



UNIVERSITY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
CONNECTICUT

USJ MISSION INTEGRATION COUNCIL

Report to the Board of Trustees – May 5, 2023

Mission Integration Council Members

- Lynnette Colón, LPC – Associate Director of Student Activities for Faith and Service
- Sr. Beth Fischer, RSM – Director of Community Engagement
- Dr. Benjamin Peters – Professor of Religious Studies and Theology
- Gerri Roberts, J.D. – Trustee
- Fr. Joseph Cheah, Ph.D. – Professor of Religious Studies and Theology

➤ The Mission Integration Council assessed the policies, procedures, and/or activities related to the following Mission Integration Core Areas:

- Engagement in Community and Celebrations.
- Catholic Social Teaching and Critical Concerns in action.

➤ Questions used to assist in the assessment:

- What policies and/or programs are in place that support the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy?
- What policies and/or programs are in place that support the Mission and Core Values?
- What are activities/events that involve the general community and support the Mission and Core Values?
- What are some community partnerships that support the Mission and Core Values?
- What planning documents are there to support the Mission and Core Values?

Departments/Programs Assessed:

- Athletics
- Institutional Advancement/Alumni Relations
- Common Read Committee
- Department of Philosophy, Theology, & Religious Studies (PTRS)
- Diversity and Inclusion/Title IX
- Faculty/Co-Curriculum
- Financial Aid
- SALD (Student Activities Leadership Development- under Student Affairs)
- Community Engagement
- Student Activities for Faith & Service

MIC's Current Findings: Athletics

- Provides students the opportunity to participate in intercollegiate team sports with the goal of developing students academically, competitively, physically, and emotionally, including the development of leadership skills.
- Offers programs with content related to stress management, study skills, tutoring, and diversity & inclusion with the goal of enhancing student-athlete success.
- Supports USJ's Core Value of compassionate service by hosting a number of food, personal care product, and diaper drives for community partners including Hands on Hartford, Mercy Housing & Shelter, and Malta House of Care.

MIC's Current Findings: Common Read

Builds community among students, faculty, and staff, helping people get to know one another and connect to the University's Mission and Core Values.

All first-year students read the book as part of their courses; the rest of the USJ community is invited to read along. Everyone may attend events that dig deeper into the topics and themes of the chosen book.

The Common Read is selected by a committee of faculty, staff and students who consider the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy and the Mission and Core Values when choosing a book. As a whole, the program supports the Core Values of Academic Excellence and Development of the Whole Person, encouraging students to think deeply about current issues, make connections to their lives and the world around them, and gain familiarity with the expectations of college work.

Recent Selections:

2020: *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

2021: *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City* by Mona Hanna-Attisha

2022: *Sitting Pretty: The View from my Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body* by Rebekah Taussig

MIC's Current Findings:

Institutional Advancement | Alumni Relations

Alumni Relations has supported the Mission and Core Values by participating a variety of events, including:

- Mercy Day
- Chapel Bells
- 90th USJ Anniversary Mass
- Distinguished Alumni Awards
- Reunion Weekend food drive
- Mercy Mission lectures and programs
- Reading/discussion groups related to social justice
- Partnering with Campus Ministry to support a Mass for Ukraine

Some Community Partnership examples:

- I.A. served as a bridge for a community partner to deliver unused food from the dining hall to a nearby soup kitchen.
- I.A. has partnered with Women's Leadership Center for educational programming that addresses the development of women.

I.A.'s financial planning supports the Mission and Core Values in the following ways:

- Raising nearly \$73 thousand for Catherine's Fund, which addresses students' urgent needs.
- Making scholarship funds a "top priority," raising millions of dollars to support students.

MIC's Current Findings:

Dept. of Philosophy, Theology, & Religious Studies (PTRS)

An external review of the Department cited the following:

- “Through coursework (both in the classroom and online), internships, guest speakers, and field experience, the department fulfills the mission’s call to impart ‘ethical values, personal integrity, and a sense of responsibility to the needs of society.’
- Faculty members, in their role as educators and scholars, are uniquely qualified to provide the Scriptural and theological bases for these values.
- In 2017, the department received a generous grant from the Teagle Foundation to develop a certificate of Interfaith Leadership. It employs notions of mercy and servant leadership as it explores issues and concepts involved in effecting personal and social change through interfaith leadership.
- Core Values are incorporated into the classes in “Food Ethics” and “Women’s Philosophers” and are discussed —along with the life and accomplishments of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy —in the PHIL 120 (Discovering Philosophy) course.

MIC's Current Findings: Diversity & Inclusion and Title IX

The Office maintains and enforces policies that cover the following Critical Concerns:

Women

Policies: Title IX policy, Parenting and Pregnancy, Employee Handbook, and Lactation Room locations, non-discrimination statement.

Programs: Day of Beauty, colorism awareness, What were you Wearing, IPV awareness programming,

Racism

Policies: Student Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook, non-discrimination statement

Programs: Panels and discussions on minorities in professions, Immigration panels, Notable professionals from underrepresented communities

Immigration

Policies: Student Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook, non-discrimination statement

Programs: The West Indian Experience Panel, Asian-American discrimination, Ramadan dinner observation, programs about underrepresented groups

Non-Violence

See all programs listed above. The Office seeks to educate and promote compliance within these areas in an effort to stem violent acts that arise out of them.

MIC's Current Findings: Diversity & Inclusion and Title IX

Mission and Core Value Policies and Programs:

- Policies: Crown Act, paid pregnancy leave, civility clause of the Student and Employee handbook. Investigations into claims of disparate treatment.
- Programs: Investigations for claims of disparate treatment, training and education for campus policies and practices under the office's authority, panels and lectures on/from underrepresented groups.

General Community Activities/Events and Community Partners:

- MLK community celebrations.
- This office maintains MOUs with CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence and CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence. This office has regularly engaged outside individuals for panels and programs.

MIC's Current Findings: Faculty/Core Curriculum

- Developing a systematic approach to Mission Integration in the curriculum.
- For **INTD 301 - Mercy Integrative Seminar:**
 - Focus more on the Mercy Critical Concerns and Catholic Social Teachings (CST), with a grounding focus on Human Dignity.
 - Create an instructional video for this course to specifically support the Critical Concerns and the Catholic Social Teachings.
 - 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 **INTD 100 - First Year Seminar:**
 - Ensure that consistency with the Mission is clearly identified. It may be helpful for faculty to have a context that they can all follow when developing the curriculum.

MIC's Current Findings: Faculty/Core Curriculum

- Additional findings and recommendations for **INTD 301 and INTD 100**:
 - Suggest providing opportunities for faculty and staff teaching sections of **INTD 301** and sections of **INTD 100 First Year Seminar** to develop knowledge about CST and the Critical Concerns, perhaps through an annual one- or two-day workshop for **INTD 301** instructors.
 - Develop a rubric or some assessment tool that can measure how much students have learned about the mission.
- Progress:
 - This year, the one staff member who taught INTD 301 attended the faculty development training for INTD 301 instructors. It was held in June 2022, funded by the Buckley Fund, and included presentations on Catholic Social Teaching, using the documents of CST, and the Critical Concerns in relation to CST. Funding was received for another workshop this summer.
 - There is a concern that funding for faculty development for INTD 301 is not a regular part of the General Education budget; however, using the Buckley monies also ensures that a main focus of the faculty development is on CST.

MIC's Current Findings: Faculty/Core Curriculum

- Additional 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 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 Mission.

MIC's Current Findings: Student Financial Services (SFS)

Offer Proactive Financial Services:

- SFS staff counsel students at each stage of the process, offering support around financial literacy and debt management, including:
 - Participating in all New Student Orientation programming for undergraduate and graduate students;
 - Using a proactive financial planning model to assist students in planning for the cost of a USJ degree, rather than planning one year at a time; and
 - Offering federal exit counseling to all students upon graduation or withdrawal USJ.
- Institutional grant aid awarded at time of enrollment is renewed annually for up to eight semesters/four years when satisfactory academic progress is made.

MIC's Current Findings: Student Financial Services (SFS)

Scholarships for qualified undergraduate students:

- **Honors Scholarship:** \$25,000 annually for up to four consecutive years for students who join the Honors Program.
- **Academic Merit Scholarship:** up to \$20,000 annually for up to four consecutive years based on a student's high school academic record.
- **Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship:** up to \$15,000 annually for up to four consecutive years awarded to community college transfer students who are members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.
- **Campus Visit Scholarship:** \$1,000 toward tuition for full-time students who make an official campus visit scheduled through the Office of Admissions.
- **USJ Grant:** varies in amount and is awarded to full-time students who demonstrate financial need.
- **Mercy Values Scholarship** recognizes enrolling students who embody USJ's Mission and Core Values with \$1000 to \$10,000 annually.
- The **Catholic Promise Scholarship** is part of an aggressive recruitment effort to attract and enroll Catholic high school graduates. Qualified students receive a \$25,000 scholarship annually (\$100,000 total over four years).

MIC's Current Findings: Community Engagement

The role of the Office of Community Engagement is two-fold:

- to promote and facilitate compassionate service as part of the teaching and learning experiences; and
- to provide students with service opportunities to enhance their educational experience.

The goal is to fully engage students in the USJ experience and to show the interconnectedness between curricular and co-curricular activities.

USJ has developed ongoing partnerships with a number of faith-based and mission-focused organizations to offer students “hands-on” experiences. These partnerships include The Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry, Malta House of Care, Mercy Housing & Shelter, and Hands on Hartford.

MIC's Current Findings:

Student Activities, Residential Life, and Wellness

The **Office of Student Activities** helps students develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually through active involvement in student clubs and organizations as well as diverse program planning.

Residence Life has programming that is hosted by the Resident Assistants (RA) on the topic of Diversity and Multiculturalism. All RAs and professional staff are trained on how to handle and report incidents of bias and discrimination so that they can be addressed in our residence hall community should it occur.

The **Wellness** Coordinator & Educator works to enhance students' well-being and resiliency; cultivate empathy, compassion, and kindness; and build trust and connection within the community. There is a designated "Wellness Room" where students can go for relaxation & de-stressing.



A vibrant yellow poster with a large white circle in the center. The text is in blue and red. The main title 'USJ CARES WELLNESS FAIR' is in large blue letters. Below it, the date and time 'Feb. 15, 2023 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.' and the location 'McGovern' are listed. To the right, a list of activities is provided under the heading 'Visit:'. In the center, there is a graphic of two red tickets with the word 'TICKET' and the number '2179264'. Below the tickets, the prizes are listed. In the bottom right corner, there is a red circle with white text about free meal vouchers.

USJ CARES WELLNESS FAIR

Feb. 15, 2023
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
McGovern

Visit:

- USJ Clubs/ Departments
- Free Massages (from 11-3pm)
- Animal Therapy
- JiuJitsu
- Life Coach
- Art Therapy
- Free Food
- And
More!

RAFFLES - ENTER TO WIN

TICKET
2179264

PRIZES INCLUDE:
WEIGHTED BLANKET,
MASSAGE GUN, THERAPY
LAMP & MORE!

**FREE MEAL
VOUCHERS FOR
COMMUTERS!**
While Supplies Last

MIC's Current Findings: Student Activities for Faith & Service

- Faith & Service works closely with Community Engagement to connect the USJ Community to compassionate service experiences. Faith & Service has also been working on creating a service page that will allow the general community to reach out when seeking volunteers, and to allow the USJ Community to communicate its service needs to this office.
- Survey results indicate that Campus Ministry programming does support the Mission, Core Values, and Critical Concerns. Program success increases when programs:
 - are organized in collaboration with faculty and/or other departments;
 - Include arts and crafts activities and/or music;
 - offer multicultural opportunities, especially for students from diverse backgrounds; and
 - Take place on weekdays, with mid-morning and afternoon timeframes preferred.

CMHE Biennial Conversation with USJ

Following the April 18, 2023, conversation, CMHE:

- commended the thoughtful integration of the Catholic, Mercy identity into the curriculum, particularly in the first-year and the interdisciplinary senior-year capstone, and the fact that new academic program proposals must highlight their mission-fit;
- appreciated the conversation and context regarding the work of the Mission Integration Council;
- encouraged USJ to be open to the recommendation to establish the position of mission officer to further integrate the ownership for mission into all segments of campus;
- cited the strategic planning process as a key example of the involvement of diverse stakeholders on campus as well as allowing mission to guide the work, and appreciated the attentiveness to the continued integration of male students into the life of University of Saint Joseph; and
- encouraged continued progress on the 2019 Team Report recommendations regarding strategic resources and planning.

MIC Recommendations:

- Have the Department of Philosophy, Theology, & Religious Studies (PTRS) develop a video on the deeper connection of the Mercy Values to their biblical and theological sources in a way that students can easily understand. The Offices for Faith & Service and Community Engagement can show some of the outreach programs currently in place that fit the value.
- Develop workshop opportunities for faculty and teaching staff that center on the Catholic Social Teachings, the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, and the USJ Core Values. Workshops can provide guidance on how to incorporate these themes into curriculum.
- The Mission Integration Council has decided that it will be a benefit to expand this Council with a subcommittee that will assist in the follow-through of recommendations.
- The University would benefit from reviewing and updating policies and facility capacities that support enhancing the engagement of community partners.



Questions?