

# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS DMV DATA FOR 2007

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# Qualitative Analysis

2008 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SAMPLE

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## INTRODUCTION

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### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Since 2002, a team of researcher under the direction of Dr. Joseph Ferrari, and with the supervision of Fr. Ed Udovic and the Office of University Mission and Values developed a valid and reliable self-report instrument called the DePaul Mission and Values (DMV) scale to comprehensively evaluate perceptions of DePaul University's mission identity and activities across key institutional stakeholders: staff, faculty, senior administrators, trustees, and students. One component was designed to assess perceptions of DePaul's identity, as reflected in its mission statement, while another component was designed to assess perceptions of the University's mission-driven activities and programs that reflected its identity through the vision and values of the school.

The purpose of the present report is to present the results from the 2007 survey of undergraduate students open ended questions.. This was the second surveying of DePaul undergraduates (the first being in 2005) using the DMV. The DMV as well as other relevant psychological measures were given to the undergraduate student body via a voluntary online survey.

### PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

The current study is a qualitative analysis of the 2007 students DMV survey. The DMV included 4 open ended questions:

1. *Please make comments on this 'Catholic Identity' section*
2. *Please make comments on this 'Vincentian Identity' section*
3. *Please make comments on this 'Urban Identity' section*
4. *Please make any additional comments*

Responses varied from a few sentences to half page replies. It was determined that a qualitative approach was necessary to investigate the 361 responses to the open-ended questions.

To fully explore the open-ended questions of the DMV, a combination of *a priori* coding and grounded theory approach were utilized. *A priori* codes reflect codes that were developed prior to exploring the data (Patton, 2002). *A priori* codes were chosen, as it was immediately apparent that many of the student’s responses pertained directly to specific survey items. The other set of codes, developed using a grounded theory approach, reflect codes that come directly from the data.

Next, 44 additional codes were developed using a grounded theory approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Grounded theory involves 3 levels of coding. The first, deemed *Descriptive Coding* focused generally on identifying and naming the data. The next level is deemed *Interpretive Coding* and involved categorizing the descriptive codes. The final level is called *Thematic Coding* and involved linking the categories to identify themes, and/or model development.

Once all of the codes were developed, it was essential to establish inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability involved having all three coders utilize the project codebook to code a set of passages independently and then compare their ratings. This ensures that the data is coded in a consistent manner despite the person coding them. Once the coding has been collected they were compared to calculate a reliability score. During this process, a reliability score of at least 80% is deemed necessary. The following formula was used to calculate inter-rater reliability.

$$\text{Inter-rater reliability} = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{(\# \text{ of agreements}) + (\# \text{ of disagreements})} \times 100$$

The inter-rater reliability was calculated to be 0.92, well within the acceptable range. This ensures that coding was consistent across coders.

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

361 students responded to at least one of the four open ended questions. The tables below describe the demographic profile of those who responded.

Gender	60.9%	39.1%		
	Female	Male		
Race/Ethnicity	8.9%	7.8%	65.7	10%
	African American	Asian American	Caucasian	Latino/a
Religion	40.2%	30.5%	25.1%	4.7%
	Catholic	Christian	Non Christian	None
Class	19.7%	24.7%	23.8%	31.6%
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior

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## FINDINGS

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### CATHOLIC IDENTITY SECTION

201 students responded to the open ended item *ease make comments on this 'Catholic Identity' section*. The four most frequent codes that arose from the responses were:

1. “DePaul allows its students to freely examine a variety of religious and non religious systems” 66 responses (32.84%).

Example: “DePaul's interfaith programs have helped me in so many ways. I feel very fortunate to go to a school that expresses the importance of multiple religions, not just the catholic faith.”

- Caucasian Christian Male Junior

2. “No, I do not support DePaul’s current approach to expressing its Catholic Identity” 41 responses (20.40%).

Example: “Personally, I'm ashamed of DePaul's lack of commitment to their Vincentian and Catholic roots. I think the fact that we're the nations largest Catholic school, yet have no theology department is laughable.”

- Caucasian Catholic Male Senior

3. “Yes, I support DePaul’s current approach to expressing its Catholic Identity” 38 responses (18.91%).

Example: “I think it is good that we express our Catholicism because it is our foundation but also that we support all of the other religions since we are also known for being diverse, which is something I am proud of.”

- Latino Catholic Female Junior

4. “The religious diversity at DePaul contributes to diversity and respect” 37 responses (18.41%).

Example: “I find it most important that DePaul can accept a wide range of students of other religious backgrounds other than Catholicism and still make these students feel welcomed and not segregated.”

- Latino Catholic Male Freshman

## VICENTIAN IDENTITY SECTION

101 students responded to the open ended item *ease make comments on this 'Vincentian Identity' section*. The four most frequent codes that arose from the responses were:

1. 'DePaul's Mission is not visible to all' 26 responses (25.74%)

Example: "Few understand his mission. I think his mission is less understood today than it was in his time. De Paul's efficacy belonged to his unyielding spirit to reach to those in need. My experience is when I asked for help De Paul wasn't there for me. I don't think this is what Vincent De Paul had in mind when he envisioned his mission. Evigilio de Novo."

- Caucasian Other Religion Senior Male

2. "No, I do not support DePaul's current approach to expressing its Vincentian Identity' 22 responses (21.78%)

Example: How can DePaul be inclusive when it deny tenure to a professor who has already been approved? How can DePaul be inclusive when it fires a professor for thinking differently than the institution? DePaul is supposed to be about diversity, but only letting certain teachers with the same mindset does not allow students to grow in all sense of the word.

- African American Other Religion Senior Female

3. 'Yes, I do support DePaul's current approach to expressing its Vincentian Identity' 16 responses (15.84%)

Example: "I also think that the orientation programs and discover/explore classes do a great job of helping students understand the Vincentian, catholic, and urban mission of DePaul."

- Caucasian Other Religion Female Junior

4. 'No, DePaul is not pragmatic regarding students needs for higher education' 14 responses (13.86%)

Example: "It is in my understanding that the Vincentian Mission includes people without a lot of money, and I feel that I was left to worry about paying my tuition alone. I know that DePaul is a huge school and needs money to pay for its many wonderful programs, but I wish the people at the Financial Aid Office would be more helpful and supportive."

- Caucasian Lutheran Female Sophomore

## URBAN IDENTITY SECTION

73 students responded to the open ended item *ease make comments on this 'Urban Identity' section*. The four most frequent codes that arose from the responses were:

1. 'Diversity efforts are important' 15 responses (20.55%)

Example: I LOVE DePaul's focus on diversity, and it was a very compelling factor in why I chose to attend DePaul.

Caucasian Lutheran Senior Female

2. 'Community Service is important' 14 responses (19.18%)

Example: "Both DePaul's Diverse student body and it's concentration on community service were huge factors in my decision to come to here!"

- Caucasian Unitarian Senior Female

3. "Yes, I do support DePaul's current approach to expressing its Urban Identity" 13 responses (17.80%)

Example: I have met so many wonderful and diverse people here at DePaul, I feel blessed to have the opportunity.

- Latino Other Religion Sophomore Male

4. 'Diversity efforts are not important' 9 responses (12.33%)

Example: "By putting forth an active effort to achieve diversity, one only highlights the differences between us. This limits ones views to ones race or ethnicity rather than their merit, abilities, or unique contributions as a person. These are merely seen as after the fact. Diversity efforts have tainted this university's image. More focus must be placed on Catholic and Vincentian values which do not discriminate."

- Caucasian Catholic Sophomore Male

## ADDITIONAL CODES SECTION

During coding several themes emerged that were not included in the initial codebook. These themes did not necessarily pertain to any one of the DMV domains, Catholic Identity, Vincentian Identity, Urban Identity, instead these codes may appear in any section. The four additional codes that appeared with the most frequency were.

### 1. Feelings are supportive about the Mission/DePaul (107 responses)

Example: “St. Vincent de Paul led a wonderful life, instilling many great things into his followers, and I feel at DePaul, his mission is upheld wonderfully.”

- Caucasian Catholic Sophomore Male

### 2. General feelings are supportive about the activities at DePaul (54 responses)

Example: “It's great that DePaul offers so many activities and programs that deal with the numerous religious faiths of its students.”

- Caucasian Catholic Freshman Female

### 3. Feelings are not supportive about the mission/DePaul (40 responses)

Example: “I want to be the best student I can be. I don't need institutional identity to legitimize my performance. The mission means very little to me. My mission is what's important. Being the objective individual that I am, I really don't think De Paul is in the business of building rapport between students and the institution. Make the school harder to get into, up the business school to a tier A school and then maybe I will donate a considerable sum to the university”

- Senior Male

### 3. Need more information about activities in general (30 responses)

Example: “Do any of these programs do anything to include distance education students? I've been a distance education student at DePaul for more than 3+ years, and my answer to that question, based on that experience, is a resounding NO.”

- Caucasian Christian Senior Female

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## DISCUSSION

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### OVERALL THEMES

Upon examining the most frequently used codes several themes emerged. It should be noted that these themes were chosen because they were frequently reported, but do not necessarily reflect overall trends. Many students were very positive about DePaul and expressed support for its mission and activities. However there was also a significant amount of criticism present in student's responses. Positive responses often centered on DePaul's openness and diversity and expressed a positive experience in which they felt included in the university. The high amounts of criticism can largely be attributed to the fine line created by the University's mission, to both be Catholic and Vincentian and well as inclusive and diverse. Criticisms were relatively equally split between students who felt that the university focused too much on Catholicism and Vincentianism to the detriment of inclusiveness and diversity and those who felt that the exact opposite was true. The following pair of statements describes how these opposing views can meld into criticism.

"I have always liked that DePaul was "as Catholic as you want it to be"... I also think the decision to build the new chapel in the Student Center was wrong. It is insulting that the multifaith space was converted into this, leaving a symbolically tiny, bare room to the side for those who are not Catholic to worship. Why is this necessary when we already have an entire Catholic cathedral just steps away? ..."

- Female Catholic Senior

"You can tell that DePaul really doesn't care about its Catholic identity. DePaul sacrifices its Catholic identity to be accommodating of other religions. For the largest Catholic university in the nation, this is shameful. I don't see any crosses or items that express DePaul's Catholic identity in its buildings. DePaul finally converted that nondenominational chapel into a Catholic one in the Student Center. It took that long for DePaul to figure out that it is not expressing its Catholic identity enough."

- Male Catholic Senior

Another key theme that arose was a lack (or perceived lack) of information on the mission and activities at DePaul. Many students indicated that DePaul needed to further publicize the mission and related activities. Additionally a high proportion of respondents indicated that they did not feel that DePaul's mission was visible to all. Some students said that they did not feel that they completely understood the mission and that they did not feel that the mission was well explained to them. Some students indicated that the mission was only talked about at orientation or that they hear mentions of mission without ever having it adequately defined.

Finally, several students indicated an anger regarding the Finkelstein incident. This survey was conducted shortly after professor Finkelstein's tenure was denied and goings on related to it. Many students seemed to think that his denial of tenure represented a blow to the openness and innovativeness of the university. The following quotes are a sample of some responses related to the Finkelstein incident:

“Before last spring my opinions were very different, but when Dean Suchar attacked Prof. Norman Finkelstein for not embodying Vincentian personalism- I was disenchanted with the belief that this University claims to uphold. It will take a lot by those that are members of the Congregation of the Mission to show me that Vincentian personalism a real thing that can do good.”

- Caucasian, Female, Muslim, Junior

“I believe the denying of tenure to Norman G. Finkelstein has greatly changed my opinion on the universities "Vincentian" values. I believe that St. Vincent de Paul would never have denied tenure to a man who stands up for what is just and right, even though it's not part of the "status quo." He was a proponent of justice and equality, yet the university let him go. I don't feel the same way about DePaul as I did when I first entered. I feel ashamed that they denied Finkelstein his tenure, which he clearly deserved. That was injustice in my eyes.”

- Caucasian, Female, Catholic, Junior:

Code:	Description	Number of Responses
ycath1	DP allows students to freely examine a variety of religious and non religious systems	66
ncath1	No, DP does not allow students to freely examine a variety of religious and non religious systems	11
ycath2	DP courses allow for appropriate expressions of Catholic identity	1
ncath2	No, DP courses do not allow for appropriate expressions of Catholic identity	11
ycath3	The religious diversity at DP contributes to diversity and respect	37
ncath3	No, the religious diversity at DP does not contribute to diversity and respect	9
ycath4	The programs and services the University Ministry provides serve the university community and enhance the institutions mission	2
ncath4	No, the programs and services the University Ministry provides do not serve the university community and enhance the institutions mission	1
ycath5	I support DP's current approach to expressing it's Catholic identity	38
ncath5	No, I do not support DP's current approach to expressing it's Catholic identity	41
ycath6	Catholic worship services are important	9
ncath7	Catholic sacramental opportunities are not important	1
ycath8	Interfaith worship is important	3
ncath8	Interfaith worship is not important	1
ycath9	Worship opportunities for other faith traditions are important	3
ycath10	Religious education and spirituality programs are important.	7
ycath11	Service programs are important (University wide service days not included)	9
ycath12	University Ministry is important.	8
ncath12	University Ministry is not important.	1
ycath13	University wide services days are important	5
ncath13	University wide services days are not important	1
ycath14	Sunday Night Mass is important	13

nvin1	DP does not manifest Vincentian personalism	3
nvin2	DP is not innovative to meet the needs of stakeholders	3
yvin3	DP is inclusive of diversity	1
nvin3	DP is not inclusive of diversity	7
nvin4	DP does not take risks to succeed in the mission	7
nvin5	DP is not pragmatic regarding students needs for higher education	14
nvin6	DP's mission is not visible to all	26
yvin7	Vincent de Paul does remain relevant today	5
nvin7	Vincent de Paul does not remain relevant today	2
yvin8	I support DP's current approach to expressing it's Vincentian identity	16
nvin8	I do not support DP's current approach to expressing it's Vincentian identity	22
nvin9	The Office of Mission and Values services and programs do not enhance DP's Catholic, Vincentian, and pluralistic identity.	2
yvin10	Vincentian Endowment fund is important.	2
yvin11	Vincentian Assistance fund is important.	2
nvin11	Vincentian Assistance fund is not important.	1
yvin16	Vincentian Heritage Tours are important	4
yurb1	I support DP's approach to expressing it's urban identity	13
nurb1	I do not support DP's approach to expressing it's urban identity	3
yurb2	DP's services and programs demonstrate a connectedness to the community	3
yurb4	Community-Based Service Learning is important	5
nurb4	Community-Based Service Learning is not important	1
yurb5	Community Service Association is important	9
yurb7	International Sites are important	7
yurb8	International Students on Campus are important	4
yurb10	Diversity Efforts are important	15
nurb10	Diversity Efforts are not important	11
noparcom	Participant commutes (lives off campus), thus does not participate activities, services, or programs in activities, services, or programs	11
nopartra	Participant is a transfer student, thus does not participate in activities, services, or programs in activities, services, or programs	3
noparbus	Participant feels too busy to participate activities, services, or programs in activities, services, or programs	4

noparnoc	Participant is not Catholic, thus does not participate activities, services, or programs in activities, services, or programs	4
exccath	Participant feels excluded because of Catholic identity	4
excofait	Participant feels excluded because of other religious identity	11
excothet	Participant feels excluded because of other ethnicity	1
mctuit	Tuition costs are inconsistent with the mission	3
mchacr	Hate crimes, sexual assault, LGBTQ discrimination are inconsistent with the mission	3
mclacom	DP lacks community, which is inconsistent with the mission	8
mcpol	University policies contradict the mission	25
mclbgtq	University support for LGBTQ community contradicts the mission	5
mclacath	Lack of university support for Catholicism contradicts the mission	18
Pmccath	Predominant support for Catholicism contradicts the mission	3
mcstaff	Behavior/actions of staff contradict the mission	3
mcfac	Behavior/actions of faculty contradict the mission	14
mcstud	Behavior/actions of students contradict the mission	3
mcneedfa	Students need more financial assistance	9
immclass	The mission needs to be expressed more in the classroom	18
immcurr	The mission needs to be expressed more in the curriculum	12
imlclas	The mission needs to be expressed less in the classroom	2
imlcurr	The mission needs to be expressed less in the curriculum	3
impub	DP needs to publicize the mission	14
imorient	DP orientation is the only place the participant was informed about the mission	4
imconfus	Participant is unclear or confused about the mission	7
iaoppca	Need more faith activities/opportunities for Catholics	3
iamoppif	Need more interfaith activities/opportunities	1
iainfoca	Need more information about catholic activities	3
iainfoof	Need more information about other faith related activities	5
iainfof	Need more information about activities in general	30
iapub	DP needs to publicize activities	12
iacomout	Need more opportunities for community outreach	8
iasched	Need greater understanding of student schedule needs regarding activities	6
iamopgen	Need more activities in general	5
iasacost	Students need assistance with study abroad costs	2
mgsupp	feelings are supportive about the mission/DP (from the additional questions section only)	107
mgnsupp	feelings are not supportive about the mission/DP (from the additional questions section only)	40

actsupp	General feelings are supportive of the activities at DP	54
actnsupp	General feelings are not supportive of the activities at DP	13
Finklestein	Mention the Finklestein tenure incedent	15
Good school	Care about DePaul being a good school over its M&Vs	2