

Office of University Mission and Values
DePaul Mission and Values Survey
Faculty, Staff, Senior Administrators and Students
2003-2006

The recent white paper titled *About Saint Vincent de Paul and DePaul University's Vincentian, Catholic and Urban Identity* (published by the University in Spring 2003) described DePaul's hallmark characteristics in light of the institution's history, traditions, and self-understanding of that identity. The Office of Mission and Values believes that at DePaul there is a critical mass of people who together create a leadership culture supporting our higher education mission as a *Catholic, Vincentian, and urban* university. This leadership represents our "mission capital" and is directly translated into a wonderful array of academic programs, student services, and operational support services. Furthermore, a notable level of mission effectiveness is documented throughout the institution, and is reflected in the success of our students.

While not discounting the important role that shared anecdotes, stories, intuition, and impressions may make in assessing and reporting mission effectiveness, these supplemental, qualitative sources of information can support accurate quantitative assessment metrics to provide a compelling institutional narrative. Moreover, both qualitative and quantitative sources provide essential information on our goals and are useful measures to inform strategic planning efforts.

Toward this end, the Office of Mission and Values, along with Joseph Ferrari, Ph.D. (LAS: Psychology Department), developed a reliable self-reporting instrument to assess faculty, staff, and student perceptions of the university's Catholic, Vincentian, and Urban identity, and the relative effectiveness of the university's many attempts to live out that identity.

In the fall quarter of the 2002-03 academic year, a sample of 178 *staff* employed at the Loop and Lincoln Park campuses of DePaul University were asked to attend breakfast or lunch sessions of 60-75 minutes to complete this new instrument. Subsequently, the measure was distributed on-line for all *staff* to complete, and an additional 361 staff members completed the scale over a period of 8 weeks during the spring quarter of 2002-03 (representing approximately 33% of both part-time and full-time staff).

We then placed the scale on-line for 8 weeks during the fall quarter of the 2003-04 academic year and provided access to all *faculty* from all colleges and schools of DePaul, yielding a sample size of 305 (approximately 25% of full-time faculty).

Next, during the spring quarter of 2003-04, we requested participation from all *senior administrators* at DePaul (i.e., assistant, associate, and full vice presidents and deans) to complete the measure on-line, across a period of 6 weeks, yielding a total of 35 senior leaders (33.6% compliance).

Finally, advertisements across campuses (e.g., emails, 'DePaulia' ad) requested traditional age undergraduate *student* participation by completing an on-line version of the DMV during the winter quarter of the 2004-05 academic year. *Students* enrolled in one of six schools or colleges with traditional undergraduate populations completed the DMV, and we obtained a total of 2,010 students after eight weeks.

Summary of Major Findings:

Catholic Identity

- As a testament to institutional support of our academic mission in the Catholic intellectual tradition, a very high positive response, 75% of the staff, 76% of the faculty, and 72% of students, both Catholic and Non-Catholic, *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that “DePaul invites all inquirers to freely examine Catholicism, other faith traditions, and other secular values systems in light of their respective contributions to the human experience.”
- The same favorable response was given when asked if one “...believe(s) that at DePaul our very diverse personal values and religious beliefs contribute to an atmosphere that fosters mutual understanding and respect.” Over 70% of all respondents said they agreed, or strongly agreed
- When asked whether “the curricula of DePaul’s schools and colleges have appropriate expressions of the university’s Catholic identity” 55% of faculty and 47% of students *agreed* or *strongly agreed*, 4% of the faculty and 7% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 22% of the faculty and 14% of the students were indifferent. (Obviously the curricula in some college lend themselves more naturally to such expressions.)
- Throughout the staff and faculty surveys DePaul’s self-defined Catholic character was consistently affirmed by large majorities (67%) of both Catholics and non-Catholics. However, the students consistently responded more favorably to inter-faith questions (71% on average) in comparison to whether they were supportive of DePaul’s self-defined Catholic characters (56%).

Activities that support our Catholic Identity

- Of those who self-identified as belonging to a religious tradition, the availability of worship opportunities for other traditions (non-Catholic) were seen as *important* or *very important* by the majority of Catholic respondents (70% for faculty/staff and 54% for students) and non-Catholic respondents (60% for faculty and staff and 59% for students).

- Similar responses were found when asked “How important to you are religious education and spirituality programs?” 60% of all four constituencies as well as all those who do identify with a faith and those who do not said this was important or very important. Given this response and the response previously mentioned, religious diversity, spirituality, and religious education is a significant value at DePaul.
- The availability of Catholic worship and sacramental opportunities were important for 65% of faculty and staff respondents and 61% of student respondents who identified themselves as Catholics. Interestingly, 66% of the same faculty and staff population reported that interfaith worship services were *important* or *very important* to them whereas 46% of the same student population responded with *important* or *very important*.

Vincentian Identity

- There was a strong affirmation of our Vincentian identity, with 70% of faculty and staff *strongly agreeing* or *agreeing* that “the heritage of Saint Vincent de Paul remains relevant to the university today.” This percentage, however, falls significantly with the students’ response of only 43% *strongly agreeing* or *agreeing*.
- Over 60% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that DePaul’s Vincentian identity is expressed through the values of, “innovation, inclusiveness, risk-taking, connections to community, and pragmatism.” Again the students differed in their response. They *strongly agreed* or *agreed* (68%) that DePaul was marked by “inclusiveness,” but only 45% strongly agreed or agreed that DePaul exemplified the values of *risk taking* and *innovation*.
- Likewise, students lagged behind in their affirmation that DePaul “... manifest(s) Vincentian personalism by our care for each member of the university.” Only 43% of all students agreed or strongly agreed where as over 55% of all faculty, staff and senior administrators agreed or strongly agreed.
- Consistent with reported perceptions on diversity as a primary Vincentian characteristic at the university 74% of staff, 81% of faculty, and 68% of students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that DePaul University is an “inclusive” institution.

Activities that Support our Vincentian Identity

- 81% of all faculty and staff respondents and 66% of students reported the mission orientation programs (for new students, faculty and staff) are *important* or *very important*.

- The Vincentian Endowment Fund (which provides funding for faculty, student, staff grant projects in support of the university's Catholic and Vincentian identity) was rated as *important* or *very important* by 65% of faculty and staff.
- The Vincentian Assistance Fund (providing emergency personal assistance for students, staff, and faculty) was rated as *important* or *very important* by 83% of faculty and staff.
- More students were unaware of the Vincentian Endowment (46%) than found it *important* or *very important* (34%). Likewise, more students were unaware of the Vincentian Assistance Fund (48%) than found it *important* or *very important* (36%).
- Other educational efforts such as lectures and workshops generally were rated lower in importance (with only 41-50% of all respondents saying these activities were *important* or *very important*).

Urban Identity

- The survey results demonstrate that all constituencies hold our diversity in high regard. This is also reflected in university opinions with respect to our urban identity. In addition to the statistic already cited above on inclusiveness, 89% of faculty, 85% of staff, and 87% of students responded that DePaul's diversity efforts are either *important* or *very important*. This represents the highest positive response of any question in the survey and also one of the questions in which the students scored higher than another constituency.

Activities Supporting our Urban Identity

- 80% of faculty and staff responded that DePaul's community initiatives are *important* or *very important*.
- 85% of all students reported that Study Abroad programs are either *important* or *very important*.
- 82% of faculty and staff and 72% of students reported that Community-based Service Learning efforts are *important* or *very important*.
- 75% of faculty and staff and 65% of students reported that the programs of the DePaul Community Service Association (University Ministry) were *important* or *very important*.
- It is interesting to note that students consistently responded that international initiatives (study abroad programs 85%, international sites 71% and international students on campus 84%) are either *important* or *very important*.

In the 2005-06 academic year, the DePaul Mission and Values Survey focused on analyzing the qualitative replies by students on the 2004-05 survey. Through this analysis several reliable and valid underlying “themes” or “sub-scales” for the 39-item inventory became apparent, namely:

University Identity:

Inclusiveness and Innovation: these questions reflected the university’s *Vincentian* and *urban* identity. This area encompassed the beliefs that DePaul is innovative in operational procedures and inclusive of persons from all backgrounds. Moreover, that the University takes risks in an entrepreneurial way, is pragmatic in educational focus, remains relevant in a changing society, keeps its urban identity, and fosters mutual understanding and respect for others.

Catholic Pluralism: these questions reflected the university’s *Catholic* and *urban* identities, by inviting all faiths to examine Catholicism and other faiths, providing curricula on Catholicism and other faiths, offering ministry and programs for Catholicism and other faiths, and expressing its Catholic heritage.

Mission-driven Activities and Programs:

Urban/Global Engagement Opportunities: these questions asked the importance of support of the mission of Chicago-area (e.g., service learning programs) and global social engagement activities (e.g., study abroad and having international campus sites and students).

Institution’s Vincentian Heritage Programs: these questions asked the importance of a set of very specific activities held at DePaul University in light of the Vincentian benchmark, such as a Vincentian Endowment Fund and Vincentian Assistance Fund.

Catholic and other Faith-Formation Opportunities: these questions asked the importance of faith-based activities, such as Catholic and interfaith worship services, religious education and spiritual programs, and sacramental and other faith worship opportunities.

These five DMV Inventory sub-scales allowed for meaningful comparisons and conclusions to be drawn from the data. Breaking the DMV down into five areas allowed for investigation of differences in response to each of the five areas. Moreover, it allowed for comparisons among specific groups in relation to the aforementioned five areas.

Specifically, by breaking down the structure of the DMV, researchers were able to make appropriate group comparisons, including how participant perception differ in relation to gender, ethnicity, and religious background in each of the five areas.

Main Themes of the Qualitative Findings

Identity Items

Within the Identity sub-scales, there were apparent mixed feelings. Regarding the *Inclusive and Innovative* sub-scale many students reported that religious diversity was important and actualized at DePaul, but many students also reported that DePaul was not inclusive of all forms of diversity and that the Vincentian mission was not visible to all.

Regarding the *Catholic Pluralism* sub-scale many students reported that DePaul does allow for religious freedom and exploration. Many students also reported that they support DePaul's approach to expressing its Catholic identity; however a fair amount of students also reported that they were not satisfied with DePaul's current approach to expressing its Catholic identity. Additionally, students were nearly equally divided on whether or not DePaul's courses allow for appropriate expressions of Catholic identity.

Inclusive & Innovative

As aforementioned the Inclusive and Innovative sub-scale reflects the view that DePaul is innovative in operational procedures and inclusive of persons from all backgrounds. This area also encompassed beliefs that the DePaul takes risks in an entrepreneurial way, is pragmatic in educational focus, remains relevant in a changing society, keeps its urban identity, and fosters mutual understanding and respect for others. In relation to this, the top areas cited by students in the qualitative section were:

- Diversity & Respect: the religious diversity at DePaul contributes to an atmosphere of diversity and respect
- In respect to this notion, 9% (23 students) responded that they felt this was the case, whereas 4% (11 students) responded that they felt this was not the case.
- Among students who did agree, students of a variety of demographic backgrounds made statements reiterating the value placed on the opportunities that arise from tolerance and acceptance

Catholic Pluralism

As mentioned, the Catholic Pluralism sub-scale reflects inviting all faiths to examine Catholicism and other faiths, providing curricula on Catholicism and other faiths, offering ministry and programs for Catholicism and other faiths, and expressing its Catholic heritage. In relation to this, the top areas cited by students in the qualitative section were:

- Religious Freedom: DePaul allows students to freely examine a variety of religious and non-religious systems

- In relation to this notion, 22% (58 students) responded that they did feel this was the case, whereas 6% (17 students) responded that they did not feel this was the case.

Activity Items

Among the activity sub-scales, go-abroad experiences (i.e. Study Abroad programs & Vincentian Heritage tours) were viewed by students as very important. Moreover, the diversity efforts at DePaul elicited a contentious debate.

Urban/Global Engagement Opportunities

These activities highlight the importance of support of the mission of both the Chicago-area and global social engagement activities.

Among these activities, Study Abroad programs stood out as key, whereas impressions DePaul's diversity efforts were very divided.

- Study Abroad Programs: Of students who felt Study Abroad programs were important, many cited the importance of the inter-cultural interactions as a key benefit of Study Abroad programs:
- Diversity Efforts: Of those who were not supportive of DePaul's diversity efforts, about half indicated that they felt that diversity efforts compromised the experience of those not considered minority group members, whereas the other half indicated that they felt the diversity efforts at DePaul need to be expanded:

Among those who did agree, students from a variety of religious backgrounds responded that DePaul does an excellent job fostering Catholicism while allowing those of other faith traditions to maintain their independent identity for example

Institution's Vincentian Heritage

These activities highlight the importance of a set of very specific activities held at DePaul University reflective of the Vincentian heritage.

Many students cited that Vincentian Heritage Tours are important; furthermore more students indicated that they were *not aware* of programs in this area more than the other two activity sub-scales, particularly the Endowment and Assistance funds.

- Vincentian Heritage Tours: Many students indicated that they felt the Heritage Tour was important to truly understanding DePaul's mission, however many students also indicated that they felt that the Tours needed to be offered more frequently

Catholic and Other Faith Formation Opportunities

These activities are reflective of the importance of faith-based activities, such as Catholic and interfaith worship services, religious education and spiritual programs, and sacramental and other faith worship opportunities.

Many students cited the importance of Service Programs, along with Other Faith Worship Opportunities, and Sunday Night Mass.

- Other Faith Worship Opportunities: Many students indicated the Other Faith worship opportunities were important as they contribute to the diversity at DePaul; however many non-Catholic/Christian students reported that they would like more worship opportunities for their faith