

Are We Who We Claim to Be?

Perceptions of Mission Engagement among Students and Faculty at Religiously-Affiliated and Independent Institutions

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Why study mission?

- Foundational to decision-making
- Allows for distinguishing among types of universities
- Are we what we claim to be—integrity

Mission in Higher Ed. Discourse

Varied definitions (overlapping)

- Clarify institutional type
- Explicit statement of purpose
- Denote values or commitments
 - Especially revered by liberal arts and religiously-affiliated institutions

Theoretical Framework

- Espoused vs. enacted mission (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2010)
- Effective education practice: small gap between espoused and enacted missions (Kuh et al., 2010)
- “Enacting” and “engagement”: synonymous in our usage—both intend a “living out” or instantiation of mission

Current Research

Ellen Boylan, Ph.D.

- Senior Director for Institutional Research at Marywood University in Scranton, PA.
- Consortia coordinator for the CCU & MECIC Consortia and integral in the development of this tool.
- Most recently published “Where Catholic Identity is Visible: Differences in College Students’ Mission Perception at Catholic and Independent Colleges” in *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* (2015, 34:2).
- Found statistically significant differences between CCU & MECIC institutions (2009-2012) first year and senior responses.
- Recommended for future research further statistical tests of regression to “identify the relative contributions of selected variables for predicting performance on mission items by consortia” (Boylan, 2015, pp. 226-227).

Research Questions

1. What **student** demographics and institution characteristics are predictive of agreement with perceptions of institutional mission?
2. What **faculty** demographics and institution characteristics are predictive of agreement with perceptions of institutional mission?

Examine variation in students’ and faculty members’ perceptions of mission engagement as defined by

- their overall sense of mission engagement
- perceptions of respect for diversity on campus
- the intentional development of values

Data Sources

- 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - 8,316 seniors
 - 76% attended CCU
- 2013 & 2014 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
 - 1,755 faculty
 - 91% employed at CCU
- Consortia
 - Append additional questions to the core instrument to explore a topic of mutual interest
 - Catholic Colleges and Universities Consortium (CCU)
 - Mission Engagement Consortium for Independent Colleges (MECIC)

Analyses

- Series of OLS regression equations
- DVs: Sense of Mission, Respect for Diversity, and Values Development (standardized)
- IVs
 - Student characteristics
 - Faculty characteristics
 - Institution characteristics (size, selectivity, Carnegie classification, consortium type)

Measures

Consortium Questions

- Sense of Mission
- Respect for Diversity
- Values Development
- Religion
 - Roman Catholic
 - Other Christian
 - Other religions
 - None

NSSE/FSSE core

- NSSE: race/ethnicity, gender identity, first-generation, age, various college experiences
- FSSE: disciplinary appt., academic rank, gender identity, race/ethnicity, tenure, degree earned, citizenship, age, teaching experience

Results: Sense of Mission

Selected Senior Results			
Constant	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig
Institutional Characteristics			
Catholic Institutions	.465	.028	***
Student Demographics			
Another gender identity	-.768	.265	**
Prefer not to respond	-.595	.167	***
Asian, Asian American	.147	.056	**
Black, African American	.135	.044	**
Latino or Hispanic	.220	.046	***
Christian	-.110	.027	***
Other Religion	-.214	.047	***
No Religion	-.351	.032	***
College Experience			
STEM Majors	-.112	.032	***
Mostly Bs	-.121	.023	***
Mostly Cs or below	-.439	.068	***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Selected Faculty Results			
Constant	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig
Academic Disciplines			
All Other Disciplines	-.348	.133	**
Faculty Demographics			
Women	.120	.056	*
No Religion	-.263	.080	**
Number of years teaching at ANY college or university	-.086	.039	*
Age	.076	.037	*
Institutional Characteristics			
Institution enrollment size	-.136	.028	***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Reference Groups for all three scales included:

NSSE Reference Groups were College grades – mostly As, Man, White, Catholic, Master's Level

FSSE Reference Groups were Arts & Humanities, Professor, Man, White, Catholic

Results: Respect for Diversity

Selected Senior Results			
Constant	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig
Institutional Characteristics			
Catholic Institutions	.084	.028	**
Student Demographics			
Another gender identity	-.116	.270	***
Prefer not to respond	-.601	.109	***
Latino or Hispanic	.208	.047	***
Christian	-.099	.027	***
Other Religion	-.188	.048	***
No Religion	-.318	.033	***
First-Generation	.011	.024	***
College Experience			
Transfer Students	.088	.030	**
Lived on Campus	-.088	.028	**
Mostly Bs	-.100	.023	***
Mostly Cs or below	-.355	.069	***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Selected Faculty Results			
Constant	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig
Academic Disciplines			
Health Professions	.241	.099	*
Social Service Disciplines	.359	.142	*
All Other Disciplines	-.302	.127	*
Faculty Demographics			
Christian	-.457	.060	***
Other Religion	-.192	.090	*
No Religion	-.369	.077	**
Number of years teaching at ANY college or university	-.133	.037	***
Age	.181	.035	***
Institutional Characteristics			
Institution enrollment size	-.167	.027	***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Results: Values Development

Selected Senior Results			
Constant	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig
Institutional Characteristics			
Catholic Institutions	.215	.027	***
Student Demographics			
Prefer not to respond	-.551	.106	***
Black, African American	.122	.044	**
Latino or Hispanic	.263	.046	***
Unknown/Other race or ethnicity	-.188	.078	*
Christian	-.109	.027	***
Other Religion	-.123	.046	**
No Religion	-.292	.032	***
College Experience			
STEM Majors	-.160	.032	***
Mostly Bs	-.109	.023	***
Mostly Cs or below	-.446	.067	***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Selected Faculty Results			
Constant	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig
Academic Disciplines			
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Science	-.455	.097	***
All Other Disciplines	-.263	.130	*
Faculty Demographics			
Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.304	.117	*
Hispanic or Latino	.371	.150	*
Christian	-.200	.062	**
Other Religion	-.369	.093	***
No Religion	-.531	.079	***
Age	.076	.036	*
Institutional Characteristics			
Institution enrollment size	-.080	.027	**

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Discussion

“The most successful and focused campuses are defined by their mission and driven daily by a sense of mission” (Milner & Ferrari, 2010).

- Results show specific populations within the institutions that do not identify with the institutional mission as strongly as their peers, for example:
 - Within the Student Population:
 - Students who do not receive mostly A's
 - STEM majors
 - Different gender identities
 - Students who identify with other Christian, non-Christian, and no religious preference
 - Within the Faculty Population:
 - Faculty who identify with other Christian, non-Christian, and no religious preference
 - Institution enrollment size
- Other Interesting Results:
 - Where a student lives (on-campus v. off-campus) and membership in a social fraternity or sorority did not have statistically significant impact on the Sense of Mission and the Values Development scales
 - The status/ranking of a faculty member (i.e. Full-time v. Part-time, Tenure or non-Tenure) did not have statistically significant results on all three scales.

Future Research

- Further investigate living situation and faculty experience
- Look within scale measures at individual items
- Explore the interaction between individual religious preference and institution affiliation
- Why are some groups (non-Catholic, STEM, gender minorities) not as connected to mission?

Considerations

- How might you use this information for decision-making on campus?
- How might you use this information in your daily interactions with others?

References

- Boylan, E. (2015). Where Catholic identity is visible: Differences in college students' mission perception at Catholic and independent colleges. *Journal of Catholic Higher Education*, 34(2), 211-234.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., & Whitt, E. J. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Milner, L & Ferrari, J. (2010). Embracing the institutional mission: Influences of identity processing style. *Journal of Catholic Higher Education*, 29(2), 255-268.

THANK YOU!

Thoughts, questions, feedback:

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Religious Preference Groupings

- (1) **Roman Catholic**
- (2) **Other Christian**: Baptist, Eastern Orthodox, Episcopalian, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Seventh Day Adventist, United Church of Christ, and Other Christian
- (3) **Other Religions**: including Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish (Orthodox), Jewish (Conservative), Jewish (Reform), Jewish (Unaffiliated), Unitarian/Universalist, & Other Religion
- (4) **None**

Categories were selected based on theological differences as well as the number of respondents within groups.

Sense of Mission Scale

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements: <i>Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree/disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree</i>	NSSE α	FSSE α
The mission of this institution is widely understood by students.	.90	.87
Ethical and spiritual development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution		
This institution offers opportunities for volunteering and community service.		
Social and personal development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution.		
This institution offers opportunities for developing leadership skills.		
Preparation for a career is an important part of the mission of this institution		
The heritage of the founders/founding religious community of this institution is evident here.		
At this institution, there are opportunities for students to strengthen their religious commitment.		
The mission of this institution is reflected in its course offerings.		

Respect for Diversity Scale

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements: <i>Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree/disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree</i>	NSSE α	FSSE α
The faculty and staff here are respectful of people of different religions.	.91	.90
The students here are respectful of people of different religions.		
Students at this institution feel free to express their individual spirituality.		
The faculty and staff here are respectful of people of different races and cultures.		
The students here are respectful of people of different races and cultures.		
People of different sexual orientations are accepted socially here.		
The environment here encourages students to develop an appreciation of diversity.		

Values Development Scale

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements: <i>Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree/disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree</i>	NSSE α	FSSE α
As a result of my experience here, I am more aware of social justice (fairness and equality) issues in the world.	.85	.82
The faculty at this institution discuss the ethical implications of what is being studied.		
As a result of my experience here, I am more aware of my own personal values.		