The University of Scranton
Mission Priority Examen
Self-Study Report
Fall 2026

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I. Institutional Information

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- Robert Davis, Ed.D., Executive Vice President
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Executive Summary of the Jesuit Mission Priorities

The following three mission priorities respond to the provincial's invitation to The University of Scranton to "deepen its Catholic and Jesuit identity in the coming years." They are the result of widespread consultation with all constituencies of the University during the MPE process, approved by the President of the University and the Board of Trustees at their October 1, 2026 meeting.

1. **We will enhance the formation of faculty and staff in the Ignatian tradition and Catholic intellectual tradition.**

This priority draws inspiration from the many decades of reflecting upon, working with, and praying within the Jesuit and Catholic traditions that are the pillars upon which the University stands. The programs already in place through The Jesuit Center will serve as a foundation for our future efforts in fulfilling this priority. It is our goal for all members of the faculty and staff of the University to be aware of the great traditions in which we live and out of which we operate here at The University of Scranton. This will especially bolster our response to Characteristic Six.

2. **We will focus on fostering *cura apostolica*.**

This priority is an obvious counterpart to our longstanding attention to *cura personalis*. This priority is meant to assist the University in meeting all of the challenges that are realities at this moment in the history of higher education in the United States,

all while staying faithful to our mission. In doing so, we will especially be responding to the call of Characteristic One.

3. **We will build upon our engagement with the local Church, especially through the active practice of synodality.**

This priority responds directly to a great need: for closer collaboration between the Church and the academy. This is another area where we will continue building upon our great work thus far. We intend to work with the local Church to put in place various programs and opportunities for greater listening. This will particularly be done through a focus on synodality, mirroring what is happening in the universal Church today. In so doing, we will respond especially to Characteristic Five.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SCRANTON
A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 15, 2026

Very Rev. Robert Reiser, S.J.
Provincial
USA East Province of the Society of Jesus
39 East 83rd Street
New York, NY 10028

Dear Fr. Reiser,

The Peace of Christ!

I am writing in response to the letter of August 19, 2025 from your predecessor, Fr. Joseph O'Keefe, in which he invited The University of Scranton to take part in our second Mission Priority Examen (MPE), following on the successful review of our inaugural MPE in 2018. In their closing communication to the University, the AJCU peer visitors, on that occasion, wrote, "It is clear that human beings are flourishing and finding fullness of life through their experiences at The University of Scranton." I write to you today confident that our community continues to manifest Jesus' declaration in John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

As you will see in the attached Self Study Report, The University of Scranton is living up to our mission in a variety of ways. This is clear in the work of the Division of Mission and Ministry, but also throughout all of our University divisions, because we see our mission as both collaborative and integral. Since everyone is responsible for our mission, everyone can take ownership in seeing that it is part of our daily existence. At the heart of our mission is our loving God, who animates everything we do at this University. As I stated during my inaugural address, "Our community is not an insulated one; it is grounded in God's love. Our University exists because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and

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our future will be stoked by the fire of the Holy Spirit for decades to come. This triune reality makes our community open to all, not despite their differences, but because of them. We are made stronger by our diversity and our love for one another. By all means, let us plant a flag there and build momentum going forward." In my five-plus years here in Scranton, I am confident that we are only gaining momentum.

Consequently, we are also focusing on what matters most: our students. Here at The University of Scranton, we aim to provide an educational experience steeped in the Catholic intellectual tradition and inspired by the Jesuit tradition of excellence that is shared by so many throughout the world. This means that the education we provide is meant to form, inform, and transform our students.

When Fr. O'Keefe asked us to take part in this process, he requested that we "engage how The University of Scranton will deepen its Catholic and Jesuit identity in the coming years." As a result, I have convoked a 15-person Self-Study Committee from various parts of the University to respond to this foundational goal, all with our students in mind. After having inquired with students, faculty, staff, administrators, the Board of Trustees, alumni, and the Jesuit community, we have identified three emerging Mission Priorities: We will enhance the formation of faculty and staff in the Ignatian tradition and Catholic intellectual tradition; We will focus on fostering *cura apostolica*; We will build upon our engagement with the local Church, especially through the active practice of synodality.

Of course, we continue to strive to live up to our mission by responding to the priorities that emerged in our 2018 MPE. Moreover, we do not statically rest on observing these three new priorities as if we were in a historical vacuum. As the Fathers of Vatican II wrote more than 60 years ago in *Gaudium et spes*, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (no. 4). Because higher education is at the very heart of how the Church engages with the modern world, we will spend these next years until our third MPE process advancing the vision of *Gaudium et spes* and reacting with the Christian virtues that the world so desperately needs.

It is for all these reasons, which are spelled out in more detail in the attached pages, that I request you forward to Father General your recommendation that The

University of Scranton be reaffirmed in our Jesuit identity and mission, and that he also recommend to the curial Dicastery for Culture and Catholic Education that The University of Scranton be reaffirmed by that body as a Catholic University.

Yours Faithfully,

Joseph Marina, SJ

Rev. Joseph G. Marina, S.J.
President

II. **Progress on Previous Jesuit Mission Priorities**

The University of Scranton completed our first MPE in the 2017-18 academic year. At that time, the Self-Study Committee, in conjunction with University and province leadership, discerned three areas for greater attention in the forthcoming years. These areas crystalized into the following three Mission priorities, a fruit borne by prayer and mutual dialogue:

1. Inspired by the Catholic, Jesuit values that are foundational to the mission of The University of Scranton, the campus community will continue to explore effective strategies for enhancing the diversity and inclusion of The University of Scranton Community.

2. Inspired by the concept of the *magis*, the University seeks to continue an effective, collegial, mission driven culture between leadership bodies on our campus.

3. Acknowledging the formational and transformational impact of the Spiritual Exercises, the Jesuit Center will expand and organize current offerings of the 19th Annotation retreat to members of the faculty, staff, administration, current students, and alumni.

As with any set of communal priorities, there will always be a series of challenges that arise in seeing their fulfillment. Nevertheless, our community has taken these priorities seriously as an integral institution. The University of Scranton recognizes that some of these priorities are best addressed by the division of Mission and Ministry, but we are simultaneously aware that the entire University is responsible for upholding our mission and vision. Therefore, as we reflect on how well we have lived up to these priorities, we also recognize that it is a team effort, best exemplified by collaboration among divisions and constituencies of the University. At the same time, we also note that further progress can and must be made towards each of these priorities, even as we name new priorities. In reflecting upon each of them in turn, we recognize these lights and shadows through the Ignatian terminology of "consolation" and "desolation."

Mission Priority 1: Inspired by the Catholic, Jesuit values that are foundational to the mission of The University of Scranton, the campus community will continue to explore effective strategies for enhancing the diversity and inclusion of The University of Scranton Community.

In his inaugural address as President of the University, Rev. Joseph G. Marina, S.J. said the following: "Our community is not an insulated one; it is grounded in God's love. Our University exists because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and our future will be stoked by the fire of the Holy Spirit for decades to come. This triune reality makes our community open to all, not despite their differences, but because of them. We are made stronger by our diversity and our love for one another. By all means, let us plant a flag there and build momentum going forward." The foundational relationship between the *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education*, the Catholic intellectual tradition, and diversity is obvious. Therefore, The University of Scranton has prayed and reflected over the years since the last MPE about the best ways to live up to our mission with regard to diversity and inclusion.

Consolation: Today, the most exhaustive explanation for how the University is grappling with these vital questions of mission is through our plan, inaugurated in 2025, entitled, "The Beloved Community: Our Commitment to Human Dignity." This plan, a work of many members of the University community, from all of our divisions, is the result of University-wide reflection on our most precious values. The document is unique in that it brings together our University's initiatives and objectives, justifying them through the use of modern Catholic social teaching, along with other Catholic magisterial documents, all focusing on human dignity. Looking ahead, we expect this document to be a living one, manifesting the constant evolution of the Church's tradition, most recently seen in Pope Leo XIV's social encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*. At the heart of this reflection is our constant attention, in everything we do, to focus on the impact of our programming on the individual person who it will most affect.

Desolation: The primary desolation from these years is directly tied to the direction of the federal government to limit the uses of some of the words mentioned in this very mission priority. This has, understandably, resulted in some groups on campus

feeling less welcome. Nevertheless, through the work of the Multicultural Center, the Jane Kopas Women's Center, The Jesuit Center, and other offices on campus, we continue to work towards living up to the potential of this mission priority.

Mission Priority 2: Inspired by the concept of the magis*, the University seeks to continue an effective, collegial, mission driven culture between leadership bodies on our campus.*

The University of Scranton is blessed with talented people throughout our community, at all levels. Therefore, in addition to the Board of Trustees, the President, and the President's Cabinet, as well as senior academic leaders, the University has identified groups of individuals among faculty, staff, students, and alumni, all of whom contribute to the life of the institution.

Consolation: Each of the leadership groups of the University has a strong sense of purpose that are informed by their understanding of the institution's mission statement. These groups (faculty senate, staff senate, student government, alumni advisory board) all meet frequently, with agenda items that are timely and also come out of the heart of the school's mission, values, and vision. They all have frequent interactions with individual University administrators, as well as the Cabinet. Likewise, they each have a liaison who attends meetings of the Board of Trustees. Excepting the alumni, each of these groups is represented on the University Planning Committee, which in 2025 helped to formulate a new University Mission Statement, and new Vision Statement. These were approved by the President and Board in conjunction with our new strategic plan. This sets the University on a strong path for the coming years.

Desolation: While employees of the University are clearly committed to the success of the institution and the service of the students through our mission, there remains an obvious tension between some faculty and the administration, especially manifested in faculty contract negotiation years, with an eye toward the financial wellbeing of the institution. This tension does sometimes have the effect of stifling the relationship between these constituencies of the University, and can also impact the student experience, by causing them to feel pressured to choose one side or another.

Mission Priority 3: Acknowledging the formational and transformational impact of the Spiritual Exercises, the Jesuit Center will expand and organize current offerings of the 19th Annotation retreat to members of the faculty, staff, administration, current students, and alumni.

Since The University of Scranton is a Catholic, Jesuit institution, we hold the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius as a great treasure. The words, and the worldview, contained therein comprise for us a special way of proceeding that we share with all of our fellow Jesuit institutions.

Consolation: Since 2018, some members of the faculty and staff have taken advantage of The Jesuit Center's spiritual resources and have taken on one of the staff as a spiritual director in the 19th Annotation Retreat. The Jesuit Center has introduced Ignatian Spirituality to various constituents in a variety of other ways. We provide annual retreats, as well as spiritual pilgrimages. In particular, the pilgrimage "In the Footsteps of Saint Ignatius" to Spain and Rome, which takes place every summer, has opened up to our faculty and staff the opportunity to read and pray with Ignatius's writings, and then bring these pilgrims to the very sites which were pivotal in Ignatius's life. Members of our Board of Trustees were also able to take part in this pilgrimage in summer 2023. Moreover, in addition to The Jesuit Center, the office of Campus Ministry makes spiritual direction available to students, especially during the Ignatian Silent Retreat, and during the Lenten Retreat. Both of these retreats often lead into long-term spiritual direction for our students.

Desolation: While the resources of The Jesuit Center make a deeper understanding and practice of Ignatian Spirituality possible for many University staff and faculty, the personnel of the office has decreased from three staff to one in the years since our last MPE. Also, the response to our offering ongoing spiritual direction and the 19th Annotation Retreat to faculty, staff and Board of Trustees members, while received well by some, could have been more successful. The COVID pandemic did pause some early momentum in this regard, from which we never fully recovered.

III. **MPE Process**

In August 2025, then-Provincial of the USA East Province of the Society of Jesus, Very Rev. Joseph O'Keefe, S.J. invited Rev. Joseph Marina, S.J., President of The University of Scranton to lead the University in their second Mission Priority Examen. In fact, preparations for this eventuality had already begun in earnest when President Marina asked Daniel Cosacchi, Vice President for Mission and Ministry, to chair the University's Self Study Committee in the preceding year. At this time, Cosacchi met several times with Stephanie Russell of the AJCU and Rev. Michael Tunney, S.J. of the USA East Jesuit Province. Thereafter, Fr. Marina convened a group of 15 members of the University community, from a wide variety of constituencies, to serve on the Self Study Committee. On February 23, 2026, Fr. Marina sent a communication email to the University community introducing the MPE process and inviting all members to attend one or more open fora. These meetings were geared towards students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the larger community, respectively.

These sessions met for 90 minutes each. At the suggestion of Fr. Tunney, the format for these meetings followed closely the methodology used by our province in the past few years: "Spiritual Conversation on Apostolic Planning." This entailed a brief introduction from Dr. Cosacchi to serve as a "composition of place" so as to contextualize the institution's situation entering this period, followed by three rounds of sharing: 1) Personal sharing where each person spoke for 2-3 minutes, focusing on intentional speaking and active listening; 2) Common movements were then considered, where each participant shared what they heard and how it affected them; 3) Discussion finally took place in a more free-flowing exchange. We were intent on implementing this process as it models the synodality that is taking place in the universal church today. In addition, special open fora sessions were held with the Board of Trustees, the President's Cabinet, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government, the Dallas Prison Program students, the Alumni Advisory Board, and the Jesuit Community.

As these open fora were taking place, Dr. Cosacchi also visited a number of entities, including those mentioned above. On separate occasions, he made presentations

about the MPE process to the Cabinet, the Board of Trustees, and smaller meetings with leadership from the Faculty Union and Faculty Senate. These gatherings were a mixture of in-person and virtual meetings. Moreover, Fr. Marina and Dr. Cosacchi held a meeting with Bishop Joseph Bambera, of the Diocese of Scranton, to discuss the process with him and elicit his feedback. The vast majority of what was heard in these sessions revolved around a sense of gratitude for the graces of The University of Scranton in the academy, church, and local community. All of these meetings taken together attempted to emphasize an integral relationship between solid planning with discernment in the model of Ignatian spirituality. Following the meetings, an anonymous online survey was made available to the University community for all those members who were not able to attend one of the sessions, or who wanted to provide additional feedback. An average of 12 people attended each open forum, but more took part due to the group meetings and campus-wide survey. All told, over 400 members of the University community took part in this process. The presidential communication as well as emails from the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, along with the individual visits to the various leadership senates, and word of mouth all played major factors in motivating individuals to participate. We did hear, however, that despite offering the meetings at a wide variety of times, that the sessions still were not convenient for some folks. The input from these meetings, open fora, and survey comprise the primary data for this report.

IV. **Input**

Introduction

In his letter of August 19, 2025, then-Provincial of the Jesuits USA East Province, Very Rev. Joseph O'Keefe, S.J. invited The University of Scranton to take part in our second MPE process. Following favorable reports from the peer visiting team in the 2018 MPE, Fr. O'Keefe has asked us today "to engage how The University of Scranton will deepen its Catholic and Jesuit identity in the coming years." In addition to the aforementioned mission priorities from our previous MPE process and the 2011 Declaration of Shared Purpose, Fr. O'Keefe singled out his intention that we take into

consideration the University's new strategic plan, "Forging Our Future" (2026-2030), and our new Ignatian Core Curriculum. Furthermore, he asked that we consider our new building, Weiss Hall, dedicated in 2025, as a conduit to carrying out our mission on campus and beyond.

Characteristic 1: Leadership and Public Commitment to Mission

At the University of Scranton, leadership has maintained a strong and sustained commitment to the mission of the institution. That commitment is shown in the internal policies of the University and in many important and public ways. The Catholic and Jesuit mission continues to be a guidepost for the strategic direction and day-to day-operations of the University.

Following the last MPE, the University undertook several important steps to enhance commitment to mission. Considering the priorities of our last MPE, the Board of Trustees formed a permanent Mission and Identity Committee. Each trustee is required to serve on this committee during their first term as a trustee. Additionally, the President's Cabinet has benefited from regular discussions and presentations on mission from both the President and the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, who is a member of the Cabinet. During the recent Strategic Planning Process, the University Planning Committee reviewed and updated the mission and vision statements of the University. Scranton's steadfast commitment to our Catholic and Jesuit Identity is proclaimed in the opening line of our mission statement: "The University of Scranton is a Catholic and Jesuit University animated by the spiritual vision of Saint Ignatius Loyola." The new mission and vision statements were developed and approved through the University governance process.

The commitment to mission is a community endeavor at Scranton. Members of our community are invited and expected to participate in the mission. This is clear from job postings that include a statement of the University mission in the most prominent place, inclusion of meetings with The Jesuit Center as part of all faculty and administrative finalist interviews, employee orientation that ensures that new members of our community understand the importance of the mission, and frequent opportunities for all

employees to engage with the mission. Students are made aware of our mission through the promotional and recruitment materials. Once committed to Scranton, opportunities to engage in the community are presented at New Student Orientation and reinforced early in their time on campus through programmatic efforts like the Mass of the Holy Spirit, and annual Service Fair. Student-Athletes engage with the mission through a long-standing Athletic Department program, The Royal Way, which is focused on providing students with a championship level experience rooted in our mission as a Catholic and Jesuit university.

The by-laws of the University ensure representation from the Society of Jesus by requiring a minimum of four Jesuits serving on the Board of Trustees. In practice, we have committed to exceeding that minimum. In 2026-27, there are six Jesuits serving on the Board, including the University President. The Board of Trustees also holds annual evaluations that include a trustee's experience with mission. The Board has a retreat every other year to ensure its leadership remains true to the institutional mission.

Scranton has allocated considerable time and resources to ensure that the community and our leaders are fully engaged in mission-related activities. The University has long been committed to AJCU formation programs by sending members of the faculty and staff regularly to the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP), the Ignatian Leadership Program which has as its capstone the Footsteps of Ignatius Pilgrimage, and the El Salvador Educational Pilgrimage. Recently, Fr. Marina started an advisory board on mission to help him with important institutional issues. The advisory board is made up entirely of graduates of the ICP. All members of the President's Cabinet are actively involved in the broader AJCU groups for their area of responsibility.

The University has a Mission and Ministry Division, led by the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, that is funded by the University's budget and an endowment that provides resources for mission-related programming throughout the campus community. The endowment funding was used to create The Jesuit Center in 2011 with the express focus on faculty and staff formation in mission. The mission of The Jesuit Center proclaims that "The Jesuit Center assists the University of Scranton in keeping its Catholic and Jesuit character at the center of the educational enterprise." The Jesuit

Center has had a profound impact on the formation of faculty and staff since its inception. In addition to the robust programming opportunities, The Jesuit Center stands as a public reminder that the University is committed to not only maintaining the mission but growing it in ways that the current climate in higher education demands.

One way that Scranton demonstrates its commitment to the Jesuit priority of justice and care for the poor in our midst is the Edward R. Leahy Jr. Clinic for the Uninsured (Leahy Clinic) on the University campus. The Leahy Clinic hosts about 1000 patient visits per year and accepts no payment for services. Approximately 60% of our patients require language interpretation services and carry a high burden of chronic illness. We offer a medical clinic, physical therapy clinic, occupational therapy low-vision clinic, and a counseling and behavioral health clinic and are able to provide many medications and laboratory tests at no cost. We offer the clinic in partnership with the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine (GCSOM), with Scranton students clocking over 3000 student volunteer hours and GCSOM students providing 1300 volunteer hours annually, in addition to the volunteer hours of the 17 Scranton faculty who provide medical services in the Leahy Clinic.

Characteristic 2: The Academic Life

The undergraduate core curriculum is grounded in a humanistic intellectual tradition that exemplifies the University's Jesuit and Catholic identity. While many of the University's peer institutions have reduced Theology and Philosophy in the core curriculum, Scranton's new Ignatian Core Curriculum (ICC) has retained 15-credits, encouraging students to reflect on significant questions of faith and ethics as they develop personally and professionally. The Royal Read, Ignatian Values in Action Lecture, and the First Year Seminar (FYS) promote entry-point formation for incoming students. In addition to familiarizing students with the University's Ignatian identity and mission, the FYS is one of four required first year foundation courses (along with Writing, Oral Communication, and Digital Technology) that fulfills the Jesuit pedagogical goal of *Eloquentia Perfecta*. The newly-revised ICC explicitly fosters the University's Catholic and Jesuit mission through a new *Civic* attribute, which has the

potential to expand Community Based Learning (CBL) across colleges, and a new *Core Capstone* (CC), which provides students the opportunity to reflect on how a Jesuit education helped them transform their thinking, discern their vocation, and guide their interaction with others.

Beyond the distinctive undergraduate core curriculum rooted in Ignatian tradition, the *Ethics Across the Curriculum* initiative provides funding for faculty from any discipline to incorporate "careful ethical reflection, reasoning, and application in their courses" to better prepare students to deal with field-specific ethical challenges. Moreover, the University offers honors programs that are mission inspired, namely Special Jesuit Liberal Arts (SJLA), University Honors, Magis Honors in STEM, Business Leadership, and Business Honors. The Business Honors program, housed in the Kania School of Management (KSOM), was recently redesigned to emphasize Ignatian principles of social and economic justice in all its components: orientation, honors coursework, and the capstone project.

Experiential and service-based learning (i.e., CBL) opportunities allow students to integrate theory and practice, with CBL being grounded in Ignatian pedagogy by preparing students to "understand common challenges facing humanity, identify systemic problems, and develop a commitment to the common good and their communities." The Office of Community Based Learning provides resources for support, including for faculty interested in developing CBL designated courses. The Leahy College of Health Sciences (LCHS) makes CBL a graduation requirement for all its students and promotes "devotion to the Ignatian qualities of care for one another and concern for those less fortunate" through its outward-facing Leahy Clinic.

Cura personalis is embodied in the relationships developed among students, faculty, and staff both in and out of the classroom. Faculty are very accessible to students. Students have opportunities to work one-on-one with faculty in honors tutorials, on research, and/or consulting projects. Likewise, the Language Learning Center honors human dignity by reducing barriers to language learning and cultural exchange. These, and other interactions exemplify care for the whole person.

Listening sessions held with students, faculty, and staff help identify how the University's academic life fulfils the University's mission of providing an education shaped by the service of faith and promotion of justice. Perceived strengths noted by students include the positive influence of the First Year Seminar and Ignatian Values in Action Lecture, the CBL requirement in LCHS, service opportunities through the Center for Service and Social Justice, and interactions with professors that demonstrate *cura personalis*. Faculty note *cura personalis* as exemplified by the formation of strong faculty-student relationships, and continued commitment to international, adult, and low-income students, as well as the life changing potential of the Prison Education Program. Similarly, staff cite the CBL requirement in LCHS, student participation in service trips with chaperones selected from all areas of the University community, and the many options made available to the entire University community for spiritual formation.

The listening sessions also help identify areas for improvement, which deal mainly with consistency and communication. While CBL is widely viewed as critical to mission, it is a requirement for students only in LCHS. While some CBL designated courses exist in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and KSOM, it is not a graduation requirement. A more intentional integration across the three colleges is suggested, with the new ICC *Civic* attribute holding some promise for implementation. Similarly, there appears to be variability in the extent to which mission-related themes are covered in the FYS across disciplines. Moreover, graduate online education poses unique challenges to mission, as what occurs naturally in person (i.e., *cura personalis*) does not automatically transfer in an online environment. Intentional and ongoing efforts to fulfill mission in online graduate programs is recommended. Examples already implemented that can serve as models include a structured community-based project in the online MS program in Speech-Language Pathology and a required cornerstone course Responsibility, Sustainability & Justice (MGT 501) in the online MBA program.

Additional areas for growth include incorporating environmental justice and sustainability in the curriculum, continuing (or developing) new programs for the formation of faculty, and recognizing the role of faculty scholarship in fulfilling mission.

While some faculty formation programs exist (or existed), such as the Ignatian Pedagogy Seminar, Catholic Intellectual Tradition Seminar, First-Year Faculty Ignatian Workshops, and Ignatian Leadership Program, some faculty express concern that the University could be more intentional about hiring and forming faculty for mission.

Characteristic 3: The Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation

From the many MPE listening sessions and the vignettes of action below, the University's passion for outreach, service, and social justice–both locally, regionally, and internationally–continues to characterize the community's sense of mission, faith, and self-understanding. The University's devotion to works of mercy are most prominent and formal through the many activities of the Center for Service and Social Justice, but this is echoed in numerous other initiatives. Since the time of Scranton's last MPE, some exciting new initiatives have been born alongside longstanding engagement.

The word "reconciliation," not used in the previous MPE, is a welcome addition to the hallmark terms of faith and justice. As for externally focused reconciliation, the many initiatives below offer glimpses of the University's pursuit of reconciliation to overcome societal silos and class divisions. But as for *internal* reconciliation, one important dynamic of the last two years calls us to work for a greater sense of morale between staff, faculty, and administration.

The University's Prison Education Program (PEP), founded in Fall 2021, offers incarcerated students at State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Dallas, PA the opportunity to earn an Associate of Arts degree. Offering nine courses a year, this program's A.A. degree completion takes 2.5 years. Supported by a mixture of private grants and Pell grants, the program, in its first five years of operation, has helped approximately 65 matriculated students earn over 2,200 credit hours. The PEP, averaging 20 students in a classroom, has graduated two cohorts so far and is currently enrolled with two cohorts. Scranton's PEP is networked with the Catholic Consortium for Higher Education in Prison and the Jesuit Prison Education Network (JPEN), which includes 11 Jesuit PEPs. JPEN is charged by all US provinces to sustain and

institutionalize programs like this as they enact the apostolic preference of walking with the excluded.

Rooted in the University of Scranton's commitment to "the service of faith and the promotion of justice," the Ellacuría Initiative, housed within The Jesuit Center, designs or co-sponsors programs that allow the University community to reflect on questions of justice related to contemporary issues and events. The Ellacuría Initiative hosts an annual Teach-In for Justice focused on a particular theme. A reading and discussion group based in the University's Peace and Justice Studies program, "Christians for the Common Good" organizes meetings throughout the semester focused on Catholic social teaching themes, and local, national, and global issues.

The Center for Service and Social Justice (CSSJ) organizes domestic and international service trips during intersession and spring breaks. These trips take students with faculty and staff chaperones to locations in the United States and abroad, focused on being in solidarity with those in great need. Such sites include the St. Bernard Project (New Orleans, LA, home repair and disaster relief), the Fr. McKenna Center (Washington, DC, presence based service), Maggie's Place (Phoenix, AZ, presence based service), Homebody Industries (Los Angeles, CA, immersion in ministry with former gang members), Olancho Aid Foundation (Honduras, immersion), Christian Appalachian Project (Martin, KY, home repair and disaster relief).

The University received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) that led to a multi-year initiative resulting in *Scranton's Story, Our Nation's Story* initiative (2021-2023). These "Scranton Stories," culminated in an oral history project which fostered narrative change and local storytelling to broaden the story told and shared about Scranton to include under-represented communities.

The University initiated an ongoing relationship with the Lenape Center (New York) and the Delaware Tribe (Oklahoma), inviting Curtis Zunigha for a keynote lecture in fall 2022 entitled, "The Forced Removal of the Lenape People: History and Homecoming." This led to additional collaborative initiatives within the city of Scranton.

The Meg-Cullen Brown S.M.A.R.T. (Scranton Mentors Actively Reaching Teens) Mentoring Program serves 40 Scranton High School and West Scranton High School

students annually. University of Scranton students create a series of activities for these high schoolers to grow in self-confidence and develop good habits.

SPARK is a week-long program each July for 40 at-risk teens and pre-teens aged 12-16 from the local community run by the University and Scranton Prep students. The program focuses on team and self-esteem building through educational and outdoor activities. The program enrolls students from Nativity Miguel Scranton and community children.

The University of Success college readiness program continues to assist young people underrepresented in higher education; in 2023, for example, 18 students graduated with six attending the University.

FIRST – First Years Involved in Reflective Service Together – brings 40 first year students led by a team of 12 upperclassmen on a week-long service experience the week before the academic year begins. Students reside at Chapman Lake Retreat Center for the week and volunteer with local service organizations.

The Justice and Mercy Alliance is a student club dedicated to care for the marginalized on the Scranton streets, who serve and share meals with the homeless or working poor, along with attending homeless shelters at night, socializing with the clientele. During its first year, 2025-26, the club served 12 public meals, serving an average of 30 individuals, with around ten students coming to serve and share these meals.

Characteristic 4: Promoting an Ignatian Campus Culture

Across The University of Scranton, community members witness a commitment to Ignatian campus culture that is most apparent in programming that encourages individual formation in the mission and in consistent messaging across divisions that reflects both a shared vocabulary and shared values. The University's investment in promoting these Ignatian values is structurally supported by offices and programs across the institution that invite staff, students, faculty, and administrators to participate in personal and communal formation in the mission, and testimony from community members across the campus highlights institutional commitments to *cura personalis* and

to accompaniment in particular. Comments that University members offered in campus-wide listening sessions and survey responses highlighted broad and diverse opportunities for spiritual formation (including regular liturgies, group retreats, immersion experiences, and pilgrimage programs), as well as orientation and onboarding processes for both students and employees that foster spiritual literacy and encourage the development of a community that is conversant in shared institutional values. The University, across divisions, works to "meet people where they're at" spiritually, and to offer them opportunities for growth and transformation.

Structural support for the work of campus ministry is evident in the visibility and accessibility of the University's Division of Mission and Ministry, which includes an office of Campus Ministry, the Center for Service and Social Justice, and The Jesuit Center. Many students describe the prayer spaces and liturgical opportunities provided on and off campus as "welcoming" and "inclusive," and appreciate the available opportunities for reflection, spiritual mentorship and counseling, and faith discussions outside the classroom, noting that spiritual growth is often relational and develops in dialogue and in community.

Student Life at the University prioritizes the care of the whole person when it comes to students. There are more than 60 staff members who work in the Division, which comprises multiple functional areas, some of which include Residence Life and Housing, the Counseling Center, and University Police. The Division of Student Life's approach is grounded in *cura personalis* and individualized care, meeting students where they are (e.g., individualized accompaniment by clinicians in Student Health Services and a Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution approach that seeks to explicitly connect behaviors and procedures to Jesuit values), and meeting staff where they are (e.g., introducing mission-focused language and opportunities during hiring and onboarding, offering spiritual programming, and granting mission leave for service trips, immersion experiences, and pilgrimages).

Athletics at The University of Scranton also intentionally integrates Ignatian values through both shared mission-driven language and a comprehensive framework called "The Royal Way," which develops student athletes and Athletics staff as whole

people in an intentional community and culture that models contemplation in action. The Royal Way features a kickoff with a theme launch, follow-up sessions with coaches, ongoing structured programming (e.g., the weekly Sunday Playbook, through which student athletes, coaches, and staff members share personal reflections), and service initiatives (e.g., clinics and community events).

The shared vocabulary and shared opportunities for spiritual formation in community that animate The University of Scranton's promotion of an Ignatian campus culture are also reflected in shared opportunities for dialogue and discussion that serve to form students, staff, and faculty as civic contemplatives in action. Specific opportunities include "Bursting Our Political Bubbles," a program coordinated by Community Engagement in collaboration with other offices on campus, and "Curious Conversations," a program coordinated by the Dean of Students Office. "Bursting Our Political Bubbles" facilitates dialogues across different perspectives 3-4 times each academic year (recent topics have included Political and State Violence and America at 250), and "Curious Conversations" is an annual program modeled after Monica Guzmán's book *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times.* The University observes a Free Assembly Policy, which allows community members to seek permits for campus protests or assemblies, representing one of the ways in which the exchange of ideas across diverse opinions takes place outside of classrooms on campus and is structurally integrated into the University. Also of note is that the full-time faculty at the University are offered membership in the faculty union (the Faculty Affairs Council), and that the University continues to develop and discern its understandings of shared governance through committee conversations representing voices across the University community. The University's recently approved ICC specifically prioritizes Ignatian citizenship among the competencies students will pursue in all undergraduate degree programs at the University; the non-partisan Royals Vote initiative also encourages civic engagement through voting.

The University of Scranton demonstrates its investment in Ignatian values in both statement and in structure: both a shared vocabulary for the mission and shared opportunities for individual and communal formation and discernment permeate the

campus and its culture. However, increasingly limited resources (both in finances and personnel) and uneven integration of the mission-driven values reflected by the University's statements and structures sometimes result in gaps between the University's purported priorities and its practice of them—between its *contemplation* of Ignatian ideals and its *action* emerging from those Ignatian ideals. Increasingly constrained budgets may impact the number of students, staff, and faculty who can participate in mission-based formation programs, as well as the number and kinds of programs the Division of Mission and Ministry can offer, and the declining availability of Jesuits on campus will continue to impact staffing for the sacramental life of the University. These challenges highlight tensions between the institution's ideals and its ability to meet those ideals as needs and priorities. Additionally, though opportunities for individual and communal spiritual formation remain abundant for students, staff, faculty, and administrators alike, the transformative impacts of these opportunities are dependent on individual initiative: though they are structurally *visible* and *accessible*, they are not necessarily structurally *integral* or *embedded*, which means that some University community members demonstrate strong Ignatian engagement and literacy but that this engagement and literacy are not consistent across the campus community.

The University of Scranton's Strategic Plan, "Forging Our Future," guided by the Jesuit values of both *cura personalis* and *cura apostolica*, is focused on mission-driven innovation; the University will need to be creative, innovative, and collaborative as a community, continuing to find ways to not only speak the words of its shared mission and offer opportunities for dialogue, discernment, and development, but to also *embody* this language and these offerings in the continued development of a community of *contemplatives in action*.

Characteristic 5: Service to the Church

The University of Scranton has always had an integral relationship with the local church since the University's founding as St. Thomas College on August 12, 1888. The first local ordinary of the Diocese of Scranton, Bishop William O'Hara had wanted a Catholic college in the area. After initial years being administered by diocesan clergy and

Xaverian Brothers, the bishop invited the Christian Brothers to take over the institution, which they did until Bishop William Hafey, Scranton's fourth bishop, invited the Society of Jesus to run the institution, by then called The University of Scranton. From the very beginning, the relationship between the University and the diocese has been vigorous, thanks in large part to the training of students to be pillars in the faith community, which is provided by the University. The close relationship is even seen geographically, since the University is located only a few blocks from the diocese's Cathedral of St. Peter and chancery building. Today, it is also manifested through a very close relationship with the tenth bishop of the diocese, Bishop Joseph Bambera, who is a regular visitor to campus, frequently presiding at University liturgies. We are also proud to claim four other Catholic bishops, hundreds of priests and sisters, and countless numbers of lay faithful as alumni.

Through the Division of Mission and Ministry, the University reaches out in a particular way to serve the Church. Students are trained as liturgical ministers: lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, sacristans, music ministers, and acolytes. After graduation, they can exercise their ministries in their own local church. Moreover, the many students who take part in the opportunities offered through the Center for Service and Social Justice are already practicing the corporal works of mercy in their daily lives. They partner with a variety of diocesan-sponsored initiatives through that charitable work. From a local perspective, the weekly "We Care" program provides students with the opportunity to prepare, cook, package, and deliver meals to various soup kitchens and other service organizations in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Closer to home, the Royal Restore Food Pantry allows food insecure members of the University community to be provided with sustenance. Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, the University has begun an arrangement with the Diocese of Scranton for all first-year seminarians to take theology and language courses at the University and engage in campus life. Also, Campus Ministry has already begun utilizing the Knipper Meditation Chapel and Prayer Garden in Weiss Hall (opened Fall 2025) for communal and private prayer. Moreover, we anticipate Weiss Hall becoming a gathering space for diocesan and university prayer functions in the years ahead.

Because The University of Scranton is an academic institution, a major part of our service to the Church is through intellectual formation. Through the Ignatian Core Curriculum, recently established by the University, each matriculating undergraduate student will take two theology/religious studies courses and two philosophy courses, with a fifth course to come as an upper-level elective from one of those two departments. Education in these academic disciplines has long distinguished Jesuit education, and we are proudly carrying on that tradition at The University of Scranton. Of course, many non-Catholic and non-Christian students study at this institution, but these courses help all students to become more well-rounded persons of "conscience, compassion, commitment, and competence," as former Jesuit Superior General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. stated. But service to the intellectual commitment of the Church at Scranton doesn't stop there. Through the programs of The Jesuit Center, we serve members of the faculty, staff, administration, alumni, parents, and Board of Trustees through a wide variety of programs that advance the Catholic intellectual tradition. Through our annual recognition of an individual who has impacted Jesuit higher education with the Arrupe Award, through regular lecture series, and through monthly Jesuit Spirituality Luncheons, we make Catholicism come alive on campus. Through a longstanding First Year Faculty Ignatian Workshop, we welcome all faculty into Jesuit pedagogy, where *cura personalis* is more than just jargon, but a way of life. Now, through a new Mid-Career Faculty and Staff Workshop, we rekindle a spark that begun years earlier: "Reigniting Vocation: Leadership, Mission, and Impact," a pilot program as of Spring 2026 that was initiated for mid-career faculty and staff focused on vocation, purpose, and mission in professional life. This group will participate in an immersion experience at the Kino Border Initiative in January 2027. The Jesuit Center also sponsors pilgrimages to El Salvador and Spain and Rome "in the footsteps of St. Ignatius," where staff and faculty dive deeper into our shared heritage. Throughout the listening sessions and survey responses, The Jesuit Center's offerings were consistently noted as a positive opportunity. It was noted that some staff due to their working hours, etc., are less able to attend or participate (e.g. facilities, police).

Characteristic 6: Relationship to the Society of Jesus

The University's relationship to the Society of Jesus, at present and for the foreseeable future, is fairly characterized as necessitating significant discernment. As is true around the world, the number of Jesuits on campus, and the number of prominent roles filled by Jesuits, is decreasing. At the same time, The University of Scranton is fiercely proud of its identity as a Jesuit University, makes that identity central to its community life, has established robust infrastructure to nurture that identity, and commits significant resources to forming community members in the Ignatian tradition. The challenge and opportunity as it relates to Characteristic Six (as distinct from Characteristic Four) is in thinking about the University as a specifically Jesuit work operating within the Jesuit network.

As noted in the 2018 MPE report, the number of Jesuits on campus three decades ago was 41; it was 25 two decades ago; and as of 2018 there were 15 Jesuits in the on-campus community, with fewer than ten working for the University. As of 2026, there are 11 Jesuits in the local community, split between the University and Scranton Prep. In the 2026-27 academic year, five Jesuits hold full-time roles on campus, including the President, three full-time faculty (in Philosophy, History, and Math), and the University Chaplain. Additionally, the superior of the local Jesuit community is a visible presence on campus, and a Jesuit missioned to Scranton Prep lives in a residence hall.

Jesuits contribute to the life of The University in important ways, though the nature and scope of that commitment continue to change in significant ways. It is clear that the community treasures the presence of these men, and they contribute in many ways beyond the specific duties of their positions. Jesuits celebrate Mass, offer spiritual direction, serve as mentors and chaplains to clubs and athletic teams, and assist on retreats. Being one of only three AJCU members with a Jesuit serving as President is a point of pride for many.

In addition to the Jesuits who are present on campus, the University has many strong links to the broader Jesuit network. The University's Chief Mission Officer, Dr. Cosacchi, serves on the Provincial Commission on Ministries, keeping Scranton well-integrated into our shared labors on a provincial level. Since 2023, the "Footsteps of

Saint Ignatius" Pilgrimages each included a Jesuit chaplain from outside the University (Adam Rosinski, Pat Rogers, Michael Tunney, and Jeremy Zipple, respectively), allowing members of the University community to connect to the network on a broader level. University employees are regular attendees at AJCU-affiliated group meetings, including the CMO gathering, JASPA, the meeting of Theology Department chairs at AAR, the Refugees and Migrants in Our Common Home conference in Rome, among others.

Since we are proudly a Jesuit and Catholic institution, much of our formation of students is promoting vocations, recognizing that everyone has a vocation, that noble calling to which they are moved to spend their lives. Through Campus Ministry and the Jesuit community, we especially promote vocations to the Society of Jesus among the young men at the University. In past years, a Jesuit missioned to Scranton has met with a group of 20 students bi-monthly to discuss a life in the Jesuits. Each year, Campus Ministry hosts a Jesuit member of the Provincial Vocations team to preside at Mass and give a talk focusing on a life in the Society. Currently, there are 20 alumni of The University of Scranton serving as members of the Society of Jesus, including a member of the Class of 2023.

In the coming years we will focus on the following areas: Discern how to maintain the stability of Ignatian formation programming and participation in AJCU activities as the University navigates the institutional challenges which shape the contemporary context in U.S. higher education; Continue strategizing for the formation of lay collaborators who can exercise leadership on campus in a distinctively Ignatian fashion, accomplishing in a more intentional way what was done "by default" when the number of ordained Jesuits was higher; Work to increase programming participation and mission commitment among faculty members who do not arrive with previous Jesuit affiliation, and in particular those who may need special forms of accompaniment (e.g. of no religious affiliation) as they discern how they can authentically and responsibly, but clearly and intentionally, see themselves as laboring in continuity with our Jesuit and Catholic heritage.

Characteristic 7: Institutional Integrity

The University of Scranton has always recognized that it is of the utmost importance to hold itself "to the highest ethical and moral principles." As will be detailed below in the areas identified as part of this characteristic, the University offers a strong compensation package for its employees and integrates mission into hiring; provides meaningful mission-focused professional development opportunities; has ongoing efforts to foster a welcoming campus community and promote sustainability; is characterized by a long tradition of shared governance; and has instituted new processes to engage the campus in the budgeting process.

At the same time, fiscal and budgetary pressures and federal policy shifts have resulted in cuts and program changes. Challenges in regard to shared governance have also strained relationships with various constituencies. The University needs to redouble its commitment to fulfill its mission in these areas in order to maintain the campus community which has long been a hallmark of the experience for staff, faculty, and students alike.

Human Resources has sought to maintain the University as a supportive and competitive workplace with adequate wages, ample vacation days, a mission leave policy that encourages service, and other generous benefits that make up a comprehensive total compensation package. Attendees at listening sessions expressed appreciation for various policies, especially the mission and community leave policy which enables staff to voluntarily participate, with pay, in service-related activities. These sessions also revealed concerns among some employees about how employee benefits include some disparities between faculty and staff whereby faculty receive some benefits at a more advantageous level (e.g. faculty receive 80% tuition remission for dependents to attend graduate school while staff receive 0%). It was also noted that our lowest-paid employees hover around the living wage and that there should be consideration of a practice that was utilized at different points in the past to target wage increases at a higher percentage for the lowest paid.

The University engages faculty and staff in training on topics that dovetail with the mission of the University and Catholic social teaching. The Office of Institutional

Compliance and Title IX advocates for, supports, and provides resources to the campus community. The Cultural Centers, composed of two offices, The Multicultural Center (MC) and the Jane Kopas Women's Center (JKWC), provide student programming that demonstrates the University's openness and responsiveness and commitment to equity, inclusion, and respect for human dignity.

The MC strives to foster "an inclusive campus community where all individuals are valued." It supports students by honoring diverse identities, cultures, and perspectives, and is centrally located in a large space on the first floor of the DeNaples Student Center, which opened in 2023. Similarly, the JKWC promotes gender equity, advocacy, leadership, and empowerment for all students. Both centers operate through small and larger scale programming, educational table sits and student training and professional identity development.

With a large number of first-generation college students, the University also upholds its mission through its THR1VE Program for first-generation college students. The program is designed to support, celebrate, and encourage all first-gen students. The University has also continued supporting new cultural and identity student clubs and since the last report, several clubs have been established or renamed. New clubs include the Louis Stanley Brown Black Student Union (BSU), a name honoring the first African American student that graduated from The University of Scranton; the Muslim Student Association (MSA); and the Scranton Student Association of the Philippines. The Association of Latinx and Latin American Students was renamed, formally known as Se Habla Espanol. A few other active cultural clubs include Scranton Alliance for Equity (SAFE), our club that supports members of the LGBTQ community, and United Cultures Organization (UCO), the University's longest standing and largest cultural organization.

Federal policy changes and funding constraints have created a challenging environment for equity and inclusion efforts. The University needs to continue to make the campus aware of the "Beloved Community" plan and the mission-driven ideals it represents and, as a predominantly white institution, continue the necessary work to fully achieve these goals in order to support a diverse campus community.

In regard to promoting policies that demonstrate care for our common home, the University continues to work to promote Laudato Si' goals, having launched its Laudato Si' Action Plan in 2022, with the goal of completion by 2029. The Jesuit Center has assumed leadership of the initiative with the intention to support and fund efforts undertaken by faculty, staff and students in coming years. In Spring 2026, community engagement Laudato Si' efforts continued with events that raised awareness of the regional environmental harms of hyperscale AI data centers in Northeastern PA and by supporting a home-composting workshop series with the City of Scranton and other partners. In addition, as noted above, the University has initiated and sustains an ongoing relationship with the Lenape Center and members of the Delaware Tribe of Indians including around native plants.

Communication about the University's budget and opportunities to ask questions about it are provided through Communications Symposium events where administrators share information with employees and through other meetings, campus-wide emails and additional communications that promote transparency and participation. The challenges we face at Scranton in revenue and enrollment decline and increased endowment spending are explained in reference to a national context of colleges being tuition-dependent and facing intense competition. In Spring 2026, the Board of Trustees approved a formal mandate directing the University's leadership to address our deficits and strengthen our financial sustainability. As the Board indicated, fulfilling the mandate must flow from a mission-driven collaboration.

Shared governance at The University of Scranton is understood and exercised through representative groups (Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and Student Government) that foster collaboration, communication, and consultation across the University community and develop policies. The President's Cabinet is the University's chief decision- and policy-making body. The three representative groups and the University Governance Council (UGC) form the remainder of the governance model. The UGC was created in order to provide a forum for the leadership of each of the three representative governing bodies to come together to discuss policy development in a collaborative way,

and a venue to forward their feedback and reactions to the President's Cabinet. The three representative bodies also provide a forum for open communication and ongoing dialogue within their constituency, between their constituency and the administration, and with the broader University community. Representatives from these groups serve on broader committees and councils, including the University Governance Council (UGC) and the University Planning Committee (UPC) and have an active role in such University initiatives as the Strategic Plan, revisions to the Mission and Vision Statements, and other periodic processes such as the Middle States Self-Study.

Challenges have arisen in recent years, amid financial challenges such that faculty contract negotiations have become more contentious. While the Faculty Affairs Council (FAC) is not formally a part of the University's shared governance process, developments such as prolonged contract negotiations directly impact the ability for different constituencies to work together effectively. As of spring 2026, the administration and FAC reached a contract agreement which relieved some of these tensions and challenges.

At listening sessions, through survey responses, and in other interactions, it was consistently communicated that all constituencies have treasured the sense of community at the University while at the same time recognize that it is strained – morale among some sectors of the University is low and relationships need to be mended. Shared governance is clearly challenged in a moment of fiscal constraint where the institution seeks to honor the work of faculty, as well as staff, while trying to remain affordable for students and families. Moving forward, all parties at the University need to continue to work to build and rebuild relationships and trust between and among all constituencies and work toward mutually cooperative, fair, and just relations.

The University also makes a significant economic impact in the region, totaling $277,019,748 in the most recent 2024 impact report (based on the 2022-2023 fiscal year). Altogether, the University is a major employer and significant anchor institution in the City of Scranton. As a tax-exempt institution, the University provides an annual voluntary contribution to the City of Scranton (currently $150,000). The University also supports the local economy by promoting and supporting small businesses through the Small Business Development Center and through the University's downtown

engagement initiative including the signature Downtown Scavenger Hunt event and other regular promotions and activities.

V. **New or Adapted Jesuit Mission Priorities with Implementation**

1. We will enhance the formation of faculty and staff in the Ignatian tradition and Catholic intellectual tradition.

As we have indicated throughout this report, The University of Scranton considers our Catholic and Jesuit heritage to be at the very heart of everything that we do. Since it animates us in each of our divisions, it is of particular interest now to recommit ourselves to embody these principles even more in the years ahead. We intend to build upon the programs that are already in place through The Jesuit Center in forming our faculty and staff as employees at a Catholic and Jesuit institution of higher learning. This will include deepening the experience of new faculty members through an evolving First-Year Faculty Ignatian Workshop, and strengthening mid-career faculty and staff through our newly-launched Reigniting Vocation Workshop. Moreover, we will work with all future participants in the Ignatian Colleagues Program to shape their capstone projects to benefit faculty and staff in deepening their knowledge and application of Catholic and Jesuit values. In the immediate future, this will also mean restoring the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Seminar that was suspended during the COVID pandemic. This priority will then have an impact on our students, who interact with faculty and staff, and will learn the unique value of a Catholic, Jesuit education. Their education is best put to use when they give themselves away for the common good of all creation.

This priority is in direct response to the provincial's request that we deepen our Catholic and Jesuit identity. Newfound comfort within the Catholic and Jesuit traditions of truth, beauty, and goodness will allow our faculty and staff to shepherd our students through their course of studies, highlighted by the Ignatian Core Curriculum. Moreover, as the number of Jesuits assigned to The University of Scranton has diminished, it is all the more important that we recognize the work of the lay employees of the University as essential to our relationship to the Society of Jesus, as explained in Characteristic Six.

2. We will focus on fostering *cura apostolica*.

At our particular time in history, The University of Scranton is committed to *cura apostolica*, which is meant in part to be complementary to *cura personalis*, which has been discussed in many ways in this report. As everyone involved today in Jesuit higher education is aware, however, it will be impossible to serve our students, faculty, and staff unless the apostolate itself is healthy and able to exercise its ministry daily. At the forefront of this ability is to steward the financial welfare of the work. This is done through careful consideration of how to enhance our enrollment, grow our endowment, and simultaneously remunerate our staff and faculty justly and fairly. In so doing, all members of the University community will be able to flourish and be cared for. In turn, they will be able to care for the apostolate and help it grow in the decades ahead.

As of the submission of this report, a group of our administrators, staff, and faculty have already engaged in a close reading and application of the newly-published, edited volume, *Leadership Lessons from the Jesuits:* Cura Apostolica *and the Mission-Driven Organization* (Georgetown University Press, 2026). The essays contained therein, along with the experience of many of our faculty and staff who have worked in Jesuit higher education for decades, will serve us well in the years to come as we build on the great foundation we already have in place.

A central component to focusing explicitly on *cura apostolica* is recognizing that what we do as a Catholic, Jesuit institution of higher learning is sacred. To say that we are caring for the apostolate is important because it is a reminder that what we do at The University of Scranton is following in Jesus' calling to teach. Our 2011 Declaration of Shared Purpose gave the University clear direction to "continue its mission in higher education in accord with the contemporary vision and directions in higher education of the Society of Jesus, as well as the Roman Catholic mission in higher education." As Fr. O'Keefe instructed us to consider this Declaration while formulating our mission priorities, it is essential that we care for the whole apostolate, so that we can continue this mission long into the future. This, of course, is exactly what is expected of all Jesuit colleges and universities through realization of Characteristic One. As The University of

Scranton moves further into the future, we intend to make clear that higher education is at the very heart of the Church's mission in the world.

3. We will build upon our engagement with the local Church, especially through the active practice of synodality.

As we have already indicated, especially in our discussion of Characteristic Five above, The University of Scranton enjoys a fruitful and life-giving relationship with the local Church. We cherish our collaboration with Bishop Joseph Bambera, who has served as local ordinary since 2010. As the priority suggests, we will work to make this relationship hinge on synodality in the years ahead. Pope Francis and Pope Leo have emphasized the role synodality plays in the life of the universal Church, and have encouraged local churches to follow suit, even in individual parishes and other apostolates. In this manner, The University of Scranton has already been engaged in a synodal approach, especially seen through the Mission Priority Examen process of the last year. When members of our community met in listening sessions and open fora, they engaged in the same type of shared listening and dialogues as did the delegates to the Synod on Synodality in 2023 and 2024. Moreover, we have also been modeling this same type of "journeying together" through annual campus ministry focus groups among our students. This can serve as a pilot program here at the University, where we can have these types of discussions and opportunities for listening on a regular basis, and not only with many years separating them from their precursors.

Our hope would be that The University of Scranton can become a hub for this type of conversation on a diocesan level. As we model this ecclesial approach in our University life, it can also be an invitation for local pastors as well as the bishop to work with us as the intellectual and physical headquarters for such programming in the diocese. Fr. O'Keefe's letter made clear that "the inauguration of Weiss Hall is an enhanced opportunity to bring your mission to the larger Scranton community." This space, located only a few blocks from the diocesan chancery offices, can serve as a location of welcome to members of the diocese, and a bridge between the University and local diocesan leaders

and parishioners. It can also be the place where we bring the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius to a wider audience.

VI. **Conclusion and Additional Comments**

Description of any updates that were made to the Self-study and/or Mission Priorities, **as a result of the Peer Visit**. Attach relevant correspondence with the Peer Team Chair

VII. **Appendices**

A. Mission Statement of The University of Scranton

The University of Scranton is a Catholic and Jesuit university animated by the spiritual vision of Saint Ignatius Loyola, a tradition of excellence, and a commitment to the common good. The University is a community dedicated to the formation of students, and to the freedom of inquiry and personal development fundamental to the growth in wisdom and integrity of all who share its life.

B. Vision Statement of The University of Scranton

We will lead confidently into the future -- extending our reach, increasing our impact and preparing graduates to lead and excel. We will ignite within our students and community a shared dedication to the ideals of Catholic and Jesuit education.

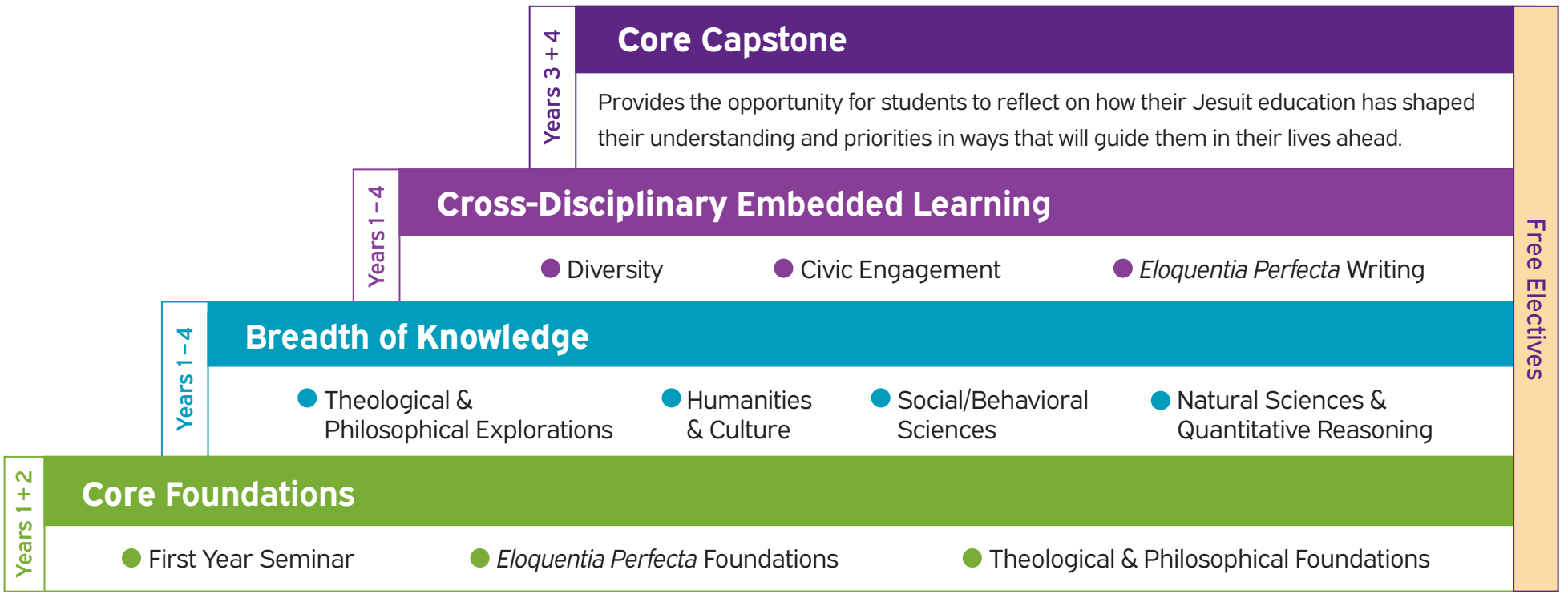
C. Jesuits currently assigned to The University of Scranton

1. Joseph McShane, Superior; Special Assistant to the President
2. John Levko, Professor of Mathematics
3 Joseph Marina, President
4. Ronald McKinney, Professor of Philosophy
5. Bret Stockdale, University Chaplain
6. Daniel Sweeney, Assistant Professor of History

D. ICP Participants since 2018

2018 (11): Abhijit Roy and Julie Schumacher Cohen
2019 (12): Paul Datti and Theresa Grettano
2020 (13): Elizabeth Garcia
2021 (14): Maria Marinucci and Michael Jenkins
2022 (15): Michelle Maldonado
2023 (16): Lori Walton and Shannon Zottola
2024 (17): Lauren Rivera and Billie Tadros
2025 (18): Shannon Murphy Fennie and Susan Mendez
2026 (19): Will Cohen

THE IGNATIAN CORE CURRICULUM



F. Campus Listening Session Highlights (with Table of Dates and Times of Sessions)

Meetings Date	Participants
November 3, 2025	Bishop Joseph Bambera
February 2, 2026	Jesuit Community
February 6, 2026	Student Government
February 18, 2026	Faculty Leadership (Union President and Faculty Senate President)
February 18, 2026	Staff Senate
February 21, 2026	Alumni Advisory Board
February 27, 2026	Board of Trustees
March 10, 2026	President's Cabinet
March 13, 2026	Faculty Senate
March 13, 2026	Dr. Mardell Wilson (Peer Visiting Team Chair)

Meetings Date	Listening Sessions
Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 2:00pm	Prison Education Program Students at Dallas Campus
Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 11:30am	Undergraduate and Graduate Students
Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 12:00pm	Staff and Administrators
Friday, March 6, 2026, 9:00am	Staff and Administrators
Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 5:30pm	Undergraduate and Graduate Students
Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 6:00pm (Zoom)	Friends of the University
Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 12:00pm	Faculty
Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 9:00am	Faculty
Friday, April 17, 2026, 3:00pm (Zoom)	Open Forum for Full University Community

The following quotes were taken directly from participants in the various meetings, listening sessions, and those who completed the survey. We have separated them into common themes that have emerged.

Student Learning Experience

- The [prison education] program and the University are staying true to the Ignatian mission. Our professors' goal is to make sure that each individual learns something. Their enthusiasm rubs off. You may start not very interested but as you get going you see an idea you had has something to it. This entire year has been enriching and challenging. I was tempted to turn in whatever work, but I feel like I'd be betraying the professor. Through the courses, I've learned to mirror the professor. The personal growth I've seen is that I'm putting others before myself. In that challenge, I have discovered a part of me I've come to love.
- My biggest takeaway is to become critical in my thinking. You question a lot of things in your background. Ignatius fought in battle and he was changed too. The quality of decisions changes for the better. The more educated you become, the better your decisions become. I've been in an academic oasis and now this is so good, the proper setting. It has been 30 years since I was last in a classroom. You'll take criticism as beneficial in the long run. Feedback is useful. This setting is not refreshing so communicating with professors is profound.
- Other AJCU theology chairs are 'mind-blown' by the new Ignatian Core Curriculum (ICC) keeping the Theology requirements, not giving in to outside pressures to reduce the credits. New Core Capstone is also distinctive (Encouraged by the ICC holistic appreciation of Gospel values to connect with academic pursuits).
- Using the new ICC Civic Engagement requirement encourages Community Based Learning (CBL) in the classroom to help students discern future careers.
- The University does a good job finding where the students are that have been missed.
- Inclusion of queer students on campus is strong, with support from student clubs/organizations.
- We are preparing students for not just careers but for life.
- We are teaching students to be good citizens
- A lot of growth has come out of experiential learning as a science major. Experiences that made me reflect have been very helpful. You can evaluate where you can make a difference.
- The classes we offer do a great job in opening up to people of all religious backgrounds.

- Experiential learning and involvement experiences. Experiences that have been mission-driven and have invited me to reflect have been important. Experiences where they learn about social justice, service, and ideals of the Jesuit beliefs that aren't exclusively religious is when the mission can resonate with students of all different backgrounds.
- When I was a graduate student in Theology here, I felt that the commitments to faith, justice, and service were beautifully emphasized. I wasn't sure if that was just because I was in the Theology department, but when my son started as a student here last year, I realized that the University's commitments are well-expressed in the more secular subjects as well. I'm so grateful for the education he is receiving that will make him a better person as well as someone equipped for a career.
- The University's commitment and development of our new Ignatian Core Curriculum (which keeps the humanities at the center of Scranton education) is the clearest sign of our commitment to a Jesuit liberal arts education.
- The new [Ignatian] Core Curriculum provides a framework to integrate justice in a more intentional way into the classroom.

Student Faith Experience

- Our commitment to mission is seen in recruiting good students over the years. The University has changed for the better in many ways, including students' commitment to Jesuit ideals.
- Food insecurity is a real issue for some of our students, and we are grateful to have the Royal Restore Pantry on campus.
- Lenten activities on campus this year were well attended – refreshing how many students participate regardless of religious faith.
- I am impressed by our preparation of students for a life of service, specifically those entering into the healthcare professions. The Leahy Clinic and other opportunities for students to have service in a related field is exemplary.
- First year seminar and the Ignatian Values Lecture encouraged me to explore Ignatian values in my life. I was less religious, but it challenged me in a good way.
- Planning events for the Cultural Centers has helped because we are expected to connect what we're doing to Catholic Social Teaching and the University's values.
- I would like to highlight the outdoor retreats. There are many opportunities to grow through time in nature. I grew through these experiences.
- Student Government encourages us to step back and critically analyze situations, which is central to Jesuit identity.

- Encounter experiences, service opportunities, retreats, etc. do a good job of meeting people where they are at regardless of what experiences they've had before coming to college. These experiences are powerful for students.
- While I understand that the University does invest in programs connected to its Jesuit mission, I think there are still areas where funding limitations can impact student involvement, especially within Campus Ministry and retreat programs. From my experience, opportunities like retreats can have meaningful effects on students personally, spiritually, and socially, but the available funding does not always make these experiences accessible to everyone. Even though some financial support exists, the costs can still limit participation for certain students, particularly for larger retreats like the Desert experience. Because these programs strongly reflect the University's Jesuit values of reflection, community, and personal growth, I think additional financial support toward them would better align with the mission the University promotes.

Faculty and Staff Formation

- One thing I have noticed at The University of Scranton is how much the campus encourages students to become involved and support one another both inside and outside of the classroom. Through leadership opportunities, service events, student organizations, and campus ministry, there is a strong emphasis on compassion, reflection, and personal growth. I have especially seen this through involvement in campus organizations and volunteer experiences where students are encouraged to think about how their actions impact others and the larger community. Professors and staff also tend to genuinely care about students as people, not just academically, which reflects the idea of *cura personalis*. Overall, the University creates an environment where students are pushed to grow intellectually while also becoming more thoughtful, respectful, and community-oriented individuals.
- I work with international instructors, and I see support from the University in serving people who might not be able to give a lot in return. They can help students recognize that they are valuable.
- We work with people of many faiths, and everyone feels like they belong.
- We have improved hiring for mission practices with the Deans, Provost, and Jesuit Center staff.
- Faculty and staff formation is done well thanks, in part, to the Jesuit Center.
- We feel supported by our supervisors/leadership to participate in mission-focused programming.

- So many colleagues know the Jesuit mission and vision, especially the care for our students. The Jesuit Center deals with faculty and staff and they care for students.
- One impressive thing is the staff has a strong sense of mission and they can speak eloquently to it. They are great colleagues in ministry. We regularly see faculty that way, but it is staff here as well.
- The University definitely talks about the Mission a lot and offers opportunities to learn about it. The Jesuit Center is a credit to the institution and offers invaluable support to faculty, staff, and students.
- Many of the professors and faculty have made me feel extremely comfortable and grateful that I chose this university. Many of which are followers of Jesuit beliefs and customs, and I am consistently reminded of *Cura Personalis* by my professors and it has made all the difference in how I approach a classroom.
- Not only from the written material about the institution but from my experience interviewing on campus, the mission was shown to be front and center.
- The Jesuit Center is at the heart of enlivening the Jesuit and Catholic mission of The University of Scranton. Its programming has an impact on faculty and staff across campus. From their Spirituality Luncheons to pilgrimages, I can't imagine a more impactful way to help keep mission alive among faculty and staff on campus.
- The Jesuit Center's workshops have been an essential part of sponsoring talks that encourage the exchange of ideas and workshops that help form faculty and staff.
- The Jesuit Center is the most robust programming that I've seen at comparable AJCU institutions. There is equal access [to programming] from a janitor to a cabinet-level administrator, which allows a range of individuals to all come together and learn of this tradition.

Local Community Engagement

- I think the mission is visible not only through official statements and events, but also through the opportunities students are given to serve others, grow in leadership, and become involved in the community. The administration, faculty, and campus organizations regularly encourage values such as compassion, service, *cura personalis*, and social justice, which makes the mission feel active rather than just something written on paper. I have personally seen this through volunteer opportunities, student leadership programs, campus ministry events, and the overall emphasis on helping students grow academically, professionally, and personally. The University's leadership does a strong job of creating an

environment where students are encouraged to think about how they can use their education and future careers to positively impact others and their communities.

- Office of Community Engagement leverages our knowledge and resources in the local community.
- Opportunities on campus such as We Care Wednesdays model positive behaviors for students to see faculty and staff volunteering.
- We appreciate the University's mission leave policy. [In speaking with HR, we average more than 20 staff members a year taking advantage of this and over 600 hours.]
- It is edifying and consoling that all trustees and the board as a whole take the mission seriously.
- I would love a chance for even more board formation on mission.
- The University adds value to the local church. Scranton Prep students go here because they feel wanted and they want a Jesuit, Catholic school.
- There is a unique relationship between the University and the high school. There is a seven-year program and a joint service program.
- The Jesuit community has a great relationship with the Bishop and the diocese. We do masses in parishes, and days of recollection. There is a good interchange and that is good for both the university and the diocese.
- We have a strong reputation on mission commitment and service to our students—and our commitment to values.
- I view the University as an esteemed community partner, however I was not aware of the passion, commitment to others, and beliefs embedded in all aspects of the University. I am proud to inform others that I work at The University of Scranton. Unselfishly, I have grown to be a better person since starting my employment.
- When I took my staff position here, I was just happy to have a job and didn't think too much about the University's mission as a Catholic and Jesuit University. After I had been here for a while, I began to appreciate the many and diverse ways that the University lives out its mission in the community and abroad.
- I see Scranton leadership embody Jesuit ideals through their organizations of discussions, forums, and other group activities that foster a Jesuit and Catholic community. The students' core curriculum coupled with Honors programs, like SJLA, also showcase Jesuit and Catholic pedagogy.
- I see multiple campus offices answering the call by trying to balance the scale of community, justice, and reconciliation. I see this through community outreach, organizational leadership, and a continued alignment with faith.

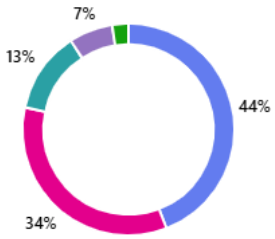
G. MPE Campus Survey Results

Characteristic 1: Leadership and Public Commitment to Mission

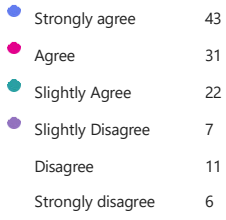
The University's leadership effectively communicates and enlivens the Jesuit, Catholic mission of the institution

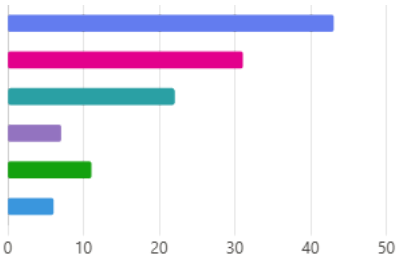
*How would you rate the University's adherence to the **characteristic of Leadership and Public Commitment to Mission?***





1. The University of Scranton's status as a Catholic and Jesuit University played a role in my decision to come here as an employee or student.



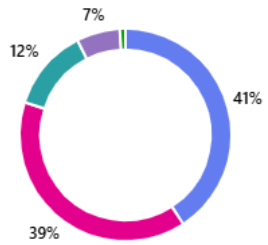


Characteristic 2: The Academic Life

The University's academic life and institutional choices clearly represent the Jesuit and Catholic commitment to a liberal arts and Christian humanistic education for all students. In addition, academic programs, distinctively informed by the University's Jesuit and Catholic character, contribute to the diversity of higher education in North America through an education shaped by the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

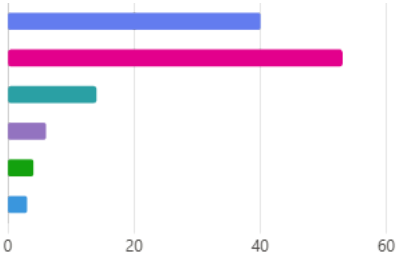
How would you rate the University's adherence to the ***characteristic of The Academic Life?***

Very Good	49
Good	47
Acceptable	15
Poor	8
Very poor	1



1. *The university supports integration of the Jesuit mission into the classroom, scholarship, and service that has shaped your understanding of faith, justice, or ethical responsibility.*

Strongly agree	40
Agree	53
Slightly Agree	14
Slightly Disagree	6
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	3

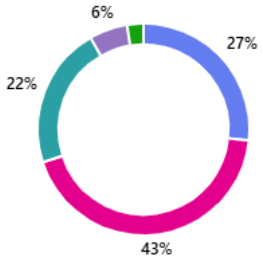


Characteristic 3: The Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation

The Jesuit University actively responds to the most morally urgent issues of our times in ways that reflect the deepest sources of the Jesuit, Catholic tradition; anchor healing and truth; and recognize the fulfillment of justice as the forging of right relationships.

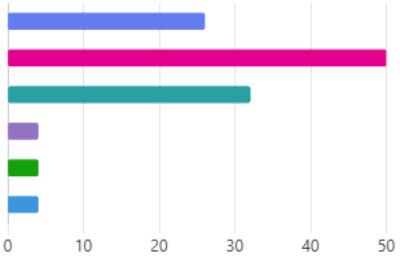
How would you rate the University's adherence to the ***characteristic of The Pursuit of Faith, Justice, and Reconciliation?***





1. You see the university (or parts of it) advancing a faithful response to morally urgent issues, building justice in our world, or contributing to reconciliation (in the sense of advancing both truth and healing).



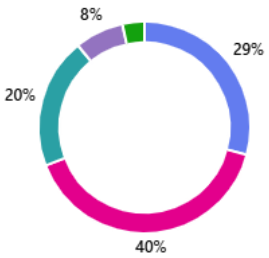


Characteristic 4: Promoting an Ignatian Campus Culture

The University works to foster within its students, administrators, staff, faculty, alumni/ae, and Board of Trustees a virtuous life and learning characterized by personal responsibility, compassion, forgiveness, respect, a habit of reflection, and integration of body, mind, and soul.

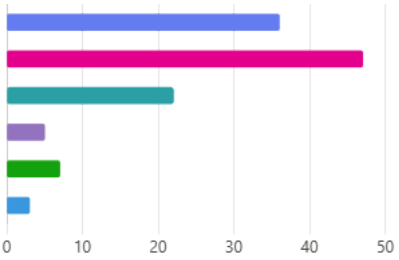
How would you rate the University's adherence to the ***characteristic of Promoting an Ignatian Campus Culture?***

Very Good	35
Good	48
Acceptable	24
Poor	9
Very poor	4



1. Discussions on the University's Ignatian and Catholic culture take place. The campus life is robust and healthy with opportunities for the cultivation of leadership skills, listening and the exchange of ideas, and a diversity of opinion.

Strongly agree	36
Agree	47
Slightly Agree	22
Slightly Disagree	5
Disagree	7
Strongly disagree	3



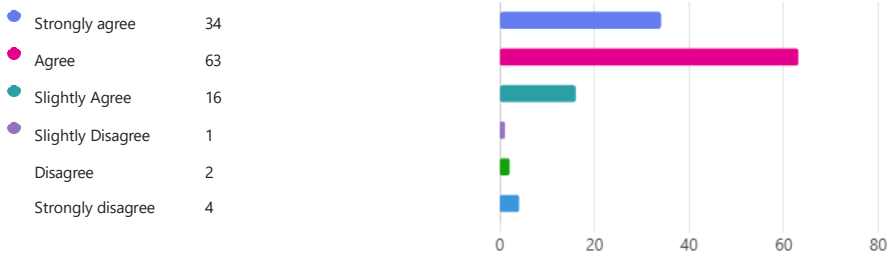
Characteristic 5: Service to the Church

Through educational and formational programs, the University offers resources to build up the local Church, so that people of faith can wrestle with difficult questions facing the Church and the world.

How would you rate the University's adherence to the ***characteristic of Service to the Church?***



1. The University is assisting those who are Catholic in developing a deeper and clearer understanding of their faith tradition, including preparing young Catholics for service in the local, national, and global Church.

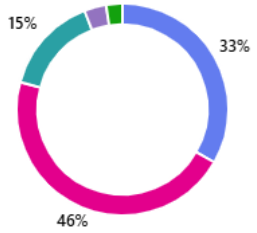


Characteristic 6: Relationship to the Society of Jesus

The University lives out its commitment to its Jesuit identity through collaboration and vibrant partnerships with the Society of Jesus, including individual Jesuits at the University, the campus Jesuit Community, and the Province, as well as national and international Jesuit networks and organizations.

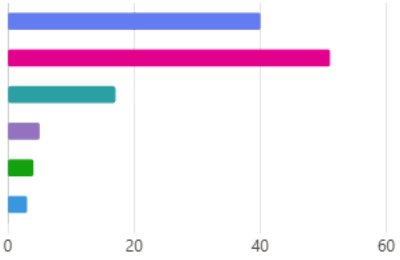
How would you rate the University's adherence to the ***characteristic of Relationship to the Society of Jesus?***

Very Good	40
Good	55
Acceptable	18
Poor	4
Very poor	3



1. I believe the leadership at the University of Scranton provides sufficient opportunities for the campus community to gather and discuss the Jesuit and Catholic mission.

Strongly agree	40
Agree	51
Slightly Agree	17
Slightly Disagree	5
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	3

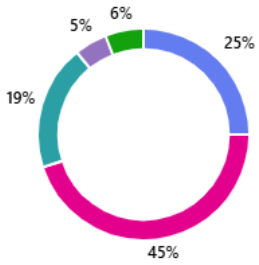


Characteristic 7: Institutional Integrity

Institutional Integrity calls on us to examine our policies and procedures in detail and with honesty, in order that the institution manifests in its dealing with all members of the community the care and respect they deserve. It asks us to review policies and procedures not only for their compliance with civil law and best practices of management in mind, but also in accord with the prescriptions of Catholic social teaching.

How would you rate the University's adherence to the ***characteristic of Institutional Integrity****?*





1. The University exercises financial management that gives evidence of a commitment to mission through its budget decision-making and choices of investment, partnerships and deployment of resources.



