**Assuring the Future Mission and Identity of Xavier - Capstone Reflection**

For a lot of people, the MAS system represents fear and change. For me, I see this as a tool that ensures Xavier's future survival.

As a financial adviser during the financial crisis, I was submersed in the news articles of bank after bank and company after company going bankrupt, with video clips of employees saying they never thought it would happen to their company. But the reality is, without proper financial management anyone and any company has the potential to fail. So, I truly believe that what I’m doing is important and beneficial to the University.

I also believe that I was not sent here by accident. Shortly after starting at Xavier for my MBA (at my last employer), I was asked to travel, sometimes every week. As a single mom, working full-time, traveling and trying to attain a Master’s degree, I was at the end of my rope. I prayed every day for guidance and help. Then one day, I saw the position at Xavier appear in the MBA newsletter. My prayers were answered! After that, I knew I was meant to continue on my spiritual journey, so joining the AFMIX class was a natural fit for me.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the AFMIX experience and specifically the Spiritual Exercises, which I plan to continue. Reflecting upon my work with MAS and the ideology that I learned through AFMIX, I was a bit cloudy on how I could live the mission while also working on MAS. But since I’m actually not the end user of the MAS reporting, I thought that I would survey the people who are the end users to find out their thoughts on how they see MAS fitting into the mission of the University. Below are a few quotes from the survey results:

*“At the most basic level, one way the MAS system enables us to fulfill that mission is to ensure we are solvent. As many of our colleagues say "without money, there is no mission." However, the MAS also forces us to analyze financial returns of each of our programs which is a way of helping us understand what the market is seeking in preparation for a career. Also, the MAS helps those within the University understand how to best use limited resources.” Tom Hayes ~ Dean, Williams College of Business*

*“We know of the 6 Jesuit charisms as articulated at Xavier: Magis, Cura Personalis, Reflection, Discernment, Solidarity and Kinship, and Service Rooted in Justice and Love. Another charism that we often do not articulate but is closely related to Cura Personalis is Cura Apostolica – care for the work. By that we mean that the work that we do in support of delivering the mission is also holy and worthy of our prayerful care. There are a host of things that we do that directly strengthen our ability to continue the work. Many of these tasks reside in finance, plant, recruiting and admissions, development and university advancement, and even in academic support – areas where it may seem that the mission is not being directly delivered (though I would disagree!). In your particular case, the work done in crafting the MAS reports is very technical, fiscally complex, and at times, obscure. Yet, by bringing the details of our financial standings for academic and non-academic programs to light in ways that are more understandable, you provide two things: 1. Insight into our ability to advance in fiscal strength, increasing our ability to persist and to grow in delivering our mission into the future; and 2. When done well, this simple (okay, it is really complicated…) report can dramatically improve our understanding of the way in which we are operating. This will provide powerful opportunities for administrators and faculty/staff to reflect on data in new and more enlightening ways and to discern future pathways for improvement.” Steve Herbert ~ Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School*

*“Academic program evaluation provides an opportunity to identify strengths and opportunities for improving our core business enterprise and is an expected function in any University committed to constant quality improvement. The MAS provides academic leaders and program faculty a second lens through which to view their work – and when combined with more traditional measures of program health – provide a multidimensional framework that can be used to initiate and sustain conversations about improving the academic enterprise on campus.” Paul Gore ~ Dean, College of Professional Sciences*

*“My hope is that MAS will provide for all of our academic and other programs a much clearer sense of how well our financial commitments match our mission-driven university priorities. The financial reports will tell us how much we’re investing in each activity, once all revenue and expenses are considered. When we combine the MAS data with a good understanding of Xavier’s mission and our strategic priorities, we should be able to identify any places where our priorities may be out of sync with our agreed-upon university goals. I hope that the results will allow us to make more intentional and strategic investments in support of Xavier’s mission.” David Mengel ~ Dean, College of Arts and Sciences*

After reading the survey responses, I was floored! I knew this project was important from a financial standpoint but hadn’t realize the direct connection to the mission before. This has actually helped me recognize the value of my work in a way that I had not previously seen. I would never have sought this information if not for the AFMIX project. I also could never connect my work to the mission because I didn’t fully understand the mission until after AFMIX. I can now clearly see that my over-the-top, detail-oriented personality, who strives for accuracy and precision, is what makes me a great fit for this position. It’s not a coincidence that I’m here and I’m especially grateful to be a part of AFMIX, the University and the mission.

*Dawn Butsch*

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