Final Report on the Examen

Examen: Final Report to Father Daniel Hendrickson
Review of all Division and School/College summaries to elicit themes that emerged consistently across all or nearly all units.

Reviewers composed a committee of faculty and staff under the support of Dr. Eileen Burke-Sullivan, Vice Provost for Mission and Ministry

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Preface and overview to the report

Process

All divisions and schools of the university were asked to submit summary reports of their own discernment processes, with key themes and insights highlighted. The Mission and Ministry office, with the help of the Student Life Office formulated a report of the two cross campus gatherings on April 22, that served as a complement and “check” on the consensus discerned across the school and division reports.

Eleven faculty and staff with some experience in Ignatian Discernment and/or Qualitative Research were invited to serve in the review of the reports. The purpose of the review was to discover consensus themes across all schools and divisions, if such was possible. Of the eleven invited, nine were able to serve and four teams of two persons each were developed to take two rounds of review of six reports each round, thus each team studied/reviewed/reflected upon 11 or 12 reports. Of the 24 submitted reports therefore, every report was read by at least three and usually five people.

Method

In the first meeting the group decided to address the summary report reviews in the spirit of the original plan of the Examen – that is through the lens of consolations and desolations. Eileen sent to each member a brief overview of an Ignatian Examen process with special attention paid to the character of consolations and desolations. Some of the reports themselves were written in that format so that facilitated the review, but even those that weren’t used terms such as “positive and negative” or “pro and con” language to assess comments for a sense of consolation or desolation. This method freed the team from concerns about the review being inconsistent with the original method for gathering the data, and allowed them to review the material carefully for both thought (intellectual) and feeling (affectional) content that characterizes the strength of an Examen.

The teams took one week each for each round of reviews of the reports. The reports were of varying lengths from several paragraphs to 10 pages. Each team member reviewed the material on their own and then the two came together to discover consensus. After the first meeting to establish method the whole group met for a second meeting after the two rounds and carefully drew on all the reports to establish seven consensus themes that were illuminated by both consolation and desolation comments. These will be reviewed in the report.
The Reviewers

The reviewers themselves represented faculty from Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Business, and Health Sciences as well as staff from the Division of Mission and Ministry and the Graduate School, so while not fully representational, the reviewers are well published and practiced scholars in their own disciplines, well qualified to accomplish this review and generally representative of the employees of the campus.

Prefatory comments

Before even establishing key themes from the reports, the group recognized what might be called three universal concepts that frame the report:

1. **Common language**: We do not have common definitions for key terms that are frequently used at Creighton University (and elsewhere) and so we often talk “over” one another rather than connect in our communications. Almost every report requested that some common definitions for: Mission, Catholic Jesuit Mission, sustainability, diversity, communication, service, discernment, shared governance and global perspective be established so that this kind of common exercise can be more productive.

2. **Innovation**: There is a consensus that Creighton is innovative, and needs to be more so. We are creating new pathways in many areas and these should be recognized and celebrated.

3. **Access to a Creighton Education**: An absolutely common need expressed across all the divisions was to develop creative ways to provide greater access to Creighton education.

Finally, as a prefatory note: There was consensus about the success of the Examen process as a universal effort to allow conversation to be both expressed and heard. Participants frequently commented on how surprised and pleased they were with the exercise itself, as it allowed them to be in a structured, meaningful conversation with colleagues as well as those in other parts and places on campus. Without a doubt this exercise was the first time many people felt that they had a voice on campus.

In addition to the themes the Examen questions called for *dreaming or imagining what would make Creighton extraordinary in the next five years*. There was no universal consensus in the responses to this exercise. Included in this report are a series of statements that capture examples of those sentiments.

With these prefatory comments made we invite you to look at the seven key themes with a sprinkling of “guiding” comments. The themes were virtually universal in all schools and divisions. Other themes arose strongly in one or another place but not across the campus. We acknowledge that the method of the Examen itself set the tone and content for the themes. If other questions had been posed for the Examen, other themes would have emerged.

**Please note that direct quotes from a variety of Examen groups are italicized in the report.**
## Catholic Jesuit Character of the Mission

- Strong ethos of *Cura Personalis* identified across the University for students, faculty, staff, and administrators
- Broadly shared passion for and commitment to stated Ignatian charisms and values
- Ongoing discussions of mission and a call to personal transformation, solidarity and Ignatian advocacy in our work
- A shared belief across the various schools and divisions that Jesuit education transforms lives; our students become agents of change and many work for justice
- Want to remain Ignatian/Jesuit, not corporate
- Need to be more committed to *hiring for mission*
- Institutional planning must flow from the best practices of Ignatian discernment; *Ignatian practices and values have to be central to decision making practices*
- *Academic vs. Catholic* tension – perception that Catholic character hinders academic freedom or ability to address topics such as sexuality/gender

## Collaboration and Communication

- Students, faculty, staff and administrators are invited to be engaged, involved and collaborative in many areas of the university
- Strong sense that we tell our story well outside of the university
- We have strong, diverse collaborative partnerships locally, nationally and internationally
- We celebrate achievements within divisions, schools, departments and areas
- Desire for Interprofessional/ Interdisciplinary collaborations
- Not all are committed to collaboration; there were many comments about the siloes at Creighton, e.g., *Fragmentation and opposition vs. partnership and collaboration*
- Culture of those unwilling to change and the university being slow to change; *Culture change is a glacier not a river-need to melt some ice*
- The length of time it takes to make decisions
- Interprofessional/Interdisciplinary initiatives are difficult to implement because of structural and process barriers
- Need better systems for communication among all groups on campus, including from the rank and file to the leadership
- Strong sense that we don’t tell our story well inside or outside of the university

## Diversity

- Acceptance and tolerance of all faiths/ opportunities to pray together
  *Development of communal liturgical life that expresses and nurtures faith*
- Diverse student population in some Health science programs.
- Strong efforts to nourish racial and ethnic student diversity in some health science schools
- *We cannot be afraid to address the issues* such as diversity; we do not draw a culturally diverse group of applicants—hiring outside the “box”
- Need Chief Diversity Office/Officer
- Need more diverse leadership; we lack diversity in our Board of Trustees and our Administrators
- Need more diversity among students (including in types of learners), faculty and staff
- More scholarship money for diversity…first generation and low income students
- Education for African American and Latino/a neighbors in Omaha
Education Mission: Excellence

- Academic excellence—Creighton offers an exemplary academic experience as evidenced by
  1. Quality of faculty publications
  2. Delivery of quality healthcare
  3. Growing assessment culture
- We are more student-focused and responsive than other universities
- Creation of non-traditional and innovative arrangements, such as more online and/or hybrid courses and programs
- Outstanding online academic programs
- Rising cost of tuition is driving away good students. We need enough funds to provide an affordable education at this Catholic, Jesuit institution
  1. How do we support and grow scholarships?
  2. Make Creighton truly accessible to all and show that excellent does not mean elite or snobbish
  3. Student loan debt at all levels is hurting our students and threatening our future

Resources:

- Virtually all divisions/schools see themselves as good stewards of the resources available
- CU staff and faculty do much with little
- Faculty and staff are learning to be environmentally friendly
- Creighton community values our people
- Learning how to consolidate and better utilize resources remains an issue, especially in terms of “human capital”: Squeezed material and human resources for our division
- Lack of critical staff and loss of institutional memory due to recent staff “buy-outs.” Failure to discern which staff are critical to effectiveness for education mission
- Some schools feel squeezed by limited resources to fund other schools/divisions
- Salaries still need to be addressed in some units to recruit and retain top talent, esp. high quality faculty
- Greater efforts are needed to educate about sustainability
- Keeping up with technological changes

Service and Service Learning

- The MOST consistent message across campus is that we are united in our attitude and practices of serving others (many highlighted Project Homeless Connect Omaha as an example)
- We have cultivated a culture of service, a service-focused mentality with many opportunities for serving others
- Health Science Schools have well developed curricular service learning including local, national and international service learning opportunities
- Our service of others contributes to the communal character of the university
- Need a structured service learning program for the undergraduate schools and graduate school.
- There is a hunger in the community and with faculty to have curricular service learning to complement co-curricular already being done since service learning is critical to the Jesuit Character of the University
**Conconsations**

**Desolations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency, Voice and Trust</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gratitude for the transparency of the Examen process</td>
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<td>• Misunderstanding and/or mistrust between faculty and administration. Little consistent two-way communication</td>
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<td>• Staff feel threatened by job loss if they criticize policies</td>
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<td>• Some staff and/or areas do not feel that they have a voice</td>
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<td>• Structures for shared governance are less effective than they should be</td>
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<td>• Need for improved communication and transparency in goals</td>
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**Dreaming and Imagining To Make Us Extraordinary...**

• Address tuition issue ... or at least be leaders in “sustainable debt”
• Renewable energy
• More online presence
• Expand on service projects in community and globally
• Being flexible and adaptable
• Become known once again as the best education in Omaha
• Shape our brand from our excellence in research, teaching, global initiatives and service-brand as our niche
• Recruit top-notch faculty...top researchers-endowed chairs and professorships
• Become top Catholic health science campus in U.S. through Catholic Social Teaching, Respect for Life, Care for the marginalized
• Endowment to one billion
• Elite school for undergraduate research
• “Take better care of the relationships in our own backyard”
• Good mix of traditional and nontraditional students
• Centrally located Mission and Ministry Center
• A Creighton that is Jesuit-Catholic to the extreme that Steubenville is conservative Catholic. Students and faculty come here wanting to be formed in Jesuit Catholic values.
• A calendar that has “Friday - Immersion in the Mission” EVERY Friday – allowing multiple options for formation, reflection, shared governance etc.
• Serving all generations (baby boomers, gen x, gen y, millennials), online courses
• More collaboration between Creighton, UNMC and UNO