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AFMIX Cohort #12

Capstone – Program Reflections

I still remember the first time I heard about AFMIX. I had arrived on Xavier’s campus for my in-person interview – this was before I was officially hired into my position – and the hiring committee posed an interesting question to me: “What do you know about Jesuit education?” Having attended a Jesuit all-male high school, I shared the little I knew. The Jesuits at my high school were incredible. All of them were highly educated, creative, somewhat strict and a little quirky. We had learned about St. Ignatius and his Jesuit mission through high school theology classes, but as with many things you learn in high school, unused knowledge eventually fades. My only recollection of Jesuit education was the impression those Jesuits left on me. Well that, and the daily prayer we recited every day before first period.

I fumbled through the question for sure. But talking through the answer made me realize that if I were to help market a Jesuit Catholic university, I should probably know a little more about those quirky Jesuits. I don’t remember who it was exactly – it was probably Audrey – but during that interview, I learned about AFMIX and how it was open to all faculty and staff members. The program seemed like a perfect way to reacquaint myself with Jesuit education.

Having completed AFMIX, I feel better suited to answer the question “What do you know about Jesuit education?” I’ll do my best to answer that here.

Jesuit education is shared knowledge delivered with the intended purpose of helping young men and women discover then use their talents in service of God. There are two key parts of Jesuit education. First, Jesuits place heavy emphasis on discovery. Reflection and discernment – two key themes in Ignatian spirituality – are of heavy importance here. The Jesuits believe that through a process of contemplation and discernment, a person can figure out how they can use their gifts to derive a sense of personal satisfaction that aligns with the service of God through others.

The second part of Jesuit education is the ability to take what you’ve learned and use it in service of God. The phrase ‘Light the world on fire’ comes to mind here. At Xavier and at other Jesuit-led institutions of higher learning, the hope is that students take what they’ve learned in college and use it to make a positive difference in the world. There is a greater purpose to classes here. It is to prepare students in all fields (not just those directly related to social justice) to make a significant impact in the lives of those they encounter.

Overall, AFMIX gave me a foundational understanding of Jesuit education which I use to view everything that goes on at the university. Even though we as employees work in different fields and have different skillsets, we’re all working toward the mission of helping students find their calling and make a difference in the world. There’s beauty in knowing that we’re all working to accomplish the same greater mission as faculty and staff.

AFMIX helped me realize this and for that, I will remain forever grateful.