



# MISSION PRIORITY EXAMEN

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY  
2024–2025



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# I. Institutional Information



# I. Institutional Information

## Fordham University and Peer Visiting Team

**President:** Tania Tetlow

**Provost:** Dennis Jacobs

**Board Chair:** Armando Nuñez

**Chief Mission Officer:** John Cecero, S.J.

**Steering Committee Co-Chairs:** John Cecero, S.J., and Julie Gafney

**Steering Committee Members:**

Jonathan Crystal, *Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*

Maura Mast, *Dean, Fordham College at Rose Hill*

Juan Carlos Matos, *Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs for Diversity and Inclusion*

James McCartin, *Acting Dean, Fordham College at Lincoln Center; Ignatian Faculty Fellow; Associate Professor of Theology*

Debra M. McPhee, *Dean, Graduate School of Social Service*

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Keisha Shay, *Associate Director of Academic Development and Administration, Center for Community Engaged Learning*

Kay Turner, *Vice President for Human Resources*

**Peer Visitor Team Members:**

Thomas Poon, *Executive Vice President and Provost, Professor of Chemistry, Loyola Marymount University*

Matthew Carnes, S.J., *Vice President for Mission and Ministry; Executive Director, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education; Professor of Political Science, Santa Clara University*

Ellen Maccarone, *Acting Vice President for Mission Integration, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Gonzaga University*

Nancy Tuchman, *Founding Dean, School of Environmental Sustainability; Professor of Biology, Loyola University Chicago*

## Executive Summary of Fordham University's Mission Priorities

Fordham University President Tania Tetlow has articulated in *Framework for a Strategic Plan* (FSP; Appendix A) goals and directions to guide Fordham's ongoing strategic planning process, emphasizing the University's commitment to its Jesuit and Catholic mission through transformative education, public impact research, and a more collaborative community grounded in trust and hope.

### PRIORITY 1: Strengthen our Jesuit and Catholic mission-based culture

*"Being Jesuit and Catholic is our identity, value proposition, and most importantly, the entire point of our enterprise."* (FSP, III, A.)

- A. Adopt a developmental approach to mission education and implementation, so that the Jesuit and Catholic mission is clearly articulated and communicated to every employee from recruitment through orientation, and all the way through to retirement.
- 1) Develop a more mission-centric approach to the recruitment, hiring, and orientation of *new faculty*, as well as afford more mission opportunities for pre- and post tenured faculty throughout their Fordham career. This will be a collaborative effort involving the provost's office, the deans, the chairs of departments, and the Office of Mission Integration. (see Appendix B).
  - 2) Develop similar mission programs for *staff*, both clerical and non-clerical, throughout their Fordham career—a collaborative effort involving the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Mission Integration.
  - 3) Create and improve upon formation programs for the *Cabinet and other VPs, deans and chairs* through mission seminars and fora.
  - 4) Foster ongoing mission awareness with the *trustees* through pilgrimages, seminars, and special events.
  - 5) Advance the Jesuit, Catholic identity of Fordham with *alumni, parents, and families*, working closely with Development and University Relations (DAUR).
  - 6) Secure grants and donor gifts in collaboration with DAUR, as this priority will require additional resources to support it.

### PRIORITY 2: Forge community by supporting faith and spirituality across all religious traditions

*"As many of you have asked, how might we come together again, to collaborate and connect? How can we build trust and hope?"* (FSP, Forging Community)

- 1) Invite students to deepen their understanding and appreciation of their faith, through liturgy, ritual, multifaith retreats, prayer communities, and guided individual and group reflection exercises.
- 2) Advance models for appreciating differences and learning how to *engage* constructively and be transformed by others from different backgrounds and faith perspectives, through ministry to the Catholic (including Eastern Catholic), Orthodox, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

### **PRIORITY 3: Advance transformative teaching and education**

*“In Jesuit tradition, we hone (students’) talents with brilliant teaching, inspire their ambitions, and imbue their lives with meaning and hope.”* (FSP, Centering Students)

A) For *undergraduate students*, at each stage of their Fordham career:

1. Through their orientation and early academic experience, with the First Year Experience, *“to focus more of our best teaching on the crucial first year”* (FSP, Centering Students)
2. Through the Core Curriculum under revision, and an emphasis on the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in teaching, all intended to embody and explain Jesuit pedagogy and mission
3. Through interdisciplinary courses taught with an emphasis on ethics and social justice, and with high impact practices (FSP, Centering Students), such as community engaged learning, mentoring, guaranteed internship placements (the Fordham Internship Promise), study abroad, and career advising

B) For *graduate students*, at each stage of their Fordham career:

1. By training graduate and professional students with an ethical lens and commitment to social justice, through curricular and co-curricular means, e.g. internships and clinic placements.
2. Through the interdisciplinary courses and high impact practices described above, *“We send graduates to the front lines of building opportunity, navigating ethics and power, teaching, counseling, and caring for those in need.”* (FSP, III, B)

### **PRIORITY 4: Advance public impact research**

*“As a Jesuit University, we also have a moral imperative to focus our research on mattering to the world.”* (FSP, III, B)

1. Through a “transdisciplinary research hub that unlocks the puzzle of interdisciplinarity” (FSP, Research and Academic Excellence), faculty can pursue public impact research, beginning with the four areas that they have already widely endorsed, namely migration, climate change, AI, and democracy.
2. Faculty and administrators continue to advance the seven-year Green Plan for Environmental Justice, through institutional efforts to implement *Laudato Si’*, as mandated by Pope Francis.
3. Through student participation in faculty research

December 2024

Dear Father General Sosa,

Through this Examen, the Fordham community has looked deep within. We asked ourselves how to cling fiercely to our Jesuit Catholic mission while letting go of our attachments to what does not matter. We use this moment of transition to lay leadership to remember that we cannot outsource our mission exclusively to the Jesuits among us. Every member of the community must embody our mission.

Fordham has the exciting and daunting task of bringing Jesuit Catholic education to New York City, one of the world's capitals, where we have unparalleled opportunities to matter. Fordham students flock to the chance to engage with every career and industry imaginable, from Wall Street to the United Nations. We seek to teach our students to operate on a world stage without losing their souls. Our faculty connect to global institutions as they do research that solves urgent problems. We convene power brokers to persuade them to care about the planet and humanity.

But New York also presents the temptations of wealth, power, and distraction. Many in our community, from students to faculty, choose us for academic excellence and stunning location rather than mission. Many come to Fordham despite our Catholicism, not because of it. We are not preaching to the choir; we are in mission territory.

As such, we work hard to be invitational and welcoming, so our community will become more open to understanding the Church and the Society. In doing so, however, we balance the risk of diluting our mission, of leaning into Jesuit and not Catholic. We work hard to resist those temptations. We defend our faith, but we also defend religion as such. We reclaim the ideal of tolerance, reminding an increasingly hostile secular world that tolerance includes people of faith too.

Fordham is a place where faith is deeply rooted and broadly welcoming, and we embrace students from across the spectrum of religious traditions and spiritual perspectives. By creating a culture of mutual respect and empathy, we help students see their faith journeys as part of a broader search for meaning that transcends any single perspective. In doing so, we prepare them to engage thoughtfully and compassionately in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Fordham centers theology and philosophy in our undergraduate core curriculum and academic strengths. We have proudly trained Catholic university leaders around the world and work to build partnerships with their institutions. Our graduate programs include flourishing social work and education schools, sending students out into the world to serve and teach. And in our prestigious schools of law and business, we weave in ethics and integrity for graduates who will take on power over economic and legal structures.

We are working to do better with a major initiative to deliver a more transformative Ignatian education. We strive to inspire students to think critically, seek justice, and engage with compassion, bringing the depth of Ignatian spirituality to their lives. We do that most effectively when we lean into experiential learning and engagement with our city. With exponential growth in service learning, our students are enriched by the city's rich diversity and dynamism, and learn from the complexities of urban life, from economic inequality to questions of social justice and community responsibility. Through interdisciplinary courses, community engaged learning, internships, and mentoring, we provide students with experiences that instill a sense of purpose, equipping them to confront societal challenges with humility, courage, and devotion to justice.

More and more, Fordham seeks to aim its research strengths in ethics and faith to areas of impact. We design guardrails for artificial intelligence. We aim economic forces towards the good. A faculty collective focuses on the growing problem of migration. We wake up a cynical public about the dangers of climate change through faith. As an expression of our commitment to *Laudato Si'*, Fordham was awarded a \$50 million grant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to pass through grants to small nonprofits doing the work of environmental justice. We work hard to embody the Universal Apostolic Preferences, especially by journeying with young people to create a hope-filled future.

Inspired by the work ahead, we remain dedicated to nurturing a community where faith, intellect, and service come together. We work to form graduates ready to lead with integrity, compassion, and a commitment to justice. We move forward with utter humility, eager to do more with Jesuit determination and ambition for the good.

With deep respect and gratitude,



Tania Tetlow  
President



## **II. Progress on Previous Jesuit Mission Priorities**





## II. Progress on Previous Jesuit Mission Priorities

### A. 2017 Mission Priorities

Fordham University engaged its first Mission Priority Examen in the 2016–2017 academic year, leading to the submission of a [Mission Priority Examen Self-Study](#) in April 2017. A Peer Visiting Team subsequently visited from 2–4 April 2017 and issued a [Visiting Team Report](#) in May 2017.

In its Self-Study, the university identified four priorities for mission integration, focus, and growth, and the Visitors’ report confirmed these priorities:

- 1) Outline a much more comprehensive and strategic plan for developing faculty, staff, and board members in their understanding of Fordham’s mission in a way that is both reflective of our identity as Jesuit and Catholic and appropriate to a diverse set of needs and backgrounds. As an outcome of this plan, all members of the community would be equipped with the competence and confidence to describe our common mission as a Jesuit, Catholic university, as well as how they fit into it. It would also find ways to cultivate leaders who will be crucial carriers of the tradition.
- 2) Design and advance strategies for linking issues of diversity to mission and identity. (That is, shifting the common framework from: “We prize diversity, even though we are a Jesuit, Catholic university” to “We prize diversity, because we are a Jesuit, Catholic university.”) This would include the implementation of methods for promoting hiring practices that demonstrate a commitment to mission.
- 3) Find ways both to support the Jesuit community and to make a claim on them corporately to assume greater responsibility as animators of the mission of the University, as well as supporters of faculty, staff, and administrators in advancing it.
- 4) Significantly improve the program in Service Learning, so as to deepen engagement of students, faculty, staff, and administrators with the Bronx and areas around Lincoln Center, have a greater institutional impact on these communities, and in turn, learn from our community partners in mutually beneficial ways.

As a key component of the 2023–2024 self-study, a baseline evaluation of progress in these four areas has been conducted.

## B. Mission Priority Implementation and Evidence of Progress

### **PRIORITY 1: Mission Development for Faculty, Staff, and Board Members**

Since 2017, significant progress has been made in addressing Priority 1 and its emphasis on the need to develop a more comprehensive strategy to advance the Ignatian mission development of the faculty, staff, and board.

#### **Faculty Development Initiatives**

Hiring an Ignatian Faculty Fellow who mentors new, recently hired, contingent, and tenured faculty in our Jesuit identity and mission in higher education through seminars, retreats, and immersion experiences. These include:

- **Issues in Mission: Special Topic Faculty Seminars** each semester related to mission, justice, and belonging in Catholic and Jesuit higher education. Sixteen seminars have been offered since 2018, each with roughly 8-10 members.
- **New Faculty Seminar on Mission** brings together new faculty members across disciplines and schools of the University to underscore the significance of their teaching, research, and service to the implementation of our Jesuit identity and mission. The seminar enrolled between 12-15 participants in 2018 and 2019, but the numbers have dropped significantly since COVID.
- **Ignatian Faculty Development Retreats** offered each year for 20-25 participants, aiming to offer tools of Ignatian spirituality to support outcomes in self-efficacy, flourishing and belonging.
- **Ignatian Silent Retreats**, offered annually since 2022, each for 7-10 faculty members, co-facilitated by the Ignatian Faculty Fellow and the Vice President for Mission Integration and Ministry.
- **Faculty Immersion to Kino Border Initiative**, offered annually since 2018 during Spring Break, with each trip engaging 8-10 faculty members. This immersion aims to improve faculty understanding of accompaniment, community engagement, and justice initiatives as central to the University's Catholic and Jesuit mission.

At the same time, despite all these very positive developments, the hiring for mission and orientation of new faculty to a Jesuit and Catholic university has been a challenging task. Invited by the VP for HR to meet with Chairs of faculty hiring committees to address areas for inquiry into a knowledge and appreciation of the Jesuit mission among faculty candidates, the VP for Mission Integration and Ministry (MIM) was met by indifference, sometimes even outright resistance. Also, the New Faculty Seminar on Mission as described above has been very poorly subscribed over the past three years. The question was raised about making these seminars mandatory as is the case at some other Jesuit universities, but the concern is that this would undermine the efficacy of these programs by enrolling some unwilling participants. Instead, as described in the next section, revisions to New Faculty Orientation have included a more extended and in-depth presentation of, and rationale for, ongoing mission integration in an academic career at Fordham, as well as a more detailed introduction to the topics and presenters for the four seminars to be presented throughout the year.

## Faculty Development Initiatives

- Required by the Provost and facilitated by the Vice President for Mission Integration and Ministry, the Deans' Ignatian Forum meets quarterly for conversation on topics that are crucial to academic leadership in a Jesuit university, as well as for personal reflection, sharing, and mutual support.

For the most part, the Deans have expressed appreciation for the forum, and conversations on the Jesuit identity and mission of Fordham continue to be substantive and engaging.

- Living our Values Seminar, proposed by the then president of the Faculty Senate and co-sponsored by the Office of Mission Integration and Ministry, this seminar began in spring 2024 and will continue through this fall 2024 term. Participants are senior administrators (five Cabinet members), members of the Faculty Senate, and other senior leaders, who gather monthly to discuss the advancement of shared governance based on core Ignatian values. This Seminar will also take place in each school at the University, beginning with the Gabelli School of Business in the fall 2024 term.

Participants in the ongoing seminar are focusing on tensions between *cura personalis* and *cura apostolica* in the exercise of shared governance, as well as the meaning of the "Work" as an apostolate of the Society of Jesus. This seminar has emerged as a very constructive and highly valued forum to build bridges between faculty and administration in the language of shared Jesuit values. The current president of the Faculty Senate brought the ongoing seminar to a vote, and it was unanimously approved for sponsorship, a very hopeful and encouraging sign for the future of shared governance at Fordham.

## Staff/Administrator Development

Human Resources has been a strong partner with Mission Integration and Ministry in developing and promoting mission development for staff and administrators. Examples of programs include:

- Half-Day Workshops on topic areas in mission, begun in fall 2023, offered each semester to 40-50 participants.
- A pilot Mission Leave Policy, launched in the 2023-2024 academic year, allows staff to use up to five days of paid Mission Leave for participation in mission-related activities, including retreats, community engagement events, and immersions. The policy is currently under review by the Cabinet to be approved as a continuing benefit for all Fordham administrators.

In addition, the mission office collaborates with the Jesuit community (Priority 3) to lead the Arrupe Seminar, where staff and administrators meet online for monthly sessions over the course of the academic year on Ignatian spirituality and its applications in Jesuit higher education. Typical enrollment is 12-15 participants, and more represented areas include Development and University Relations, Human Resources, the Office of the Provost, and some faculty as well.

- Campus Ministry offers the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL) to an average of 8-10 participants.
- Ignatian Workshops and Events—a total of 107 events were organized in the 2022-2023 academic year in Ignatian spirituality, mission collaboration, religious retreats, and spiritual reflections.



While all of the above point to excellent opt-in formation programs that have created deeply trained advocates for mission integration, there remains a struggle to get through to the broader culture of faculty and staff. As indicated above, the University believes that mandated ongoing training can trigger more defensiveness than learning. Instead, Fordham relies on the entry points where mission orientation is mandated, introducing Jesuit identity, faith, and values clearly and thoroughly, with an invitation to ongoing learning.

### **Board of Trustees Development**

- **Mission and Social Justice Committee.** In 2020, the then Mission and Identity Committee was restructured to include a focus on social and racial justice at Fordham. At each meeting, committee members discuss topics such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and strategic planning for mission integration across the University.
- **A Board Arrupe Seminar** (see above, again related to Priority 3) was initiated in fall 2023, and 11 trustees participated.
- **Board Retreats** every two years with time dedicated to mission integration. Trustees receive training directly connecting Jesuit, Catholic mission to the work of the University, and engaging with the trade-offs involved.
- **Deep Dive Sessions During Board Meetings.** The president has begun providing training during quarterly board meetings on formation, beginning with the question of whether diversity and racial justice is central to Catholic teaching, and how we might respond to the growing American trend of banning such teaching.
- **The first Board Pilgrimage to Rome** in June 2022 with five trustees and several major benefactors and alumni, led by the Vice President for Mission Integration and Ministry and accompanied by President Tetlow deepened an awareness, especially among the trustees, of the broader context for their exercise of leadership in Catholic and Jesuit higher education, as well as initiated relationships with key Vatican offices related to our Jesuit mission.
- **The second Board Pilgrimage to Rome** in June 2024 was designed exclusively for trustees to deepen their formation in Ignatian spirituality and to learn tools for discernment in leadership. In addition, the 12 trustees who attended, along with President Tetlow, were introduced to various pertinent dicasteries for substantive conversations on mission today. The president and board chair have decided that this summit will take place every other year in Rome.

At the most recent **Board Pilgrimage to Rome**, trustees learned how to have a spiritual conversation in the service of doing an Ignatian discernment. President Tetlow emphasizes with the board that every major decision is an expression of mission, and this tool of spiritual conversation in the service of discernment strengthens that association and contributes to their ownership of Fordham's Jesuit mission and their important role in sustaining it.

## **PRIORITY 2: Linking Diversity to Mission**

- Inspired by the University strategic plan *Educating for Justice, 2021-2026*, the University hired its first Chief Diversity Officer who served as a resource on the Mission and Social Justice Board Committee and was charged, among other duties, to collaborate with the Division of Mission to ensure greater diversity, equity, and inclusion. It became clear, however, that the success of this significant role would depend on more skilled strategic planning and implementation.
- Consequently, this summer 2024, the University hired for a new position, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion (VPEI), a Cabinet-level position with wider authority and resources to ensure its success. The position was explicitly framed and tasked with responsibility to work with the Division of Mission to achieve formation and culture change together.

Mission Integration and Ministry, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), HR, and the VPEI are committed to regular and ongoing communication to respond most effectively to the diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation communities at Fordham. However, all parties acknowledge that busy schedules and multiple commitments can serve as obstacles to this level of communication, and efforts are presently underway to schedule more regular meetings to overcome these challenges.

In addition, the rationale for supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion will need to be more explicitly linked to the Jesuit and Catholic identity of the University. In [Fr. General's address to the IAJU](#) at Boston College in August 2022, Fr. Sosa emphasized the importance of interculturality as an expression of the Jesuit mission of the University. Encounter and dialogue with diverse persons in the University community enable the transformational education that is characteristically Jesuit.

Within Campus Ministry, the message is clearly communicated that the Catholic identity of the University is the very rationale for multifaith ministry, and the newly hired rabbi and imam embrace this understanding and work collaboratively with the director of Catholic life to model the importance of interfaith dialogue and exchange, while all the way valuing one's own religious tradition.

## **PRIORITY 3: Jesuit Community as Animators of Mission**

The Jesuit community has contributed to Priority 1, through the Arrupe Seminars described above, hospitality, and faculty commitments to teaching, research, and service.

In addition, the president and the board chair have been warmly welcomed to the community, and last year the president did have one formal meeting with the Jesuits. The superior is a member and vice chair of the Board of Trustees, and in that capacity meets regularly with the president and offers input to University governance.

At the same time, it would be helpful for the Jesuit community to have more structured conversations among its members on matters of mission importance to the University. This year, a staff member in Campus Ministry has organized, with the permission of the Jesuit Superior, some activities to bring students into the community for conversation, and these could very well happen more frequently.

The Vocation Committee is organized within the Jesuit community to recruit potential candidates for the Society, but thus far efforts have reached only a few students. While not charged with animating the mission of the University, the Ciszek Hall community of scholastics is active on campus through liturgical and prayer ministry, spiritual direction, and regular coffee conversations on both campuses through their "Java with the Jesuits" program.

#### **PRIORITY 4: Significantly Improve Service Learning**

- Inspired by this priority, the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) was created in fall 2018 to transform service learning into community engagement, focusing on experiential learning, research initiatives, and civic engagement. During the 2023-24 academic year, 148 course sections were conducted with a strong community engagement component, each incorporating reflective classroom practices—a hallmark of the Jesuit educational paradigm that has been proven to enhance retention and deepen the learning experience. A total of 136 faculty members from 13 departments actively collaborated with CCEL, teaching these courses, conducting and mentoring community-based research, and partnering with other faculty and community partners. CCEL is well known and respected throughout the University.

At the same time, as the growth and extension of this center has been extraordinarily successful, the explicit link between faith and service that belonged to its predecessor, the Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice, seems to have been downplayed or even lost. As will be explained later, with the planned move of CCEL to a new division of the University, Campus Ministry plans to expand service opportunities that are explicitly linked to faith doing justice.

#### **C. Ways the Previous Set of Mission Priorities Remain Stalled or Unaddressed**

- 1) The mission development of faculty, as challenged by priority 1, ideally begins at the hiring phase, and this needs to be more strongly supported by the Provost's Office in its communication of expectations to Chairs of Faculty Hiring Committees. In addition, the orientation of new faculty to mission, while much improved with additional time and emphasis during orientation, has not yet sufficiently motivated new faculty to participate in New Faculty Seminars offered throughout the academic year by the Ignatian Faculty Fellow. Thankfully, this year, the Associate Provost for Faculty Development is committed to working more closely with the Ignatian Faculty Fellow to encourage participation and to co-lead the seminars.
- 2) Whereas faculty development initiatives are widely subscribed, reaching staff and administrators remains challenging, especially given their fixed work schedules and relative lack of flexibility (as compared to faculty) for program participation.



# III. MPE Process



### III. MPE PROCESS

In the spring of 2023, the Fordham VP for Mission Integration and Ministry asked Dr. Julie Gafney, then Assistant VP for Strategic Mission Initiatives, to co-chair the MPE, and charged her with next steps, including the selection of a Steering Committee. Dr. Gafney reached out to Fr. Michael Tunney, S.J., Assistant Provincial for Higher Education, and Dr. Stephanie Russell, Vice President for Mission Integration at the AJCU, over the summer of 2023 for preliminary check-ins and information sharing. Provincial Fr. Joseph O’Keefe’s formal letter to President Tetlow inviting Fordham to the process was sent to her on August 29, 2023 (Appendix C)

#### A. Engagement with Senior Leadership and Board

On September 15, 2023, the VP for Mission Integration and Ministry met with President Tetlow to discuss her hopes and expectations as we were to begin this Examen, and she emphasized how the convergence of the MPE, the Middle States Accreditation Review, and the emerging University Strategic Plan afford a unique opportunity to consider the mission implications of the data that would surface from the academic reviews.

At the September 28, 2023, Board Mission and Social Justice Committee meeting, the VP for Mission Integration and Ministry introduced Trustee members to the upcoming MPE process as well as the Mission Priorities from the last MPE in 2017.

On December 7, 2023, updated on the preparatory work of the MPE Steering Committee, the Board Mission and Social Justice Committee was informed of some emerging mission priority areas where the Spirit seemed to be moving this group, including 1) public impact research; 2) holistic student experiences prioritizing wellness; 3) DEI; 4) multifaith approach to ministry; and 5) student mission formation. The trustees emphasized the importance of a continuity in mission formation, starting with first-year students all the way through their lives. They also concurred with the emerging priority of a multifaith approach to this generation of students.

#### B. Initial and Follow-Up Meeting with the Cardinal Archbishop

On December 11, 2023, President Tetlow met with Cardinal Timothy Dolan to apprise him of the MPE at Fordham. In that meeting, she discussed how the MPE has already been a transformative process for Fordham, with the creation of the Center for Community Engaged Learning emerging directly from the last Examen, and she asked if he had any recommendations for areas of focus or priorities for Fordham. The cardinal expressed his appreciation for Fordham’s contribution to Catholic education locally and globally.

In a subsequent meeting with the cardinal on October 8, 2024, President Tetlow reported on the progress of the MPE, and Cardinal Dolan commented that Catholic education reminds us that faith and reason are intertwined with the search for truth, which we call Jesus. In an increasingly hostile secular world, he continued, we remind our students of the importance of faith. He expressed gratitude for our strength in philosophy and theology and the reach of those programs throughout the world and the Church.

#### C. MPE Steering Committee

During the fall 2023 semester, Dr. Gafney gathered the members of the Steering Committee for regular sessions to deepen their understanding of the MPE process and emphasize that data collection would look very different from an accreditation process, in that this Examen would be conducted in the context of prayer and reflection. A timeline was developed and a [website](#) created to more effectively engage representatives from the entire University community. From October 2023 through January 2024, the committee also conducted a literature review and coding of relevant documents as well as listening sessions to refine areas of inquiry. Three members of the Steering Committee each chaired a focus group.

## D. Opportunities for Input from the Entire Community

On February 21, 2024, the MPE Steering Committee issued a letter to the entire Fordham community, identifying themselves and inviting participation in listening sessions and focus groups for undergraduates, graduate students, alumni, staff and administrators, and faculty members. As noted above, over the course of the spring 2024 semester, each session began with prayer and an invitation to open-ended conversation to discern the movement of spirits.

There was relatively broad engagement of University constituents, with responses to surveys as follows: full-time faculty (237, 31% response rate); part-time faculty (142, 14% response rate); administrators and staff (509); undergraduates (594, 12% response rate); and graduate students (946, 18% response rate).

Whereas part-time faculty (32%) affirmed that faith and spirituality positively intersected with their teaching at Fordham, only 23% of full-time faculty did so. Among the staff and administrators, 40% strongly agreed that mission was central to their work. Of the graduate students who responded to surveys, 29% stated that Fordham's Jesuit mission remains very important to them.

Among undergraduate students, 66% endorsed strongly or very strongly that Fordham's Jesuit mission is reflected in courses taken here. At the same time, in an August 2024 study of prospective and current students, conducted by University Marketing and Communications, 29% of current undergraduate students cited the Jesuit mission as their reason for coming to Fordham, and an additional 27% of current students reported appreciation for the mission, despite originally feeling negatively toward it or not knowing about it. At the same time, in the recent branding study, consistent with findings in this MPE, 40% of current undergraduates reported that the Jesuit mission did not affect their experience.

On September 3, 2024, the VP for Mission Integration and Ministry conducted a listening program session with the Cabinet and President Tetlow in two rounds. The first round focused on how well the mission is integrated and vibrant at Fordham, and VPs focused on evidence such as care for students; mission engaged staff; recruitment and enrollment of students of all faiths; a clear appreciation of the Jesuit "brand"; mission-centered leaders in the president, board chair, and trustees; engagement with the global Jesuit network; community engaged learning; and the Deans' Ignatian Forum.

The second round focused on areas where mission integration needs improvement, and the VPs shared the need for more resources; cynicism of the "louder few"; inadequate onboarding for mission of faculty and staff; and *cura personalis* misinterpreted to mean refusal to challenge people to grow.

On September 9, 2024, the VP for Mission Integration and Ministry, (MIM) conducted a listening session with the local Jesuit community at Spellman Hall, using the two rounds described above. In the first round on how the mission is well lived at Fordham, responses included: attendance at Masses and student-led initiatives for common prayer and worship; first-rate theology department; the Arrupe Seminar for staff and trustees; participation by students in the Catholic Worker movement; prayerful student protests; broad engagement by new faculty in mission conversation during New Faculty Orientation; interfaith prayer services; the Deans' Ignatian Forum; the work of the Center on Religion and Culture; and the Global Outreach program.

Areas in need of growth included faculty development in mission; unclear communication about the meaning of Catholic; New Student Orientation (weak in mission); silos; and the seeming marginalization of faith.



On September 11, 2024, the VP for MIM met with the Mission Council, a group of faculty and administrators who are leaders across the University and who meet three times each year to advise the VP on how to better integrate the mission. In that session, participants emphasized the need for greater infrastructure and incentives (money, course releases, etc.) to attract and retain personnel committed to mission integration, in order to develop programming for mission engagement across the Fordham lifecycle, including for retirees.

Finally, the VP for MIM held two listening sessions on October 9, 2024, with facilities, public safety, and clerical workers, to gauge their understanding of, and commitment to, the Jesuit and Catholic mission of Fordham. In these sessions, participants expressed appreciation for how well they are heard and the generous benefits received, and also for the efforts of Campus Ministry as a “beacon of light,” but at the same time emphasized the need to grow as a family or community and to resist the “corporatization” of Fordham. They also underscored the need to communicate that everyone should contribute to the mission.

### **E. Preparing and Sharing the MPE Self-Study Draft Report**

On September 9, 2024, the VP for MIM met with the Steering Committee to discern the Mission Priorities that seemed to emerge from the predominant themes gathered from the listening sessions and surveys. That meeting was exceptionally inspirational, as members carefully listened to each other, reviewed the data, and eventually settled on three of the priorities presented in this report. In a subsequent meeting on October 8, while reviewing a rough draft of the report, and with input from President Tetlow, the committee added a fourth priority (Advancing transformative teaching and education) and also more explicitly aligned the priorities with the emerging strategic plan.

On October 11, 2024, the entire rough draft was shared with President Tetlow for her edits and comments, and on December 4, 2024, the final draft was sent to the MPE Peer Visiting Team.

## **IV. Presenting Input from the MPE:**

### **The Characteristics of Jesuit Education at Fordham University**



## IV. Presenting Input for the MPE: The Characteristics of Jesuit Education at Fordham

### Context for MPE

As noted above, this Mission Priority Examen benefits from simultaneous systematic reflection on the Fordham mission as a part of the University's accreditation. In Standard 1: Mission and Goals, (see Appendix D), the University reports progress on its goals of 1) educating leaders for justice (the title of the last strategic plan); 2) excelling across the natural and applied sciences; and 3) cultivating an inclusive community.

At the same time, President Tetlow in *Framework for A Strategic Plan* is likewise focusing on the goals of 1) providing a transformative education for students; 2) public impact research and teaching; and 3) forging community through trust, transparency, and our Jesuit values.

These goals are reflected in the proposed Mission Priorities which emerged from the various input sessions around each of the Seven Characteristics.

In the spirit of a true Ignatian Examen, this report on each characteristic is presented under three headings: first, a graced review of how we are presently **Living the Mission**; secondly, the **Challenges to Living the Mission**, having taken an honest look at the shortcomings or obstacles that have prevented us from a more robust implementation of each mission area; and thirdly, **Moving Forward**, directed by the present Mission Priorities to live more fully a commitment to the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the University in each of these areas.

It is especially interesting to note that with Characteristics 3 (Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation) and 5 (Service to the Church), the appreciation and implementation of the "Jesuit" aspects of mission are in tension with the "Catholic" foundations, where most who willingly endorse the former are far less sanguine about the latter. Directions are proposed for addressing and hopefully resolving these tensions.





**CHARACTERISTIC I:**  
**Leadership and Public Commitment to Mission**

## Characteristic 1: Leadership and Public Commitment to Mission

### Living the Mission

Mindful of the critical importance of supporting and sustaining an abiding understanding and commitment to the implementation of Ignatian values at the University, Fordham prioritizes the selection and ongoing formation of senior leaders with a sound mission commitment.

Fordham hired a new president in 2022, choosing a Search Committee deeply committed to mission, made up of faculty, students, and trustees (including Jesuits—the former Provincial Assistant for Higher Education and the Superior of the Fordham Jesuit Community). The VP for Mission Integration and Ministry provided consultation on desired mission qualities in a president as well as an exercise in Ignatian discernment with the Search Committee, and after extensive consultation by the Search Committee with the two Jesuit trustees on the committee, as well as after conversation between the board chair and the Jesuit provincial, the Board of Trustees appointed Tania Tetlow as Fordham’s 33rd president, the first woman and lay person in this position. In this leadership role she brings a lifelong connection to the Jesuit and Catholic traditions that shape the institution’s mission. Growing up in New Orleans, Tetlow was deeply influenced by her Catholic upbringing and education. Her father was a Jesuit for 17 years before marrying her mother, a Fordham alumna and biblical scholar. Her uncle, Fr. Joseph Tetlow, S.J., is a renowned scholar on Jesuit spirituality. Her background gives her a deep understanding of the values of Catholic social teaching and Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality, which emphasize the pursuit of justice, education of the whole person, and service to others—core tenets of Fordham’s mission.

President Tetlow’s professional and academic career have also been aligned with these values. Before joining Fordham, she was the president of Loyola University New Orleans, a fellow Jesuit institution, where she was known for her commitment to diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence rooted in Catholic identity. Her leadership style reflects the Ignatian principles of discernment and *cura personalis*, which guide her approach to both the academic and spiritual well-being of the Fordham community.

As Fordham’s president, Tetlow is dedicated to ensuring that the University continues to embody its Jesuit and Catholic mission in teaching, research, and service. The central framework of the emerging strategic plan centers on Fordham’s commitment to a better expression of its Jesuit identity and mission. President Tetlow has emphasized the importance of ethical leadership, social justice, and intellectual rigor in the context of faith. Tetlow’s presidency reflects a seamless blend of her personal and professional alignment with the Jesuit values of reflection, action, and commitment to the common good, ensuring that Fordham remains a place where students are not only educated academically but also spiritually and morally prepared to serve the world.

President Tetlow makes explicit reference to our Jesuit identity and mission in every speech given—from prospective students to alumni, from faculty to staff. She invokes mission not just as a generic purpose, but specifically embraces and explains the Jesuit way of proceeding. She also begins each Cabinet meeting with a prayer and uses her professionally trained voice to enhance Fordham’s worship experiences. Beyond Fordham, she has become a spokesperson for the Jesuit and Catholic mission in the American media, from newspaper profiles to podcasts.

The president also defends faith as such, treating our ecumenical approach as more than mere box-checking. All through her first year, she wrote community emails to celebrate every major religious holiday and explained how each related to our Catholic beliefs. She then turned over that message-writing to members of our community who beautifully describe their own faiths. She leans in heavily to the overlapping messages of the world’s great religions—to love one another, to welcome the stranger, to care for the poor.

President Tetlow has traveled to Rome twice within her three years as president, and worked carefully to establish a close and working relationship with the Jesuit Superior General and other members of the Vatican Curia. Earlier this year she signed a memorandum of understanding with Villa Nazareth, a Vatican-affiliated university community in Rome, and at the invitation of the Cardinal Secretary of State, Pietro Parolin, who visited Fordham's Rose Hill campus on Sunday, September 29, 2024, to tour campus, preside at the 11 a.m. Mass, and engage members of the Fordham community.

At the Cabinet level, VPs are regularly engaged in mission awareness and development. Several new members have participated in mission formation programs both internally and through the offices of the AJCU. Beginning in the spring 2024 term and continuing in fall 2024, the Faculty Senate and the VP for Mission Integration have co-sponsored a Living Our Values Seminar seminar to focus on the implementation of core (Ignatian) values in shared governance. Five Cabinet members are enrolled in this seminar. Four new Cabinet members have also participated in the Arrupe Seminar over the past two years. In December 2024, the full Cabinet will have a retreat to include training in spiritual conversation and the use of Ignatian discernment in decision-making.

At the AJCU level, one Cabinet member has completed the Ignatian Colleagues Program and two new members began the Ignatian Leadership Seminar in October 2024.

President Tetlow has challenged the Cabinet to think about what being Jesuit and Catholic means in each one's respective administrative portfolio, with special focus on better understanding the lived experience of these traits by and among our current and prospective colleagues and staff.

At the board level, there was a retreat in 2023, where Trustees listened to a panel discussion on the mission as experienced by faculty, Jesuits, administrators, and staff, and a series of substantive conversations ensued among trustees about how to sustain and strengthen Fordham's Jesuit identity and mission. More specifically, the board grappled with the meaning of mission in the context of higher education, including the necessary resource trade-offs between (a) transformative teaching, (b) creating opportunity for more students, and (c) research that changes the world.

At a subsequent board meeting in 2024, President Tetlow led trustees through a deep dive session on the meaning of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a Catholic context. Our teaching challenges those on the right to move beyond formal equality to create a preferential option for the poor, to move beyond protecting our own to welcome the stranger, and to believe in the fundamental dignity of all. Our teaching challenges those on the left to understand diversity as rooted in community, to reject a culture of grievance and identity politics and embrace empathy. And the board prepared for the moral questions raised by increasing efforts to ban such teaching.

In June 2024, one quarter of the Trustees participated in an Ignatian Pilgrimage to Rome for one week. The experience began with an Ignatian discernment exercise led by David McCallum, S.J., director of the Ignatian Leadership Institute, and was built around a question: "What does it mean for Fordham to be rooted in its Jesuit and Catholic identity and mission and yet be attentive and committed to a financial and business model that requires it to be sensitive to the marketplace?" At the board retreat scheduled for February 2025, members who engaged in this exercise in Rome will share their experience with all trustees present and Fr. McCallum will facilitate this Ignatian discernment process.

At the AJCU level, the board chair participated in the recently inaugurated Trustee Forum in October 2023, and he and President Tetlow attended a meeting of presidents and board chairs in April 2024 with Fr. General Sosa, at which Fr. Sosa delivered a major address on the mission responsibilities of board chairs. In addition, the board chair meets regularly with the UEA Provincial at each visit to New York.



There are six Jesuits who serve as University trustees (out of a total of 38 trustees), including one who serves as the vice chair. Consistent with the existing strategic plan, *Educating for Justice*, (2021–2026), the board’s Mission and Identity Committee has become the Mission and Social Justice (MSJ) Committee, expanding its scope and nomenclature to highlight the University’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. At the same time, the then board chair asked the MSJ Committee to meet with each of the other committees to oversee mission implementation in all areas of the University.

The Nominating and Governance Committee of the Board has articulated expectations for all trustees in a document that is actively used in the recruitment, evaluation, and interview process. The first stated expectation addresses the individual’s responsibility “to sustain and advance the University’s Jesuit mission, traditions, values, and reputation as an institution of *Cura Personalis*.” See Appendix E for the Board of Trustees Expectations. New trustees are also required to participate in a half-day orientation at the beginning of their term.

### **Challenges in Living the Mission**

While the above makes clear that efforts are presently directed toward the ongoing mission development of senior leadership, a disparity in levels of mission awareness continues to exist among individual senior leaders and trustees. In order to address this challenge, there could be a more coordinated developmental approach in play to identify candidates who are appropriate for existing formation programs and to plan their mission development individually and as a cohort.

With the Trustees, it might be helpful to engage the Jesuits on the board to work with the VP for MIM to offer opportunities for individual and small group mission development programs and activities.

Additionally, in order to raise mission consciousness among Cabinet members and with the trustees, the president might request that each VP add Jesuit and Mission activity to the annual report.

### **Moving Forward**

In relation to the Mission Priorities, the leadership and public commitment to mission at Fordham clearly support Priority 1 and its emphasis on strengthening the infrastructure for mission integration.



## **CHARACTERISTIC 2: The Academic Life**

## Characteristic 2: The Academic Life

### Living the Mission

Fordham's Jesuit identity permeates nearly every aspect of how the University pursues its core mission—the discovery of wisdom and the transmission of learning, through research and through undergraduate, graduate, and professional education of the highest quality. As a Catholic, Jesuit University, Fordham provides a value-centered, experiential education that emphasizes the whole person and that aims at graduating people for others.

At the center of these efforts is the **Fordham faculty**, consisting of 550 tenure-line faculty, about 170 full-time non-tenure track instructors, as well as part-time adjunct and graduate student instructors. From the time new faculty arrive at Fordham for New Faculty Orientation, the University engages in efforts to foster mission awareness and support professional development with a mission perspective. (An earlier section of this report details the significant progress on faculty development initiatives since the previous MPE.) Advanced graduate student instructors, meanwhile, are eligible to participate in the GSAS Jesuit Pedagogy Seminar. The seminar meets six times over the course of the spring semester and provides a structure for reading, reflection, discussion and experimentation to explore the implementation of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. As part of the seminar, graduate students are mentored by faculty members who are excellent undergraduate teachers themselves. The mentors are chosen from across the Arts and Sciences (A&S), and paired across disciplines. A biologist may be paired with a philosopher, while an economist may be paired with a theologian. Mentors and graduate students visit each other's classrooms and exchange syllabi, lesson plans, and grading samples. They then meet to discuss their observations.

The mission is thoroughly embedded in the curriculum at every level of the University. At the heart of the undergraduate curriculum is the **core curriculum**—courses that are designed to nurture curiosity, inspire a love of learning, and provide students with the foundation needed to engage in lifelong learning. Fordham's liberal arts core curriculum is a statement of its educational values and a reflection of its Jesuit mission to prepare students to lead meaningful lives of leadership and service. At its heart is the practice of *Eloquentia Perfecta*, where students learn the right use of reason joined to cultivated expression.

The University is currently in the midst of a faculty-driven effort to revise the core curriculum. This effort has had several phases. The first phase (Phase Zero) entailed research by a faculty committee that surveyed current faculty and students about the existing core and looked at core offerings at peer institutions. One finding that emerged is that the current core has so many requirements that the overall learning goals tend to get lost as students struggle to fulfill requirements. Subsequently, a new Phase I committee articulated a vision for the new core. That vision is as follows:

- Building on the traditions of Jesuit and Catholic education, the core is humanistic (i.e., attends to an appreciation of human dignity), integrative (i.e., makes connections between and among fields of inquiry), and ethically-aware (i.e., remains alert to the ethical implications of actions/decisions in all areas of life).
- Aiming to help them become lifelong learners with a growing sense of personal agency and a discerning inner life, the core provides opportunities for students to cultivate the critical intelligence and creative imagination necessary for them to flourish as active, empathetic, globally informed citizens who collaborate effectively with others across differences in service of justice and the common good.

The Committee identified three central learning goals for the new core, that were subsequently approved by the faculty:

**Knowing** – Students will deepen and broaden their knowledge to reflect critically upon their human experience and address the most pressing problems in the world.

**Doing** – Students will develop, integrate, and apply critical and creative skills for effective participation in a global society and responsible leadership in service of social justice.

**Being** – Students will graduate from Fordham as discerning citizens of integrity who are practically wise and work toward the common good.

Under each of these categories are a number of more specific learning outcomes. For instance, under Knowing, there were goals associated with studying and understanding the natural world, social structures, global cultural productions, and “the beautiful, the transcendent, and the intricate in the arts and sciences.” Under Doing, there are goals related to writing and communicating effectively, reasoning scientifically, working collaboratively, and working within a linguistic or cultural context other than their own. And under Being, the proposed core will offer students opportunities to become reflective persons who cultivate an inner life and are capable of holding personal convictions while being open to having their views challenged. They will become critically engaged citizens who recognize the inherent dignity of all human beings and work toward making the world and their communities more peaceful, sustainable, and just.

The current stage (Phase 2) is charged with developing a comprehensive framework for a University core that all Fordham undergraduates will complete (both A&S students and Gabelli students). Assuming the faculty approves this framework, a Phase 3 committee will develop a plan for implementation, administration, assessment, and amendment of the University core.

The current core curriculum is resolutely grounded in the liberal arts and was developed by Arts and Sciences faculty; most courses are taught by A&S faculty. Gabelli School of Business students complete a version of this core, consistent with the school’s emphasis on the liberal arts as a differentiator among undergraduate business schools.

Jesuit values permeate graduate and professional education at Fordham as well, as evidenced in the mission statement of each school. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, for example, expresses its commitment to offering student-centered graduate education in the service of the greater good. Fordham Law School strives to create a community of compassionate and highly capable lawyers in order to make a difference for the profession, society, and world. The school works to prepare students to become leaders in the legal profession who will effect real change through principled, ethical lawyering; through active citizenship; and through an unwavering dedication to justice. The Graduate School of Social Service prepares graduates to be effective agents for change as they strive to enhance the quality of life for the individuals, groups, communities, and organizations they serve.

While these values infuse the curriculum at all schools and at every level, there are particular programs that are notable in highlighting Fordham’s Jesuit identity, even apart from the obvious examples such as the programs in theology, philosophy, and the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education. For example, Fordham’s Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs offers undergraduate and graduate degree granting programs to prepare current and future aid workers with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively in times of humanitarian crisis and disaster. Fordham’s graduate program in International Political Economy and Development offers an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing contemporary global economic relations as well as international development issues through graduate and certificate programs. A graduate degree in ethics and society offers an interdisciplinary graduate program in applied ethics with courses that cover topics that include bioethics, social justice, and professional and scientific ethics, paired with a wide range of applied courses that use these foundational perspectives to take on some of today’s most pressing challenges in ethics and social justice.



Interdisciplinary programs that emphasize the global environment are increasingly popular at the undergraduate level. An Environmental Studies major involves interdisciplinary course work in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities so students gain insight into the physical and societal causes and effects of environmental problems, integrating these disciplines in economic, political, and societal policy solutions. For those with more scientific background, the environmental science major at Fordham allows students to investigate the complex intersection of physical, chemical, and biological sciences that together form the field of environmental science. These students rely on science to understand the anthropogenic (human-made) causes and effects of environmental problems. Students in these programs, as well as those in biological sciences and other fields can take advantage of the [Louis Calder Center](#), a biological field station 25 miles from New York City that comprises 113 forested acres with a variety of ecosystems and communities available for study.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are a central part of the University's mission. In 2020, Fordham released an antiracism action plan ([Addressing Racism, Educating for Justice](#)) that identified 33 specific actions designed to root out racism from the Fordham community and cultivate an institutional culture whereby people from all backgrounds could have the experience of being a part of a diverse community marked by care and belonging. Released in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, the plan identified specific aims for admissions, hiring, creating communities of affinity and belonging, and partnering with community organizations to advance the work of racial justice beyond campus. One notable example of the work launched under this plan was Teaching Race Across the Curriculum (TRAC), an internal grant program which, between 2021 and 2023, supported and evaluated 37 distinct projects across Fordham's schools designed to integrate state-of-the-art multidisciplinary approaches to teaching about race and cultivating an inclusive community at Fordham.

Finally, the University's commitment to supporting faculty and student research fits within the mission of the "discovery of wisdom," and in particular, Fordham has promoted research that addresses real world issues, notably demonstrated in research programs in Fordham College at Lincoln Center and Fordham College at Rose Hill. Most important, of course, is the faculty and student research that will be generated by the ["Flourishing in Community" Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program for EPA Region 2](#). In addition, the Office of Research has coordinated the formation of several interdisciplinary research consortia on topics such as disability studies, science and justice, and global studies. Faculty organizers of an initiative on ["Migrants, Migration and Human Dignity"](#) received a \$200,000 grant for their work from the Cummings Foundation, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit. The grant will provide funding for a two-year pilot program, based at Fordham College at Lincoln Center, that aims to "cultivate student leaders committed to becoming activists, policymakers, and researchers who are dedicated to affirming the human dignity of migrants and prepared to address complex challenges related to migration in U.S. society into the future." Finally, Fordham became a member of the Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN), a group of 63 universities that focus on developing a set of practices to design, deploy, and govern technology in ways that advance the public interest.

### **Challenges to Living the Mission**

While Jesuit and Catholic values are evident in the academic programs and policies of the University, some faculty reported in this MPE that engagement in the academic mission is compromised by perceptions of an overemphasis on teaching and service at the expense of research.

These concerns are corroborated by other sources of faculty feedback. For example, the University conducted a faculty satisfaction survey using the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) instrument in the spring of 2024. The survey is designed to capture faculty sentiment with regard to teaching, service and research, tenure and promotion, departmental engagement and collegiality, and other aspects of the academic workplace. Faculty were asked (among other things) about the best and worst aspects of working at Fordham. Among the top responses for the latter category were the following:

- Teaching load
- Lack of support for research/creative work
- Too much service/too many assignments

Addressing these concerns to the extent possible will be essential in supporting the mission-critical work of faculty research. At the same time, this highlights the need for ongoing attention to hiring for mission—onboarding faculty who deeply appreciate the mission importance of teaching and service, even at some cost to their own research and career advancement.

Fordham is in the process of searching for an inaugural director for a proposed Center for Educational Innovation. The current lack of an office on teaching and learning has been an impediment to supporting faculty teaching, but also presents an opportunity for Fordham to learn from existing centers and incorporate lessons learned from the experience of other institutions.

Finally, the process of revising the Core Curriculum has been very protracted. While the faculty has primary responsibility for curriculum, and there certainly is a need to be deliberative, broadly consultative, and ensure participation of stakeholders, it would also be helpful to consider process improvements that could expedite curricular review/reform.

## **Moving Forward**

Through its commitment to academic excellence in the service of mission, Fordham clearly supports Mission Priority 3 (Advancing transformative teaching and education) and Priority 4 (Advancing public impact research).

A woman with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a black long-sleeved dress and white sneakers, stands at a wooden podium, speaking into a microphone. She is holding a piece of white paper. Behind her, a man in a red t-shirt stands near another podium. The background features tall, narrow stained glass windows with colorful geometric patterns. The floor is covered with a light brown carpet. The text "CHARACTERISTIC 3: Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation" is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

**CHARACTERISTIC 3:**  
**Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation**



## Characteristic 3: Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation

### Living the Mission

As noted earlier in this report, the creation and growth of the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) is arguably the most significant structure to emerge directly from the last Mission Priority Examen in 2017.

“In 2018, after a significant review of what was then called service learning, the University launched CCEL with the goal of fostering collaboration and active citizenship within the University and beyond. Dramatically expanding upon work previously undertaken by the Dorothy Day Center and Global Outreach (GO), CCEL’s mission is to bridge Fordham with neighboring communities and global partners through experiential learning, research, and civic engagement. Its vision is to engage every member of the University as active citizens in the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of justice, and protection of human rights, and respect for the environment.” The new structure allowed Campus Ministry to create the *Pedro Arrupe Volunteer (PAV)* program for students who more explicitly want to link their faith commitment and spiritual practice to service in the community.

Presently, CCEL has a staff of eight full-time professionals who run teaching, learning, research, cocurricular and extracurricular programming as well as robust community offerings. CCEL currently supports more than 200 faculty members from 24 disciplines and engages approximately one third of the undergraduate student body annually in community engagement experiences. In the 2023–2024 academic year, CCEL collaborated with academic departments to offer roughly 150 community engaged learning courses, each of which engages all students in more than 20 hours of community engagement work, up from seven courses offered in 2014–2015.

Through CCEL’s community collective, *Fordham in Community*, more than 200 community collaborations have been formed across various focus areas such as environmental sustainability, migration justice, and educational access, reflecting a broad commitment to community welfare. Cocurricular programs like [Global Outreach](#), which offers short-term global immersions, and [Urban Plunge](#), a pre-orientation program for first-year students based on community solution-building, foster cultural understanding and social justice advocacy among students. As one student puts it, “GO is the prototypical example of what makes Fordham unique. Beyond the verbal commitment to *cura personalis* and Ignatian virtues, Fordham walks the walk. Keeping students grounded in the everyday realities of life as college students while teaching them to strive for more, GO is a once-in-a-lifetime, quintessentially Fordham experience.”

In CCEL’s newest program, the [Engaged Leaders Fellowship](#), students partner with community members on applied research. In this yearlong fellowship, students convene in the first semester as a community of practice to be formed in Ignatian leadership and to develop research skills. In the second semester, students work directly with a community leader to co-articulate and explore a research project. For example, in 2021 three Fordham undergraduate students partnered with the Tremont Neighborhood Health Center to provide empirical research regarding coronavirus vaccine avoidance among child-bearing age women in the Bronx. This fellowship allows students to not only ask big questions about systems of oppression in our immediate community but also to mobilize University assets to offer a mutually beneficial solution.

These efforts underscore Fordham’s dedication to nurturing sustained and transformative relationships with the community, driven by its Jesuit and Catholic mission. During the 2022–23 academic year, 100% of students who participated in CCEL fellowship programs indicated either very high satisfaction or satisfaction with their community engaged learning projects or experiences with personal development or growth. During the 2022–23 academic year, 92% of students who participated in the Global Outreach program, Engaged Leaders Fellowship, and the Fordham Student Advocacy Fellowship reported a positive impact on their sense of belonging at Fordham after participating in CCEL programs.



A very ambitious project currently underway is the substantial \$14 million renovation of a University-owned building on Fordham Road to serve as a workforce development and entrepreneurial green economy hub, deepening the University's engagement with the Bronx community and operationalizing long-term programming that amplifies Fordham's positive social, environmental, and economic impacts.

Beyond CCEL, the Division for Student Affairs (SA) is a key collaborator with MIM in the service of faith, justice, and reconciliation. Beginning with its own staff, SA has a rich history of infusing the Jesuit mission into their initial training and ongoing development, with sessions on Fordham's Jesuit history, Jesuit educational philosophy, and the role of each person in the implementation of mission.

In addition, at monthly divisional SA staff meetings, senior staff and department heads volunteer to facilitate an Examen to open the meetings. Moreover, Student Affairs is utilizing the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm as a framework for developing a divisional strategic plan.

In August 2024, the Dean of Students at Lincoln Center collaborated with CCEL, Fordham College at Lincoln Center, and the Gabelli School of Business at LC to provide a mission-based experiential community learning experience for First-Year and Transfer students who participated in the three-day orientation program.

Due to the important role Resident Directors (RDs), Resident Assistants (RAs), and Resident First-Year Mentors (RFMs) play for residential students, training sessions with a focus on the Jesuit mission to pursue faith, justice, and reconciliation are held for their respective staffs.

This year, Student Affairs is working closely with MIM to infuse even more mission programming into the ongoing Residential Life staff training and to increase pastoral and sacramental offerings for the residential communities. In addition, the Dean of Students at the Rose Hill campus is collaborating with SA and MIM to reinvigorate the Integrated Learning Community models in residence halls. Efforts to build a more mission-centered First-Year Experience, a key goal of the emerging strategic plan and explicitly included in Mission Priority 3, will rely on the effective collaboration of SA, MIM, and the academic centers reporting to the Provost.

As noted earlier in Characteristic 2, signature programs in the professional schools are also oriented to the implementation of reconciliation and justice. For example, the curriculum in the Graduate School of Social Service emphasizes experiential education through work in mental health and social service clinics throughout the city. Likewise, in the Graduate School of Education, future teachers, counselors, psychologists, school administrators, and other educational practitioners are trained for a commitment to social justice. The Law School has a dedicated Feerick Center for Social Justice through which future lawyers are educated for service to others. And at the Gabelli School of Business, a vibrant Center for Responsible Business (CRB) is dedicated to the education of corporations for environmental justice. In fact, a *Laudato Si'* Center within CRB has been recently proposed to continue the implementation of the University's seven-year Green Action plan.

### **Challenges to Living the Mission**

While the above clearly demonstrates programmatic commitments to the implementation of faith, justice, and reconciliation, the explicit link between the work of these centers and programs with Catholic social teaching could be strengthened. Program directors appear to be far more familiar and conversant with the Jesuit values embodied in the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) than with aspects of Catholic social teaching that articulate the meaning of the "common good" as a necessary corrective to the exclusive pursuit of individual well-being.

In addition, the connection of faith to justice and reconciliation is sometimes overlooked or downplayed, in the interest of engaging a wider swath of students who may be otherwise put off by an explicit reference to God or religious faith. However, as Pope Francis emphasized at the promulgation of the UAPs, without the first UAP and its direction of “showing the way to God,” all the other ones lack grounding. This challenge is perhaps even more salient in the professional schools, where the focus is more disciplinary specific.

In order to address this issue, it will be necessary for Campus Ministry to redouble its efforts to provide multifaith consultations and resources illustrating the important link between faith and justice to directors of residential, commuter, community engaged, and professional school programs that are oriented to heightening awareness and responsiveness to circumstances of injustice.

### **Moving Forward**

Through its commitment to initial and ongoing mission formation for students and staff, Fordham demonstrates its support for Mission Priority 1: Strengthening an infrastructure for mission integration. Through programs such as Global Outreach and the Pedro Arrupe Volunteers, each of which emphasize faith in service, Fordham demonstrates its support for Mission Priority 2: To forge community by supporting faith and spirituality across all religious traditions. In addition, through the efforts of CCEL to integrate faculty teaching and student participation in faculty research with topics of urgent importance for the neighboring communities and our world, Fordham likewise shows support for Mission Priority 3: Advancing transformative teaching and education and Mission Priority 4: Advancing public impact research.



**CHARACTERISTIC 4:**  
**Promoting an Ignatian Campus Culture**

## Characteristic 4: Promoting an Ignatian Campus Culture

### Living the Mission

Across the University, a number of initiatives and programs contribute to Fordham's Ignatian campus culture, but the deciding factor is the *felt* or affective experience informing how our mission is shared and operationalized. Through workshops, initiatives, worship, meals, conversations, community engaged learning, service, reflections and varied and diverse spiritual programming, Fordham follows the nearly 500-year-old Jesuit tradition of creatively engaging the head (intellect/curiosity/imagination), heart (beliefs/character/values), and hands (on- the-ground actions). And this Ignatian charism of educating people for others aims to transform the world by integrating intellect, spirituality, ethics, and public service for the betterment of all—one soul at a time.

Members of the Fordham University community are invited to encounter the Ignatian tradition and heritage in significant ways as a *felt* experience of interiority. This happens through the mobilizing of various campus networks and is led by the promotional work of the Office of Mission Integration and Ministry, including outreach by Campus Ministry through its recently hired director of Ignatian mission initiatives. As Fordham becomes a more diverse community, Campus Ministry is charged with offering fall, spring, and summer semester workshops, reflections and [Ignatian programming](#) in the head-heart-hands model, as well as trainings, academic class visits, and professional and spiritual development sessions for students, faculty, staff, trustees, Cabinet members, and alumni. There are Ignatian fitness and mindfulness sessions to educate and challenge athletic teams and coaching staff, Ignatian mission workshops/retreats for departments and clerical staff (such as University Health Center, Student Financial Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, academic deans' offices, faculty of arts and sciences, Gabelli School of Business graduate student success and advising, Development and University Relations, and an Ignatian based mini-course at Fordham's College at Sixty adult education program). In-person Ignatian programming is offered in the fall and spring semesters to students, faculty, and staff at the Fordham London campus. There are also opportunities for Ignatian formation offered to members of the University Cabinet and trustees, as well as collaborations with external Jesuit institutions in order to promote cooperative learning across different disciplines and apostolates.

Campus Ministry provides robust liturgical and spiritual programming. Examples include Mass, liturgy and sacramental life, faith formation, Eucharistic ministry and lectoring, altar serving, hospitality and media ministry, praise and worship, spiritual accompaniment, Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice, LGBTQ+ Spirituality, commuter and resident ministry, Christian Life Communities, Peer Ministry, retreat offerings to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff (one hour, day, weekend, silent), Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL), pastoral counseling, prayer and meditation "how-to" sessions, sacred music ministry, liturgical formation, Ignatian yoga, book clubs, service and justice fusions. There is also promotion of our Ignatian tradition and heritage through sustained collaboration between the Fordham community and the Jesuit scholastics in formation (Java with the Jesuits weekly outdoor campus coffee tent chats, retreat leaders, Theology on Tap) and spiritual programs and academic course partnering that occurs with our elderly Jesuits in the province infirmary adjacent to campus. "Together with you, Fordham Campus Ministry is committed to building a community where you belong, where you are known, and where you feel connected to others."

The spirit of encountering extends to the diverse offerings of Fordham's Center on Religion and Culture (CRC), Arrupe Seminar for faculty/staff, Ignatian dinner reflections for graduate students, Pedro Arrupe student volunteer contemplation-in-action events, and an annual campus-wide multifaith Prayer and Picnic collaborative showcase and related spiritual programming given the recent hiring of full-time Jewish and Muslim chaplains. There are new



student and faculty mission-focused orientations and formation trainings; mission centered fusions with the Office of Human Resources (including the recent launch of a Mission Leave policy to encourage staff to engage in Ignatian professional and spiritual development during a traditional workday); presentations and engagements as part of University preview and open house days for prospective students, families, faculty and staff; discernment offerings and Academic Affairs Ignatian mission accompaniment sessions; and community meals for new faculty organized by the Ignatian Faculty Fellow.

Living the Mission lunch-and-learn discussion events throughout the year help to showcase diverse campus perspectives on our shared Ignatian mission from students, faculty, and staff. The Fordham University Emerging Leaders (FUEL) program and related Student Affairs initiatives have an Ignatian tradition reflection and action component to their curriculum to further operationalize mission, as well as the distinctive offerings of Fordham's Young Alumni Committee (YAC) to connect 20-to-30-year-olds to reflect on meaningful lasting ties between their Jesuit education and current professional and spiritual lives.

In a collaboration between Student Affairs and Mission Integration and Ministry, Fordham's Career Center for Cura Personalis contributes to an Ignatian campus culture through resume and interviewing skills workshops to help students translate their daily Jesuit education to employers unfamiliar with such Ignatian soft skills. The Learn & Lunch: Ignatian Conversation Starters series unpacks, situates, and challenges our Ignatian mission identity through meaningful dialogue and is often centered on a brief article in *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*. Year-round Ignatian days of service offered to the campus community help foster appreciation for Jesuit tenets, Ignatian spirituality, and concrete links to the Universal Apostolic Preferences. An increasing effort is also made to embrace the beauty of spiritual and natural space (University Church, various chapels on campus, our unique geographical location in NYC accessing spiritual, cultural, and civic engagement and learning opportunities and Jesuit apostolates such as America Media and Xavier Mission food pantry and social justice ministries).

As evidenced in the recent Audience Research Study (Appendix G) of prospective and current students, faculty, and staff, our Jesuit mission rings true and remains central to our brand. Study authors report that "a majority of respondents across audiences saw the emphasis on the Jesuit mission as beneficial and didn't want marketing materials to dial it down." Of note, while 29% of current undergraduate students reported that the Jesuit affiliation positively influenced their decision to come to Fordham, 56% reported being happy with this identity and mission after enrolling and attending the University. Still, we have more work to do to fully integrate our Ignatian identity into the student experience and employee culture.

### **Challenges to Living the Mission**

While the above amply demonstrates a commitment to, and relative success with, promoting an Ignatian campus culture, there are nevertheless University community members who have come to Fordham with little to no prior knowledge of Jesuit education and/or Ignatian spirituality. It is especially challenging to effect culture change by demonstrating the relevance of Jesuit values to those who are instead attracted to the University for its strong academic reputation, career networking opportunities, and geographical location.

One potentially effective way to confront this challenge may be to highlight the essential role of reflection as core to an Ignatian culture and as a key differentiator in the higher education market, even challenging professors to add discernment and reflection to learning outcomes.

### **Moving Forward**

The numerous programs in Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit mission with a range of populations across the University demonstrate a clear commitment to Mission Priority 1: (Supporting an infrastructure for mission integration) and Mission Priority 2: (Forging community by supporting faith and spirituality across all religious traditions).



**CHARACTERISTIC 5:**  
**Service to the Church**

## Characteristic 5: Service to the Church

### Living the Mission

As a University community, Fordham is committed through research, teaching, and service to partner with the local, national, and global Church in its mission of religious formation for the common good.

The following stand out as examples of academic research and teaching in service to the Church, contributing to the Church's mission of forming young men and women to appreciate and live out their Catholic faith.

- Through faculty research and graduate and undergraduate coursework, the [Theology Department](#) at Fordham is committed to advancing “the critical and constructive study of the ideas, symbols, narratives, beliefs, and practices of religious traditions, with particular attention to the rich diversity of Catholic Christian theology.” The department offers a robust curriculum that covers various theological and religious studies, including courses on the Bible, Christian ethics, systematic theology, and church history, among others.
- The [Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education](#) (GRE) was established in the wake of Vatican II to provide graduate-level education and ongoing pastoral formation for Catholic priests, religious, and laity in the service of informed catechesis and church leadership. The mission of the school expanded over time to serve students of diverse religious traditions.

Of special note, GRE's M.A. in Christian spirituality, with its dependent certificates in spiritual direction and supervision, provides education and training in much-needed skills for pastors and chaplains in a variety of pastoral settings.

Over the past decade, enrollments in GRE declined to the point that, by fiscal year 2023, the direct operating expenses associated with running GRE amounted to three times the revenue that the school is able to generate. The Provost began engaging with faculty in the school to explore options to house various GRE academic programs in academic units (departments, schools, etc.) capable of supporting affiliated faculty, student recruitment, and program logistics and to help GRE to shed the financial and administrative burden of operating a full school. Currently, there are ongoing conversations with the Graduate School of Education (GSE) to shift viable GRE programs and associated faculty into that school that already shares a commitment to serve the Church through training leaders in the ministry of Catholic school teaching and administration.

- Academic coursework in Catholic thought and practice is advanced through [the Francis and Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies](#), (CACS,) whose stated mission is “to advance knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of American Catholicism within the academy, the church, the broader religious community, and the general public.” The center offers an undergraduate concentration in American Catholic studies, as well as special lectures open to the wider University community and the public at large.

In 2022, the director of Global Outreach, a constituent part of the Division of Mission, pursued synodality as a pedagogical model as part of a national grant, the Wabash-Lily Grant. Through conversations with a cohort of national educators, she created a course on synodality and co-imagined what an immersion could look like with the director of the Center on Religion and Culture.

The CACS director sponsored the course, and with the originators named above designed it to include a trip to Rome during the Synod of Bishops in fall 2023 and fall 2024. The group of 10 students each time met with Synod participants for conversation about its contents and proceedings, and also had a session on Ignatian discernment with Fr. David McCallum, S.J., at the Jesuit General Curia and visited various Jesuit sites, with Masses and reflection periods throughout the experience. The course and trip were so successful that they have been replicated by a host of sister American Catholic and Jesuit universities for the October Synod gathering.

Two of the alumni of last year's trip are [Duffy Fellows](#), a program for undergraduate seniors and recent graduates who want to study and write about some aspect of religion and society, sponsored by the [Center on Religion and Culture](#) (CRC). These two fellows are focusing on the topic of synodality and its promise for the Catholic Church in the 21st century. Two of last year's fellows created a film focusing on the development of priestly vocational discernment from the 1960s through the present, interviewing Jesuits and other priests and religious of various age groups on their own experience.

The CRC director, David Gibson, in collaboration with Fr. Mark Massa, S.J., at the Boisi Center for Religion and Public Life of Boston College, and Dr. Michael Murphy, at the Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage at Loyola Chicago, inaugurated a multiyear conference for Catholic bishops and theologians on topics that are central to Pope Francis' hopes for the Church, including synodality, care for our common home, and interreligious dialogue. Named the Way Forward Conference, it was originally hosted at Loyola University Chicago in spring 2023; then at University of San Diego in February 2024; and in March 2025, Fordham will host the event. Around 50-60 bishops ordinarily participate in the conference, and they are deeply grateful for an opportunity to speak together about these important issues for our Church, in an atmosphere of open listening and dialogue.

CRC hosts a variety of programs, public lectures, film screenings, and panel discussions with leaders in the artistic community on topics related to faith. These programs are open to students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

- [The Center for Catholic School Leadership and Faith-Based Education](#) within the Graduate School of Education offers graduate degree programs in teaching, educational psychology, and Catholic school leadership, serving as a much-valued program for teachers within and beyond the school systems of the archdioceses of New York and Newark, and the Diocese of Brooklyn.

In addition to offering these primarily academic resources, Fordham partners with local Catholic organizations to provide opportunities for community engaged learning as an essential component of living one's faith. Two such organizations have long-standing relationships with Fordham: Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). [The Graduate School of Social Service](#) (GSS) and the [Center for Community Engaged Learning](#) partner with Catholic Charities to provide students with practical experience through internships, field placements, and other opportunities that integrate academic learning with real-world practice. The signature program at Fordham to prepare students for global leadership is in [International Political Economy and Development](#) (IPED), and because of its long-standing relationship with Catholic Relief Services, many students find placements at CRS and continue their engagement beyond graduation.



Within the Division of Mission Integration and Ministry, [Campus Ministry](#) (CM) is dedicated to the formation of students, faculty, and staff in their respective faith traditions. This academic year, with the hiring over the summer of an imam and a rabbi, Campus Ministry is focused on providing multifaith ministry opportunities through prayer services, individual pastoral counseling, and faith-based service experiences. The new executive director of Campus Ministry, Fr. Phil Judge, S.J., was also hired over this past summer, and he has creatively crafted a new organizational chart for this department, with a Director of Catholic Life in addition to the imam and rabbi serving the Muslim and Jewish communities, respectively. The Director of Catholic Life oversees the creation, coordination, and implementation of:

- **Masses and Sacramental Preparation:** The university has a vibrant liturgical life, with services held in various campus chapels, including the University Church. Students can participate in sacramental preparation, including opportunities for Reconciliation and Eucharist, as well as preparation for Confirmation and other sacraments.

All directors coordinate the following with staff, under the oversight of the executive director:

- **Retreats and Prayer Services:** The office organizes retreats that focus on personal growth, spiritual reflection, and community building. These retreats provide students with an opportunity to deepen their faith and connect with others.
- **Service and Social Justice Opportunities:** Reflecting Fordham's Jesuit commitment to serving others, Campus Ministry is deeply involved in service projects and social justice initiatives. Students are encouraged to engage in volunteer work both locally, through the Pedro Arrupe Volunteer program, and globally through the Global Outreach program.
- **Bible Study Groups, Jewish Lunch and Learn Series, Muslim Halaqa Study Circles, and Interfaith Dialogue Initiatives**
- **Counseling and Support:** Campus Ministry offers pastoral counseling and spiritual direction for students seeking guidance or support in their faith journey.

In response to the needs of Eastern Catholics on campus, Fordham offers the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom—and the Presanctified Liturgy during Lent—twice weekly during the school year. Increasingly, these liturgical services have attracted the interest of Roman Catholics. Students of both traditions express that they come not only to share in the Eucharistic celebration and sacramental life expressed through another tradition but also to witness the diversity of the Church. This offers students a model of church that responds to the contemporary theological question, “What is the church?” revealing that it is a synodal church of dialogue, mutual expression, and openness to understanding. As Fordham is both a research and teaching University, liturgical services are arranged to allow students to ask questions and engage in discussion before and after each liturgy.

In service to the local Church, Campus Ministry hosts an annual Vocation Promotion Day, inviting various religious communities and the archdiocesan director of vocations to engage in conversations with students about their respective charisms and ministries. Last year, CM hosted the Archdiocesan Eucharistic Revival weekend gathering on the Rose Hill campus, and it was very well attended, much to the appreciation of the cardinal.

The Vice President for Mission Integration and Ministry (MIM), in addition to supervising the three departments within MIM (CM, CCEL, and CRC), focuses on the initial and ongoing formation of trustees as agents of mission leadership in collaboration with the global Catholic Church and the Society of Jesus.

In June 2022, the VP accompanied a group of trustees and benefactors, along with Fordham's president-elect, to Rome for a series of conversations with Vatican dicasteries with an interest in our mission of Jesuit and Catholic higher education. The meeting with Cardinal Parolin was especially instructive, as he shared his own hopes and directions for Catholic education. The cardinal visited the Rose Hill campus in September 2024 for Mass and a reception with the Fordham community.

This past June 2024, the VP once again accompanied a group of trustees with the president and met with heads of key dicasteries, and this time the conversation with Cardinal Mendoça, the new head of Catholic Education and Culture, was especially open, dialogical, and very engaging. The group also had a session on spiritual conversation in the context of Ignatian discernment and leadership. The group had a personal meeting with Pope Francis, arranged by Cardinal Parolin, and also visits to the Jesuit sites, including Mass in the Rooms of St. Ignatius. This trip was so much appreciated by the president and trustees, including the board chair, that they have made a commitment to do this every other year as a board.

Finally, as a service to the Church beyond Fordham, the University's Jesuit priests contribute to the sacramental life of the archdiocese and surrounding dioceses through regular commitments to celebrate parish Masses, baptisms, weddings, etc.

Several Jesuits also offer retreats, workshops, and spiritual direction locally and nationally for clergy and religious on issues of spirituality, sexuality, preaching, and best practices in pastoral leadership.

### **Challenges in Living the Mission**

It is abundantly clear that Fordham directly serves the Church through centers, departments, programs, communities, and individuals. At the same time, as an intellectual community that values diversity and inclusion, Fordham also acknowledges its responsibility to extend its service of the Church beyond the Catholic community, by explaining its core values in language that is appealing to the broader University community. This approach underscores that Catholic universities, at least in the United States, are mission territories, and that the Jesuit legacy of translating Catholic doctrine into the language of diverse cultures and circumstances is as relevant and necessary today as it was in the 16th century.

One potential avenue for this approach might be to emphasize Catholic moral teaching highlighting the dignity of each person within the curriculum and across the range of co-curricular programs designed to develop students for leadership in a global context.

### **Moving Forward**

In service to the Church through mission development efforts, impactful research and teaching, and multifaith formation, Fordham University bears witness to all four of its MPE priorities.



**CHARACTERISTIC 6:**  
**Relationship to the Society of Jesus**

## Characteristic 6: Relationship to the Society of Jesus

### Living the Mission

Fordham University enjoys a long-standing collaborative relationship with the Society of Jesus, having served the educational needs of Jesuit scholastics as a philosophate and then center for First Studies over many decades. At one point, more than 140 Jesuits worked at the University in various capacities, including faculty, staff, and senior leadership positions, all serving the intellectual apostolate of the Society of Jesus.

At present, the University continues to collaborate with the Society in four primary areas:

- 1) Jesuit Vocation Promotion and the First Studies Formation of young Jesuits within the AJCU and globally;
- 2) the academic preparation of national and international Jesuits for service to the intellectual apostolate of the Society here and abroad;
- 3) recruitment of national and international Jesuits to Fordham to serve the mission of the University; and
- 4) with the most recent formulation of the United States East (UEA) Province Apostolic Plan (Appendix F), through the implementation of key goals and strategies articulated in that plan.

Among the three Jesuit universities in the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU) hosting a First Studies Program for Jesuit Scholastics, Fordham was chosen as the most suitable partner institution to collaborate with the Ciszek Hall Jesuit Community in the implementation of a pilot program to integrate academic coursework in philosophy and the humanities with service to the local Bronx community. In its fourth year, some 30 young Jesuits from the JCCU, with their cohort scholastics from Latin America studying at ITESO, the Jesuit University of Guadalajara, benefit from coursework, faculty mentorship, and spiritual direction at Fordham, and they reciprocate with service to the prayer and liturgical life of the University. Scholastics serve as lectors and acolytes at University Masses, sing in the choir and lead Praise and Worship weekly Eucharistic adoration. Scholastics also increase Jesuit presence on each of the Fordham campuses, hosting a very popular weekly Java with the Jesuits event, where they offer coffee and conversation to passersby. The scholastics have also organized Karaoke with the President, demonstrating that Jesuits can have fun in higher education! They also participate with Spellman Hall Jesuits in vocation promotion events.

As the Jesuit University of New York, Fordham enjoys a reputation for advanced research and partnerships with leading global cultural, artistic, and financial institutions. As such, Jesuits from the United States and abroad are attracted to pursue advanced degrees at Fordham. The Provost, in consultation with the Jesuit Superior, worked out a policy for the recruitment and hiring of Jesuits (see Appendix G), clarifying the constituent steps involved, concluding in the final offer of a Fordham position to a given Jesuit.

This year, Fr. Kumar Kiran, S.J., from India holds the Campion Postdoctoral Fellowship which funds advanced study and publication for one year. Fr. Moka Willy, S.J., permanently assigned as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at University Loyola du Congo, holds the funded Loyola Chair, designed to attract more seasoned academics to do research, some light teaching, and one public lecture each semester. Other international Jesuits doing advanced studies at Fordham include Fr. Mwanmba Mutale, S.J., of South Africa studying economics; and Fr. Francisco Parilla, S.J. of the Philippines studying mental health counseling. JCCU Jesuits doing advanced studies include Fr. Curtis McKenzie, S.J., and Mr. Tim Perron S.J., both finishing doctorates in theology.

The Spellman Hall Jesuit Community, through its Recruitment Committee, also actively seeks Jesuits to join the faculty and staff of the University, working closely with the AJCU, JCCU, and the UEA Assistant Provincial for Higher Education, Fr. Michael Tunney, S.J., to identify suitable candidates for Fordham. This year, Fr. Phil Judge, S.J., was recruited to serve as Executive Director of Campus Ministry, and last year Fr. Eric Studt, S.J., joined as a tenure-track professor of philosophy.



Over this past summer, the UEA Province issued its new Apostolic Plan, and Fordham University is committed to close collaboration with the province through the implementation of its key priorities.

One area in the UEA plan that calls for improvement is the active involvement of Jesuits in the apostolic goals of their communities. As noted above in the section on Progress on MPE 2017 priorities, Fordham Jesuits are committed to apostolic works, but the Jesuit community has not yet developed regular structures to actively engage Jesuits in the identification, support, and assessment of progress on its corporate communal apostolic goals.

Other UEA plan priorities call for greater engagement in the mission of meeting the needs of local communities and promoting ecological and social justice. As noted in the present MPE, consistent with the goals of its emerging strategic plan, Fordham prioritizes research and teaching that matters to the local community and to the world, and this opens a rich possibility for the Jesuit community to partner with lay colleagues at the University who will respond with specific service, research, and teaching proposals.

For example, the University, through its Center for Community Engaged Learning, has a strong commitment to service to its neighboring communities in the Bronx and Lincoln Square. The seven-year Green Plan for Environmental Justice, generated in response to *Laudato Si'* and Pope Francis's mandate to every Catholic University, that gave birth to the Flourishing in Community EPA Federal Grant of \$50 million to fund community led strategies to promote ecological justice, has generated a host of neighborhood partnerships, and the Jesuit Community would be most welcome to collaborate with University leaders in this area to maximize their public impact and direct their energies toward the implementation of the Society's UAP No. 4: Care for Our Common Home.

### **Challenges to Living the Mission**

Despite all these positive signs of collaboration between the University and the Society of Jesus, some Jesuits at Fordham feel that their importance to the University is increasingly fading in an increasingly diverse and secular culture, and they wonder if Jesuit presence will be a future priority for the province and for Fordham. In addition, Jesuits are regularly reminded that membership is declining in the U.S., and this awareness may cloud over the perception of real areas for mission opportunity in higher education.

Such fears and doubts would be addressed and likely alleviated through more structured conversations within the Jesuit community and with University leadership, to be initiated at times by each with the other. One such effort is presently planned for the end of this semester, with a gathering of Fordham Jesuits precisely to address these concerns.

Additionally, Fordham would benefit from more outreach to Jesuits in formation, at Ciszek and beyond, by hosting programs of interest during the winter break and/or over the summer. This would not only serve potentially to recruit Jesuits to Fordham but also to reassure the Society that the University is serious about its long-term commitment to Jesuit presence at Fordham.

### **Moving Forward**

Through its relationship to the Society of Jesus, Fordham demonstrates its commitment to all four priorities articulated in this MPE, along with opportunities to strengthen them through even greater engagement between the University and the Jesuit community on shared goals and strategies.

Given the Church's emphasis on synodality and lay leadership, there is an urgent need to form lay people for this mission, underscoring that the relationship between the Society and the University is arguably more necessary now than ever.



**CHARACTERISTIC 7:**  
**Institutional Integrity**

## Characteristic 7: Institutional Integrity

### Living the Mission

Among all the divisions and departments of the University, the Office of Human Resources (HR) has demonstrated an exceptional interest in and commitment to mission integration. The visionary VP for HR has focused the department on fostering partnerships across campus, providing exceptional service to faculty, administrators, and staff, and implementing innovative technologies in pursuit of caring for the whole person—body, mind, and spirit, thereby cultivating a deeply engaged, loyal, and productive workforce.

Through the efforts of HR in partnership with all departments and divisions of the University, employees benefit from the core mission values of inclusivity and engagement, fairness, and a commitment to health and well-being.

### Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

In support of inclusivity and to counter racial, gender, and other biases, Fordham elevated the Chief Diversity Officer to a Cabinet position as Vice President for Equity and Inclusion (VPEI). The new VPEI is a vital member of Fordham's senior leadership team, an expert strategist and change agent charged with: 1) advancing academic excellence through diverse perspectives; 2) fostering a culture where all feel welcome and cared for; and 3) promoting equitable access to opportunities for students and employees at the margins.

Through policies and training of new and ongoing employees, the University supports inclusivity and deters bias for potentially marginalized groups. In its recruitment and hiring of new employees, Fordham supports accessibility and transparency with available jobs at every level.

In the service of inclusivity and engagement among faculty, and senior administrators, a Shared Governance Working Group was created through the Office of the Provost to ensure the principles, qualities, and processes of shared governance are applied across the University. This working group developed a framework by which the faculty, administrators, and the council of each school can review and improve shared governance practices at their level of operation.

Human Resources launched the Flourish Program in 2021 to develop employee leadership skills and inspire employees to take part in shaping our future. This inclusive program focuses on assisting employees to upskill their competencies, build networks, and engage with leadership.

In 2024, the Fordham Investment Office engaged with the board, students, faculty and the wider community to consider a formal approach to socially responsible investment in line with Fordham's mission and its Jesuit and Catholic values. This decision stemmed from a 2023 joint meeting of the Mission and Identity Committee and the Finance and Investment Committee of the board. During this session, the trustees reaffirmed their commitment to understanding the Fordham endowment's exposure to socially responsible investments and investments that have a positive impact on issues referenced in the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

### Fairness

In the interest of fairness, Fordham strives to provide competitive market rate wages to all employees. To ensure transparent and equitable compensation, the University has undertaken a comprehensive review of staff salaries. In addition, the Employee Handbook is periodically reviewed and revised to reflect recent changes in the law, making it more user-friendly and easily accessible to all employee classifications. The recently hired CFO engages the University on financial matters as budgets tighten and the higher education market continues to be carefully scrutinized.

Admittedly, Fordham struggles to maintain affordability and keep pace with cost. A key contributor to this challenge is that each constituency advocates for its own fair share, seemingly blind to market differences that inform compensation for different disciplines, roles, and responsibilities. All of this makes it even more difficult to make financial decisions for the whole University. Nevertheless, in response to the requests of the lowest-paid contingent faculty, base salary raises were allocated for this group to soften the effects of market forces on salary decisions.

The Budget Planning Committee, which is composed of faculty and administrators, meets regularly to review the budget status and resolve any foreseeable changes. Quarterly administrative budget meetings are held to discuss the budget, monthly forecasting, and annual results, as well as the proposed timetables, deadlines, and usage of systems. The Office of Finance meets with the deans to plan and discuss their financial needs before sharing the University's financial status with the entire Fordham community at the annual budget forum in the spring.

### **Commitment to Health and Well-Being**

Following the recommendations of the University's own internal task force, Fordham's curated benefits package manifests Jesuit values in tangible ways. The University's retirement plan demonstrates a long-term investment in employees' financial security, extending the University's care well beyond their employment tenure.

Consistent with the Jesuit mission of *cura personalis*, Fordham is likewise committed to the physical and behavioral well-being of its employees.

### **Challenges to Living the Mission**

Despite the high quality of mission-based programming offered to employees, levels of participation are relatively low. For example, Fordham successfully secured a New York State Accessibility Awareness grant to support communication and training in serving students with disabilities, but staff and faculty participation was disappointing.

At the same time, HR is undaunted in its commitment to mission implementation, redoubling its efforts in this area for onboarding new employees and collaborating with MIM in developing mission-related programming for ongoing employees. In addition, the University regularly seeks feedback from new hires and long-standing employees about their workplace experience, including their awareness and experience of the core mission and values of Fordham.

### **Moving Forward**

Fordham's strong commitment spearheaded by HR to the initial and ongoing mission awareness and development by all employees of the University from initial hiring through retirement and beyond demonstrates convincing support for the grounding and ongoing pursuit of Mission Priority 1: Strengthening an infrastructure for mission integration.



## **V. New or Adapted Jesuit Mission Priorities**



## V. New Or Adapted Jesuit Mission Priorities

One of the most important lessons to emerge from this Examen is that while the Jesuit and Catholic identity and mission of Fordham are recognized and appreciated by members of each constituency (prospective and present students, faculty, administrators, and staff), there is a lack of clarity and a corresponding underappreciation for its value among many others in each of those categories. This highlights the need for structures to enable a more effective communication of this mission and identity from the very beginning of a person's career at Fordham all the way through it.

As such, this MPE proposes:

### PRIORITY 1: Strengthen our Jesuit and Catholic mission-based culture

*"Being Jesuit and Catholic is our identity, value proposition, and most importantly, the entire point of our enterprise." (FSP, III, A.)*

- A) Adopt a developmental approach to mission education and implementation, so that the Jesuit and Catholic mission is clearly articulated and communicated to every employee from recruitment through orientation, and all the way through to retirement.
  - 1. Develop a more mission-centric approach to the recruitment, hiring, and orientation of new faculty, as well as afford more mission opportunities for pre- and post-tenured faculty throughout their Fordham career. This will be a collaborative effort involving the provost's office, the deans, the chairs of departments, and the Office of Mission Integration.
  - 2. Develop similar mission programs for staff, both clerical and non-clerical throughout their Fordham career—a collaborative effort involving the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Mission Integration.
  - 3. Create and improve upon formation programs for the Cabinet and other VPs, deans, and chairs through mission seminars and fora.
  - 4. Foster ongoing mission awareness with the trustees, through pilgrimages, seminars, and special events.
  - 5. Advance the Jesuit, Catholic identity of Fordham with alumni, parents, and families, working closely with Development and University Relations (DAUR).
  - 6. Secure grants and donor gifts in collaboration with DAUR, as this priority will require additional resources to support it.

The emerging strategic plan invites the entire University to forge a more collaborative, trusting, and hopeful community, and the MPE heard from students, faculty, and staff who expressed their grounding in faith and spirituality, across a range of religious traditions, as the way to promote this kind of community. One faculty person put it this way, "Given the centrality of religion to Fordham's identity, the wide range of religious views among our students—including those who don't identify with a religion—and my own perspective as an 'other Christian,' I try to incorporate this rich range of perspectives into my class discussions. It also is a key factor in the research topics I tackle and my commitment to inclusive excellence."

With the hiring this year of a rabbi and imam, Fordham is poised to foster a well-informed and deep appreciation for one's own faith and religious tradition in dialogue with those of others.

As such, this MPE proposes:

### **PRIORITY 2: Forge community by supporting faith and spirituality across all religious traditions**

1. Through liturgies, retreats, prayer communities, and guided individual and group reflection exercises, invite students to deepen their understanding and appreciation of their faith.
2. Through ministry to the Catholic (including Eastern Catholic), Orthodox, Jewish, and Muslim communities, advance models for appreciating differences and learning how to engage constructively and be transformed by others from different backgrounds and faith perspectives.

Aligning with the emerging strategic plan and its call to research and academic excellence, with a focus on transdisciplinary research that matters to our world, this MPE heard from faculty and students who are passionate about engaging this focus for their work here at Fordham and beyond. One full-time faculty member offered, “I am part of a group of faculty immersed in migration initiatives primarily via the Zolberg Foundation-supported Migrants, Migration and Human Dignity initiative. All of this feeds me spiritually and I have now incorporated migrant justice as part of my pedagogy.”

As such, this MPE proposes Priorities 3 and 4:

### **PRIORITY 3: Advance transformative teaching and education**

- A) For *undergraduate students*, at each stage of their Fordham career:
1. Through their orientation and early academic experience, with the First-Year Experience, “*to focus more of our best teaching on the crucial first year*” (FSP, Centering Students)
  2. Through the Core Curriculum under revision, and an emphasis on the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in teaching, all intended to embody and explain Jesuit pedagogy and mission
  3. Through interdisciplinary courses taught with an emphasis on ethics and social justice, and with high impact practices (FSP, Centering Students), such as community engaged learning, mentoring, guaranteed internship placements (the Fordham Internship Promise), study abroad, and career advising
- B) For *graduate students*, at each stage of their Fordham career:
1. By training graduate and professional students with an ethical lens and commitment to social justice through curricular and co-curricular means, e.g. internships and clinic placements
  2. Through the interdisciplinary courses and high impact practices described above, “We send graduates to the front lines of building opportunity, navigating ethics and power, teaching, counseling, and caring for those in need.” (FSP, III, B)

### **PRIORITY 4: Advance public impact research**

1. Through a “transdisciplinary research hub that unlocks the puzzle of interdisciplinarity” (FSP, Research and Academic Excellence), faculty can pursue public impact research, beginning with the four areas that they have already widely endorsed, namely migration, climate change, AI, and democracy.
2. Through institutional efforts to implement *Laudato Si’*, as mandated by Pope Francis, faculty and administrators continue to advance the seven-year Green Plan for Environmental Justice.
3. Through one of the key high impact practices of student participation in faculty research



## VI. Implementation and Integration





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As these Mission Priorities either reinforce or complement key goals articulated in Fordham's emerging strategic plan, they are well positioned for integration and implementation by the University. In addition, these Mission Priorities are also well aligned with the UEA Apostolic Plan and its key priorities (themselves grounded in the Society's Universal Apostolic Preferences), and as such they are likewise well positioned for engagement and implementation by the Jesuit community as it aligns its efforts more fully with the apostolic plan of the University.

Progress on the implementation of these Mission Priorities will rely on effective communication and collaboration among various departments and divisions of the University, most extensively in the operationalization of Mission Priority 1: Strengthening an infrastructure for mission.

1. University Marketing and Communications with Mission Integration, as evidenced by the most recent (and very first in the history of Fordham) Audience Research Study of our Brand (August 2024) (see Appendix H). Through that study, as referenced earlier in this MPE report, Fordham learned that among the 8,000 prospective and current undergraduate and graduate students and alumni surveyed, 29% cited the Jesuit mission as their reason for coming to Fordham, and an additional 27% of current students reported appreciation for the mission, despite originally feeling negatively toward it or not knowing about it. At the same time, 40% of current undergraduates reported that the Jesuit mission did not affect their experience. These data underscore the need for a clearer communication of the Jesuit mission from the recruitment phase of new students.
2. Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Mission Integration. Given the academic, relational, and mental health challenges facing current undergraduates as they transition to college, the creation and implementation of a new First-Year Experience to provide mentorship, connection, and support through *cura personalis*, guided reflection experiences, and access to communities of learning, faith, and service.
3. Provost's Office, Deans, and Chairs of Departments with Mission Integration. To provide a more mission-centric approach to the recruitment, hiring, orientation, and ongoing formation for mission of faculty.
4. Office of Human Resources with Mission Integration. To build on mission programming for employees throughout their Fordham career.
5. Development and University Relations with Mission Integration. To build on mission programming for alumni and donors and also to secure funding for the entire mission infrastructure through grants, partnerships, and donor gifts.

Mission Priorities 3 and 4, advancing public impact teaching and research, already enjoy broad appeal among University faculty, and as key components of the emerging strategic plan, their implementation is highly likely to be advanced and funded by the University. The inclusion of a research focus on climate change and environmental justice aligns with UAP No. 4 (Care for our Common Home) and it is explicitly articulated in the UEA Province Priority 3 as "engaging with greater freedom in the mission of ecological and social justice."

Whereas the above Mission Priorities largely reinforce the goals and directions articulated in the emerging University strategic plan, Mission Priority 2, forging community by supporting faith and spirituality across all religious traditions, complements those goals and directions by offering a path to creating the more trusting and hopeful community called for by that plan. As such, the implementation of this priority will be largely assumed by Campus Ministry within Mission Integration, and the recent hiring of a full-time rabbi and imam reflect the University's support for this ministerial goal and direction.

## VII. Conclusion and Additional Comments



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Fordham University welcomed the peer team to campus January 12-15, 2025. Three of the four members arrived, while the fourth member and chair, Dr. Tom Poon, had to cancel his visit due to illness. In his stead, Dr. Ellen Maccarone served as chair during the site visit.

The visit afforded a privileged opportunity for the various constituencies in the University community to meet with the team both to share their experiences with mission awareness and implementation as well as to be invited to think more deeply about how to align their efforts more closely with the Jesuit and Catholic identity and mission of the University.

At the very beginning of their visit, the peer team expressed appreciation for this MPE Self-Report and especially applauded the honesty and transparency about challenges to living the mission at Fordham. They acknowledged that the MPE process at Fordham leading to the report was truly modeled as intended after an Ignatian Examen.

At the conclusion of their visit, the team gathered as a panel with the president and Cabinet, along with the Steering Committee members, to offer preliminary feedback and to converse with the University leadership about their impressions and findings. The team emphasized its impression that the University is deeply committed to its Jesuit and Catholic mission in so many ways, and they also noted areas for growth. Just a little over a week later, the team sent the MPE Peer Visitor Report to the President (see separate document).

Immediately following the visit, the VP for MIM met with the Mission Council to discuss how to address and implement the preliminary findings from the Peer Visit. He subsequently met with the president to do the same, with curricular and structural considerations discussed and preliminary plans for addressing them surfaced for ongoing work.

Finally, this Mission Priority Examen has been a singular grace for the Fordham University community—students, staff, faculty, administrators, trustees, and alumni—who have participated in numerous listening sessions and engaged with the peer team. The University is especially grateful to the team members, all of whom invested energy and effort, along with the wisdom borne of extensive experience in mission implementation, in its preparation, visit, and feedback.

We look forward to receiving feedback from other University stakeholders as we share these reports, and most especially from Father General as he considers the reaffirmation of our cherished Jesuit and Catholic mission at Fordham University.