

Regis University
Mission Priority Examen Self-Study
2021 – 2022

INTRODUCTION

Few periods in recent memory have so challenged our work as companions in mission as have the last five years. Facing several compounding crises – a crippling cyber-attack (August 2019); a once-in-a-century pandemic (2020-2022); financial pressures stemming primarily from enrollment shortfalls (2018-2022); a national reckoning over racial injustice (2017-2021); and unexpected changes in leadership, including the resignation of President Fitzgibbons midway through the academic year (December 31, 2022) – the Regis University community has found itself asking once again, with renewed urgency, “How ought we to live?” Like the country and world of which we are a part, every member of our community has felt in acutely personal ways both the gift and the weight of our shared responsibility to each other.

In this, our 145th year as the only Jesuit Catholic university in the Rocky Mountain west, there have been moments of desolation and uncertainty as we addressed the fiscal challenges before us. We have shared moments of profound personal loss, saying goodbye to friends or family members taken by the pandemic. The physical separation necessitated by the pandemic and exacerbated by operational changes resulting in the departure of many friends and colleagues intensified our sense of disruption and loss, even as the traditional religious and academic rituals that build solidarity and resilience had to be radically reimaged. Yet we have also experienced profound consolation as we have faced these challenges together, our hearts and minds set on the future. How do we ensure that this nearly 500 years-old tradition of Jesuit education will be accessible for generations of Regis students yet to come?

From the beginning, Jesuits have rooted their hopes in a God of promise and possibility who comes to us “in all things,” not least in the gifts of friendship, shared mission, and communal discernment. As Ignatius insists, we do not teach the mission with words so much as we strive to live the mission through our actions. The following report details the progress we have made on many but not all of our goals from the 2017 MPE in response to the recommendations from the Visiting Team Report. We begin with a prefatory note on method, followed by four major parts: I/ Leadership’s Commitment to Mission; II/ Responses to 2017 MPE Recommendations; III/ Summary Results of the 2021-2022 MPE; and IV/ Conclusions and Resolutions.

A Note on Method

We approached the 2021-2022 self-study in terms of a centering question posed to our collective imagination and framed in terms of an Ignatian “composition of place.” *What are we doing now so that in 20 years Regis will thrive as a vibrant Jesuit Catholic University?*¹ This question presupposes that Regis has already entered a Kairos moment with regards to its core Jesuit

¹ See Appendix “A” for the text: *Mission Priority Examen: Notes for a Composition of Place*

Catholic identity, signaled clearly by the actual number of Jesuits assigned to this apostolic work and key roles played by Jesuits in the past that are not likely to be in the future, including the role of the President. Significantly, during this same Kairos moment, Regis has been blessed with a growing number of mission-centered and mission-trained colleagues who exercise genuine Ignatian leadership in our Regis community. Maintaining robust, functional relationships between these emerging leaders and companions in mission with the local Jesuit community and with the Jesuit province and worldwide Society is crucial for achieving our 20-year aspiration.

Three Principal Areas of Focus in Our Current MPE

Responding to the vision outlined in the revised *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education*, and the Society of Jesus's *Universal Apostolic Preferences* promulgated by Father General Arturo Sosa in 2019, we chose to structure our MPE listening sessions and this self-study report around three primary concerns:

(1) *Formation in the Ignatian Tradition.* Jesuit Catholic universities like Regis are precisely those places where “the future of Jesuit presence is now” in terms of providing formation in the Ignatian tradition of lay leaders and colleagues in the university, a commitment that includes (a) the broad formation of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students; (b) the focused formation of an identifiable cadre of mission-centric Ignatian leaders (“Companions in Mission”) who actively live Ignatian spirituality and think (“sentir”) with the larger Society of Jesus and the Church; (c) the development of a robust understanding of our mission that addresses the ecumenical, interfaith, and cultural diversity of the people who make up Regis and of the larger social context within which we live.

(2) *Education towards a Faith that Does Justice.* As a Jesuit Catholic university, Regis participates in and is affected by broad socio-politico-economic-cultural movement affecting the world at large. In response to the call of Vatican II, recent Popes, Catholic Social Teaching, General Congregations and Generals of the Society of Jesus, Regis has been conscious of its relationship with the larger world and the need for comprehensive social justice. We are especially conscious of our need to act in the manner of a university in addressing this multifaceted call, to promote an education towards a faith that does justice.

(3) *Engagement with Companion Institutions.* As a Jesuit Catholic university – the only Catholic university in the state of Colorado and the only Jesuit university in the Rocky Mountain West (our nearest sister schools Creighton University and Rockhurst University are some 550-600 miles to the east), Regis recognizes its privileges and responsibilities as a social force, an anchor institution in relationship with many other institutions. Attention to these relationships is crucial if we are to deepen our identity and fulfill our mission. We especially feel the importance of fruitful engagement with (a) institutions and apostolates of the Society of Jesus (the local Jesuit community, other Jesuit works in our region, the UCS Province, sister Jesuit schools and the AJCU network, and international Jesuit works and the worldwide Society of Jesus); (b) the local, national, and worldwide Catholic Church and other faith bodies; (c) the institutions of civil society, including our neighborhood, city, state, and nation.

PART I: UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO MISSION (2017-2022)

Like its companion institutions across the AJCU network, Regis University has wrestled with how best to embody its mission to witness to the Gospel and to be a force for justice and peace in society. The commitment to be a “social projection” must also include an honest appraisal of the dynamics of privilege and power in our internal life as a university community. From the President and President’s cabinet and Board of Trustees to the Office of Mission and University Ministry, Provost, Deans, Department Chairs, Staff Advisory Committee, and Faculty Forums, leadership succeeds or stumbles to the degree our way of proceeding is guided by the core principle that “We belong to each other, and that each person shares responsibility for the long hard work of shaping an inclusive community where all can flourish.” As then-President Fitzgibbons wrote in his “Message on Race and Justice” (2020), amid national protests following the murder of George Floyd, “We will do this work together. It is the only way forward.”

There is much to celebrate in Regis leadership’s public and often prophetic commitment to its Jesuit Catholic mission. The statement on race noted above is just one of dozens of public letters issued in the past five years by President Fitzgibbons on matters of social, political, and religious urgency in defense of human dignity. The prophetic character of these statements—e.g., the expression of unambiguous support for DACA students, for LGBTQ persons in our community, for the aims of the Black Lives Matter Movement, and the formation of a President’s Council for Race and Justice—have sometimes yielded internal and external pushback. Yet many in the Regis community and across the Rocky Mountain West, including many Catholics, take consolation in Regis’s public leadership in matters of faith and justice. “As God does not abandon his people, neither will we abandon our immigrant community,” Fr. Fitzgibbons wrote in his public statement on DACA. “God’s people are our people.” One senses in our long legacy of public advocacy for “the most vulnerable among us” a genuine passion to lead from a heart of prayerful discernment, grounded in the principles of Catholic social teaching and a firm conviction that the link between “Catholic” and “Jesuit” at Regis is non-negotiable.²

In addition to the public leadership of Regis’s President and other leaders, the commitment to mission appears in noteworthy examples in the five years since the 2017 Institutional Examen. We mention six of these, some treated in greater detail here and others later in this report:

(1) *The Office of Mission*. In 2017, the creation of a six-person Mission Team initiated a major commitment by Regis leadership to place mission at the forefront of vision, strategic planning, teaching and learning, and the administration of the university. Led by the newly appointed Vice-President for Mission, Fr. Kevin Burke, S.J., the Mission Team provides a three-year “Manresa” formation program for new faculty, with similar intensive offerings for staff and for Trustees, in partnership with the Office of Human Resources, the President’s Office, the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Excellence (also established in 2017), various AJCU committees when they have met on our campus, and many others. While new faculty meet with the Mission Team no less than six times over the course of their first year, in addition to a summer retreat, quarterly programs with the Board of Trustees and the University Budget Committee aim toward the

² See Appendix “B” for a selection of the public statements issued by the Regis president between 2017-2021.

infusion of Jesuit Catholic identity “into the bloodstream” of university culture at all levels, from curricular design to budgetary decision-making.

(2) *The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence* (see section II.2, below)

(3) *2019 Revision of the Regis Mission Statement*. In November 2018, Father Fitzgibbons asked the Office of Mission to oversee a process of developing a new statement of the Regis University mission. Noting that our then-current mission statement, last revised in 1992, reflected an institutional reality that no longer existed, Fr. Fitzgibbons and other important stakeholders discerned that we needed a mission statement that more accurately reflects our present and future aspirations. These stakeholders included the 2016-17 Institutional Examen Visiting Team, partners at Martz and Lundy who were helping us develop a strategic plan for advancement, and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) during our successful re-accreditation process in 2018.

After a substantive period of listening sessions and consultation across the university, a new Mission Statement was created, unanimously adopted in 2019 by the Board of Trustees, and formally presented to the community on Ignatian Heritage Day that August. The newly adopted Mission Statement reads: *As a Jesuit Catholic university, Regis seeks to build a more just and humane world through transformative education at the frontiers of faith, reason and culture.*

While the cyber-attack and long recovery followed by the COVID pandemic hampered the roll-out of the new Mission Statement, since its adoption many have offered unsolicited positive feedback on both the process and the outcome of mission statement revision. One staff observed that the “process of rewriting the mission statement was inspiring”; a faculty member stated, “I love the revised mission statement; I had used the previous mission statement in my teaching, but this is so much clearer. It’s as if I was teaching this new statement even before it was written.” The 2021 MPE listening sessions strongly suggest that the new statement is widely accepted and is being utilized throughout the university.³

(4) *The First University Mission Symposium*. In October 2018, Regis University hosted its first “University Mission Symposium” on the theme: *The Vision of Pope Francis: Mercy in a Suffering World*. The three-day symposium drew inspiration from various aspects of Pope Francis’s ministry and several key documents issued during the early years of his papacy. Among the eighteen speakers were two bishops, the Executive Secretary of the International Union of Superiors General of Women, a former Governor of Colorado, and numerous renowned theologians and pastoral leaders. The attendance at the sessions generally fluctuated between 100 and 150 participants; one session totaled 600 participants.⁴

(5) *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal*. Founded at Regis in 2012, this professional academic journal came under the editorial leadership of Assistant Vice President for Mission, Dr. Kari Kloos, in 2019. It has since become the go-to academic journal for leading and emerging

³ See Appendix “C” for the revised Mission Statement and the “Elements of the Mission,” along with an annotated guide to the Statement, and a description of the “Listening and Writing process” that we shared with the Regis community.

⁴ See Appendix “D” for information on the Pope Francis symposium, including the list of speakers.

scholars in the AJCU for cutting-edge research on issues related to Jesuit higher education and Ignatian-inspired pedagogy. Since 2019, the journal has more than doubled its readership.

(6) *The Regis Mission and the Budget.* The commitment of leadership to mission is reflected in the budget on multiple fronts: the creation of the mission team (2.5 FTE in 2016-17, currently 5.8 FTE); the growth of the Jesuit Mission Endowment, established previously by the Regis Jesuit Community; and the new gift of the Companions in Mission Fund, established in 2018, which enables community members to deepen their Ignatian commitments through retreats, spiritual direction, and participation in the annual Creighton-Regis pilgrimage, *In the Footsteps of Ignatius*, through parts of Spain and Italy. Additionally, the University commits to three days of paid mission leave for all full-time employees, while all new faculty and staff commit to regular Manresa formation meetings. A member of the mission team has joined the University Budget Committee (UBC) and the team further conducts quarterly input sessions with UBC. Finally, we see both direct and indirect channeling of budget dollars to mission in the commitments of numerous employees to regular AJCU committee meetings and initiatives – e.g., Ignatian Colleagues and the Leadership Institute of AJCU – and in the countless number of person-hours dedicated to mission reflection in academic meetings, operational unit meetings, cabinet meetings, and Board of Trustee meetings throughout each year.

Areas for Growth in the Commitment of University Leadership to Mission

Two key areas have emerged most prominently and consistently as areas calling for attention, transformation and growth with respect to Regis leadership and the mission.

As noted above, Regis leadership has excelled at “talking the talk,” often prophetically, drawing from Catholic Social Teaching, the teachings of Pope Francis and the Society of Jesus to advocate for human dignity, racial justice, interfaith collaboration, and care for the environment. But how well does leadership “walk the walk” in promoting these values internally, in the cultivation of trust with faculty and staff, and in budgetary decisions, campus design, and building practices, etc.? Listening sessions across the university suggest a worrisome gap between how leadership publicly presents its commitment to Jesuit Catholic values and how well these values are actualized in structures that support the well-being of Regis employees.

Secondly, and looking outward, many at Regis express the feeling that the university has been for too long a “hidden gem” in the Rocky Mountain West. “Our excellence,” as President Fitzgibbons acknowledged, “is hidden under a bushel basket.” In a word, how to make more widely and publicly visible our Jesuit Catholic identity, our academic excellence, and our far-reaching passion for creating “a more just and humane world”?

Both of these areas will be addressed in the conclusions and recommendations below (Part IV).

PART II: RESPONSES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2017 MISSION PRIORITY EXAMEN

In response to the recommendations for areas of growth from the 2017 Institutional Examen Visiting Team Report, Regis has taken significant steps in eight major areas.

(1) *Student Life*. Recognizing the inseparability of student engagement and academic success, and in response to a 2016 review of student life, Regis established and filled the position of Vice President for Student Affairs in 2017. With the aim of cultivating a more integrated collegiate experience, the newly created division adopted national best practice principles for Student Affairs, including a commitment to the development of the whole person, education for effective citizenship, acceptance and appreciation of individual differences, and ethical and reflective practices in cultivating an inclusive culture that promotes justice. To facilitate a shift toward a student-centered culture, the division is partnering with colleagues across campus to implement a curricular approach in Student Affairs to foster learning both in and beyond the classroom. We note here range of new initiatives and programs that are consistent with key Jesuit values.

(1.1) *Cura Personalis*: (a) the creation of “Care Teams” to integrate academic and student support services for students in crisis, due to behavioral, physical, or mental health concerns; (b) the shift of Student Conduct policies from a punitive to an educational approach; (c) the implementation of Critical Incident Response, Bias Incident Response, and Behavioral-Intervention Teams in collaboration with institutional partners to address campus concerns more quickly and comprehensively; (d) the integration of the Peer Minister Program within Student Housing and Residential Life.

(1.2) *Civic Formation*: (a) the re-envisioning of the Fr. Woody Program as the St. John Francis Regis Service Society, providing opportunities for students to advocate for and support marginalized persons in our society; (b) the development of A *Speech and Expression Policy* in partnership with legal counsel to affirm the University’s commitment to civil discourse, freedom of expression, and academic freedom to encourage the free and respectful exploration of ideas; (c) the continued resourcing of RegisCorps, Romero House, Magis House, and RUSGA (Regis University Student Government Association), which offer students transformative leadership experiences following in the footsteps of St. Ignatius and Archbishop Oscar Romero; (d) the establishment of the Regis Cupboard by our Military and Veterans Services to address hunger and food insecurity among our students, funded by a grant from the Denver Post Community Foundation.

(1.3) *Cultivating an Inclusive Culture*: (a) the completion of a climate survey to learn more about students’ experiences on campus; (b) the creation of gender-neutral restroom facilities in the Fitness Center, Main Hall, and the Student Center; (c) the hosting of a Hate Crimes seminar by Campus Safety in conjunction with local advocacy groups and law enforcement to ensure awareness of incidents on and near campus, culminating in the RU-Informed alert system; (d) the awarding of the Ignatian Q conference to be hosted at Regis in March 2020, postponed, however, due to the pandemic shutdown; (e) the continued flourishing of Regis student identity-based affinity groups and religious and spiritual clubs,

which support students in exploring their values, celebrating their cultures and identities, and developing a campus culture where all are welcomed and respected.

(2) *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.* At the time of the 2017 MPE, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence (ODEIE) was in the process of rebuilding its programming efforts but was without a chief diversity officer. In August 2017, Dr. Nicki Gonzales was appointed the new Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, leading university DEI efforts and reporting to the Provost while closely collaborating with Student Affairs. Since 2017, ODEIE has launched an impressive range of programming, including “First Scholars” and 1LEADS for first generation college students; employee “Introduction to Inclusivity” training; university-wide “Good Trouble Conversations” on diversity and equity; training and support in hiring for diversity; and diversity councils in each college and the library.

Other initiatives overseen by ODEIE and Dr. Gonzales include Regis’ commitment to become a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), a years-long effort in close collaboration with Denver Latino leaders who have agreed to partner with Regis on a Community Advisory Committee; the ongoing work of the Land Acknowledgement Working Group at Regis; the Undocumented Student Resource Alliance; the Queer Student Association and the Queer Resource Alliance; and the Inclusive Hiring Committee. Looking beyond Regis to the AJCU network, ODEIE and Dr. Gonzales brings Regis into direct engagement with the AJCU’s Mission-Diversity Officers, the AJCU Antiracism Examen, and the DEI advisory group for the Ignatian Colleagues Program.

The President’s Council on Race and Justice, chaired by Dr. Gonzales and Dr. Barbara Wilcots, Vice President of Student Affairs, was established by Fr. Fitzgibbons in Fall 2020 to work with other university partners in undertaking a Climate Study and developing a comprehensive antiracism strategy. While the work of the Council was put on hold with the departure of Fr. Fitzgibbons, Interim President Cody Teets directed ODEIE, the Office of Mission, and other partners to implement the AJCU’s Anti-racism Examen across all divisions of the university, an effort that is ongoing into the 2022-2023 academic year.

(3) *Difficult Conversations.* The US presidential election of November of 2016 sparked a period of conflict in the Regis community in which the social and political polarization in the US was finding expression on our Northwest campus. In the spring semester of 2017, student government leaders and Black and Latinx affinity groups worked with the Institute for the Common Good and ODEIE to create a series of six “Courageous Conversations.” As a result of these, the Office of First Year Experience (FYE) led by director Dr. Jason Taylor, working with Dr. Tom Bowie, then Dean of Regis College, committed to finding ways to create such spaces for dialogue in the freshmen curriculum itself, noting “that they are an essential component of any kind of intelligent response to the crisis of solidarity facing our community.” The result was a substantial revision of the first-year curriculum and co-curriculum, including a revision of the existing communication-intensive seminar in the second semester of the first year so that it would “play a significant role in creating a stronger student culture of dialogue and a stronger faculty culture of facilitating dialogue.”

In the spring semester of 2018, the Institute on the Common Good sponsored dialogue facilitation training workshops for student leaders, who were then invited to develop their

facilitation skills as teaching assistants for communication-intensive courses. This student-centered initiative took a major step forward with the hiring of Dr. Alison Castel as Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Studies in the FYE program of Regis College. Dr. Castel brings expertise in conflict analysis and resolution, and has since overseen training for Peer Dialogue Mentors (students) and for Regis College faculty who teach communication-intensive courses in the First Year Experience curriculum, with the goal of enhancing student and faculty skills and capacities for dialogue and for difficult conversations.

Effectively the FYE program is charged with focusing the attention of our incoming students, beyond the scope of the foundational core, “on diversity as a social justice issue directly connected with our mission.” Just as importantly, it aims to equip them with the tools to engage in difficult conversations, while selecting and training faculty across disciplines who possess the passion and skills to guide these students. The broad aim set forth by FYE was to help all students, and especially those most vulnerable, to thrive in a climate that is empathic and inclusive for all, and in this sense “to be a tangible expression of a commitment to equity and diversity as inseparable from university efforts to promote student success.”

In addition, FYE developed a consistent set of conversation/dialogue norms, introduced at student orientation and woven through fall and spring first-year courses, such that students would experience repeated practice in these norms, supporting a broader culture of dialogue that extends beyond the classroom. The ODEIE has also taken up this priority by sponsoring “Good Trouble Conversations” throughout the academic year on a range of topics, from how to become an anti-racist university to better understanding race and disability, from debates over monuments and museums to the relationship of athletics to social justice, from homelessness to voting. The office has hired a staff member with expertise in facilitating dialogue who will also help students to develop their dialogue facilitation skills.

Like other universities, the Regis community continues to experience tensions at times, with faculty across colleges asking for more support for facilitating difficult conversations in and beyond the classroom and for developing inclusive pedagogies.

(4) *Jesuit and Catholic*. As with other religious orders, we understand that the word *Jesuit* describes our institutional spirituality and *our way of being Catholic*, “a global community of faith called to celebrate and embody God’s love in the world.” As a Jesuit university, our way of proceeding draws from the Ignatian tradition while also being “open to the sacred in all human cultures.” What does it mean for a university to embody God’s love in a local, national, and global context of injustice? How can we offer programs to our staff, faculty and students that are rooted in Jesuit spirituality while also learning from the sacred in different cultures and traditions? How do we ensure that our curricula prepare students for lives of service, meaning, and solidarity? These questions and priorities guide decisions around speaking and acting for immigrants, against white supremacy, in support of LGBTQ students, and more.

One major initiative here with impact on the local and regional Catholic community and beyond was the 2018 Symposium hosted by Regis and the Office of Mission on “The Joy of the Gospel,” marking five years of Pope Francis’s papacy (see above, I.2.4). The event was open to the public and promoted to local Catholic parishes and Catholic high schools.

The Office of Mission has worked closely with Advancement as well as Marketing and Communications in articulating a clear and compelling narrative of how Regis embodies a robustly Catholic and Jesuit way of being a university. Catholic theologians among our faculty publish and speak locally, nationally, and internationally, from local parishes to national theological societies, contributing to church life and the academy. Among these is Dr. Christopher Pramuk, hired in 2017 as University Chair of Ignatian Thought and Imagination. As a Catholic systematic theologian, scholar of Thomas Merton, and Ignatian educator, Dr. Pramuk speaks and publishes widely, at retreats, conferences, in academic journals and popular Catholic magazines. Likewise, Kyle Turner, Director of University Ministry, writes for Catholic liturgical and prayer publications and recently was elected to the North American Academy of Liturgy. Fr. Kevin Burke, Vice President for Mission, recently concluded a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the Catholic Theological Society of America and two six-year terms as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Jesuit sponsored journal, *Theological Studies*. Dr. Julia Brumbaugh currently serves as President of the College Theology Society.

(5) *University Ministry*. Amid interruptions following from the cyberattack and COVID pandemic, University Ministry has continued to accompany students spiritually and to provide liturgies and sacramental opportunities for students, employees, and two worshipping communities, a Roman Rite and Russian-Greek Catholic Rite community. At the same time, we have been unable to implement the recommendations of the 2017 peer visiting team to increase staffing in University Ministry. Indeed, the size of the Ministry staff has decreased in the wake of budget and staffing cuts in spring 2020, the retirement of one University minister and the departure of our music minister. After a two year-hiring pause, we recently hired a fulltime University Minister for Liturgical Music, a great boon to our growing worshipping community and outreach to students. University Ministry seeks to continue growing its staff to adequately support student ministry and to more effectively collaborate with Student Affairs.

(6) *Staff and Affiliate Faculty*. In the fall of 2018, the Office of Mission hired a Jesuit priest to serve as Mission Coordinator for Staff Outreach. In the two years he was with us before reassignment to a local Jesuit parish, he began to develop regular avenues of communication and engagement between Mission and staff. In 2021, the Mission team collaborated with Human Resources to design a new mission orientation program, the Manresa Experience for Staff, which aims to achieve the goals of the Manresa for Faculty program while adapting to staff needs and schedules. Consisting of a series of five meetings, the orientation was developed in two pilot versions in 2020-21, and launched officially with newly hired staff in Fall 2021. Going forward, Mission will offer the program three times a year as a complement to HR staff orientation.

We have made far less progress in supporting mission formation for affiliate faculty, partly due to staffing and budget challenges. The Office of Mission worked with the former Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to integrate mission themes into faculty pedagogy workshops; however, due to budget issues, the center was disbanded in Fall 2019. Colleges and schools integrate mission into their faculty and student orientations, but need more support in reaching affiliates, who may have little time and compensation for adding to their work loads. Future attempts to offer mission development for affiliate faculty will require time, compensation, and collaboration between Mission and academic offices.

(7) *Adult Faith Formation.* Regis has steadily increased offerings for deeper formation in Ignatian spirituality for staff and faculty, including 5-week retreats hosted by the Ignatian Spirituality Program of Denver; adventure retreats in the mountains and directed retreats at Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Sedalia, Colorado; reviving a “Light Works” 8-week version of the Spiritual Exercises; developing a university-wide luncheon series on St. Ignatius as part of our Ignatian Year celebrations; and collaborating with the UCS province by hosting a conference on “Reconciliation,” a major theme of Jesuit General Congregation 36. The “Retreat in the Workday” program has been revived, and Dr. Dan Justin in the Mission Office has worked with Catholic faculty and staff members to promote outreach to their local parishes.

Interfaith and ecumenical opportunities have also developed since 2017. Dr. Russ Arnold of Religious Studies, for example, has worked with University Ministry to expand these efforts by building a stronger relationship with local Muslim leaders and communities, and working with Mission to create a new Interfaith Prayer Room in Main Hall. Reverend Tamara Boynton, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, primarily engages our student population through weekly ecumenical and interfaith offerings, as well as offering her pastoral support in prayer and vigil services throughout the year (attended by faculty, staff, and students). Such efforts, however, need to be strengthened through greater staff support, especially following the 2020 retirement of Mr. Ken Phillips, longtime University Ministry staff member who was chiefly responsible for interfaith and ecumenical programming. Ken’s creative and pastoral programming reached a lot of folks, Regis staff in particular, who miss his presence acutely.

In sum, all of these efforts only partially address the university’s need for spiritual support and development, particularly in the offering of Ignatian retreats and spiritual direction. While University Ministry has two trained spiritual directors on staff, they are overworked and their primary focus is on ministry to students. For Regis to continue to thrive as a Jesuit Catholic university into the future years, we need to invest now in programs to help staff and faculty who desire to grow in Ignatian spirituality. This, in turn, will have an impact on mission integration at the university, particularly in discernment and decision-making for the University’s future.

(8) *Sustainability and Integral Ecology.* As the water crisis in the West grows more ominous, many express a clear and urgent desire to practice sustainability more fully. In Fall 2019, Dr. Nancy Tuchman of Loyola University Chicago was invited to campus for an Ecological Examen. Hosted by the Office of First Year Experience in Regis College, Dr. Tuchman met with students, staff, and faculty to learn about our sustainability efforts and to make recommendations for growth. Noting that she found “numerous pockets of engagement in environmental sustainability occurring across the university that are creative, exciting, and impactful,” Dr. Tuchman emphasized the need to coordinate efforts “to make the overall effort more efficient and focused on a university Plan.” She further suggested hiring a full-time Campus Sustainability Director (or Director of Integral Ecology) to coordinate and develop these efforts in a serious and systematic way. Most recently, in Fall 2021, President Fitzgibbons signed onto Pope Francis’s Seven-Year Journey Towards Integral Ecology on behalf of Regis University, which calls the institution to develop and implement an action plan incorporating Pope Francis’s seven *Laudato Si’* goals. The University Mission Office has assumed responsibility for convening a Coordinating Committee on Sustainability to implement our *Laudato Si’* commitment, an effort that is just beginning and will require institutional support at all levels, as well as from the new President.

PART III: CONSOLATIONS AND DESOLATIONS RESULTS OF THE 2021-2022 EXAMEN

Theme 1: Formation in Ignatian Tradition

When it comes to acting now so that Regis remains a vibrantly Jesuit and Catholic University twenty years from now, perhaps no effort has been more important, more comprehensive, and yet more unfinished than the charge to the Mission Team to facilitate formation of Regis employees in the Ignatian Tradition. As noted above, university's leadership's commitment to mission can be assessed in resource deployment, both financial and personnel, and in the tangible consolations expressed by community members during the MPE listening sessions. Here is a sampling of comments from Regis community members on the consolations of our mission:

- “I am grateful for the abundance of resources Regis commits to mission work. It does not depend on one person or a small group of ‘usual suspects.’”
- “I am grateful to have people interviewing for faculty and staff position who are already focusing on mission, self-selecting for mission, etc. We hire for mission very well.”
- “I love the way we at Regis talk about our mission. We are Jesuit/Catholic *and* we really are open to and welcoming of others.”
- “I am grateful – as a Southern Baptist – to have received the ‘Traditions’ document [during the process of application for a position at Regis] and I felt *welcomed* as a candidate. I am valued even if I label my religious identity differently.”
- “As an administrator, I find it very consoling to discover the opportunities afforded me to develop and sponsor new mission-centered initiatives. Mission is *taken very seriously* at Regis. I’ve been thinking about our mission statement and our post-traditional learners to whom we offer ‘transformative education at the frontiers of faith, reason, and culture.’”

While it is evident that most of our community members have a basic grasp of our Jesuit Catholic mission and look to it with much appreciation – indeed, many identify it as the primary reason they love working at Regis – we also note some of the desolations our community members have experienced and the longings they still feel. Some representative comments:

- “In our institutional processes and practices, we sometimes miss out on opportunities to connect with a lived Ignatian Spirituality... [we need] to look more deeply at this and see how we can do better in this area.”
- “I feel a need to implement the mission in my teaching, but I don’t yet know how to do that. I need a toolbox and I haven’t yet been able to find it.”
- “Too often our adult and on-line students cannot find ways to belong. We need to develop real relationships with all our students, especially those ‘at a distance.’”

It is worth noting that such “desolations” or “yearnings” are often expressed on a continuum with “consolations” and “gratitude,” in other words, as a *yearning for more* of what is being partially or less fruitfully realized than it might be, and a desire for more contact with initiatives that are widely appreciated as drawing people close to the heart of our Jesuit Catholic identity.

During and after the MPE listening sessions, we identified four sub-themes within the category of *Formation in the Ignatian Tradition*. One of these sub-themes was treated above in the discussion of “Leadership’s Commitment to Mission.” The other three are summarized below.

(1) *How Regis introduces and shares Ignatian spirituality*. For some ten years, all new faculty at Regis have undergone a three-year onboarding program. Successful completion of the Manresa Experience for Faculty is mandated, and the vast majority of those eligible for the program have received certificates of completion. The development of the Mission Team since 2017 has strengthened the program with new content and new learning modalities.⁵ As recommended by the MPE Peer Visiting Team in 2017, the Mission Team has also developed a Manresa Experience for Staff Program, as noted above. Beginning in 2018, we instituted a similar Manresa program for new and current Trustees coordinated by members of the mission team.

Feedback from Manresa Program participants indicate high levels of *gratitude and consolation*. The programs are strong, with solid curricula and experienced Ignatian leaders guiding them. Second and third-year faculty are grateful for opportunities to participate in regional and national AJCU conferences, local “Learning Communities,” and the Ignatian Summer Institutes (ISI¹ and ISI²), which empower them to integrate Ignatian themes and pedagogical strategies into their teaching and scholarship. Our most recent Mission hire, Office Manager Mary McManus, brings considerable pastoral and theological skills to her oversight of all mission outreach to staff, including the Manresa program and the program for developing staff *mission mentors*. Under her guidance, the Mission Team is well-positioned to increase participation in this required program. As with the faculty program, we are hopeful that the slow, patient work of relationship-building will go far toward infusing a shared love for mission “into the bloodstream” of the university.

In terms of *longing and desolation*, it took the Mission Team nearly four years to launch the Manresa Program for Staff, and listening sessions revealed just how deep is the desire for these kinds of opportunities. And as noted earlier, we have only begun to assess how to bring affiliate faculty more fully into mission outreach. The need to establish and maintain connections with these groups is among our top priorities in the coming years.

(2) *How Regis invites members of the community into deeper lived experiences of the Ignatian tradition*. While the Manresa programs are required for full-time faculty, staff, and trustees, programs in Ignatian spirituality are invitational, and due to staffing shortages, somewhat piecemeal. We offer several short retreats each year for employees, both on and off site, and the Office of Mission will pay for a portion of retreat or spiritual director fees for employees. Having an Ignatian spiritual director on staff for employee outreach would help enormously.

Each year the university is able to support the participation of small numbers of Regis staff and faculty in the Ignatian Colleagues Program (which includes a spiritual retreat), as well as the Ignatian Pilgrimage to Spain and Italy (thanks to a generous donor), and in a variety of Province retreats. Additionally, several mission leaders on staff have joined the Ignatian Associates program in Denver. Once again, where we fall short is in a lack of dedicated staffing for spiritual direction, for making the Spiritual Exercises more widely available (in 18th and 19th annotation formats), and to coordinate overall outreach more effectively.

⁵ See Appendix “E” for materials describing the program and a summary of assessments of the program.

(3) *How Regis integrates and welcomes people of diverse faith traditions.* Repeatedly during the MPE listening sessions, members of different faith traditions, as well as those of secular identity, expressed gratitude for feeling welcome at Regis, and specifically during the hiring for mission process. University Ministry coordinates outreach during Jewish and Muslim holidays, both inviting people to campus events and sending out communications. Until 2020, University Ministry had a full-time staff minister, Mr. Ken Phillips, who led ecumenical/interfaith outreach. As noted above, his absence is felt acutely, especially as we recover from pandemic restrictions.

The MPE listening sessions underscored that we still have work to do in creating environments that are welcoming and inclusive for our non-Catholic and non-Christian community members. Two faculty members in the department of Religious Studies are currently working on an interfaith index of university programs to identify gaps where we need to grow. As noted above, one of these, Dr. Russ Arnold, coordinates outreach to local Muslim communities and has been an important partner in the conversion of a conference room in Main Hall to an Interfaith Prayer Room, independent of the Chapel. Beyond the need for dedicated staffing for interfaith and ecumenical outreach, other needs under discussion include more inclusive gathering spaces for other faith traditions; dietary options at the dining hall; support for observing religious holidays; and visible representation of other traditions in campus art.

Theme II: Education Toward a Faith that Does Justice

The world is always being made. God wants to bring forth the world with us, as partners, continually. . . We are, if I can stretch the word, co-creators. . . . God asks us to dare to create something new.

~ Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*

Education toward a faith that seeks justice implies a two-fold discernment: both inward self-reflection, as we accompany our students in asking how their gifts and desires might contribute to the co-creation of a better world; and outward social analysis, as we examine through all the university disciplines the root causes of societal injustice. Both are necessary if we are to discern the means to effect personal and social transformation. Moreover, as Pope Francis insists in *Laudato Si'* and the Jesuits underscore in the UAPs, solidarity with the poor is inseparable from environmental justice: care for the earth and for non-human creatures with whom we share the great web of life. God “wants to bring forth the world with us,” says Francis, as partners and as co-creators, asking us “to dare to create something new.” How are we doing?

Two preliminary points are crucial. First, universities across the AJCU have begun to acknowledge egregious blind spots, willful sins, and historical evils with respect to how the forces of colonialism, white supremacy, and exclusion have played a part in the founding and sustenance of Jesuit universities from the beginning. The work of justice in our US context implies a self-examination that is painful but necessary, namely, the hard work of truth-telling. How are we doing with respect to understanding Regis’s history and present climate with respect to race relations, racial equity and racial justice? And what must we do on this front to ensure that Regis will thrive as a vibrant Jesuit Catholic university twenty years from now?

Second, “the service of faith” and its link to justice cannot mean only the Roman Catholic faith. The very notion of faith, as one faculty put it, is “multivalent.” It “embodies everybody.” In the wake of decades of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue catalyzed by Vatican II, centuries of pioneering Jesuit witness at the frontiers of interfaith encounter and inculturation, and in a university climate properly imbued with secular epistemologies, the very horizon of “faith” can and must be translated for our students of diverse backgrounds in ways that find purchase in their imaginations. “What are your deepest commitments, and how are you acting out of those commitments? Are we alone in the daunting work of justice, or is there a transcendent horizon from which and toward which we journey together?” Moreover, the prophetic dimensions of the Gospel have their roots in God’s revelation to the Jewish people. Do our Jewish students, faculty, and staff feel at home at Regis, their wisdom and ritual practices acknowledged and celebrated? Those who identify as Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims, Sikhs and Quakers, secular humanists, and people with little or no faith tradition at all—do they feel at home in the Regis community?

From Catholic Social Teaching and the Second Vatican Council to the Jesuit UAPs, by and large people at Regis express heartfelt gratitude for their points of contact with this prophetic spiritual and social tradition that bends toward care for the most vulnerable in our society, even where it challenges us to confront hard truths and to move beyond what is familiar and comfortable. In what follows, we identify those aspects of the total Regis experience—elements of the *curriculum*, *climate*, and *community*—that people suggest are transformative, bending our purpose toward a more just and humane world. Once again, these consolations live alongside desolations; they are both real and not yet realized. The picture is one of lights and shadows.

(1) *Curriculum: Accompaniment in the Classroom and Beyond*. The invitation to transformative education begins in the classroom and extends to elements of the curriculum that require our students, as one respondent put it, to “go to the margins,” so as to “let the community be your university.” Feedback from students and faculty in all three colleges suggest that faculty consistently expose students to core Jesuit values, the six “compass points” painted on the pavement that greet students as they walk past Carroll Hall. In the hard sciences, for example, as one faculty notes, “We ask questions about how new technologies impact society and explore their potential benefits and risks for vulnerable populations.” A faculty in Anderson College of Business reports that their students are likewise exposed to ethical questions—“How ought we to live?”—with an intentionality that they would not likely find in business programs at other universities. As detailed in the previous section, all new faculty are required to participate in a three-year formation program in the Ignatian tradition, and are thus prepared, at least at a basic level, to integrate Jesuit values into their curriculum. Faculty who teach in *The First Year Experience* (FYE) program of Regis College have gone through additional training in methods that aim to cultivate attentive listening and dialogue in the classroom, which is to say, practices of listening and learning together in an Ignatian key.

In the five years since FYE’s launch, its experiments connecting dialogue and diversity with our commitment to a faith that does justice have shown promising results. As one student writes in a course evaluation, “I learned how to have valuable, in-depth, and mature conversations not only with peers but also adults. Thanks to the professor I also really learned that it is so important to be aware of my mental health.” A biology faculty describes the FYE course she teaches as “transformative for my teaching.” A religious studies faculty notes that “participating in FYE

formation trainings has been invaluable for me, especially in connecting with first-generation students and students of color. As a white ‘cradle Catholic’ at a Jesuit Catholic school, I need to be constantly aware of my presumptions, privilege, and pedagogical expectations in this regard. I’ve learned a lot from the diverse perspectives my students bring into the classroom.” Looking ahead, we see a clear need to make a stronger connection between the good work being done in FYE with the seminar on Diversity and Cultural Tradition, which became a sophomore-year requirement also in response to the Courageous Conversations in 2017.

In the past five years, many new courses or new foci in existing courses have been incorporated into the four-year Regis College curriculum in the areas of racial justice, gender diversity, interfaith dialogue, and environmental awareness. This has been facilitated by course-release and financial incentives offered by the Dean of Regis College and the Faculty Development Committee. A new course on “Religion, Caste, and Racial Justice,” for example, envisioned by a Jewish scholar and a Catholic theologian in the Religious Studies Department, is being team-taught in spring of 2023. Faculty “learning communities” and reading groups on new research in these areas provide fresh opportunities each year, as it were, to “educate the educators.” As one faculty remarks, “Social justice is what draws many faculty to Regis and continues to excite them because Regis does a better job than average by encouraging us” with such opportunities.

Regis’s commitment to integrating service learning into the curriculum—“let the community be your university”—is a point of consolation for many, though it is also identified as an area that is significantly under-resourced. “Our students often have amazing and transformational experiences through their service-learning placement. We partner with all kinds of people in the community. But there is a desolation, too, having to do with the lack of resources to adequately fund the program.” Through their clinical placements and service-learning opportunities, Regis health care students are encouraged to “go to the margins, not only internationally, through the Global Health Pathway program, but especially here in our own city and neighborhood.” A longstanding point of pride at the university, Regis nursing graduates are sought out by hospitals and clinics across the state. As one staff member put it, “You can always pick out a Regis nurse when you’re in a hospital. The way our students treat people—they’re different.” A Physical Therapy faculty remarks that “We have been very intentional about what transformative education looks like at a Jesuit university, asking students what they stand for, who are they in the world for others.” Now in its fourth year, the Guatemala Interfaith Medical Service Project transforms the career trajectories of pre-professional health care students through year-long study of Guatemalan society, culminating in a week of clinical service among the indigenous poor of Coban, Guatemala. Now in its 30th year, Romero House, a student community that lives, prays, and works together alongside the poor in Denver, is arguably the university’s bedrock example of education in which faith and justice are integral components.

By virtue of its location in Thornton, the Division of Counseling and Family Therapy exposes student therapists to a far more racially and economically diverse client population than if their studies were confined to the Northwest Denver campus. It is both hard to measure and hard to overstate the impact that DCFT has on the Denver area community, offering mental health services on a sliding scale to many who could not otherwise afford it. As one DCFT faculty member notes, “Probably 50% of Denver area therapists are from Regis. We have been creating the culture in this area. We are culture-changers, community-changers. We should be more

persuasively telling this story.” At the same time, this person asks whether Regis could not do a better job offering spiritual support and resources for DCFT faculty, staff, and alumni. Here, as in other areas of the MPE, one gathers a deep sense of consolation matched by a corresponding sense of yearning. “I don’t think the administration has any real idea of what we are doing here.” Consistently, Regis employees express the conviction that “what we are doing here” is remarkable, but we often fail to capitalize on our strengths and fail to get the word out.

(2) *Climate and Community*: “*We journey as companions responsible to each other.*” Many members of the Regis community report being deeply gratified to work at an educational institution that feels “like a family,” by no means without flaws, but generally a place that people enjoy working and in which they feel affirmed. The “prominent role of women in leadership at the university” was lifted up by several staff, as well as the prevalence of “student-driven advocacy for social change, something that we have helped to instill in them.” “Teamwork, respect, and care for each other: these are crucial here at Regis. Everyone takes care of and covers for everyone else. When someone needs help, they ask for and receive that help.”

Much of our most significant work to reach and support marginalized communities happens before the arrival each year of the incoming freshman class. Many express gratitude for the administration’s efforts “to bring lower income students to Regis,” through our relationship with Arrupe Jesuit High School, through the Porter Billups Leadership Academy, and recruitment efforts at Denver Public Schools, all of which represents a significant commitment of financial aid and other support programs such as the Pell grant. The increase of our first-generation and Hispanic student population in the last five years is evident to all, and largely celebrated, though it also elicits sometimes contentious questions around “academic rigor” and how well we are supporting and retaining such students. Faculty and staff of color, as well as those who identify as queer, report a mixed record as to whether or not they experience a welcoming climate and authentic sense of community at Regis over the long haul. In short, Regis’s ability to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff who represent the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in US society (and the church) cannot be taken for granted.

On this point, the “Good Trouble Conversations” are praised by many as a source of much-needed dialogue, introspection, and even reconciliation in the Regis community. Inspired by the late Congressman John Lewis, and facilitated by Dr. Gonzales and ODEIE staff, these conversations have helped many, as one participant puts it, “to have the difficult conversations we need to have, to try to understand and be open to different worldviews that we have not experienced.” Noting the dramatic polarization of political life in the United States, he continues, this “might be the ultimate transformation: finding ways to transform public discourse.” A recent iteration of Good Trouble involved a plenary address by Olga Segura, a Black Catholic immigrant from the Dominican Republic, entitled “Catholicism and Liberation: Creating Spaces for Freedom in the Church.” Open to the entire Regis community and well-attended by students and faculty, staff, and administrators, the “Good Trouble Conversations” are frequently mentioned as among our most valuable means for “grappling with the racism embedded in the history and current reality of this nation,” as one publicity notice put it. “We may find ourselves feeling weary. Yet, as a community inspired by the Jesuits to well-educated solidarity, we will stay the course and ask again, ‘How ought we to live?’”

The invitation to “well-educated solidarity” finds expression in other campus events organized by ODEIE as well as the Office of Mission, University Ministry, the President’s Council for Race and Justice, and many other student-centered organizations. Two years ago, the Queer Student Association (QSA) approached administration about hosting the Ignatian Q event here at Regis. With administration’s support and guidance from faculty mentors in the Queer Resource Alliance (QRA), the QSA submitted a winning proposal to host the conference. While the COVID pandemic prevented Ignatian Q from taking place, Regis is presently scheduled to host Fr. James Alison, a renowned Catholic theologian, in March 2023. The administration’s support of our LGBTQ students is mentioned by many faculty and staff as a point of consolation.

Many faculty and staff have undergone formal “Safe Space” training led by Regis’s Title IX Office and display visible signs of welcome for queer students outside their office doors. Nevertheless, comments from students themselves suggest that Regis still has work to do in creating an inclusive and safe campus climate for LGBTQ students, faculty and staff. Recognizing the need to support LGBTQIA+ students in becoming more visible, in June 2022 Regis sponsored a table at the Denver Pride Fest, staffed mainly by students with QRA support. While many greatly appreciated Regis’s presence at the festival—a significant number of Regis alumni stopped by the table, clearly moved, to express their thanks—others have expressed some dismay that our public messaging remains ambiguous, not vigorous enough.

The fact that the university “is beginning to employ the practice of Land Acknowledgement” is described as “an important first step” in recognizing the presence of indigenous peoples on the land that Regis occupies. As noted earlier, participants in listening sessions at every level expressed gratitude for the President’s public statements in support of DACA students and other vulnerable populations, as well as ODEIE’s leadership in conversations around racial justice. Many celebrated the administration’s controversial decision to host on our northwest campus the Safe Outdoor Space – an organization that houses and provides meals and services to those experiencing homelessness – as an example of “the Jesuit mission to help others made visible.” More recently, working closely with the City of Denver, Regis housed migrant families from Venezuela, with material and personnel support from innumerable staff and faculty.

Finally, a significant source of consolation are the many art installations and memorials that dot the Northwest campus: the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador in the main quad; the bronze bas relief portraits of “great women of spirit” in the corridor of Loyola Hall; the statue of Pedro Arrupe at prayer behind Main Hall; the Black Crucifixion in a hillside grove between the Chapel and Jesuit Residence. In quiet but powerful ways, all of these contribute to an educational climate that visibly underscores our call to a faith that seeks justice. A faculty member shared this story: “I was speaking with a new pharmacy student visiting Regis with his African American stepfather who, when he encountered the crucified black Jesus near the chapel, filled up with tears, and said ‘this place must be committed to racial justice to have art like this on the campus.’”

(3) *Yearnings and Desolations*. We conclude this part of the MPE by detailing in schematic form the disappointments and desolations expressed in listening sessions in the areas of faith and justice – those areas it appears that we are falling short of our mission or our potential to realize it – and where Regis employees yearn for the Magis as we look to the future.

First, while Regis has begun to address issues around sustainability and integral ecology with initiatives like the SEED Institute, the Environmental Studies program, science programs, food service programs, the installation of six EV charging stations around the northwest campus, and a firm commitment to the “*Laudato Si*’ Action Plan,” a frequent criticism is that we are not doing enough and not proceeding in a sufficiently serious or systematic manner. There is among our colleagues a growing conviction that our institutional practices and curricula across the three colleges need to be reimagined in view of the realities of climate change, severe drought in the Rocky Mountain West, and the pressing need to transition to renewable energy sources. Many wonder why there is “no solar power on campus except for the Jesuit community. I would love to see more commitment as we move toward zero carbon footprint.” Some ask whether Regis has moved to divest its financial portfolio from industries linked directly or indirectly to profit from fossil fuels. Many observe that it is our students who are propelling us forward in this area. Their boldness in confronting how their generation might dwell more sustainably and reverently in the community of all things must not be overlooked, and indeed, can lead the way.

A second area of desolation linked to justice pertains to work/life balance and compensation. One facilities staff member would like the larger community “to understand our duress: we are on call 24 x 7. We need the community ‘to see and hear us.’ We don’t have the work/life balance we should have.” The wish “to be seen and heard” is a persistent refrain of faculty in Regis College, as salaries have long languished below market value and the cost of living in the Denver area continues to rise at rates well above the national average. Fair compensation is often framed as “a matter of justice” and the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*. “We need to properly value our employees, so people aren’t priced out” and can realistically continue to work at Regis. Many respondents raised similar concerns around pay and benefits for adjunct and affiliate faculty as well as “contracted services” such as housekeeping. Too often, as one staff put it, “the Regis way is to reduce personnel and simply expect those who stay on to do more.” In short, there may be no area where Regis risks a greater credibility gap and crisis of trust between its employees and the administration and Board of Trustees than in this area of just compensation. It is notable that Regis recently completed a comprehensive compensation review and introduced a two-year plan to bring salaries up to market value across the university. This has been a major step, one that has earned appreciation from various community members. At the same time, the number and quality of resignations from the university—especially from key staff members—suggests that more work needs to be done to restore community confidence in the administration.

A third area of desolation might be called the “shadow side” of the consolations described above related to the sense of “family” that many describe at Regis, namely, to acknowledge the pain of those who feel marginalized, vulnerable, or overlooked, and the need to engage in difficult conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Alluding to the “crisis of reckoning in the nation” around racial injustice, one faculty suggests that we don’t “have the will or the stomach to engage in conversation around very difficult issues because fragility shuts down that conversation.” Another suggests that there is a lot of talk “about our mission of social justice, but not of *the faith* that does justice. Without a firm grounding in faith, talk of justice can lead to using mission as a bludgeon against others, rather than as a mirror for self-reflection.” And while the Land Acknowledgement is hailed by many as a positive first step, in practice “it sometimes feels hollow. . . . I’m not sure indigenous people would feel welcome on our campus.” In sum, many yearn for a climate “where we can talk about difficult issues with love,” and a “greater

capacity to sit in and with discomfort; to listen and hear, so as to discern together, rather than dismiss and revert to old patterns.”

A fourth and related area relates to the need to provide greater support for our first-generation students, faculty, students and staff of color. A common refrain is the need to attract and retain more faculty and staff of color, which could “go a long way in attracting and retaining a more diverse student body.” While many praised the administration for its defense of queer persons on campus, others lamented that “We have a long way to go in terms of LGBTQIA+ identity; the new questions facing us around traditional approaches to race and gender are huge and they too often frighten and paralyze us.” Employees in IT noted that “We need to close the ‘technology gap.’ Some of our diverse students are under-resourced re: their access to technology.” Many students also commented on the difficulties faced every day by students with disabilities. “The campus is not very friendly or universally accessible to disabled people.” The poor accessibility of Dayton Memorial Library, in particular, has long been a source of concern.

Finally, a number of faculty and staff expressed concerns over the question of Regis’s Catholic identity. Several Jewish and Hindu faculty members, for example, struggle to find evidence for the university’s oft-stated commitment to welcome “those of other religious traditions or none at all,” noting a lack of public spaces or curricula in which non-Christian teachings, figures, or rituals are recognized. Among Catholics, a few expressed their frustration that students and faculty are often expected to “buy into an assumed [secular or liberal] framework regarding things that are still open questions.” The directive to “use someone’s preferred pronouns,” for example, “is still very much an open question, yet we were told in a Title IX training that the ethical thing to do is to use the student’s preferred pronouns.” In other words, some in our community feel their views are unjustly marginalized in favor of progressive-leaning religious or secular standards of belief and practice. As one faculty put it, “It’s important to help students think carefully about these things and to be sensitive to alternate perspectives that are worth taking seriously.” On the other side of this tension are those who feel that Regis has done too little to “own up to the role that the Catholic Church has historically caused severe harm to some marginalized communities (indigenous peoples, LGBTQ folks).”

Theme III: Relationships with Companion Institutions

Early in his tenure as president, Fr. Fitzgibbons articulated a hope that the university would remain and grow as a “social projection.” Drawing from the inspirational example of Ignacio Ellacuría and the Jesuit martyrs of the University of Central America, Fr. Fitzgibbons challenged the university to embrace its potential to profoundly shape our broader world. This vision became even more concrete during the listening sessions for drafting the new mission statement. For many, education is our ultimate mission, teaching our purpose and identity. Yet just as many voices suggested that while education is central to our identity, our ultimate purpose is the impact that our education and our students can have on the world. While the writing committee was tasked with discerning these dual visions of the university, the resulting statement left no room for doubt about our ultimate purpose: “As a Jesuit Catholic university, Regis seeks to build a more just and humane world through transformative education...” A transformative education is how we seek our mission, but the goal is the transformation of the whole world.

The theological anthropology that undergirds Catholic social teaching emphasizes relationality and interdependence: we are built for community and find our full humanity in relationships with others. Correspondingly, Regis University finds its fullness of purpose and meaning in its human-to-human networks of relationships with others. While much of the MPE focuses on our internal culture, practices, and ways of proceeding, we also sought to explore the impact of our engagement with companion institutions. Three sets of relationships were examined: those with the Society of Jesus and its area apostolates; with the Catholic Church, locally and more broadly; and with the local and regional civic community.

(1) Relationship to the Society of Jesus. As noted in *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education*, it is not possible to be a Jesuit university without a clear 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.” This relationship remains foundational to our core identity and understanding, while also changing in important ways that invite new opportunities and challenges.

One of the clearest examples of change emerged in the MPE process itself. In November 2021, after the listening sessions were complete but before the report was drafted, Fr. Fitzgibbons announced that he would be resigning as university president. Stepping into the role of Interim President in January 2022, Cody Teets would be the first female and lay president in Regis’ 140+ year history. While Regis’ self-understanding has largely moved past requiring a Jesuit president to ensure our identity – and our sister institutions have clearly demonstrated the ability to preserve their Jesuit character while transitioning to lay leadership – our relationship to the Society of Jesus is sure to evolve in the next 20 years in perhaps unexpected ways.

The number and presence of Jesuits at Regis is small. In addition to the Vice President for Mission, we have two full-time Jesuit faculty and no Jesuit staff. While the superior of the Regis Jesuit community has worked part-time with University Ministry in recent years, as the leader of an inter-apostolic community with multiple residences, his availability to the university is limited. This situation has led to expressions of both gratitude and yearning: gratitude for the ways that our communities have been able to interact alongside a yearning for more. Frequently mentioned sources of gratitude are the presence of Jesuits in the classroom and their presence at liturgical and other ritual celebrations: Commencement, Ignatian Heritage Day, Mass of the Holy Spirit, and the like. Beyond a general desire for increased presence, a longing voiced by both lay and Jesuit members of our community has been the opportunity for more informal interactions. With the community stretched so thin, they are seldom able to simply be present to students and staff in the Student Center or other gathering places. The Jesuit community has likewise named for themselves a desire to provide more hospitality and welcome as they’re able.

Beyond the local Jesuit community, Regis has maintained a healthy relationship with the UCS Province and global Society of Jesus. During periodic visits of the Provincial, there is good candor and close communication when challenges emerge. Regis has certainly benefited from having its former Vice President for Mission, Dr. Tom Reynolds, now serving as the Provincial Assistant for Higher Education. We have also embraced opportunities to engage initiatives of the Society of Jesus such as the Universal Apostolic Preferences and the Ignatian Year.

As part of our MPE discernment, the Mission Team hosted two listening sessions with leaders and representatives of the other Jesuit apostolates in the Denver area. Our companions at other institutions clearly view Regis as a leader in the area, particularly in its public messaging about critical issues of our time. Our unique relationship with Arrupe Jesuit, a local Cristo Rey model high school, was mentioned often as a genuine source of pride. Every year more than a dozen Arrupe graduates continue their studies at Regis, and they have proven to be excellent students and leaders in our community. The high school uses our facilities for their commencement and other events, and now shares an artificial turf field for soccer and lacrosse.

In recent years, our commitment to these companion institutions has deepened, with retreats offered for faculty and staff at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Sedalia. (A January 2022 immersion experience for faculty/staff with the Encuentro Project in El Paso had to be canceled due to the pandemic.) As an outgrowth of the listening sessions noted above, there are now colleagues from many of the local apostolates meeting monthly. These include Regis Offices of Mission and University Ministry, Parent and Family Liaison Kristi Gonzalves-McCabe, Loyola Parish, Sacred Heart Retreat Center, Ignatian Spirituality Project, Ignatian Spirituality Program, Arrupe Jesuit High School, Regis Jesuit High School, Ignatian Volunteer Corps and Contemplative Leaders in Action. The mostly lay colleagues in these apostolates are talking to each other in ways that they haven't before, a source of energy, solidarity, and shared vision. Likewise, we see opportunities for a broader sharing of our theological resources. While our theological and religious studies faculty are frequently invited to offer talks and workshops around town, there are no programmatic offerings in place for deeper theological training.

A last set of relationship involving the Society of Jesus is the AJCU Network. Nearly every faculty, staff, and administrator connected to peer networks organized by AJCU have taken advantage of these opportunities and expressed gratitude for the collegiality and support. As one observed, "The *fact*, the very existence of AJCU is a consolation. The freedom to pick up the phone and talk to partners in other schools is a gift." Yet that same participant also named the challenge: "We seem to run into practical limitations as to how far things can go. Can we do more to drive greater efficiencies through partnership?" A few expressed not just the sentiment that we are failing to fully leverage opportunities for partnership but that other schools in the network seem indifferent to the struggles and challenges of smaller institutions like Regis. Collaborations such as the joint Occupational Therapy Program with Creighton University are a glimpse of what is possible, but the hope is for many more such initiatives in the future.

2. Relationships within the Catholic Church. Just as cultivating an integral relationship with the Society of Jesus is constitutive of our Jesuit Catholic identity, so is service of the Catholic Church a key characteristic of Jesuit higher education. As articulated in *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education*, "to be in and of the Catholic Church" includes service to the local archdiocese as well as a commitment to the universal church. While the primary service that we provide is the education and formation of our students, we are also called to partner with and support our local Catholic communities and the broader mission of the church. At times, this has been a source of tension and conflict in our mission. It is also a source of gratitude and consolation.

The Second Vatican Council articulated a vision of the church engaging in the world, with all of its hopes and anguishes. Our Catholic inspiration and identity demand that we take a consistent

stand in solidarity with the vulnerable and marginalized. As an institution of higher education, we must also affirm our commitment to the properly secular methodologies of the diverse range of disciplines that comprise the contemporary university, the open exchange of ideas and dialogue about disputed questions of our day. Moreover, the Catholic community is by no means insulated from the hyper-polarized political climate of our times. These factors can sometimes materialize in disagreements over how we understand and express our Catholicity.

Unfortunately, these internal and external tensions have sometimes led to open conflict with the Archbishop of Denver, who emphasizes clear teaching on moral issues and a confrontation with the cultural and social shifts our society is undergoing. Regis' commitment to upholding the dignity of our LGBTQ students has been a particular source of tension with the Archdiocese, coming to a head in 2019 when the Queer Student Association hosted a "drag show" for the Regis community (not open to the general public) with the support of the Provost. After learning of the event, the Archbishop published a public rebuke of university leadership. Responses by Fr. Fitzgibbons included a private meeting with the Archdiocese and a public statement reaffirming the university's commitment to the principles that led to the initial decision. In their private meeting the President pledged to improve the lines of communication in the future.

These events exemplify both the desolation and consolation that listening sessions have generated in this area. While many participants (including non-Catholics) expressed a sincere desire and hope for more warm and collaborative relations with the Archdiocese, they also insisted that such a reconciliation cannot come at the expense of our moral commitments to the marginalized and vulnerable. What is often lost in these points of tension are the myriad ways that Regis embodies a robust Catholic vision and sacramental imagination—a deep love for and sense of responsibility for God's creation—in our curricula across the three colleges and the more hidden but everyday communal experience of campus life. Many in the Denver area consider the Regis worshipping community to be their spiritual home, and others take advantage of formative events that are open to all. While the Pope Francis Symposium is perhaps the clearest example of this service to the church, Regis also frequently hosts speakers and events that explore issues of faith and morality. Our faculty and staff are engaged in local parishes and have been invited in to speak on a myriad of topics and current issues.

Beyond the local Archdiocese, the past five years have seen Regis take a significant step forward in its service to the universal church, in part through the addition of Fr. Kevin Burke and Dr. Chris Pramuk, two theologians with international renown. While serving as our Vice President, Fr. Burke also served on the boards of *Theological Studies* and the Catholic Theological Society of America, offering a keynote address at the 2019 convention of CTSA. In addition to several national and international speaking engagements, Dr. Pramuk was recently elected president of the International Thomas Merton Society; his latest book *The Artist Alive: Explorations in Music, Art & Theology*, makes a significant contribution to elevating the importance of the arts in Jesuit higher education and Ignatian spirituality. Other faculty and staff have likewise made contributions at a national and global level, including theologian Dr. Julia Brumbaugh's recent election as Vice President of the College Theology Society and Director of University Ministry. Kyle Turner's publications on liturgical theology. While we remain a smaller institution with limited resources, we have developed an outstanding presence in the broader Catholic world.

3. Relationships with the Institutions of Civic Life. The final set of relationships the present MPE explores is our collaboration with community partners and civic institutions. Once again, the direct impact that Regis students have in the world is a foremost source of gratitude expressed in conversations with civic partners. Locally, people from companion institutions praised the passion, generosity, and compassion of Regis graduates. These include some that go on to work at local Catholic and Jesuit projects, and many more who make their impact in secular fields such as education, business, and healthcare. The same can be said of our alumni nationally, and especially through projects such as Jesuit Worldwide Learning. The commitment to educating men and women for and with others pervades all our academic endeavors, and especially in initiatives such as Anderson College's Computing for the Common Good and the Virtual Inside/Out prison education program, a partnership between the School for Professional Advancement and four Colorado correctional facilities that offers prisoners the opportunity to earn college credit in video-linked remote classrooms alongside on-campus students.

A common sentiment shared on campus and by our immediate neighbors is that Regis' relationship with the local community has improved dramatically in recent years. Much of this can be traced to the formation of the Regis Community Council, a collaboration of Regis employees, registered neighborhood organizations, small businesses, and other stakeholders in the area. Meeting monthly, this group has come together to discuss shared concerns and develop projects that seek to improve the quality of life in Northwest Denver. From neighborhood newsletters and films on the quad to candidate forums and advocacy events for pedestrian safety, such collaborations have led to a greater sense of trust and mutual appreciation.

Arguably a highpoint in this relationship was the Safe Outdoor Space (SOS), established in June 2021, a partnership inaugurated when the City of Denver approached Regis about hosting a temporary space for people experiencing homelessness to stay in augmented tents. While several potential concerns had to be settled, the question of how such a project would align with Regis' mission was never in doubt. We were soon able to work through the pertinent legal questions and alongside our neighbors to facilitate a warm welcome for up to 60 residents in a lot at the perimeter of campus. Our Physical Plant division worked diligently to provide the infrastructure necessary to help the residents live as comfortably as possible, and faculty and staff organized to find ways to share meals and stories with our guests. Repeatedly this commitment was held up during MPE listening sessions as a clear example of our institution and administration "walking the talk" and embodying the deepest truths of our mission.

While the partnership with SOS recently ended, city and nonprofit leaders have cited Regis' willingness to host a site as a turning point for the movement, giving legitimacy and inspiration for others to follow suit. More importantly, SOS residents found the stability and security to seek permanent housing solutions and access to necessary resources and services. More recently, Regis stepped forward in partnership with the City of Denver to provide shelter for over forty Venezuelan migrants in several units of Regis Square. Once again, the efforts of facilities personnel, led by Associate Vice President for Physical Plant Mike Redmond, along with dozens of volunteer staff and faculty, provided not only a critical waystation of sustenance for the migrants but an experience of real grace and active solidarity for the Regis community.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

“Our mission is not a closed thing that we can define or grasp. We need always to leave a gap where the Spirit can enter and surprise us. How to leave that little gap is the issue.”

~ Father General Arturo Sosa, SJ

Although we are not able to conclude our MPE with the Peer Visiting Team until after the next President of Regis University, Dr. Salvador Aceves, has been officially inaugurated, we offer the following five conclusions and resolutions so that “in 20 years Regis will thrive as a vibrant Jesuit Catholic University.” To borrow from the Universal Apostolic Preferences, foremost in our hearts as we look to the next generation is the call to walk with our students, indeed, with all youth, in “the creation of a hope-filled future.” In the words of Pope Francis, we are “co-creators” in a task larger than us. “God asks us to dare to create something new,” and each member of the Regis community, not least each of our students, brings distinct gifts to the table.

1/ A Relational Culture: Collaboration, *Cura Personalis*, Communal Discernment

Repeatedly during the MPE listening sessions, when asked to describe what they most appreciate about working at Regis and what gives them joy, people reached for phrases such as the following: a “relational, collaborative culture”; “teamwork, friendship, respect, are at the heart of Regis culture”; “when we’re at our best, there’s a strong sense of ‘family.’” In the words of the Mission Statement, we are called “to celebrate and embody God’s love for the world,” and to accompany our students in that sacred vocation. Yet we cannot hope to advance this vision if we fail to embody God’s care for one another in our daily working relationships at Regis. Given the significant stressors on the institution and the morale of Regis employees in the last several years, it is crucial for university leadership to make sincere efforts to bridge the gap between our public profession of a commitment to Jesuit Catholic values and how well these values are actualized in structures that support the well-being of Regis employees.

Especially as we move forward with lay leadership at the helm, it is arguably more important than ever to maintain and cultivate, as it were, a vibrant lay *esprit de corps* in and across the total university environment, a spirit of unity-in-diversity and mutual help that will shape the quality of life for Regis employees and positively impact the student experience. Put another way, Regis’s modest size compared with other AJCU institutions is not a weakness but a real strength, allowing for a certain intimacy and familiarity across divisions, and perhaps a nimbleness and flexibility that may be lacking in larger institutions. At the same time, when resources are constantly limited, there is a danger that the Jesuit value of “Magis” can serve, intentionally or not, as a justification for asking people to “do more with less,” a kind of transactional, “keep your head down and push through” way of proceeding that will certainly impact the student experience in ways we are not always aware. As the MPE listening sessions confirmed, such a climate can sow weariness, frustration and distrust between Regis’ leadership and employees.

In sum, people across the university have expressed a clear desire to preserve and strengthen Regis’ *relational culture* at its best, a place “where we can talk about difficult issues with love,” with a “capacity to sit in and with discomfort; to listen and hear, so as to discern together, rather

than dismiss and revert to old patterns.” We seek an environment that facilitates common purpose, shared humor and joy, reasonable work/life balance, and a desire to stay with Regis over the long haul. As Fr. General Sosa reminds us, *“We are not an NGO or a business. We are the Society of Jesus, religious and lay people following Christ both at a personal and communal level. Discernment is the foundation. As leaders, you must take the risk of discernment.”*

With these words of Fr. Sosa in mind, we resolve to build on Regis’ relational culture at every level through practices of collaboration, *cura personalis*, and communal discernment. How such practices are embodied across different divisions will vary, and each unit is best positioned to discern what such practices will look like for them and those they serve. Let us resolve that our commitment to a collaborative culture of care will be felt in our daily interactions with one another, and above all, in our presence and service to students. Our care for them is a seed that blossoms outward, by God’s grace, into an embodied love for self, God, and the world.

2/ Ignatian Spirituality and Pedagogy

As noted above, the many opportunities offered by University Ministry, the Office of Mission, the Regis Jesuit community, ODEIE, Student Affairs, and other stakeholders in the spiritual life of the university only partially address the desire and need for spiritual support and development, particularly in the offering of Ignatian retreats and spiritual direction. For Regis to continue to thrive as a Jesuit Catholic university, we need to invest now in programs to help staff, faculty and students who desire to grow in Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy. Two of the Universal Apostolic Preferences come into play here: first, pedagogically, to “accompany youth in the creation of a hope-filled future” involves promoting distinctively Ignatian approaches to teaching, academic excellence, and student affairs that seek to accompany and develop the whole person; second, to “show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment” calls for greater opportunities for those who wish to deepen their fluency with Ignatian models of spiritual formation, institutional decision-making, and personal vocational discernment.

Convinced of the importance of continuing to develop a strong cadre of committed lay Ignatian Companions in Mission, we resolve to grow in our capacity for offering the Exercises along with regular spiritual direction and Ignatian pedagogical formation to key members of our Regis community, including trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Similarly, we resolve to work with UCS Province leadership to empower our lay leaders to become familiar with the province and to know how to develop deep relationships and clear channels of communication with Provincials and other Jesuit leaders. Developing new models for offering mission development for affiliate faculty will require creativity and collaboration across divisions and programs, as well as learning from best practices of our sister universities in the AJCU network.

3/ Racial Justice, Care for the Marginalized, and Reconciliation

At General Congregation 36 in 2016, the global Society of Jesus committed itself to the work of reconciliation in three forms: reconciliation with God, with one another, and with creation. In reality, as Pope Francis has insisted, these are not three but “one work of God, interconnected and inseparable.” Embracing Francis’s and his predecessors’ critiques of the global economic system – describing it as “predatory,” a system that which “discards natural resources as well as

people” – GC 36 noted that disproportionately the victims of this system are indigenous peoples and women, all deemed expendable before the rapacious forces of development. “We are called to support these communities in their struggles, recognizing that we have much to learn from their values and their courage.” The Jesuits here strike a powerful note of humility, incumbent upon all of us: *we have much to learn from their values and their courage*. Fully embracing the vision of Pope Francis, GC 36 concludes, “the only adequate solution must be a radical one.” Jesuits worldwide, through all their apostolates, “are called to help heal a broken world, promoting a new way of producing and consuming, which puts God’s creation at the center.”

Our third resolution builds from the previous two, speaking directly to our Regis mission that places a Jesuit Catholic education in service to the building of a “more just and humane world.” While our commitment to social justice is strong, we resolve to become even more adept and consistent in articulating and living a “faith that does justice.” Approaching the question of justice in ways appropriate to the norms and methodologies of all the university disciplines, we resolve to focus our scholarship and teaching on the ongoing scourges of systemic racism, discrimination and bias in all their insidious forms, as well as social and cultural inequities that disproportionately impact communities of color, LGBTQ persons, the economically disadvantaged, and persons with intellectual or physical disabilities.

Once again, if we are committed to embodying God’s compassion and justice looking outward to the world, we must not shrink from examining our practices in the Regis community itself, looking inward. As noted above, a truly Catholic vision of a “faith” that seeks justice is not limited to the Christian or Catholic faith; indeed, the call to social concern and love for neighbor runs through the heart of every major religious tradition. We resolve to explore how Regis might better respond to the needs and wisdom of other faith traditions so as to create a more welcoming and mutually enriching interfaith environment. Moreover, whatever success we have in recruiting first-generation students, Hispanic, Black, Asian and Indigenous students, as well as faculty and staff of color, it is essential that these efforts are matched by resources to ensure that their welcome and potential for flourishing at Regis is not short-lived. Indeed, with respect to those coming to us from marginalized communities, *we have much to learn from their courage*.

4/ Sustainability and Integral Ecology

As creation itself is threatened by rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, biodiversity loss, ocean warming and acidification, and severe water shortages in the Rocky Mountain West, how are we listening as a university to the cry of the earth, and what are we doing to build a more just and sustainable environment? People living in poverty bear a greater burden of environmental degradation. What are we doing to hear their cry and to promote their well-being? In the words of Pope Francis, “a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (*Laudato Si’* 49).

While it is easy for the challenges to feel overwhelming, we are beginning to build a foundation at Regis that can support this commitment to integral ecology and ready us for the internal conversion—individual and collective—required for this critical moment. Our curriculum features ecological education and sustainable development. Our faculty includes environmentally focused scholars in disciplines of science, sociology, humanities, business, and health care. Our

First Year Experience program orients traditional undergraduates to contemplative ways of seeing and being in relationship with the environment as a significant characteristic of our academic community and element of our mission. Our mission statement empowers us to ask how our education and institutional practices can support a more just, humane, and sustainable world: “*Regis aspires to be a community of learners who labor for a transformed world and renewed ecosystem, and who journey as companions, responsible to each other.*”

In ways that relate organically from the previous three resolutions, we resolve to build upon these foundations toward an integral ecology by engaging the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform and the UAP on “Care for our Common Home” in ways befitting a Jesuit, Catholic university: educating on the ecological crisis as well as potential solutions; promoting environmental scholarship and research; advocating for good policy; nurturing an ecological spirituality; being responsible use of resources; and reducing our environmental footprint. As Pope Francis has said, “the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion” (*LS* 217). We commit ourselves to interior conversion, to justice for those communities most impacted by environmental injustice, and to “journeying with youth” in care for our common home.

5/ Relationships with the Church and with Civil Society

Our commitment to serve the local and universal Church is deep, broad, and sincere, a constitutive part of our Jesuit Catholic identity. While our links to the universal Church are strong—through our affiliation with the UCS Province, Catholic theological societies, *Jesuit Higher Education*, the AJCU, faculty publications, service, and public speaking—we lament that our relationship with the Archdiocese of Denver has been strained for some years. Our desire for reconciliation is sincere and must be a priority for the new President. At the same time, as listening sessions across the university and with our sister Jesuit apostolates in the region have made eminently clear, our efforts toward reconciliation must not compromise our public commitment to those persons and communities most vulnerable in society and church, nor our call to engage difficult questions in a university way. We resolve to continue striving to be a “social projection” for solidarity, compassion and justice for the most vulnerable in society.

Recognizing that much good has been done in the past five years to grow and sustain our relationships with the surrounding neighborhood and City of Denver, here, too, we are called to creatively imagine new ways of building partnerships toward the civic good in and through these local and regional relationships. As well, we must do more to build bridges to those Catholic institutions, churches, and schools, whose students and parishioners have not thought of Regis as really “theirs,” as realistically accessible, as a resource for education, spirituality, or social justice advocacy. We resolve that Regis University should no longer be a “hidden gem” in the Rocky Mountain region, and thus, to take measures that make more widely visible and accessible our Jesuit Catholic identity, our academic excellence, and our passion for creating a better world.