**EFFECTIVE MISSION PRACTICES AT THE UMI UNIVERSITIES**

Selective Ideas

For several years I have visited the UMI universities and have listened with great interest and appreciation to the various mission activities at each institution. While I have consistently been impressed with the variety and depth of the work in all the mission departments and the significant work of the Chief Mission Officer in forming and shaping mission information and experiences, I have also noticed an area of interest which are the ways mission integration has surfaced and been effectively used across the UMI institutions of higher education.

Rita O’Malley, Rebecca Harrington, and I decided to review the annual reports to the Provincial beginning in 2015 and to read these documents with two questions:
1. What mission practices seem to be successful and why;
2. What made those programs, events, and documents effective?

We discovered some common themes and were able to discover in those themes why people seemed to respond and integrate the ideas and experiences into their own areas and personal reflection.

We believe that you will see hints or parts of your own programs in these ideas. You also might discover some important handles for further reflection or some add-ons for incorporation in programs or experiences in your institutions.

The first stage of this process was to assemble what seem to be effective approaches to mission in the UMI universities. What now seems important is to attach some handles which will help elaborate on these ideas and to that end, we invite you to add documents which will inspire the application of these effective practices. Those are such items as the template which Debra Mooney distributed on a [Communal Discernment Process](https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/resources-by-theme/ignatian-communal-discernment) or LUC’s document on *Transformative Education in the Jesuit Tradition*. Our goal is to have a ready library of documents which point to mission integration and serve as reflective pieces on how to make some of the effective ideas internalized in your institution.

If you want to suggest items for this bibliography, I would ask that you insert the name and title of the document right after the applicable idea below. Save the document and return it to me and we will assemble a final document for our UMI institutions which will be distributed through our regular channels of your leadership. Please include the name of your institution in each suggestion.

What are the ideas and practices we discovered? In what follows, please find common themes and extra ideas which you might find of interest for influencing those at your institution.

* The integration of mission and identity seems to have the best footprint as it builds on the solid mission programs of institutions. While committing mission ideas into one’s vocabulary and reflection by administration, faculty, staff, and students can have an important place, those **programs which ask people to personalize the ideas** into a ‘way of life’ seem to make the mission live. Seemingly most important is the simple question at the end of a mission meeting, event, or experience: “What is your take-away’? This seems to begin a process of internalization and as this is repeated over time, it seems to become a reflective call to internalization. Such a question, if written, allows the CMO to revisit these individuals at some regular intervals and the ideas seem to develop.

[Manresa Orientation for Faculty/Staff - Mission and Identity - Programs | Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/manresa-for-new-faculty-and-staff/index) \*

* How does a mission office develop after **initial programs** in formation, new employee orientation, ICP, etc. Creative programs which focus energies for various interest groups allow people to grapple with and incorporate the mission into their own identity structures.

 [The Women’s Ignatian Leadership Salon at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/online-seminars/womens-ignatian-leadership-salon-jr/index)

* Significant **engagement of the ICP\* graduates** into carefully considered programs seems to have a significant impact. Those schools which have a way of renewing ICP graduates’ interest by exercising their talents and learned information into important programs seems to generate a multiplier effect in themselves and others.
*\*ICP = Ignatian Colleagues Program, a leadership program of the AJCU*

[Mission Priority Examen - Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/xaviers-mission/mission-examen/index)\*

[The Director of Faculty Programs in Mission and Identity – Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/conway-institute/director-of-faculty-programs/index) “

* **Student orientations** which are remembered are ones which employ experiences and icebreakers which students are required to attend. Mission ideas which are retained in the memory of students over their time at an UMI university are ones that devote at least half a day during orientation to mission information and experiences.

 [Manresa Orientation for 1st-year students at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/student-involvement/orientation/manresa/index)

* **Mission mentoring** programs have a real impact. These have appeared in UMI colleges, academic departments, and non-academic departments. In particular, programs that focus mission mentoring with faculty seem to be particularly helpful for engaging faculty in Ignatian pedagogy.

 [Ignatian Mentoring Program for faculty at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/ignatian-mentoring-program/index#:~:text=Ignatian%20Mentoring%20Program%20Affirming%20excellence%20in%20teaching%20scholarship,continuing%20with%20support%20from%20the%20XU%20Jesuit%20Community.)

* **Mission Animators** or a Mission Animator Committee/group on an UMI campus are effective if they work with the president and his/her cabinet. A group made up of faculty and staff seem to be most effective and creative in suggesting new ways to approach mission and identity. These animators often seem to work with mission themes and create programs around mission topics. Mission animators are groups that meet regularly and discuss important ways to vitalize the mission on campus. Effective groups engage such questions as how to hire for mission, what more can be done with mission programs, etc. What seems also effective in this group is when these groups have a voice with the CMOs and the communication between them and various areas of the university are considered important, and action emerges. The alternative type of group is that of a think tank about mission and identity.
[Mission Animators at Xavier University – annual themes](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/index)
* **Endowed Institutes/Chairs/Programs/Centers for Ignatian Spirituality and Leadership** which are connected with the Office of Mission seem to have effective outcomes.

 [The Ruth and Robert Conway Institute for Jesuit Education at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/conway-institute/)
[Assuring the Future Mission and Identity at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/afmix/index) \*
[Ignatian Mentoring Program at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/ignatian-mentoring-program/index) \*

* Focused work on creating a **collaborative experience on the interconnection of mission like areas** of the universities. When people on these various arms work together for mission-centric outcomes these seem to produce a lot of positive integration.

[Mission Animators at Xavier University – annual themes](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/index) \*

* One of our institutions seems to have created a lot of success with **its adjunct professors’ program**. In this institution there is an online course on Jesuit and Catholic identity and at the end the adjunct professors receive a pin to wear. Based on reports, this seems to be highly engaged program and the visuals indicate people are proud to show their connection to this process.

 [M.A.G.I.S. at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/conway-institute/contact-us)

* **Orientation programs which are off campus** and have an important mission component which engage the imagination and understanding of new faculty, staff, and administrators seem to reap long term rewards with people who become carriers of the mission.

 [Manresa Orientation for Faculty and Staff at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/manresa-for-new-faculty-and-staff/index)

* **Mission Moments** for meetings seem to have a deep impact over time. In particular, mission moments that dive deeper in time with 10 – 15 minutes and which have a personal engagement component seem to build into long lasting effects and expectations. Taking the time beyond a prayer seems the key.

 [Mission Reflections of the Senior Leadership Council at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/supporting-presidential-leadership1/supporting-presidential-leadership)
[Mission and Identity for Trustees - Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/trustees/)\*

* Two of the UMI schools are spending time and effort to develop a clearly defined **four year pedagogical and experiential** program for students to experience a Jesuit education. [The Road Through Xavier](https://kirchernetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/XAVIER-UNIVERSITY-Bauman-Melissa-Mooney.pdf) ([website description](https://www.xavier.edu/road-through-xavier/index)) and Ignatian Model for Student Success at JCU. Both are in process but seem to have a real appeal to students and parents as they make decisions about where to send their child/where they will fund a unique education. These programs do or will clearly articulate the components of a Jesuit education. Applied to all students with the engagement of faculty and staff makes promises realizable. Such foci as vocation, who am I becoming, what are my gifts, how to engage critical thinking, etc. form the content and background for these two innovative programs. Clear learning goals in a Catholic and Jesuit context seem to be part of this focus.
* **Communal discernment**, once it seems clear and the process understood, seems to have a significant effect on BOT, colleges, departments, student life, etc. Much was learned during the pandemic; much has been clarified. Most institutions want to know how to do this better.

 [Using an Ignatian Communal Discernment mindset by the President’s Cabinet at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/documents/all-cabinet-icd-mindset-examples.pdf)

* **The Ignatian Educator with Distinction** program has caught on and people take pride in receiving this certificate and going forth to communicate the mission.

 [The Province Ignatian Educators with Distinction at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/province-ignatian-educators-of-distinction)

* Programs which ask people to dive more **deeply into the Spiritual Exercises** seem to have a very positive effect. Programs which build on people making the Exercises seem most effective.

 [Wisdom Integration through the Spiritual Exercises for faculty - Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/wise/index)
[Assuring the Future Mission and Identity at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/afmix/index) \*

* Clear ways of proceeding with mission integration for Cabinets seem to focus and integrate the mission in institutions.
[Mission Reflections for the President’s SLC and Cabinet at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/supporting-presidential-leadership1/supporting-presidential-leadership)
* **Ignatian Heritage Weeks** (also known as Mission Weeks, etc.) are not only effective and creative moments, but as these abide in the institutions over time seem to be anticipated as mission integration experiences.

 *(while not annual* – [Xavier’s Presidential Inauguration in 2021 was week long on the theme of The Ignatian Year](https://www.xavier.edu/presidential-inauguration/index))
[Annual Pope Francis Presentations –on the anniv. of his election - at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/8thannualpresentation)\*

* Most of the schools have found that programs for **courageous conversations** or difficult conversations are a way to focus mission about very challenging topics in contemporary society. What seems most successful in this conversation are the focused questions and that people gather in honesty, openness, and respect for others.

 [Take it On 2024 at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/takeiton/index)

* **Service-learning departments** or areas for experiences are an important part of university life for students, but those which seem most effective in working for the integration of faith and justice are ones where two components are present. The first is prayer before engaging the service. The second is a reflective component after the experience which intentionally asks students to connect their experience with justice and faith.

 [Eigel Center for Community Engaged Learning at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/community-engaged-learning/)

* **Extended mission reading and reflection programs** (six months to two years) seem very effective in mission integration. In particular, programs which enjoy a good reputation and create desire for attending among administrators, faculty, and staff are ones that help people create an understanding of Jesuit identity and apply it in their area.

 [Assuring the Mission and Identity at Xavier University (2 years)](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/afmix/index)

* The most significant way to build on present programs is to ask the following question after a program or event ends each year: **How can we do this better or more effectively.** Many ideas come from the reviews of these experiences each year. Refreshing programs and events seems to be very effective.

[Manresa for Faculty/Staff - Mission and Identity - Programs | Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/manresa-for-new-faculty-and-staff/index)\*

* Mission and Identity which proceeds with a formula for **reflection, clarity, and creativity** seems to have an important effect. Along this vein, helping the institution to understand the difference between the parts of Mission and Identity which deal directly with ministry issues and the parts of Mission and Identity which frame the apostolic nature of the university helps clarify understandings for people.

[Assuring the Mission and Identity at Xavier University (2 years)](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/afmix/index) \*

[Lent and Advent Bible Study at Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/programs/bible-study/index) \*

* For some reason, when institutions focus on their **values**, these seem to have an important impact even if these are already expressed in the mission statement or other documents pertaining to the mission. It seems that people find these ‘value’ utterances more immediately accessible. Whether framed as university values or Ignatian values, the effect seems to have a living presence in people.

 [The Gifts of the Ignatian Heritage – Xavier University’s values](https://www.xavier.edu/mission-identity/xaviers-mission/ignatian-gifts-and-vision)

* Over and over, when **students** were asked about how they experienced the mission and identity of an institution, they have really good responses. They are highly effective representatives of the lived mission and, when asked, have many important things to say. These students are great carriers of the mission and can testify to it.

[Center for Faith and Justice | Xavier University](https://www.xavier.edu/cfj/)\*

*Created by Fr Dan McDonald in August 2021
 –black font is original*

 *- blue font/websites added by his invitation from each Province CMO
 \* added in updated response*