Marilyn Gomez, Assistant Dean for Student Services

Ignatian Leadership Capstone – Spring 2024

The Ignatian Leadership experience this semester has provided an opportunity to step away from day to day activities - to pause, listen, learn, reflect and discern how I can improve my skill set as a leader.

As members of the Xavier family, we are truly blessed to have the Gifts of our Ignatian Heritage. Our guest speakers were fantastic as they shared their unique experiences as leaders. Concepts that stood out to me to hone my skills as a leader include self-reflection, humility, being a servant leader, taking time to truly listen, communicate and walk with others.

The College of Nursing Student Affairs area includes the assistant dean, one administrative assistant and one nursing academic advisor. The BSN program enrolled its first class in 1995 with 20 freshmen and has grown to a population of approximately 600 students. The Nursing Student Affairs team is busy year-round assisting students with a multitude of needs. We are still see the effects of the pandemic and there is little time even in summer to take a pause and reflect on how we might better serve our students.

In the College of Nursing we emphasize to our students that their own self-care is essential in order to be the best student and the best nurse in their practice. This certainly connects to one of our Ignatian gifts – Cura Personalis. As busy as our students are, taking time for self-care care is a challenge for them as well.

One of the University committees on which I serve is the Xavier Action Care Team (XACT). The committee is led by Angie Kneflin, Director of Care Management Services and includes individuals from across campus. XACT meets once a week to review concerns submitted by faculty, staff or even other students on behalf of students who are struggling with a variety of challenges. These challenges are often are beyond academic and include mental health, personal/family difficulties and food insecurity. The XACT team determines who is best to follow up with each student to help them. While XACT is an important committee for the success of our students, it is difficult, hard work.

My membership on XACT and this semester’s Ignatian Leadership experience has reminded me that regardless of how busy I am, setting aside time for reflection is essential. What I have implemented for myself is - at the end of each day, I set aside time to use the Daily Examen of Consciousness. While every session of this inaugural Ignatian Leadership experience has been so valuable, the Daily Examen has helped me as I continue to serve in my role as assistant dean, on XACT and in my interactions with my team, our students, faculty and staff across campus.

Upon conclusion of my Ignatian Leadership experience, my goals are:

* To encourage my team to also take time for themselves and to consider incorporating the Daily Examen in their daily routine.
* To work with my team to develop a Nursing Student Affairs statement reflecting how we practice the Gifts of our Ignatian Heritage.