

Next Steps from Board Retreat Focused on Anti-Racism Examen

February 18, 2022

Dear Members of the University Community

As we previously announced, the Board of Trustees engaged in a facilitated discussion of the Anti-Racism Examen as a key part of a retreat held this week on campus.

This Examen was developed by the Association of Jesuit Colleges & Universities (AJCU) to “... strengthen the link between personal reflection and institutional action.” In order to assist our deliberation, the Board enlisted two expert colleagues from sister Jesuit institutions: Robert Kelly, Ph.D., vice president and special assistant to the president, Loyola University Maryland, and Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos, assistant to the president for Mission and Integration, University of Detroit Mercy.

Our engagement with the Examen was informed by a comprehensive review earlier in the day of the newly revised Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education, a discussion that was facilitated by Nancy Dallavalle, Ph.D., associate professor of religious studies, Fairfield University. Among other recommendations, these new characteristics call for mission reflection on how well Jesuit colleges and universities are addressing racial injustice and systemic racism.

The trustees were deeply moved by the experience of the Anti-Racism Examen and by its critical connection with our mission as a Catholic and Jesuit university. We are grateful to our facilitators for so skillfully guiding our personal reflection and group discussion.

The Board viewed its deliberations in the context of the ongoing work on campus to develop a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Strategic Plan. Building from campus-wide input and research, a final plan was approved this week by the President’s Cabinet and reviewed with and endorsed by the Board of Trustees. It will be shared with the campus community in the near future.

Recognizing the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion and moved to see swift progress, especially for actions that will positively influence the experience of students, the Board of Trustees unanimously committed to evaluating the new Plan’s budget request at its next meeting in May with the intention of identifying areas to direct personal financial support. Most immediately, the Board of Trustees also voted unanimously to establish a fund through which the trustees will personally support students from Cristo Rey and similar mission-driven schools, beginning with students who will enroll in the fall of 2022.

We are deeply grateful to everyone involved in our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and to the entire campus community for supporting our mission in generous and steadfast ways.

Sincerely,

James Slattery
Chair, Board of Trustees

Joseph Marina, S.J.
President