral milestone in the University's overall journey, including its upcoming sesquicentennial

Furthermore, the process was strongly influenced by the University's more recent ecclesiastical journey that began in 2011 with the Archdiocese of Newark to transition the neighborhood parish church of St. Aedan's into St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church. The University Church serves to strengthen the Catholic identity of Saint Peter's and as the cornerstone for a reinvigorated emphasis on ministry and mission.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Established in 1872, SPU educates the most diverse student body among the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States, while pursuing the mission to prepare graduates "to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately and promote justice in our ever-changing urban and global environment." The main campus is in Jersey City, New Jersey, often cited as the most diverse city in the nation, and just two miles from Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. The University has a proud and a long history of making higher education accessible to low- and moderate-income individuals, and educating immigrants and their children and the minority community. As of Fall 2017 the student body totals 3,524 students: 2,308 traditional undergraduates, 329 adult and non-degree undergraduate students and 887 graduate students. In the undergraduate population approximately 62% are low-income, 25% are non-native English speakers, 50% are first-generation college students, and 70% come from minority backgrounds (40% Hispanic, 23% Black and 7% Asian/Pacific Islander). By serving a diverse community of learners and a diverse parish community in an economically challenged area, SPU provides educational and service opportunities to move people to achieve their highest potential.

Saint Peter's University also has relatively few Jesuits, and has among the smallest operating budgets and endowments among the institutions of the AJCU. Yet, remarkably, the University tightly manages its limited resources to advance its mission and support student success. From tuition scholarships to university funded work study positions; from programs for the underprepared to the honors program; from internships to study abroad; students enter a world of scholarship, research and service steeped in the Jesuit tradition on their journey to graduation. SPU's focus on the underrepresented and underserved reflects an institution-wide commitment to Catholic social teaching, particularly solidarity and the option for the poor in an educational context.

MISSION EXAMEN OUTCOMES

As recommended by the mission examen guidelines from the AJCU, the Saint Peter's community utilized the document, *Seven Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education*, to gain greater awareness of how Saint Peter's University carries out its Catholic, Jesuit mission. A summary of the findings from the process are outlined according to these characteristics.

CHARACTERISTIC 1: LEADERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION

Throughout the self-study, the community interpreted its goals and objectives as a Catholic,

Jesuit institution in light of our institutional mission to prepare graduates “to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately and promote justice in our ever-changing urban and global environment.” Through the University’s leadership, the entire campus community shares responsibility for advancing this mission and its Catholic, Jesuit values. The mission statement is inspired by the 470-year-old tradition and principles of Jesuit education. The University undertakes wide-ranging and deep efforts to involve the campus community in discussions of and formation in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition. SPU is blessed with a Board of Trustees, president and lay leaders who are committed to ensuring that its policies, programs and decisions support our Catholic, Jesuit identity.

CHARACTERISTIC 2: THE ACADEMIC LIFE

The vibrant academic life of the University is driven by the Catholic and Jesuit mission

CHARACTERISTIC 7: INTEGRITY

Saint Peter's University continues its journey to foster a community that seeks to "live lives of honesty, integrity and concern for the common good," as called for by Pope Francis. This commitment is fulfilled in the people, policies, leadership, programs, and places at the University and supported by the goals of the strategic plan, *Pathways to Distinction*. The alumni are proud of their Jesuit education and enthusiastically support New Jersey's only Jesuit University. Through ethical decision making, fair and equitable human resources policies, leadership formation, and environmental sustainability practices, the integrity of Saint Peter's University is uniquely inspired by and aligned with its Jesuit heritage.

JESUIT MISSION PRIORITIES

The Saint Peter's University community has identified four overarching Mission Priorities — invitations for growth — over the next five years, to foster our Catholic, Jesuit identity and mission. Possible pathways to achieve these priorities are included in the full report. Under the leadership of the president, the University commits to these priorities.

- 1. Ensure that the resources for Mission and Ministry effectively and adequately support Ignatian formation and programming for the campus laity, the student body and the parishioners at St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church.**

Throughout the Examen, the campus community indicated appreciation for the existing formation programs provided by the University, but also called for intensified and continuing orientations. There is a need for the University to provide adequate funding and resources for Mission and Ministry to expand these programs and to support the area's goals overall. Over the years, the Jesuit community has generously contributed to mission programs and Ignatian spirituality development. With the decline in the number of active Jesuits on campus, the

- 3. Integrate more effectively, and articulate more clearly, Ignatian values across all parts of the undergraduate and graduate curriculum and student experiences.**

**GO FORTH
AND SET
THE WORLD
ON FIRE.**

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

