

Incorporating and Promoting Principles of *Cura Personalis* into Xavier's Undergraduate Curriculum and First-Year Faculty Experience

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The Ignatian Mentoring Program was created to facilitate the incorporation and assimilation of the Ignatian vision into the professional identities of faculty at Xavier University. The program pairs early faculty members (i.e. those in their 1st-4th years) with experienced faculty members to serve as mentors. The pairs meet regularly to discuss the Jesuit mission and identity as it relates to one's own discipline and career, and each faculty mentee enrolled in the program is expected to incorporate a new mission-driven teaching component into their courses, and to articulate their scholarly works in a way that affirms the mission and identity of the University.

The objective of this work is to two-fold:

1. Mission-driven teaching

The first objective is to further explore and expand upon the mission-driven teaching component *cura personalis* in undergraduate health services courses.

2. *Cura Personalis* among First-Year Tenure-Track Faculty

The second objective is to identify practices at Xavier that promote *cura personalis* among tenure-track faculty during their first year.

Cura personalis (a Latin phrase that translates as "care for the entire person") is an Ignatian-Jesuit principle that emphasizes the importance of care not only for each individual, but for every part, i.e. the whole, of each individual. Thus, *cura personalis* suggests that each individual be given appropriate attention to their needs, respect for their unique circumstances, and appreciation for their distinct talents and contributions.

The first objective of this work (i.e. to further explore and expand upon the mission-driven teaching component *cura personalis* in undergraduate health services courses) is vitally important for Xavier's Health Services Administration undergraduate students. These students will soon be expected to competently manage a staff of healthcare professionals, and thus it is important that they are aware of *cura personalis* as one strategy for the prevention of "burnout" among their future staff of healthcare professionals.

"Burnout" is a colloquial term used to describe a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion among workers, especially those in the "helping" professions (i.e. medicine, nursing, social work, counseling, and teaching). It is associated with prolonged periods of excessive stress, coupled with high ideals, and nowhere are rates of burnout higher than in the field of healthcare. Burnout of healthcare professionals is dangerous to the healthcare professional themselves, as well as to the patients and communities that they serve. To satisfy the first objective of this work, a new component is being developed for *HESA 410 Public Health* that addresses the burnout of healthcare professionals as a public health issue, and which recognizes *cura personalis* as one possible strategy for prevention. During this portion of the course, students will be encouraged to reflect upon the principle of *cura personalis* as they work to:

- understand the etiology of burnout among healthcare professionals
- investigate the implications of burnout for patient safety, quality of care, and health care costs
- recognize the symptoms of burnout among healthcare professionals

- evaluate policies designed to prevent burnout of healthcare professionals from occurring

The second objective of this work is to identify and evaluate practices that could potentially be implemented to promote *cura personalis* among first-year tenure-track faculty members at Xavier. The first year is an important time for tenure-track faculty to build a solid foundation for success. A solid foundation serves to benefit not only the individual faculty member, but also Xavier and the students of Xavier, ideally for many years to come. While a successful first year is undeniably valuable, it is also undeniably challenging. Thus, there are unique aspects of the first year as a tenure-track faculty member that may be perceived as being in direct opposition to the principles of *cura personalis*. This presents an opportunity for Xavier to evaluate (and perhaps eventually implement) practices and/or policies that serve to ensure the principles of *cura personalis* are being prioritized and preserved during the first year as tenure-track faculty.

In order to build a solid foundation for success, first-year tenure track faculty members must be ensured sufficient time to:

- Prepare their courses
- Become integrated into the affairs of their department
- Establish a productive research agenda
- Become more familiar with the culture and mission of Xavier

Practices and/or policies have been developed and implemented by other US universities in order to help first-year faculty successfully achieve these goals, but it is unknown whether these practices would be helpful if implemented at Xavier. In order to evaluate these practices in terms of their perceived helpfulness to first-year faculty, all faculty mentees enrolled in the Ignatian Mentoring Program (n=13; first-author excluded) were asked to participate in a brief online survey (response rate: 62%). The survey presented each mentee with seven practices that have been implemented at other universities across the US, and asked them to *evaluate each practice in terms of how helpful it would be for supporting a first-year faculty member as they work to build a solid foundation for success at Xavier:*

Respondents could rate each of the seven practices in terms of perceived helpfulness by selecting one of the following:

N/A	I don't have an opinion about this practice
0	Not at all Helpful
1	Slightly Helpful
2	Moderately Helpful
3	Significantly Helpful

On a scale of 0 to 3 (with 0 being Not at all Helpful and 3 being Significantly Helpful), the average score of all practices combined was 2.24. Average individual scores for each practice ranged from 2.13 to 2.63. Overall these data indicate that, if implemented, the practices outlined in the survey are likely to be at least moderately helpful in supporting first-year tenure-track faculty as they work to build a solid foundation for success at Xavier.

Survey responses indicated that the *most* helpful practice would likely be a one-course reduction in teaching responsibilities for first-year tenure-track faculty. This practice received the highest average score (2.63), and was the only practice in which every respondent indicated that it would be at least moderately helpful, and was also the only practice in which the *majority* of respondents indicated that the practice would be *significantly* helpful.

Practice being Evaluated	Mean Score
First-year tenure-track faculty members receive a one-course reduction in their teaching responsibilities	2.63
First-year tenure-track faculty members receive a workload equivalency for collaborating with undergraduate students on research projects	2.29
First-year tenure-track faculty members are paired with a teaching assistant for exceptionally large classes	2.29
First-year tenure-track faculty members are not permitted to have service obligations above the department level	2.14
First-year tenure-track faculty members receive a workload equivalency for exceptionally large classes	2.13
First-year tenure-track faculty members are paired with another faculty member for advising students during their first semester	2.13
First-year tenure-track faculty members are paired with faculty mentors who have completed a mentorship training program	2.13

Cura personalis is an integral component of Xavier's mission. The Ignatian Mentoring Program encourages faculty to include this principle in their classroom and pursue it in their career. A component that emphasizes the importance of *cura personalis* is being developed for the undergraduate course *HESA 410 Public Health*. Further, practices have been identified that are likely to be helpful in supporting first-year tenure-track faculty members as they work to build a solid foundation for success at Xavier, which would in turn promote and preserve *cura personalis* in this group. These practices, and especially the practice of a one-course reduction in teaching responsibilities, should be considered for first-year tenure-track faculty in the future.