



UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
CONNECTICUT

USJ MISSION INTEGRATION COUNCIL

Report to the Board of Trustees - April 30, 2021

Mission Integration Council Charge

The Mission Integration Council reports to the President of the University and the Chair of the Board of Trustees and is charged with:

1. Identifying policies and procedures at USJ that ensure the continued integration of the University's mission and Catholic and Mercy Identities. The Council will assess policies and procedures related to:
 - a) Curricular and co-curricular development and integration;
 - b) Hiring, orientation, onboarding, and ongoing mission development of faculty, staff and Trustees;
 - c) Space, art, symbolism, and environment;
 - d) Inclusive worship, reflection, and ritual;
 - e) Engagement in community and celebrations; and
 - f) Catholic social teaching and critical concerns in action.
2. Evaluating how effective current policies and procedures are, and will continue to be, in ensuring mission integration.
3. Making recommendations for changes in policies and procedures to promote greater or more effective mission integration.
4. Making an annual presentation to the Board of Trustees to report on its evaluation and recommendations.

The Mission Integration Council is composed of:

- Two faculty members with doctorates in Theology or Religion
- One Sister of Mercy who is a USJ faculty or staff member
- Director of Campus Ministry
- One member of the Board of Trustees

Mission Integration Council Members

- Lynnette Colón, LPC – Director of Campus Ministry
- Sr. Beth Fischer, RSM – Director of Community Engagement
- Sr. Patricia Rooney, RSM- Trustee Emerita
- Gerri Roberts- Trustee
- Fr. Joseph Cheah, Ph.D.- Professor of Religious Studies and Theology (currently on sabbatical, and being represented by Nancy Billias, Ph.D. – Professor of Philosophy and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies)

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Call by the Board of Trustees:

The Mission Integration Council was charged to start with assessing the policies and procedures related to the first two Mission Integration Core Areas:

- Developing a systematic approach to Mission Integration in the curriculum; and
- Mission orientation process for new hires/ongoing mentorship for faculty and staff.

The first Core Area already integrated:

- <https://www.usj.edu/academics/areas-of-study/general-education-requirements/>
- [Guidelines for New or Modified Graduate Course Syllabi \(Revised December 8, 2020\)](#)

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Findings

- Developing a systematic approach to Mission Integration in the curriculum. A focus on **INTD 100 - First Year Seminar** and **INTD 301 - Mercy Integrative Seminar**:
 - **INTD 301** could focus more on the Mercy Critical Concerns and Catholic Social Teachings. A grounding focus can be on the Human Dignity theme.
 - There was the suggestion of an instructional video and a consultant for this course who could specifically support the Critical Concerns and the Catholic Social Teachings (CST).
 - There is a concern if faculty teaching **INTD 301**, with no theological training, are willing to commit to learning Catholic Social Teachings. There is a goal to provide additional instructional materials in the form of recorded webinars, faculty development workshops, and readings about CST that can be used across a wide variety of topics. Ideally, instructional materials can be accessible in our library for the instructors.

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Findings

- Developing a systematic approach to Mission Integration in the curriculum. A focus on **INTD 100 - First Year Seminar** and **INTD 301 - Mercy Integrative Seminar** (continued):
 - For FYS, it is important to have consistency with the Mission being clearly identified. It may be helpful to faculty to have a context that they can all follow when developing the curriculum.
 - In relation to Student Affairs co-curricular activities integrating Mission, the recommendation at the time was that they could benefit from identifying how their activities support Catholic Social Teachings and the Critical Concerns.

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Findings

- Additional and/or reiterated findings and recommendations on **INTD 301**, **INTD 100**, and **INTD 116**:
 - More staff members are expected to teach up to 40% of their time for this coming year. A few are scheduled to teach a section of **INTD 301** along with a section of **INTD 100 First Year Seminar**. There is the concern around limited training they have around CSTs and the Critical Concerns. It may be beneficial to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to develop knowledge about the CST and Mercy Mission. Perhaps offering an annual one- or two-day workshop to **INTD 301** instructors on this topic.
 - Develop a rubric or some assessment tool that can measure how much students have learned about the Mercy mission.
 - Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to develop knowledge about the CST and Mercy Mission. Perhaps offering an annual one- or two-day workshop to **INTD 301** instructors on this topic.

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Findings

- Additional and/or reiterated findings and recommendations on **INTD 301**, **INTD 100**, and **INTD 116** (continued):
 - Explore further the overload support limitations within the Gen Ed budget to increase faculty availability. Only one full-time faculty overload can be authorized per semester.
 - Having Campus Ministry visit FYS sections to, specifically, talk about Mercy Values & Mission.
 - **FYS II – INTD 116**: Support faculty & staff in making sure the Mercy Mission is clear in the service learning experience that is being introduced to students.
- Progress:
 - Fr. Joe put together a PowerPoint on the CST for each instructor to share with each class. A similar PowerPoint is available on the Sisters of Mercy and the Mercy Mission.
 - [Student Perception Survey of INTD 301](#)

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Findings

- Second Charge: Mission orientation process for new hires/ongoing mentorship for faculty and staff:
 - An Onboarding packet is sent to all new employees prior to their beginning at USJ: The Mission, Core Values & Mercy Path are included in the packet.
 - All new employees attend a half-day orientation meeting which addresses the Onboarding packets, shows three YouTube videos featuring what the Mission & Core Values mean to students and faculty. There is also a video from an alumna, Lois Luddy, who talks about her journey and the Mercy Mission.
 - Trustee orientation is conducted by the Board of Trustees Committee of Trustees and Governance in conjunction with the sitting President.

USJ Mission Integration Council's Current Findings

- Recommendation at this time:
 - HR was found to be supportive to the Mission. It was noticed that there is a need to add more Mission focused interview questions in the hiring process.

The background of the slide features a faded image of a banner hanging from a pole on the left. The banner has a colorful geometric pattern at the top and text below. To the right, a faded image of a building with a prominent dome and spire is visible against a light blue sky.

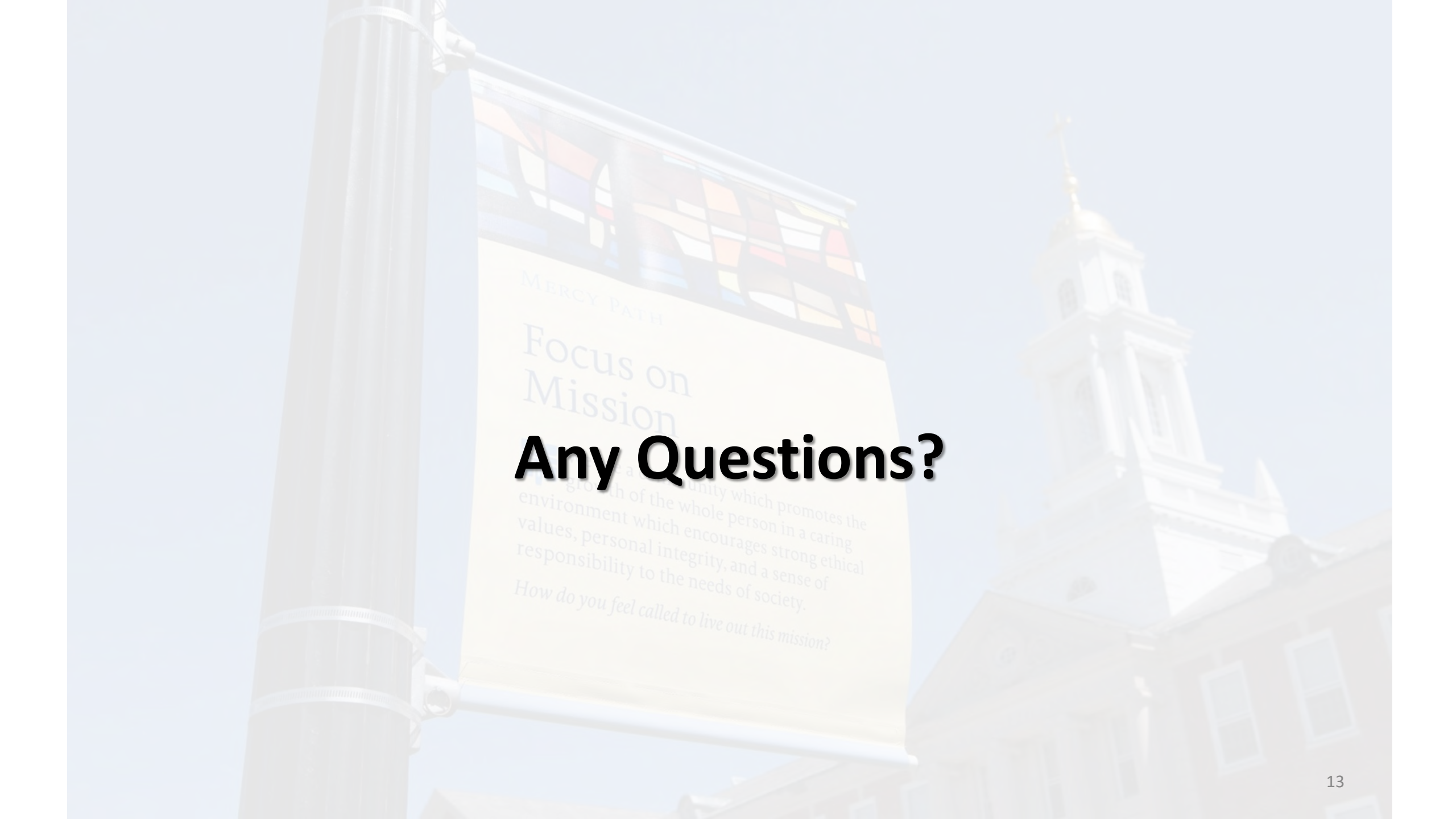
Focus on
Mission

 We are a community which promotes the growth of the whole person in a caring environment which encourages strong ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.

How do you feel called to live out this mission?

Next Steps:

- Follow up with any assessment recommendations by the Board of Trustees in connection to these first two charges.
- Mission Integration Council will meet on June 2 to identify the next one or two charges to address.
 - Ongoing Formation of Mission
 - Space, Art, Environment, and Symbolism
 - Inclusive Worship/Ritual and Reflection
 - Engagement in Community and Celebrations
 - Catholic Social Teaching/Critical Concerns in Action

A banner hangs from a dark pole on the left side of the frame. The banner has a colorful stained-glass pattern at the top. Below the pattern, the text 'MERCY PATH' is written in a small, sans-serif font. Underneath that, 'Focus on Mission' is written in a larger, serif font. The main body of the banner contains a paragraph of text in a serif font, followed by a question in italics. In the background, a church with a tall, ornate steeple topped with a cross is visible against a clear blue sky. The church building is made of light-colored stone or brick.

Any Questions?

To grow a community which promotes the growth of the whole person in a caring environment which encourages strong ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.

How do you feel called to live out this mission?