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Mission *and* Catholic Identity



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY



Sacred Heart University Mission Statement

Sacred Heart University is a coeducational, independent, comprehensive institution of higher learning in the Catholic intellectual tradition whose primary objective is to prepare men and women to live in and make their contributions to the human community.

The University aims to assist in the development of people knowledgeable of self, rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, responsive to social and civic obligations and able to respond to an ever-changing world. It does this by calling forth the intellectual potential of its students, nurturing each one's spiritual and moral growth and deepening in them a sense of social responsibility. The University is committed to combining education for life with preparation for professional excellence.

Office of Mission and Catholic Identity

The Office of Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University has as its primary purpose the articulation, promotion and transmission of the Catholic Intellectual and Spiritual Tradition. Flowing from the Mission and Core Values of the University, Mission and Catholic Identity seeks to prepare men and women to live in and make contributions to the human community. The Office runs programs for Faculty Development in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition that include the Presidential Seminar as well as Faculty Conversations. In addition, it serves as a resource for community and academic engagement in issues at the intersection of faith and culture through public lectures, panels, publications and discussion on a local, national and international level. The Office serves as a liaison and partner for diocesan initiatives in education, spirituality, health care and youth ministry.

Recognizing that education of the whole person in the Catholic Intellectual and Liberal Arts tradition involves academic formation, opportunities for spiritual growth and a commitment to serving the needs of others, the Office of Mission and Catholic Identity oversees and supports both the Office of Campus Ministry and the Office of Volunteer Programs. These offices provide opportunities for members of the University community to deepen their experience of faith and to use their gifts and talents in service to the world.



Senior Officers

Dr. Matthew Kenney received his doctorate in systematic theology from Duquesne University, with a concentration in clinical health care ethics from the University's Center for Health Care Ethics. He is the assistant vice president for Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University, where he is also a lecturer in bioethics. He is chair of the Education Subcommittee of the Institutional Ethics Committee at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut. His areas of research and scholarship include terminal illness and a theology of suffering, medical futility and end-of-life care, spirituality and chronic illness, the ethics of embryonic and adult stem cell research and the role and function of ethics committees.

Fr. Anthony Ciorra was ordained a priest in 1973. His experience has included parish life, teaching, administration, retreat work, preaching and formation ministries. He has graduate degrees in psychology, history and pastoral theology and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction. He has a Ph.D. in theology from Fordham University. His areas of research and publication include spirituality in the workplace and living Christian moral values in the world. In recognition of his ministry in the Church, he was given the pontifical honor *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* by Pope John Paul in 1999. He was awarded the Caritas Centennial Award in 2000 for his work in lay ministry and the Spirit of Renew Award for his work in interreligious dialogue and ecumenism. Prior to coming to Sacred Heart, where he serves as Assistant Vice President for Mission and Catholic Identity, Fr. Ciorra was dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University and professor of Theology and director of the Center of Theological and Spiritual Development at the College of St. Elizabeth. He gives workshops and retreats throughout the United States, the Middle East and Europe. He is actively involved in creating programs for inter-religious dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Dr. Matthew Kenney, Fr. Anthony Ciorra, and Dr. Michael Higgins



Dr. Michael W. Higgins, Vice President for Mission and Catholic Identity, came to the University from Fredericton, New Brunswick, where he was president and vice chancellor of St. Thomas University and a professor of English and Religious Studies. From 1999 to 2006, he was president and vice chancellor of St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo, Ontario, and he has held numerous appointments at other Canadian colleges and universities. Professor Higgins is a columnist, a radio documentary maker, a television commentator on Vatican affairs and a regular contributor to *Commonweal* magazine. In addition, he was the chief advisor for the widely acclaimed TV series, *Sir Peter Ustinov's Inside the Vatican*. He is the author and co-author of over a dozen books. The recipient of many awards and honors, he was presented an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Sacred Heart University in 2008. His next major project will be the official biography of the late Father Henri J.M. Nouwen. He is also a biographer of Thomas Merton and Cardinal Gerald Emmett Carter.

Seminars, Conversations, and Series

Annual Presidential Seminar on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Catholic universities have a special responsibility as stewards of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. As such, they seek to preserve, transmit and develop this 2,000-year-old tradition in the context of and in active dialogue with the contemporary cultures of the world and the signs of the times. The tasks of preserving, transmitting and developing the Catholic Intellectual Tradition enriches our pedagogical mission of preparing students for lives of continuous learning, leadership and service to others. Sacred Heart University has emerged as one of the leading Catholic universities in the United States in this important work at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Members of the faculty have a unique role in fulfilling this aspect of the University's mission. To assist those members of the faculty interested in developing this part of the University's mission, The University established an annual Presidential Seminar on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.





The Presidential Seminar is a year-long program for a group of eight to ten members of the full-time faculty. The seminar has four objectives: (1) to assist the participants to come to a better understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition; (2) to articulate and explore the methodological and pedagogical implications of this tradition for the participants' work as teachers seeking to engage students with the Catholic intellectual tradition; (3) to examine the research opportunities that engagement with the tradition creates for the participants; and (4) to encourage each participant to work toward the development of the Catholic intellectual tradition throughout his/her scholarly life.

Faculty Conversations on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

This series of discussions is designed for new full-time faculty members of the University. Over the course of eight months, faculty are invited to join in six “conversations” to explore issues related to the University’s mission and Catholic identity, especially as they relate to the Catholic intellectual tradition and to their experiences as new members of our faculty. This series of informal “conversations” has been planned by the University’s Office of Mission and Catholic Identity in conjunction with a faculty committee. The sessions are facilitated by experienced colleagues from the faculty of all the colleges, and directed by one of the senior officers of Mission and Catholic Identity. The six sessions are:

- * **September** - Dinner Conversation on The History of Sacred Heart University within the Context of Vatican Council II
- * **October** - Luncheon Conversation on Mission and Catholic Identity as Enhancing Teaching
- * **November** - Luncheon Conversation on Mission, Catholic Identity and the Vocation of Teaching
- * **January** - Dinner Conversation on Mission and Catholic Identity: Implications for Scholarship
- * **February** - Luncheon Conversation on The Legacy of Catholic Social Teaching: Justice, Peace, Service

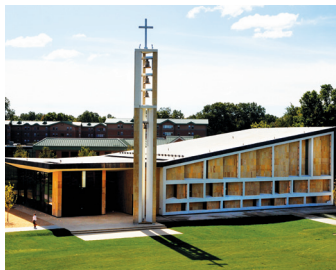
The series concludes with a final Dinner Conversation with the University President.

“Religion And...” Panel Discussion Series

The Office of Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University sponsors and organizes an annual panel series entitled “Religion and...” The University presents this special forum to engage the local, national and international community in an ongoing dialogue on issues of crucial significance at the intersection of faith and culture.

“In Vino Veritas” Series

This series flows from the “Presidential Seminar” and “Faculty Conversations.” It provides continuity of discussion among faculty and administration participants and an opportunity to continue the dialogue that began in each of these existing programs. Since it is sponsored by the Office of Mission and Catholic Identity and involves faculty and administrators from different departments, disciplines and divisions, it provides a concrete way for the Catholic intellectual tradition, which is fundamental to the mission of the University, to permeate the University culture and have a positive impact on collegiality, teaching, scholarship and research.



Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU)

The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) is an educational and research division of Sacred Heart University. Established in 1992, CCJU is a direct outgrowth of the Second Vatican Council's teachings that encouraged interreligious dialogue and cooperation. The Center draws together clergy, laity, scholars, theologians and educators to focus on current religious thinking within Judaism and Christianity and provides forums for dialogue to advance greater knowledge, understanding and harmony between religions. The growing participation of Muslims in the interreligious dialogue is also welcomed by the CCJU. As members of each religious tradition reevaluate attitudes toward the other, the Center strives to foster the exploration of the major theological, historical, philosophical and social issues on the frontier of interreligious dialogue as these are formulated by scholars and religious leaders at the national and international levels.



Partnerships with the Diocese of Bridgeport

Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Annual Communion Breakfast

Sacred Heart University hosts the Annual Communion Breakfast for Fairfield County Educators. Last year's breakfast featured a special presentation on *Catholic Social Teaching: A Component of the New Evangelization* by the Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl, S.T.D., the Archbishop of Washington, DC. The breakfast is designed for educators from Pre-K through 12 and in higher education and it offers practical information and networking opportunities for those who attend. It is sponsored by Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice (CAPP) of Fairfield County, SHU's Isabelle Farrington College of Education, and the Office of Mission and Catholic Identity.

Diocese of Bridgeport Education Days and Catechetical Congress

The University hosts Catholic school educators from diocesan K-12 schools for their annual education days and their Catechetical Congress. Educators from across the diocese gather with Bishop William Lori to celebrate Mass and Catholic education. Nationally recognized speakers on topics such as data-driven decision-making and differentiated instruction, as well as vendors from numerous educational resources are invited to participate. The Office of Mission and Catholic Identity coordinates programming and logistics with the Diocesan Schools Office.

Annual Vocation Days Retreat

The Office of Mission and Catholic Identity hosts the annual Vocation Days Retreat for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The retreat is coordinated by the Diocesan Vocations Office and Center for Youth Ministry and is open to high-school-aged young men and women who are considering a vocation to priesthood and religious life.

Convivio

Convivio is an annual High School Congress that has been held internationally for more than 30 years. The Congress in the United States is hosted by Sacred Heart University's Office of Mission and Catholic Identity in conjunction with the Diocese of Bridgeport Office for Youth Ministry. It is a weekend event where students from grades 9 through 12 come together to reflect upon contemporary society, to share their experiences, thoughts and interests and to propose explanations and answers to the problems and challenges that we experience in today's world. It is an opportunity for youth to have a profound encounter with themselves, with others and with the Lord Jesus. The hope is that from this authentic encounter, they can give deep and meaningful answers to all those in the world who need their help.





Campus Ministry

Liturgy

Our community gathers regularly during the week as well as for special celebrations to worship as an academic community of faith. On Sundays Mass is celebrated at 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and on weekdays at 12:00 p.m. Morning Prayer and a weekly service on Meditation are also available in addition to other interfaith efforts on the University campus. Students are especially encouraged to serve as ministers for all of our liturgies and to suggest new initiatives!

Sacraments

The Office of Campus Ministry offers opportunities to participate in the sacramental life of the Church. For those interested in receiving the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, reconciliation or marriage, please contact Campus Ministry directly.

Faith Formation

All are encouraged to grow in their life of faith and witness while at Sacred Heart University. Opportunities include prayer groups, faith-sharing groups, lectures and retreats.

Retreats

- * **The Freshman Retreat** will be held on Sep. 30-Oct. 2 for all incoming students and is sponsored by the Cor Team peer mentors.
- * **The Encounter With Christ Retreat** will be held for the 24th time on March 16-18.
- * **The Busy Person's Retreat** is offered on campus to encourage spiritual reflection in the midst of everyday life.
- * **The Senior Retreat** is held each Spring for all graduating students.

An interfaith day of reflection and a justice retreat are being developed with students.

Small Groups

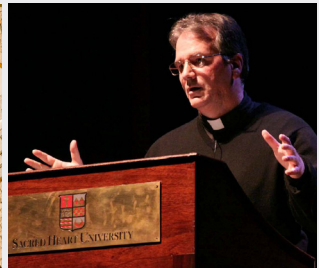
- * **Cor Team** - a peer ministry group that leads various programs and activities through Campus Ministry.
- * A community for incoming students who participate in leadership training and faith formation with Cor Team mentors.
- * **ESTEEM** - a faith and leadership program that helps seniors become active and engaged leaders in their parishes upon graduation.
- * Small Church Communities who break open the Word of God each week.

Justice

The Corporal Works of Mercy are engraved on the north wall of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit because the needs of others cannot be separated from our prayer and faith lives. Campus Ministry sponsors groups to help bring about peace and justice in the world:

- * **Sunshine Kids** - a mentoring program held on campus each Tuesday and Wednesday and in partnership with a local church on Thursday afternoons
- * **Heartbeat** - a pro-life ministry that works with local groups and tries to attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C. each year
- * **Knit Wits** - a knitting and crocheting group that provides prayer shawls, scarves, hats and mittens to all in need

Additional opportunities to volunteer and work for justice both locally, nationally and internationally are available through the Department of Volunteer Programs and through student groups like Habitat for Humanity and Peace By Justice.





Volunteer Programs Office

The Volunteer Programs Office is designed to assist in the development of people who are knowledgeable of self, rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart and responsive to social and civic obligations in an ever-changing world. We do this by calling forth the intellectual potential of the students, nurturing one's spiritual and moral growth and deepening in them a sense of social and civic responsibility. By immersing students in a variety of opportunities, both locally and abroad, we deepen in them a commitment to use their gifts and talents to promote the common good of society and recognition of the worth of every human being.

Volunteer Opportunities

Mentoring

Project STRONG - One all-girls group and one all-boys group of 5th graders

Mi Amigo - 2nd-5th grade students

Prep Pals - 6th-8th grade students

AMP - 6th-8th grade students (See description below.)

Competitive Edge - Athlete mentor program for 8th graders

Read to Succeed - English learners program

Project Learn - Group mentoring, all ages

One Shots (one-time service opportunities)

Hunger Programs - Soup kitchens, food pantries

Environmental Programs - Community gardens, clean-up days, read-alouds

Fundraisers, Holiday Programs, and Drives - Clothing, food, hygiene products, books, school supplies

Service Clubs

Habitat for Humanity, ONE Campaign, Best Buddies

Academic Mentor Program

The Academic Mentoring Program (AMP), funded by the Zimmerman Foundation, is designed to encourage middle school students to maintain academic success with the support and assistance of college students. The goal of the program is to pair two 6th-grade students at John Winthrop School with one Sacred Heart University mentor for what would be the beginning of a three-year commitment on the part of both mentor and mentee. The intent is that students reach higher levels of achievement so they can eventually complete high school with a strong academic foundation. College students working as mentors provide young students with an exposure to the possibilities within learning and higher levels of education.

Service-Based Work Study

Students who are eligible for Federal Work study may apply to use it to work in a Bridgeport school or non-profit agency. Students can work as teacher's assistants during the school day, in an after-school program, as a van driver or in a position in the Volunteer Programs Office.

The Lighthouse Program is a state-of-the-art after school educational and recreational program in partnership with community-based organizations and the Bridgeport public schools. Over 3,000 children are seen daily with enrichment activities that support school day learning. Sacred Heart University has partnered with the Lighthouse Program to provide quality after school and summer programming to youth in grades K-8. Our service-based work-study program supports these sites by facilitating a safe environment that compliments school day learning and fosters intellectual, cultural, physical, social and emotional development of children. Sacred Heart serves as providers for the following schools: Bryant, Columbus, John Winthrop, Geraldine Johnson and Discovery Magnet.

Reflection

Candlelight Prayer is a student-led prayer service that creates an environment for students to share their experiences in the realm of service and social justice. Students are invited to reflect on their relationships both spiritually and with the communities they are now a part of. The service takes place by candlelight and consists of brief reflections around a particular theme, contemporary music and private reflection. Candlelight Prayer takes place every other Tuesday in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. All religions, faiths and beliefs are welcome.

Opportunities for reflection are also integrated into immersion weeks, service trips, and other volunteer activities.

Leadership and Scholarship

We are proud to have a large number of students looking to enhance their leadership skills throughout their time at Sacred Heart. Students lead immersion weeks, mission trips and weekly volunteer groups that work in soup kitchens, at park clean-ups, animal shelters, and schools through our Read Aloud program.

Each year we award scholarships to upper class students of \$1,000-2,500 who are active volunteers in the community!

Mission Trips - Sacred Heart University has made a long-standing commitment to the people of El Salvador and Mississippi. Every year, delegations of 15-20 students travel to these regions to serve and to learn. New mission trips are happening all the time, so stay tuned.

Immersion Weeks - Immersion weeks are community service-based weeks that include many different volunteer and faith-based experiences within the Bridgeport community.

Community Connections - Community Connections is an orientation program led by senior students and involving faculty and staff. It provides an introduction to various service opportunities in the surrounding community and increases students' understanding of urban issues. First-year students and upperclass leaders, together with faculty and staff members, spend six days at St. Charles Catholic Urban Center in Bridgeport, and Golden Hill Methodist Church, where they work together to renovate Habitat for Humanity houses, serve people at the Merton House (soup kitchen) and share time with urban children and parents. Students may help run a sports program at a neighborhood community center, do Read-Aloud programs at a nearby school or work on a park project. Students work at sites that have already hosted Sacred Heart University volunteers.

CURTIS Week - Curtis Week, named for the University's founder, Bishop Walter Curtis, is an immersion week that occurs the week prior to Spring Break. Students live at St. Charles Urban Center within the city of Bridgeport, and participate in service activities that promote diversity.

Staff

Mission and Catholic Identity

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