THE MISSION, VALUES AND IDENTITY
OF LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

The Mission Statement of Loyola University New Orleans

Loyola University New Orleans, a Jesuit and Catholic institution of higher education, welcomes students of diverse backgrounds and prepares them to lead meaningful lives with and for others; to pursue truth, wisdom, and virtue; and to work for a more just world. Inspired by Ignatius of Loyola’s vision of finding God in all things, the university is grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, while also offering opportunities for professional studies in undergraduate and selected graduate programs. Through teaching, research, creative activities, and service, the faculty in cooperation with the staff, strives to educate the whole student and to benefit the larger community.
(Approved March 2004 by the Board of Trustees)

Identity Shaped by Mission

The first words of the Mission Statement proclaim Loyola University’s identity as a Jesuit and Catholic institution of higher education. First and foremost Loyola is a university and that is its primary mission. This basic mission is further specified by noting that Loyola’s mission has three distinct characteristics: it is an American (United States) university, it is a Catholic university, and it is a Jesuit university.

LOYOLA IS AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

- American universities have much in common. Most have similar organizational structures. They are made up of a number of colleges and professional schools. They have undergraduate and graduate divisions. They have a complex administrative structure served by numerous administrators and support staff. The colleges and schools are built around their faculties. They too are served by an administrative structure, headed by deans or directors, and divided into departments, each with its own chair.
- Most American Universities offer a wide variety of programs and specializations. In their undergraduate programs they frequently require some basic courses to provide a broad base upon which to build more concentrated, specialized degree programs. The curriculum for each degree program is made up of a series of required and elective courses which are often supplemented by laboratory, service, and internship experience.
- Faculty members are recruited and hired to fulfill very specific needs in a department or school. In addition to teaching responsibilities faculty members are expected to continue to do research, to publish and to serve the university in other
ways. Academic freedom, tenure and promotion, service on university committees, are all part of faculty life at the university.

- Students are recruited and admitted only if they fulfill very specific criteria which predict academic success in the particular university.

- Although American universities have much in common, no two are the same. Each university is distinct in a variety of ways, differing in its location, in the purpose and reasons for its founding, and in its growth and development. Some of Loyola’s distinctiveness derives from its Catholic and Jesuit character For example, although Loyola is clearly an American university, its growth and development has been shaped by its location in New Orleans, Louisiana. The city’s religious, racial, multicultural, multi-national heritage, its unique contribution to music and the arts, its many social and economic problems, and its position as a major port serving the Caribbean and Latin America, all provide an environment rich in learning, service, and research opportunities for Loyola students and faculty.

LOYOLA IS A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
(Statements below are based on Ex Corde Ecclesiae by Pope John Paul II, August 15, 1990.)

Loyola, as a Catholic university, “is an academic community, which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching, and various services.” (#12-14) While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, the dialogue demonstrates that methodical research with every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God.

Since the objective of a Catholic university is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture, every Catholic university, as Catholic, must have the following characteristics:

- A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such.

- A continuing reflection in the light of Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research.

- Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church.

- An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.
• Commitment to moral values and ethical behavior.

• Possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good.

• Mutual respect – by the individual for the Catholic identity of the university and by the university for the individual’s freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

LOYOLA IS A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

• Loyola has been a Jesuit university from its very foundation. The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) founded Loyola University in 1904. In its founding Loyola became a part of a long tradition of Jesuit Education.

• Jesuit Education is rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola and in the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540. The Ignatian charism is embedded in the Spiritual Exercises which continue to inspire and shape the Society of Jesus. So too were the Exercises instrumental in the entry of the Jesuits into education with the founding of the first Jesuit College in 1548, just eight years after the Society’s foundation. Today there are over 180 Jesuit higher education institutions around the world, including 28 Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States. The Ignatian charism continues to inspire and shape these institutions.

• Flowing out of the Ignatian charism are a number of convictions, values, and actions that shape the distinctive spirit that infuses all sectors of a Jesuit University. Characteristics of this Ignatian world vision which impact Jesuit Education are:

• An affirmation of the goodness of the world. This has led to a basic liberal arts curriculum, including studies in philosophy, theology, history, literature, language arts, fine arts, music, mathematics, the natural and social sciences. These studies provide a foundation, context, and support for each student’s degree program.

• To know and love the world is to know and love the God creating it.

• That by finding God in all things, we realize we are partners with God in the ongoing creation of the world.

• That God’s love is more powerful than human weakness and evil.

• That true freedom includes freedom from sin, ignorance, prejudice, limited horizons, and distorted values and desires.
• That a person can discern what is better to do, distinct from one’s own present activities and inclinations (which may, in fact, be good) by listening to God in the Scriptures, in tradition, in the believing community, in the circumstances of one’s life, in reason and imagination, and in the deep desires of the heart.

• That all are asked what more they can do in serving God and others.

• That with Jesus Christ as a model, everyone is called to compassionate action.

• That a personal concern for and respect for each person in the university community is evident in all its programs, practices, and services.

• That there is a special dedication to the growth of the whole person.

• An emphasis on developing critical reflection and critical thinking within a conceptual framework and value system which is not inimical to basic Christian and humanitarian values.

• The formation of a learning community among students, faculty and staff marked by personal interaction, mutual concern and mutual respect.

• The development of an attitude to be of service to others and a habit of reflection on the experience of this service.

• An awareness of their social environment, the world around them, and the needs of that world.

LOYOLA IS AN AMERICAN CATHOLIC JESUIT UNIVERSITY

• It should be clear that all three descriptors have overlapping characteristics. Examples of this might be:

• The ordinary liberal arts curriculum of a university reflects the Jesuit conviction and affirmation of the goodness of the world, and can fulfill the Catholic concern for an ongoing dialogue between faith and culture.

• Developing a habit of critical reflection and critical thinking which is a goal of most American universities also supports the Catholic commitment to moral values and ethical behavior and the Jesuit insistence that we always ask what more we can do in serving God and others.

• That Loyola is an American Catholic Jesuit University should be reflected in all segments of the university, especially when we view its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.
LOYOLA STUDENTS

During their time at Loyola, students should grow and develop in a number of ways:

- Their admission is marked by demonstrated academic ability and recognition and acceptance of Loyola’s values and goals.
- They should have a desire and determination to pursue an academic and formational program which will give them a broad liberal education coupled with specialized education in their occupational and professional choices.
- They should develop habits of thinking critically and acting justly in the important areas of their lives.
- They should grow in ethical awareness, reflection, and decision making which leads to principled behavior in all walks of life.
- They should develop a determination to work for justice and to preserve God’s creation for the benefit of present and future generations.
- They should develop a commitment to excellence which applies well-learned lessons and skills to achieve new ideas, better solutions, and vital answers to questions and problems which confront them.
- They should experience a growing resolve to offer their gifts and talents in service to the world around them, especially in working for the poor, the forgotten, and the marginalized around the world.
- They should have a desire to become “contemplatives in action” recognizing that life is a constant interplay between reflection and action, prayer and work, knowing and doing.
- They should have a developing sense of global solidarity: an educated awareness of society and culture, a sense of being interrelated and interconnected, and a commitment to act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.
LOYOLA GRADUATES

- Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the former Superior-General of the Society in a 2003 address to U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities, reminded his listeners that "the measure of Jesuit universities is not what our students do but who they become. It is the responsibility which our graduates exercise towards their neighbor and their world."

Fr. Kolvenbach goes on to say that "Jesuit Universities want their graduates to become men and women for others, .... who are grateful and generous, who are "great-souled," who have the wisdom to understand themselves and the world, who are mindful of the needy, and who have the knowledge, skill, compassion, and courage to do what is most needed in our world.

LOYOLA FACULTY

*The Faculty plays a pivotal role in the shaping of Loyola’s identity and the achievement of its mission as an American Catholic Jesuit university.*

- The knowledge and teaching ability of the faculty place the university in a unique position of leadership.

- The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.

- The faculty sets requirements in courses, determines fulfillment of requirements, and approves degree candidates.

- Within the framework of excellent liberal and professional education, faculty activities are a studied balance among teaching, research, and service both to the university and to the larger community.

- The faculty has a concern with academic excellence through teaching, research, other scholarly activities, and the maintenance of an atmosphere of academic freedom and responsibility.

- Faculty members have active professional interests which will contribute to the vitality of their work in the classroom.

- By word and example, the faculty are committed to educate students in the Christian tradition, which is not wedded to any given philosophy, science, art, or politics although still not compatible with every point of view.
• Faculty members are “contemplatives in action” recognizing that life is a constant interplay between action and reflection, prayer and work, knowing and doing.

• The faculty has a sense of global solidarity: an educated awareness of society and culture, a sense of being interrelated and interconnected, and a commitment to act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.

• Faculty members possess a respect for Catholic tradition and faith commitment, even if they do not share them.

LOYOLA STAFF

The staff at a modern university includes a wide variety of occupations, positions, and functions: provosts, vice-presidents, program directors, counselors, administrative assistants, campus ministers, chaplains, media specialists, computer technicians, maintenance technicians, custodians, and groundskeepers – to name some positions. Whatever the position or function, each member of the staff has a role to play in forwarding Loyola’s mission.

• Each staff member is made aware of Loyola’s mission and identity upon hiring.

• Additional lectures, workshops, days of recollection, and the like deepen this understanding and help staff members work out their contributions to the school’s mission and identity.

• Wherever possible staff members are included on those committees where their expertise is essential or helpful.

• Staff members interact with students daily or regularly and realize the importance of providing positive, helpful service to them.

• Staff members understand that the mission and identity of the University are not confined to the classroom or the physical boundaries of the campuses.

• Staff members are mindful to conduct the business of the institution internally and externally in a manner which reflects the high standards and principles upon which Loyola is founded.

• The value of each individual is continually affirmed by the manner in which each staff member treats students, faculty, other staff members and the general public.
THE LOYOLA COMMUNITY

Finally, all these elements are united in the entire Loyola community. The bond of this community is the desire of students, teachers and staff members to reach an academic and educational excellence in knowledge, wisdom, and service. By reason of their formative life within this community, everyone should become conscious of the achievements and failures of all human history, particularly those of their own culture and time. As a result, they should be capable of principled judgment in the face of complexity and ambiguity, and humanely moved or divinely inspired to leave behind them a better world than they found.

This statement was composed by a committee of the Mission & Identity Committee of the Board of Trustees of Loyola University, and went through various drafts after being reviewed by the Loyola Jesuit Community, by faculty, staff and students. It was also presented by Fr Kevin Wildes, S.J., to the Loyola University community, posted on-line, seeking comments and suggested revisions.

The Loyola Character and Commitment Statement

After many months of work by both Jesuit and lay faculty, staff and administrators at Loyola, the Task Force on Jesuit Identity produced The Loyola Character and Commitment Statement which was approved by the Board of Trustees in November 1980. The document has held up well in the ensuing years and still presents a powerful complement to Loyola's Mission and Identity statement.

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