

Our FY21 Hopes and Resolutions

My hope is that we continue to:

Begin meetings with reflections that permit vulnerability and transparency with one another that tap the deeper roots in us all and allow us to foreground those elements of our identities.

Care for and respect each other personally and professionally.

Do more of the same as far as our team dynamics and meaningful conversations. I think we have a really good thing going so hopefully we can stay the course.

Use humor and share a few good laughs.

Listen to each other.

Find ways to ensure we are doing everything we can to support each other – simple signs of support and encouragement, bouncing ideas off of each other, etc.

Cherish and adhere to our Jesuit Catholic Mission and Identity, using Ignatian principles/teachings as a guide in all we do.

Take the long view, and that our long view is colored by optimism.

My hope is that we:

Remain hopeful and optimistic, yet realistic and ready to confront/face the difficulties ahead

Remain grateful for, focused on and protective of our Jesuit Catholic Mission

Let our Mission Moments set the tone for critical thinking and discernment.

Tend to our *esprit* and culture of solidarity and kinship, inter-dependency and respect.

Make certain to engage in complete discussion and attend to differing/minor opinions per Ignatian Communal Discernment processes.

Find the wisdom to “thread the needle” in our response to sensitive issues of the day so that we position Xavier to be a beacon of light and leadership in a world that is often not truthful. We have the opportunity to be more a part of the solution than part of the problem.

As a team, can celebrate Mike’s final year at Xavier. His tenure and impact has been remarkable and it would be easy for Mike’s last year to get swallowed by Covid. We can’t allow that to occur.

Remember that our best decisions take time, and that some of that time should be spent testing those decisions with the people impacted by them.

Find ways to express gratitude more regularly.

Can speak more freely and respectfully—that we stay in conversation especially when uncomfortable truths are spoken.

Have additional opportunities to get to know more about each other either through exercises like the corner office article or, corona permitting, through social events outside of the office.

Strive to understand all areas and their respective perspectives as we problem solve and grow the success of Xavier together.

Always keep cura personalis and cura apostolica at the forefront of our minds as we make decisions about Xavier and for the campus community.

That we're able to all (not just DR's but the entire community) continue to work together in a spirit of generosity and openness. In light of COVID-19, a weakened economy, pay reductions, RIF's and a presidential search, folks in our community will be feeling tremendous stress and anxiety. It will be challenging to retain our sense of grace and patience with each other but I believe we will do it.

Improve consistency of communication to each other and to faculty and staff

a. Broadcast messages and communications have been very effective, however, not everyone reads or views them.

b. How do we ensure that decisions made or topics discussed in our DR discussions are properly communicated to our respective organizations?

c. How do we ensure we are properly engaging Faculty and Staff in our DR-level discussions and discernment processes?

d. We have been relying on Faculty Committee and SAC to help us with messaging, but there are times where this has not been as effective as we might have hoped. Are we expecting too much of them in their roles? Are we not clearly communicating what we are asking them to do?

e. What roles to other University Committees play in this communication strategy?

Find ways to improve working together despite "physical distance" through more in person discussions (where it is safe and practical to do so), by phone, and by Zoom; less email (eg Can we replace certain long email threads and "back and forth" with better use of our existing technology – Outlook, SharePoint, Microsoft Teams?)

Are able to navigate this presidential search and find a strong successor to Father Graham. There are many challenges facing Xavier in this search, and I pray for the search committee and our community that we are able to navigate those challenges and make the right choice. Again, I believe we can and will.

Have honest, frank dialogue but seek and listen even more intentionally to voices among us and beyond our circle.

Remember that we work best, think best, as a team, that Xavier is best served when we collaborate.

Have a DR meeting without coronavirus as an agenda item! ☺

My hope is:

That the spirit of our conversations remain in the very best interests of Xavier's future success.

That a vaccine is created that is safe and effective and we're able to return to some semblance of normal overall at some point in the academic year.

That we're able to return to campus as a community in a way that is safe for our students and colleagues. It will be a tremendous boost for Xavier if we can return to campus and limit the spread of COVID-19.

That mission moments continue to transform us into better servants, stewards, and companions

For a successful transition for Mike Graham and for Xavier as a new President is selected.

My hope is that I am:

Able to learn from our Mission Moments to communicate effectively externally.

An effective contributor to team cohesion and a comforting support for my 'teammates.'

Other hopes and inspirations

I would like to see us share the key challenges or projects in our respective areas on a more regular basis. Perhaps this could be through a weekly rotation so that we each provide an update on a monthly basis. Nothing fancy, just bullet points of our top items with a couple of sentences on each. We could share these ahead of time and then discuss key points during the meeting if time permits. This would help to improve our awareness across divisions and potentially identify additional opportunities for collaboration.

Ensuring we allow time (make time) for personal reflection, personal discernment and communal discernment regarding important discussions and key decisions. However...

a. We also need to recognize as DRs that certain decisions can/should/must be made by certain leaders when those decisions are within that leader's normal job responsibilities. This needs to be communicated to the campus community, too.

b. In other words, not every decision will come before the DR group or other groups for a lengthy and protracted discussion process.

The more important the decision, the more slowly and deliberately we should generally make it, allowing for those times where circumstances force speed upon us. All voices need to be heard and individuals invited to reflect on what they are hearing from one another and how what they are hearing helps them to think more deeply about, perhaps even re-frame, the issue at hand.

Specific to the DR group: we are collegial; I'm not sure we're always partners. Trust is the currency of a strong team. I hope we take time to continue to work on our relationships, as we did intentionally in the last year. It would be easy to allow Covid to distract from that.

Institutionally, the same – I hope we can be future-focused in the face of the immediacy of crisis. The best organizations will come out of Covid better. The same as we have a task force focused on the “now” of Covid, how are we looking forward?

Specific to FY22 and finances, I hope we have a conversation about a strategic approach to the expected reductions we'll need to make in FY22. I'm relatively confident we (each DR) made strategic reductions within our own divisions this summer. But I don't think a 6% across-the-board reduction was necessarily the most strategic approach to budget reductions for the university. To a degree this gets at the larger organizational development conversation we never quite get to and related process and technology shortcomings that take more resources than necessary.

How might we develop some kind of a “feedback loop” which allows us to ask questions at the end of the meeting—What went well. What could we do better? What needs more conversation? Etc.—that would help us build an examen-like structure into the fabric of the meetings such that we would grow in the ability to have meetings marked by greater depth of discussion and discernment?