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## Saga and Socialization in Jesuit Institutions

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### Abstract

The 28 institutions of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities share a strong heritage dating back to the founding of the first Jesuit institution in Messina, Sicily, in 1548, by Ignatius of Loyola and the newly founded Society of Jesus. Though formally independent of the Catholic Church, this Jesuit tradition is a core value of these institutions, and their presidents came together to articulate this value through *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities*. In this consensus statement, there is a rich sense of saga and socialization. The consensus statement is used to demonstrate elements of initiation and fulfillment that support the creation of an organizational saga, including the manner in which current members of the Society of Jesus residing on each campus provide a unique, lived representation of the Society's founder, Ignatius of Loyola. The president's statement, the work of the AJCU, and the efforts of the individual schools, clearly articulate efforts to maintain the Jesuit tradition through the socialization of laypersons. These efforts seek to overcome the challenges of a declining representation of the Society of Jesus on their campuses. The experience of these institutions, both individually and collectively, raises interesting questions for further study, such as the level and impact of cultural strength on these institutions, and may provide insight into how other colleges and universities may effectively socialize their academic and administrative staff to carry on the educational traditions unique to their institutions.

### Introduction

Jesuit institutions have long played a role in the history of higher education, both in the U.S. and internationally. Going back to the founding of the very first Jesuit institution, in mid-16<sup>th</sup> century Rome, the Jesuit community has been committed to supporting education and producing "men and women for others."<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the presidents of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S. joined together to issue *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities* (hereinafter called *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission*). This statement is rich with imagery regarding the cultural, governance, and organizational structures that exist within these Jesuit institutions. This richness of detail inspired further exploration of *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission*, which led to the identification of significant cultural references, most specifically in the areas of organizational saga and socialization. With the decreasing number of men entering the Society of Jesus, there is a great need for Jesuit institutions to turn to laypeople to support the academic and administrative components of these colleges and universities, while still maintaining the Jesuit character of the institutions. Elements

such as organizational saga and socialization provide mechanisms to prepare laypeople to take on this responsibility.

Developing a greater understanding of the history and culture of Jesuit higher education is critical given the ever-changing nature of the field and the need to integrate lay staff into the administration of Jesuit institutions. These institutions are no longer able to rely on practicing Jesuits as their primary source of faculty or administrators, as the number of Jesuits in the U.S. continues to decline. Even relying on practicing Catholics as the primary source of employees is unrealistic as that number also continues to decline. The changing nature of higher education delivery systems also contributes to the challenges of Jesuit higher education. How do Jesuit institutions ensure that the Jesuit identity of an institution remains as delivery systems change and a greater number of employees come from backgrounds that may include no prior familiarity with the Jesuit identity? The commitment to socialization at Jesuit institutions is critical to answering this question and may also provide insight into how other institutions of higher education may be able to use

similar concepts to ensure the ongoing understanding and support of the history and culture that make their institutions unique.

The representation of saga and the role of socialization in *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission* presents an intriguing opportunity for review. In this article, the history of Jesuit institutions and the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) is briefly reviewed, followed by a discussion of the collective effort of the presidents of the AJCU institutions as they work to ensure the continued success of these institutions in an ever-changing society. The concept of organizational culture is explored, looking specifically at sagas as a manifestation of culture and the imagery of organizational saga that exists in the consensus statement. The role that socialization plays in overcoming the reduction in the number of Jesuits available to support the academic and administrative needs of the AJCU institutions is then presented. Specifically, representations of socialization in *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission*, in the activities of the AJCU, and in the efforts of individual AJCU institutions are provided. Finally, some benefits and challenges of taking an organizational culture perspective are provided, along with some considerations for future study.

### **Jesuit Institutions and the AJCU**

For more than 450 years, Jesuit education has had a profound effect on our world. Beginning with their first college in Messina, Sicily in 1548, Jesuits soon became known as the schoolmasters of Europe because of their highly regarded schools and their pre-eminence as scholars. The number of Jesuit schools reached 740, and Jesuits were at the center of the intellectual world, beginning a long tradition of educating leaders in all walks of life.<sup>2</sup>

Jesuit education has a long and storied history. In 1540, Pope Paul III approved a new religious order, the Society of Jesus, which would come to be known more familiarly as the Jesuits. Several characteristics of the Society laid the groundwork for the Society to become famed schoolmasters. First, “the Society of Jesus was born in a university. Its first members were all university

students ...”<sup>3</sup> Education was at the center of the creation of the Society, and Ignatius of Loyola was at the center of this group. His drive and his constant challenging of his peers led them all to Rome, where they would eventually be recognized as an official order of the Catholic Church. Upon becoming an official order, this drive for education was not abandoned and served as a foundation for future activities. Second, the Jesuits were somewhat unique among religious orders, in that their focus was on direct involvement in the community. “They envisioned living in the middle of the currents of life – in the world.”<sup>4</sup> With this desire to be directly involved in the community, Jesuits trained for specific professions in addition to their role in the church. This additional training created an ideal opportunity for the staffing of schools and universities. Because of the Society’s commitment to educating its members, many other Jesuit schools could quickly follow the start of the first Jesuit institution. “Soon Jesuit astronomers, dramatists, theologians, linguists, painters, musicians, architects, and botanists were populating [Jesuit] schools and university faculties across Europe.”<sup>5</sup> Third, the Society was also unique in the development of education as a core function of the order. “The Society was the first religious order to undertake systematically, as a primary and self-standing ministry, the operation of full-fledged schools for any student, lay or clerical, who chose to come to them.”<sup>6</sup> By committing to education as a form of ministry, the Society was able to create thirty-five Jesuit colleges by the time of Ignatius’ death, just eight years after the first Jesuit educational institution was founded.<sup>7</sup>

Within the United States, the Jesuit tradition of education can be seen in 28 colleges and universities spread across 19 states. Georgetown University, founded in 1789, was the first U.S. Jesuit institution, and U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities continued to be established throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with Wheeling Jesuit University, founded in 1954, being the most recent. These institutions comprise the membership of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

The ... AJCU was founded in July 1970 as a national organization to serve its members ...

The Association serves as a facilitator for various cooperative initiatives such as fostering Jesuit, Catholic identity and institutional and international collaboration, educating for a faith that does justice, supporting leadership initiatives, and developing a distance education network.<sup>8</sup>

The AJCU is a voluntary organization, thus playing no official role in the governance of any of the institutions. Nor does the Catholic Church play an official role in the governance of these colleges and universities. “Each institution is separately chartered by the state and is legally autonomous under its own board of trustees ...”<sup>9</sup> And while all of these institutions include Jesuits in their administration and on their faculty (ranging from two to thirty-one<sup>10</sup>), both the Jesuit community and the Catholic Church remain clearly separated from the institutions. “Provincials, for instance, do not exercise authority in the external or internal governance of these institutions,”<sup>11</sup> and “because the Jesuit community – both for its own integrity and for the sake of the college/university – remains outside the ordinary university structures and governance, it has the unique opportunity to make more personal and communal the lived meaning of the Jesuit character.”<sup>12</sup>

While the history of the Church and the Jesuits plays a significant role in the manner in which each of these institutions operates, ultimately, it is up to the independent institutions to ensure that their Jesuit identity continues to be a critical component in the on-going success of the university or college. Jesuits at the individual institutions help achieve this by facilitating the “lived meaning of the Jesuit character.” Another mechanism for accomplishing this is the consensus statement written by the presidents of the 28 U.S. Jesuit institutions. The statement provides a framework of critical elements necessary for ongoing success and is described in the next section.

### ***The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities***

In 2010, the presidents of the AJCU-member institutions issued a consensus statement on the role of their Jesuit, Catholic identity.<sup>13</sup> The

original goal of the document was to prepare for discussions with the U.S. provincials of the Society of Jesus in October 2010, though it was “written in such a way that it can stand on its own and can be used ... in other conversations.”<sup>14</sup>

This consensus statement of the presidents explains first of all the defining character and apostolic rationale of the Jesuit colleges and universities, articulates their manner of collaboration and governance, and addresses a set of key relationships vital to engaging positively in the common Jesuit apostolic mission.<sup>15</sup>

While not specifically articulated by the presidents as a core element of the document, the statement also provides significant imagery that captures cultural aspects of the colleges and universities. *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission* consists of six sections, allowing the presidents to address key aspects of their institutions and their relationships with external stakeholders:

1. Defining Character: Catholic, Jesuit Universities
2. Further Dimensions of Our Apostolic Rationale
3. Collaboration and Governance
4. Jesuits and Jesuit Communities
5. Presidents, Rectors, and Provincials
6. Relationships with Bishops.

The sections focusing on character, collaboration, and Jesuit communities provide the primary connections to organizational culture. While equally interesting, the organizational structure and governance characteristics outlined in the consensus statement are beyond the scope of this article.

With the decreasing number of Jesuits come a variety of challenges for these institutions. Ultimately, how does one maintain a Jesuit identity in the midst of a reduced presence of Jesuits themselves? Organizational culture plays a crucial role in the success of an institution and may help provide a context in which to frame an answer to this question. Tierney discusses the importance of having a deep understanding of the organization’s culture in order to effectively lead the institution.<sup>16</sup> Masland discusses the role that

culture plays in providing “unobtrusive controls” to help guide the organization when explicit or implicit controls are weak.<sup>17</sup> And Rice and Austin present their findings on the importance of having an “unusually and compelling identification with the institution”<sup>18</sup> in the development of strong morale. Jesuits, by their nature of being members of the Society of Jesus, have this “unusually and compelling identification” with their institutions. In many ways, they have “an edge” on understanding the organizational culture of Jesuit institutions, which laypersons do not have. Thus, as this unique understanding of the organization slowly disappears, elements of these institutions, such as leadership, control, and morale, risk alteration. Organizational culture provides a lens through which to view Jesuit institutions to identify ways to transmit the unique identity of these organizations to lay administrators.

The next two sections provide an overview of two specific aspects of organizational culture – saga and socialization – and how they relate to Jesuit institutions. *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission* provides a variety of examples that demonstrate how the presidents of these institutions emphasize saga and socialization in the consensus statement. Examples from the AJCU and individual AJCU institutions also provide support for the importance of saga and socialization in ensuring that laypersons can fulfill a complimentary role to the one Jesuits play in support of the continued commitment to the Jesuit traditions these institutions hold.

### Organizational Saga

Analyzing *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission* from an organizational culture perspective is challenging due to the elusive nature of defining culture. “Culture is one of those terms that defy a single all-purpose definition, and there are almost as many meanings of ‘culture’ as people using the term.”<sup>19</sup> Masland indicates, “a strongly articulated culture tells employees what is expected of them and how to behave under a given set of circumstances.”<sup>20</sup> This strongly articulated culture is the main interest in reviewing the impact of a declining Jesuit presence on the institutions in the AJCU. How will the articulated culture be passed on to others, as there are fewer Jesuits available to

tell the story? Schein provides a highly descriptive definition of culture:

*Culture* can ... be defined as (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.<sup>21</sup>

However, “culture, as a total concept, is too all embracing. It needs to be dissected into manageable proportions so that it can be used in the interpretation of observable behavior.”<sup>22</sup> “... ‘Organizational symbolism’ refers to those aspects of an organization that its members use to reveal or make comprehensible the unconscious feelings, images, and values that are inherent in that organization.”<sup>23</sup> More specifically, the symbolism inherent in organizational saga provides a mechanism for reviewing the presidents’ consensus statement.

Burton R. Clark introduced the concept of the organizational saga through his 1970 book, *The Distinctive College*, and his subsequent 1972 article, “The Organizational Saga in Higher Education.” “An *organizational saga* is a collective understanding of unique accomplishment in a formally established group.”<sup>24</sup> It “refers to a unified set of publicly expressed beliefs about the formal group that (a) is rooted in history, (b) claims unique accomplishment, and (c) is held with sentiment by the group.”<sup>25</sup> Looking at Dandridge, Mitroff, and Joyce’s definition of myth demonstrates how sagas represent a heightened form of myth in organizational culture. “Myths display the structured, predominantly culture-specific, and shared, semantic systems that enable the members of a given culture to understand each other and cope with the unknown.”<sup>26</sup> The nurturance of myth is a critical component to the management of an institution of higher education.<sup>27</sup> “Myths help to anchor the present in the past, and provide meaning which legitimates the social practices of academic life.”<sup>28</sup>

Sagas bring unique benefits to an institution. “A symptom of a powerful saga is a feeling that there

are really two worlds – the small blessed one of the lucky few and the large routine one of the rest.”<sup>29</sup> The saga provides a strong base to which all members of the organization can turn for understanding and guidance. As a manifestation of the organization’s culture, the saga plays a core function in leadership of the organization. “... Leaders must have a full, nuanced understanding of the organization’s culture. Only then can they articulate decisions in a way that will speak to the needs of the various constituencies and marshal their support.”<sup>30</sup> As leaders, there is a crucial role to be played not only in the understanding of the saga, but also in the ongoing nurturance of the myth:

Many academic administrators have an exquisite sense of myth and are skilled in its presentation and maintenance. This requires insuring that the history of an institution ... is not forgotten, that it is rewritten, read and known, that individuals who embody that history in their lives are visible and active in the community ...<sup>31</sup>

Lay administrators, through an understanding of the Jesuit saga, can take on leadership roles that help continue the Jesuit mission and identity of the institutions. In their discussion of organizational spirituality, Konz & Ryan<sup>32</sup> describe the spirituality of the Jesuit institutions in ways that tie it directly to an organization’s culture, and ultimately, to the saga that the Jesuits have created.

Clark identifies two stages in the development of a saga: initiation and fulfillment.<sup>33</sup> Initiation is effectively the birth of the saga. “The saga is initially a strong purpose, conceived and enunciated by a single man or small cadre (Selznick, 1957) whose first task is to find a setting that is open, or can be opened to a special effort.”<sup>34</sup> Clark describes how initiations usually occur at the start of an institution, at a crisis point, or in an established organization that is ready for change. In the case of Jesuit education, Ignatius serves as the single man who, with his small cadre, is instrumental in starting the very first Jesuit educational institution in 1548. John O’Malley emphasizes the significance of this effort in *The First Jesuits*. “Never before had a group of this size been gathered and ‘sent’ for any ministry. Never

before had so much talent been concentrated on a single undertaking.”<sup>35</sup> Ignatius’s drive and inspiration led to the founding of hundreds of institutions, and he serves as the central figure in the creation of an educational saga that is still inspiring. In his role as the creator of Jesuit education, Ignatius takes on a sainthood that is different from the one later provided to him by the Catholic Church.

One means of animating symbols, which helps to communicate their meaning to academic life as it is lived, is the canonization of exemplars. Saints are individuals who in harsh or extreme circumstances have personified values necessary for the community to function, thereby earning our respect, our adoration and emulation.<sup>36</sup>

Ignatius serves as an icon for what Jesuit education encompasses. For most institutions, the founder is someone who is remembered through the careful nurturance of myth and shared remembrance of the saga. Jesuit institutions, on the other hand, have the very unique opportunity to fulfill Dill’s emphasis on needing to ensure that “individuals who embody that history in their lives are visible and active in the community.”<sup>37</sup> Jesuit institutions have daily, human representation of Ignatius on their campuses. The Society of Jesus continues to be an active participant in these institutions, and each Jesuit on campus is effectively a lived representation of St. Ignatius. Other than institutions where the leaders are descendents of the original founder, there may be no other situation quite like having the religious community actively involved in the institution, thus providing this constant reminder of the initiation of the institution’s saga.

Turning to *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission*, this imagery is presented in a manner to ensure emphasis of the role the Jesuits play.

[The Jesuits] embody in a lived and unparalleled way the Jesuit character of our ministry. Our students, colleagues, and alumni respect and identify with Jesuits as being at the heart of Jesuit education. The impression Jesuits make and the apostolic impact they have is profound.<sup>38</sup>

In addressing the reduced size of the Society of Jesus, the presidents go on to say:

It seems to be the case, however, that [the educational] impact does not depend completely on there being a sizable number of Jesuits, but at least some, who visibly represent by their presence the commitment and engagement of Jesuits with the college or university.<sup>39</sup>

Individual institutions also emphasize the importance of the Jesuit presence, as they seek greater Jesuit representation on their campus.<sup>40</sup> The 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S. had the unique benefit of inheriting a saga at the time of their initiation and founding. The strength of the Jesuit saga was something that each school could turn to as they created their individual institution, thus providing a common, core element of organizational culture to help guide their development and support their success.

The second stage of the saga is fulfillment. Fulfillment centers on “the personnel, the program, the external social base, the student subculture, and the imagery of the saga.”<sup>41</sup> In order for a saga to become a core part of the organizational culture (e.g. to be fulfilled), the support of each of these elements is necessary. Looking at the Jesuit institutions, the personnel are primarily represented by the faculty, almost 22,000 in number across the 28 Jesuit institutions,<sup>42</sup> and the critical nature of their support. The program is represented by the curriculum and the nature of what makes the learning experience unique at Jesuit institutions. The external social base is the alumni and the support they provide even after leaving the institution. With a living alumni base totaling almost 2 million across the AJCU institutions,<sup>43</sup> this external social base can have vast influence. The student subculture is represented by the students, totaling almost 220,000 across the U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities,<sup>44</sup> and represents what they bring to support the ongoing strength of the saga. And, finally, imagery is the physical representations of the saga, such as ceremonies, written accounts, buildings or statues, and other traditions that keep the saga in the forefront.<sup>45</sup> All of these elements are crucial to the ongoing support of the saga – the nurturance of myth.

*The Jesuit, Catholic Mission* accentuates the value of all of these aspects of fulfillment in highlighting the importance of the Jesuit traditions. As mentioned earlier, “our students, colleagues, and alumni respect and identify with Jesuits as being at the heart of Jesuit education.”<sup>46</sup> In stating this, the presidents effectively capture the student subculture, the personnel, and the external social base as critical to the support of the Jesuit saga. They again capture these components by stating:

Most of our students and colleagues, because of their knowledge of and personal relationship with Jesuits, do not believe that Jesuit education – at least as anything like what they experience it to be – is possible without Jesuits who embody, concretize, or personalize it in the college or university.<sup>47</sup>

The presidents identify additional dimensions as representing the core of the Jesuit tradition. The first of these speaks to the program, which must be distinctive to support the establishment of saga:

The transforming power of the education of our students as whole persons and the inculcation of our Catholic and Jesuit values so that our students become the kind of persons who are leaders manifesting these values in whatever they do.”<sup>48</sup>

To support the imagery necessary in fulfilling a saga, the presidents reference “university convocations, conferences, liturgical celebrations, and award ceremonies to articulate our Catholic, Jesuit identity.”<sup>49</sup>

Jesuit institutions share a strong organizational saga, rooted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which is present on each campus today. While members of the Society of Jesus provide a human representation of this saga, how do these institutions ensure that the Jesuit tradition continues to play a strong part in the cultures of these organizations, even as the Society of Jesus makes up a smaller percentage of the academic and administrative staff? The answer to that question lies in the concept of socialization.

## Socialization

Schein's earlier definition of culture captured socialization in its final two elements, where he indicates that culture "(e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."<sup>50</sup> "The socialization process is the learning process through which the individual acquires the knowledge and skills, the values and attitudes, and the habits and modes of thought of the society to which he belongs."<sup>51</sup> Relating this specifically to organizational culture, "culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities."<sup>52</sup> Thus, for Jesuit institutions, socialization is the process that allows laypeople to play a key role in supporting the ongoing fulfillment of the Jesuit educational tradition, even though they are not a part of the Society of Jesus (and may not even share the same Catholic spirituality that is at the foundation of these Jesuit schools).

Konz and Ryan<sup>53</sup> emphasize the importance of matching the spirituality of the employee to the spirituality of the organization, in order to support the culture and traditions that are a core part of the institution. Dill provides the example of the School of Organization at Yale University, which took a strong, focused approach to socialization, through joint appointments and recruitment that focused on "a small core of selective graduate schools where students had been intensely socialized to academic values consistent with those of Yale ...".<sup>54</sup> These approaches serve well when the supply of potential employees who meet the established criteria is sufficient to meet the demand. However, with the number of practicing Catholics continuing to decline in most of the regions containing Jesuit institutions,<sup>55</sup> tying the socialization process solely to Catholics who may bring a prior awareness of the Jesuit tradition is an unrealistic approach. Thus, there is a necessity in developing a socialization process that supports new employees at Jesuit institutions, regardless of their spiritual background, in developing a close connection to the Jesuit saga.

Ultimately, socialization is a learning process<sup>56</sup> that allows members of an organization to work

effectively together toward a common cause. "When actions are required, people sharing culture will know what to expect from one another – even if they have not seen one another before."<sup>57</sup> In relation to the Jesuit institutions, a successful learning process will result in the internalization of the Jesuit tradition. This learning process is an ongoing activity, represented as much by "the less dramatic, ordinary daily occurrences" as it is by "examples that serve as grand transitional markers."<sup>58</sup> The ability of each institution to successfully navigate the socialization process of laypersons into the Jesuit tradition plays a key role in overcoming the declining presence of the Society of Jesus on the AJCU campuses. The consensus statement, the activities of the AJCU, and efforts on individual campuses demonstrate how this is occurring.

### *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission*

The presidents of the AJCU institutions place significant emphasis on the importance of socialization, as demonstrated through language that appears repeatedly throughout the consensus statement. The presidents acknowledge the role of laypersons in the academic and administrative functioning of the institutions, and with this acknowledgment comes the critical process of socializing laypersons to the Jesuit tradition.

Each of our colleges and universities in its own way gives priority of attention to being faithful to, deepening, and applying this Catholic, Jesuit character in what it does. The specific means we use for this run into the hundreds, are well resourced and staffed within our institutions, are coordinated by a person charged with the responsibility to further this character, and are shared across our schools and our association so that we learn from and build on the experience of one another.<sup>59</sup>

The presidents also focus on specific roles within the institutions. In relation to the boards of trustees, directors, or rectors that have responsibility for each institution, they state:

We recognize the increasing importance of the preparation and ongoing formation of our board members for bearing the responsibility of fulfilling the Catholic, Jesuit purpose of our colleges and universities and we welcome



sharing ways with the Society of Jesus for this formational process of our boards.<sup>60</sup>

And, in relation to the Presidents of each institution (referred to as “Directors of Apostolic Work”), they indicate:

As Director of Apostolic Work, the new president, whether Jesuit or not, appointed by the board, should be “missioned” to this Jesuit apostolic aspect of his responsibility by the provincial on behalf of the Society of Jesus. Experience shows that this “missioning”, especially when done publicly, is very meaningful not only to presidents who are Jesuits but very supportive of presidents who are not Jesuits.<sup>61</sup>

And this commitment is not just to the highest level of leadership at the institutions.

Each of our colleges and universities has created responsibilities, structures, and programs for the hiring, orienting, and developing of faculty and staff according to our Catholic, Jesuit mission. We make available special retreats, seminars in Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit education, programs and colloquia which seek to enhance Catholic, Jesuit identity, development and scholarship opportunities, service and immersion experiences, special events that focus on our mission, and we utilize university convocations, conferences, liturgical celebration, and award ceremonies to articulate our Catholic, Jesuit identity.<sup>62</sup>

### **Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities**

Through its efforts to foster the Jesuit, Catholic identity, the AJCU also supports the socialization process for all its member institutions. Some of the support is provided through smaller, campus-based activities, such as a series of videos created to capture the “origin, transformation, and transitions of Jesuit spirituality,” which are used both for new employee orientation and ongoing staff development.<sup>63</sup> At a broader level, annual professional conferences have been developed which focus on over 30 different fields in higher education, such as chief academic officers, financial aid directors, criminal justice educators, or student affairs administrators. “The

Conferences sponsored by the AJCU provide our institutional faculty and staff members with the opportunity to collaborate and network with one another, advance their professional growth and development, and discuss issues affecting Jesuit education.”<sup>64</sup>

The AJCU also offers two signature leadership programs: The AJCU Seminar on Higher Education Leadership, and the Ignatian Colleagues Program. These intensive opportunities are open to participants who are nominated by their presidents and who serve in roles that allow them to “[advance] the institutions mission in light of its Jesuit identity.”<sup>65</sup> The Leadership Seminar, a weeklong event started in 2003, was established to meet the following objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the relationship among mission, identity, institutional leadership, strategy and decision-making
- To foster an understanding of management and other disciplines such as finance and organizational theory
- To enhance leadership abilities through the understanding and the practice of leadership
- To advance knowledge of educational policy issues within the academy and in the broader national environment.<sup>66</sup>

To date over 300 leaders have taken part in the program, representing all 28 U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities.<sup>67</sup> The curriculum of the seminar focuses on mission and strategic planning, leadership, financial management, fundraising, and student development, all with a specific concentration of what makes these various areas unique at a Jesuit institution.<sup>68</sup> The AJCU has also taken a leadership role in the Ignatian Colleagues Program: “a national program designed to educate and form administrators more deeply in the Jesuit tradition of higher education so they may better articulate, adapt, and advance Ignatian mission on their campuses.”<sup>69</sup> Started in 2009, the program will have included over 225 participants from 25 AJCU institutions in its first five cohorts.<sup>70</sup> The program evolved from one specific question: “Where do we go beyond where we are now in the development of lay

leadership?”<sup>71</sup> The goals of the program are achieved through an eighteen-month experience that combines a three-day orientation, on-line learning, campus-based spiritual exercises, an international immersion experience, and a three-day capstone experience.

### AJCU Institutions

Individual institutions are also deeply committed to the process of socialization. As mentioned earlier, there are hundreds of programs occurring across the 28 Jesuit institutions in the AJCU, and these programs are growing.

Targeted programs involve boards of trustees, faculty, administrators, staff, students, and alumni in richly varied ways. Schools are more and more concerned about hiring for mission in sensitive but effective ways, and about orientation and development programs that include ongoing discussions, seminars, and colloquia.<sup>72</sup>

While the titles and roles vary, each institution has a person or office committed to advancing the Jesuit mission and identity of the institution, and these individuals participate in the AJCU's Mission and Identity Conference.<sup>73</sup> The Society of Jesus also supports this commitment: “programs are to be provided and supported (even financially) to enable lay people to acquire a greater knowledge of the Ignatian tradition and spirituality and to grow in each one's personal vocation.”<sup>74</sup>

In gathering examples of the activities that occur at institutions, the responses to the AJCU's mission and identity survey<sup>75</sup> provide a rich level of detail. Activities can be primarily categorized as orientation programs, ongoing educational programs and opportunities, and spiritual exercises and retreats. Orientation programs ranged from separate staff and faculty orientation programs for new employees coordinated by the mission and identity officer, orientation programs for new members of the Board of Trustees, publications for prospective employees that outline the school's Jesuit, Catholic identity, and specific activities such as video-and-discussion programs for new employees. Ongoing educational activities included brown bag lunch opportunities for monthly reflection on Jesuit mission and identity, roundtable discussions (using

the publication, *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*, as the basis for facilitation), Ignatian Heritage Week, summer institutes designed to help staff connect their personal vocation with the institution's Jesuit mission, a monthly lecture series focused on current issues in the church, and recognition awards to honor faculty who embody the Ignatian tradition. For those staff interested in developing an even greater understanding of the Spiritual Exercises developed by St. Ignatius, each campus offers retreat opportunities for staff and faculty to participate in events led by a spiritual director ranging from a weekend event to an eight-month experience.

### Conclusion

A diverse range of elements is captured in the concept of organizational culture. This article focuses on two particular elements – organizational saga and socialization – to provide a lens through which to review the work of the presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) and their consensus statement, *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities*. Organizational saga focuses on the story that makes a particular educational institution unique and engages members of its community in a way that makes them feel as if they are part of an exceptional and distinctive group. Socialization is the combination of mechanisms that allow this story to be transmitted to new members of the institution who then carry on this unique identity. As entities separate and distinct from the Catholic Church, the U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities are all individually responsible for maintaining the Jesuit identity of their institutions. With the number of Jesuits available to work at these institutions declining, the reliance on lay staff to carry on the Jesuit mission increases. Socializing lay staff into the saga of Jesuit education provides a cultural mechanism to help them carry on the Jesuit identity, and *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission* is infused with examples of these cultural perspectives.

The 28 Jesuit colleges and universities that combine to create the AJCU offer a unique perspective on organizational culture. Through their activities, they are able to ensure the ongoing character of the Jesuit educational tradition, even as more laypeople are active in the academic and


administrative roles in the institutions. “One of the advantages of a cultural perspective is that it can force administrators to recognize that paradoxes existing within their institution are not always detrimental.”<sup>76</sup> The role of laypersons in furthering the goals of Jesuit education could easily become a paradoxical situation when there is a simultaneous existence of the beliefs that accompany the Jesuit tradition and the non-Catholic views that employees may bring with them. Using myself as an example, one would not necessarily expect an agnostic man to be a motivated supporter of the Jesuit educational tradition, yet, through active socialization, I came to be an ardent supporter of the tradition during my time working at a Jesuit institution. Other colleges and universities may benefit from understanding the methods used to socialize employees at Jesuit institutions, in order to adapt those methods to the core values that are part of their educational institutions.

The application of saga and socialization to the Jesuit educational tradition is not without its challenges. Both Sackmann and Schein point to the challenges of using manifestations of culture “as valid surrogates for the cultural whole.”<sup>77</sup> Sackmann points to manifestations enduring long after they cease being relevant and that manifestations may look very much the same in different cultures but actually have very different meanings (for example, pyramids in Egypt represent something different than those in Mexico).<sup>78</sup> Given the congruence of the Jesuit educational saga across institutions, identifying whether Sackmann’s concerns carry the same relevance at Jesuit institutions may provide additional insight. Schein takes the broader view that the challenge is “that [a manifestation] fractionates a concept whose primary theoretical utility is in drawing attention to the holistic aspect of group and organizational phenomena.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, a potential question for further research becomes, what is lost in the understanding of the Jesuit educational culture when the focus narrows to the point of saga? Additionally, there is the challenge of the roles played in the socialization process. This article reviewed socialization from the standpoint of socializing laypersons into the world of the Jesuit saga. It did not address the impact that the layperson’s beliefs have on the institutions. The person being socialized is

bringing his/her own experience to the table, as well, and the impact of that experience cannot be ignored.<sup>80</sup> “Culture is not discovered by unchanging recruits. Rather, socialization involves a give-and-take where new individuals make sense of an organization through their own unique backgrounds and the current contexts in which the organization resides.”<sup>81</sup> Addressing the impact of the new recruit on the overall socialization process may play a critical role in understanding the socialization activities at the Jesuit institutions.

The degree to which these socialization processes are considered “successful” at the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities deserves further study, and, in so doing, the concept of cultural strength may play a key role in understanding what leads to success. As mentioned earlier, “a strongly articulated culture tells employees what is expected of them and how to behave under a given set of circumstances.”<sup>82</sup> Smart and St. John define strong cultures “as those in which there is congruence between espoused beliefs and actual practices, whereas weak cultures are characterized by incongruence between espoused beliefs and actual practices.”<sup>83</sup> Peterson and Spencer also point to the importance of congruence, as well as clarity and consensus in determining cultural strength.<sup>84</sup> Assessing these factors across the ACJU member institutions may provide a better understanding of how saga and socialization play a role in these organizations. Other possible research questions include analyzing whether the significant variation in the number of participants from each institution taking part in AJCU’s signature leadership programs provides insight into the strength of the institution’s culture, or pursuing Dill’s observation that “if the common academic culture has not been carefully nurtured during periods of prosperity, the result can be destructive conflicts between faculties, loss of professional morale, and personal alienation [during periods of declining resources].”<sup>85</sup>

The 28 institutions of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities share a strong heritage dating back to the founding of the first Jesuit institution in Messina, Sicily, in 1548, by Ignatius of Loyola and the newly founded Society of Jesus. This Jesuit tradition is a core value of these institutions, and their presidents came together to articulate this value through *The Jesuit, Catholic*

*Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities.* In this consensus statement, there is a rich sense of saga and socialization, which are two aspects of organizational culture. In studying the president's statement, the work of the AJCU, and the efforts of the individual schools, clearly articulated efforts to maintain the Jesuit tradition through the socialization of laypersons are demonstrated. These efforts seek to overcome the challenges of a declining representation of the Society of Jesus on their campuses. The experience of these institutions, both individually and collectively, raises interesting questions for further study, and may provide insight into how other colleges and universities may effectively socialize their academic and administrative staff to carry on the educational traditions unique to their institutions. 

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Center for Ignatian Spirituality, *What Are We?* (Boston: Boston College, 2002) 27.

<sup>2</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "International Jesuit Institutions," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, <http://www.ajcunet.edu/International-Institutions>, para. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Ignatian Spirituality, *What Are We?*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>6</sup> John W. O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 239.

<sup>7</sup> Center for Ignatian Spirituality, *What Are We?*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "About AJCU," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, para. 1. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/About-AJCU>.

<sup>9</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "The Mission of AJCU," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, para. 1. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/The-Mission-of-AJCU>.

<sup>10</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "2010-2011 Enroll-Faculty-Tuition," 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of Jesuit Colleges and Universities* (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, January 2010), 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, i.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> William G. Tierney, "Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Defining the Essentials," *The Journal of Higher Education* 59, no. 1 (January 1, 1988): 5, doi:10.2307/1981868.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Masland, "Organizational Culture in the Study of Higher Education," *The Review of Higher Education* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1985): 166.

<sup>18</sup> R. Eugene Rice and A.E. Austin, "High Faculty Morale: What Exemplary Colleges Do Right," *Change* 20, no. 2 (March 1, 1988): 52.

<sup>19</sup> Musbau Ajiferuke and J. Boddewyn, "'Culture' and Other Explanatory Variables in Comparative Management Studies," *The Academy of Management Journal* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 1970): 154. doi:10.2307/255102.

<sup>20</sup> Masland, "Organizational Culture," 158.

<sup>21</sup> Edgar H. Schein, "Organizational Culture," *American Psychologist* 45, no. 2 (1990): 111.

<sup>22</sup> V. Lynn Meek, "Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses," *Organization Studies* 9, no. 4 (October 1, 1988): 455. doi:10.1177/017084068800900401.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas C. Dandridge, Ian Mitroff, and William F. Joyce, "Organizational Symbolism: A Topic to Expand Organizational Analysis," *The Academy of Management Review* 5, no. 1 (January 1980): 77.

<sup>24</sup> Burton R. Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (June 1, 1972): 178. doi:10.2307/2393952.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>26</sup> Dandridge, Mitroff, and Joyce, "Organizational Symbolism," 80.

<sup>27</sup> David D. Dill, "The Management of Academic Culture: Notes on the Management of Meaning and Social Integration," *Higher Education* 11, no. 3 (May 1, 1982): 303–320.

<sup>28</sup> Dandridge, Mitroff, and Joyce, "Organizational Symbolism," 313.

<sup>29</sup> Burton R. Clark, "Belief and Loyalty in College Organization," *The Journal of Higher Education* 42, no. 6 (June 1, 1971): 511. doi:10.2307/1979081.

<sup>30</sup> Tierney, "Organizational Culture in Higher Education," 5.

<sup>31</sup> Dill, "The Management of Academic Culture," 314.

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- <sup>32</sup> Gregory N.P. Konz, S.J. and Francis X. Ryan, S.J., "Maintaining an Organizational Spirituality: No Easy Task," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 3 (1999): 200–210.
- <sup>33</sup> Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education."
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 180.
- <sup>35</sup> John W. O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 204.
- <sup>36</sup> Dill, "The Management of Academic Culture," 315.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 314.
- <sup>38</sup> Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 13.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>40</sup> Santa Clara University, *Santa Clara University Strategic Plan 2011* (Santa Clara, CA: Santa Clara University, 2011).
- <sup>41</sup> Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education," 181.
- <sup>42</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "2010-2011 Enroll-Faculty-Tuition."
- <sup>43</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "Fact Files: 2009-2010 Executive Summary," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, <http://www.ajcunet.edu/Fact-Files-2010-2011-Executive-Summary>.
- <sup>44</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "2010-2011 Enroll-Faculty-Tuition."
- <sup>45</sup> Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education."
- <sup>46</sup> Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 13.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 12.
- <sup>50</sup> Schein, "Organizational Culture," 111.
- <sup>51</sup> Ann Kieffer Bragg, *The Socialization Process in Higher Education* (ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 7; Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education, 1976), 3. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED132909>.
- <sup>52</sup> Tierney, "Organizational Socialization in Higher Education," 4.
- <sup>53</sup> Konz and Ryan, "Maintaining an Organizational Spirituality."
- <sup>54</sup> Dill, "The Management of Academic Culture," 318.
- <sup>55</sup> Joe Koczera S.J., "Survey: New England Catholic Population Plummeting," *The City and the World*, March 9, 2009, <http://jesuitjoe.blogspot.com/2009/03/survey-new-england-catholic-population.html>.
- <sup>56</sup> A. E. Austin, "The Socialization of Future Faculty in a Changing Context," in *The American Academic Profession*, ed. J.C. Hermanowicz (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 145-167; Bragg, *The Socialization Process in Higher Education* (ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 7.); Schein, "Organizational Culture"; Tierney, "Organizational Socialization in Higher Education"; J. Van Maanan, "Doing New Things in Old Ways: The Chains of Socialization," in *College and University Organization: Insights from the Behavioral Sciences*, ed. by J. Bess (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 211-247.
- <sup>57</sup> Van Maanan, "Doing New Things in Old Ways: The Chains of Socialization," 243.
- <sup>58</sup> Tierney, "Organizational Socialization in Higher Education," 3.
- <sup>59</sup> Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 5.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 10.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 19.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 11.
- <sup>63</sup> Konz and Ryan, "Maintaining an Organizational Spirituality," para. 26.
- <sup>64</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "AJCU Conferences," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, para. 1.. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/Conferences>.
- <sup>65</sup> Ignatian Colleagues Program, "Participants | Ignatian Colleagues Program," *Ignatian Colleagues Program*, 2012, para. 2. <http://ignatiancolleagues.org/program-information/participants>.
- <sup>66</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "The AJCU Seminar on Higher Education Leadership," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, para. 5. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/AJCU-Leadership-Seminar>.
- <sup>67</sup> Susan Jacobson, *AJCU Seminar for Leadership in Higher Education, 2011 Final Report* (Association for Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2011).
- <sup>68</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "The AJCU Seminar on Higher Education Leadership."

<sup>69</sup> Ignatian Colleagues Program, "Ignatian Colleagues Program," *Ignatian Colleagues Program*, 2012, para 1. <http://ignatiancolleagues.org/>.

<sup>70</sup> Ignatian Colleagues Program, *Ignatian Colleagues Program Report*, March 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., para. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "Mission and Identity Activity," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, para. 3. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/Mission-and-Identity-Activity>.

<sup>73</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "Mission and Identity Conference," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012, para. 1. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/Mission-and-Identity-Conference>.

<sup>74</sup> Konz and Ryan, "Maintaining an Organizational Spirituality," para. 25.

<sup>75</sup> Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, "Mission and Identity," *Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, 2012. <http://www.ajcunet.edu/Mission>.

<sup>76</sup> M. W. Peterson and M.G. Spencer, "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate," in *Assessing Academic Climates and Cultures (New Directions for Institutional Research 68)*, ed. by William G. Tierney (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1990) 15.

<sup>77</sup> Schein, "Organizational Culture," 110.

<sup>78</sup> Sonja A. Sackmann, "Uncovering Culture in Organizations," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 27, no. 3 (September 1, 1991): 297. doi:10.1177/0021886391273005.

<sup>79</sup> Schein, "Organizational Culture," 110.

<sup>80</sup> Bragg, *The Socialization Process in Higher Education* (ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 7.); Tierney, "Organizational Socialization in Higher Education"; Van Maanan, "Doing New Things in Old Ways: The Chains of Socialization."

<sup>81</sup> Tierney, "Organizational Socialization in Higher Education," 6.

<sup>82</sup> Masland, "Organizational Culture," 158.

<sup>83</sup> John C. Smart and Edward P. St. John, "Organizational Culture and Effectiveness in Higher Education: A Test of the 'Culture Type' and 'Strong Culture' Hypotheses," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 18, no. 3 (October 1, 1996): 223. doi:10.2307/1164261.

<sup>84</sup> Peterson and Spencer, "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate," 9.

<sup>85</sup> Dill, "The Management of Academic Culture," 304.

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