

Are We Who We Claim To Be? Perceptions of Mission Engagement among Students and Faculty at Religiously-Affiliated and Independent Institutions

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Authors' Note

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Abstract

While the importance of institutional mission is acknowledged within the higher education community, there is a lack of empirical evidence investigating how missions are implemented. Using survey data from students and faculty, this study investigates perceptions of mission engagement at religiously-affiliated and independent institutions. Implications for practice are discussed.

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Introduction

The term “mission” is used frequently in higher education rhetoric with various shades of meaning. It is invoked in conversations about institutional type (e.g., community colleges vs. bachelor’s-granting universities), used as a synonym to refer broadly to institutional values, and applied to describe written statements of purpose (Bastedo & Gumport, 2003; Morpew & Hartley, 2006; Woodrow, 2006). Many liberal arts and religiously-affiliated institutions highly revere their missions (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008; Lowery, 2012; Weiss, 2009;) and expect faculty and students to make daily decisions in light of these institutional values (Firmin & Gilson, 2010; Weiss, 2009). Yet, it is unclear how students and faculty from diverse backgrounds experience or perceive the espoused mission. This study investigates student and faculty perceptions of mission engagement, taking into consideration salient demographics and institutional characteristics in order to provide meaningful and actionable data for institutions. Specifically, we examined variation in students’ and faculty perception of the overall sense of mission engagement, respect for diversity on campus, and the intentional development of ethical values by the institution. Findings from this study shed light on areas of improvement for student affairs professionals and faculty developers.

Theoretical Framework

Within the current milieu of accountability regimes and outcomes-based measurement, mission statements have increased in prominence as guiding and defining documents. They are believed to be a necessity for accreditation, a guide for strategic planning, and a means of

fostering institutional integrity (Meacham & Gaff, 2006; Morphey & Hartley, 2006). Mission statements are closely linked with, if not congruent to, institutional values, purpose, and goals (Ferrari, McCarthy, & Milner, 2009; Morphey & Hartley, 2006; Woodrow, 2006). While most institutions agree with the importance of mission, liberal arts and religiously-affiliated institutions in particular highly revere their missions, as they are believed to convey deeply held beliefs about human flourishing (Lowery, 2012; Weiss, 2009) as well as embody a meaningful heritage that should be safeguarded (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008). These institutions typically have a commitment to “lived mission,” meaning that they adhere to a normative expectation that daily professional decisions be made in light of the mission (Firmin & Gilson, 2010; Weiss, 2009). Supporting the importance of “lived missions,” Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010) contended that institutions often have both an espoused mission and an enacted mission. As institutions pursue best practices, it is important to consider that schools Kuh et al. (2010) identified as exemplifying effective education practices have a smaller gap between their espoused and enacted missions. In other words, mission is “alive” or instantiated in the day-to-day interactions and decisions made on these campuses. With the current emphasis on student success, it is prudent to consider institutional practices, such as “lived missions,” which have been found to foster effective learning environments (Kuh et al., 2010; Sander, 2014).

With mission holding such a prominent place in higher education generally, and liberal arts and religiously-affiliated institutions particularly, it is important to consider what factors influence both student and faculty’s engagement with and understanding of their institution’s mission. A great deal of research demonstrates that individual characteristics as well as institutional characteristics affect experiences in higher education (Baker & Robnett, 2012;

Bank, 2011; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Kuh & Hu, 2002; Ribera, Rocconi, & McCormick, 2013; Strayhorn, 2013). While many individual factors are not within the capacity of universities to address directly, there are aspects of the campus climate that institutions can attend to. For example, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) found that support networks (such as academic support programs) increase Latino students' sense of belonging and confidence in their analytical skills. Hurtado and Ponjuan's study suggests that institutions seeking to increase the success of Latino students should consider how academic support programs might prove successful in their context. This study is just one example pointing to the significance in understanding the campus environment in order to pursue practices and policies that foster a hospitable environment in which all faculty and students can thrive. As previous research has demonstrated, a significant aspect of the environment is the institutional mission, as it tacitly (and at times explicitly) affects decision-making as well as the general campus ethos (Morphew & Hartley, 2006).

If various environmental conditions and individual characteristics are connected with a negative perception of mission engagement (which is consonant with "mission enactment" in our usage), it is important institutions identify these conditions and characteristics so that subsequent interrogation and strategizing can occur. Further, while all institutions could benefit from exploring how missions are or are not enacted on campus, this seems an especially salient concern for religiously-affiliated and liberal arts institutions. Religiously-affiliated institutions are more likely than their public counterparts to discuss mission in ethical and elevated terms; for example, in an article focusing on Christian higher education, Woodrow (2006) stated that "mission statements reach into people's hearts and souls and motivate them to collaborate

toward a cause that provides them with the opportunity to make a difference in the world” (p. 314). Mission is significant if not sacred at these institutions. Thus, institutions of this type should consider research on mission engagement a critical concern.

Boylan and Crockett (2014) investigated enacted missions by researching how students’ perceptions of mission differ between Catholic and independent colleges. Catholic colleges were identified by their membership in the Catholic Colleges and Universities Consortium, which is a subgroup of institutions participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) who identify as Catholic. Independent colleges were identified by their participation in the Mission Engagement Consortium for Independent Colleges, also a subgroup of NSSE participants who identify as independent. While there may be differences between institutions that identify as independent and those that identify as liberal arts (such as for-profit independent colleges), there is a commonly held understanding that a majority of institutions that identify with either term would be private rather than public and emphasize a liberal rather than a more narrow career-based education. Therefore, in our study the terms independent and liberal arts are used interchangeably, acknowledging that there are shades of difference that other authors might decide to emphasize. When comparing independent and Catholic institutions, Boylan and Crockett (2014) found that the campus environment of Catholic colleges has a positive influence on student perceptions of mission engagement. However, Boylan and Crockett did not control for student characteristics nor did they consider faculty’s perception of mission engagement. Building upon the work of Boylan and Crockett (2014), this study investigates student and faculty perceptions of mission, taking into consideration student and faculty demographics and institutional characteristics. Specifically,

this study examines variation in students' and faculty members' perceptions of mission engagement as defined by their overall sense of mission engagement, others' respect for diversity on campus, and the intentional development of ethical values.

Methods

This study investigates student and faculty perceptions of their institution's mission by asking the following research questions:

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

Data

The student data for this study come from the 2014 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE is used by four-year colleges and universities to assess first-year and senior students' engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities associated with desirable learning and developmental outcomes (Kuh, 2009). Students were asked about how often they engage in practices related to reflective and integrative learning, higher-order learning, quantitative reasoning, learning strategies, collaborative learning, discussions with diverse others, effective teaching practices, and student-faculty interactions as well as their perceptions of the campus environment and quality of interactions with other students, faculty, administrators, and academic advisors. In 2014, a total of 473,633 students from 713 institutions responded to the survey. The average institutional response rate for NSSE 2014 was 32%.

The faculty data for this study come from the 2013 and 2014 administrations of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Two years of data were used to increase the number of participating institutions in the study. In the situation where an institution participated in both years of administration, the most recent year of participation was used. FSSE was designed to complement the NSSE by asking about faculty perceptions of student engagement, the importance faculty place on various areas of learning and development, the nature and frequency of faculty-student interactions, and how faculty organize their time. In 2013, 18,133 faculty members responded from 146 four-year colleges and universities. In 2014, 18,860 faculty members responded from 143 four-year colleges and universities. The average institutional response rate for 2013 and 2014 was 49% and 48%, respectively.

Institutions that participate in NSSE and FSSE have the ability to participate in optional consortia. The consortia are groups of at least six colleges or universities that participate during the same NSSE/FSSE administration and append additional questions to the core instrument to explore a topic of mutual interest. The Catholic Colleges and Universities Consortium (CCU) has been in existence since 2002 and has used the same consortium items since 2004. These items were designed to focus on assessing mission effectiveness to assist participating institutions by receiving useful outcomes for accreditation purposes and to act as a mechanism to ensure institutional goals align with their mission (Boylan & Crockett, 2014). The Mission Engagement Consortium for Independent Colleges (MECIC) has been available to independent colleges since 2008. MECIC has collaborated with the CCU Consortium using the same set of additional questions appended to the end of participating institutions' survey administrations. See Table 1 to view a selection of these additional items.

Sample

The student sample for this study included responses from 8,316 seniors who attended either one of the 47 institutions in the CCU consortium or 19 colleges in the MECIC. Overall, about a quarter of students in the sample were enrolled at an independent college and the remaining majority (76%) attended a Catholic college or university. The majority of students held a Christian-based religious belief as 41% self-identified as Roman Catholic and 35% selected a Protestant religion (i.e., Methodist, Lutheran). A smaller portion (7%) selected another faith-based religion (i.e. Islamic, Buddhist, Jewish) and about 17% of seniors selected “None” as a response option. The sample was diverse in terms of racial and ethnic backgrounds as 70% were White, 8% were African American, 6% were Latino or Hispanic, 5% were Asian, and 5% were multiracial. Almost half of the sample was first-generation students and 68% were 23 years old or younger. Men are underrepresented in the sample (30%) whereas women represent 69%. The majority of students (84%) were enrolled full-time and 27% lived on campus. Two out of five seniors reported they started college at another institution. Students were enrolled at institutions with a variety of characteristics. A little over half (58%) were at competitively selective institutions and approximately a quarter (26%) were at ‘very’ or ‘highly’ competitive institutions. Around one in three students (29%) were from medium-sized institutions (2,500-4,999 total undergraduate enrollment), 45% from small-sized institutions (1,000-2,499), and 10% from very small institutions (fewer than 1,000). The remaining 13% of students were from large institutions (5,000-9,999) and 3% from very large institutions (10,000 or more). Over half of students were enrolled at baccalaureate arts and science colleges (55%) and 18% were at master’s-level institutions. For additional details, see Table 2.

The faculty sample for this study consists of 1,755 faculty members from 19 institutions participating in the CCU or MECIC consortia. Faculty were heavily concentrated in the CCU consortium, representing 91% of respondents. Faculty were roughly evenly split between administration years with 55% of responses from the 2014 administration. Faculty were from a variety of disciplinary areas with the largest portions in Arts and Humanities (27%), Education (13%), and Social Science (12%) fields. Faculty were less represented in fields of Engineering (1%); Communications, Media, and Public Relations (3%); and Social Service Professions (4%). Faculty were roughly split evenly by academic rank with 20% full professors, 26% associate professors, 30% assistant professors, and 24% part- or full-time lecturers/instructors. Half of the sample (50%) identified as women, and 76% identified as White. Nearly all of the faculty (98%) identified as U.S. citizens. About a third (31%) were tenured and 63% had an earned doctorate. Around two in five (42%) of faculty identified their religion as Roman Catholic, 32% as another Christian religion, 10% as another religion, and 16% as having no religion. The average age of the faculty was 51, and the average number of years of teaching experience was 16. Around two in five faculty (42%) were from medium-sized institutions (2,500-4,999 total undergraduate enrollment), 31% from small-sized institutions (1,000-2,499), and 4% from very small institutions (fewer than 1,000). The remaining 16% of faculty were from large institutions (5,000-9,999) and 8% from very large institutions (10,000 or more). See Table 3 for additional details.

Measures

The focus of this study is data from an additional item set asked by the CCU and the MECIC. These items asked students and faculty about their agreement with a series of

statements related to their institution's mission. These items were grouped into three scales – Sense of Mission, Respect for Diversity, and Values Development (see Table 1 for component items and Cronbach's alphas). Guided by Boylan's previous work (2011; Boylan & Crockett, 2014), scales were created with a principal component factor analysis with an oblimin rotation. Scales were scored on five points where 5 was "Strongly agree" and 1 was "Strongly disagree." For students, the average Sense of Mission score was 4.07 (.66 SD), Respect for Diversity was 4.11 (.71 SD), and Values Development was 4.04 (.80 SD). For faculty, the average Sense of Mission score was 4.32 (.53 SD), Respect for Diversity was 4.13 (.72 SD), and Values Development was 3.91 (.85 SD).

This item set additionally asked students and faculty to indicate their current religious preference. In order to distill participating respondents into manageable and meaningful groups, we created four categories: (1) "Roman Catholic;" (2) "Other Christian," including Baptist, Eastern Orthodox, Episcopalian, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Seventh Day Adventist, United Church of Christ, and Other Christian; (3) "Other Religions," including Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish (Orthodox), Jewish (Conservative), Jewish (Reform), Jewish (Unaffiliated), Unitarian/Universalist, & Other Religion; and (4) "None." Categories were selected based on theological differences as well as the number of respondents within groups.

The student characteristics explored in this study included a set of variables that described the college experience as well as demographics such as race or ethnicity, gender identity, first-generation status, age, and religious background. The faculty demographics examined in this study include disciplinary appointment, academic rank, gender identity,

racial/ethnic identification, tenure status, highest degree earned, citizenship, religion, years of teaching experience, and age.

Analyses

A series of OLS regression equations were used to determine predictors for both student and faculty agreement with aspects of mission engagement. The three mission engagement scales--Sense of Mission, Respect for Diversity, and Values Development--served as the dependent variables in regression models. The dependent variables were standardized before entry in model. By standardizing the dependent variables, the reported unstandardized regression coefficient in the models can be interpreted as an effect size (Nelson Laird & Garver, 2010).

The independent variables included in the senior student models were enrollment status, the extent of online learning, transfer status, major field as defined by STEM or non-STEM, being a member of a social fraternity or sorority, living on or off campus, and self-reported college grades. A host of demographic variables were also included in the model to examine differences in perceptions of mission engagement by racial/ethnic identity, gender identity, first-generation status, age, and religious background. Total undergraduate enrollment, selectivity, Carnegie classification, and consortium type were included in the models as controls for institutional context. (For more details see Table 2.)

The independent variable faculty demographics included in models were disciplinary area, academic rank, gender identity, racial/ethnic identification, tenured or not, earned doctorate or not, U.S. citizen or not, religion, years of teaching experience, and age. Institution size was included as an institutional characteristic. This was the only variable that described the

institutional context due to the lower number of institutions with faculty data. All continuous variables were standardized before entry in models. (For more details see Table 3.)

Results

Overall, individual and institutional characteristics explained about 9% of the variance in students' perception of Sense of Mission, 5% of the variance in students' perception of Respect for Diversity, and 4% of the variance in students' perception of Values Development (Table 4). The corresponding faculty models (Table 5) explained a similar portion of the variance in faculty perceptions of Sense of Mission (6%), Respect for Diversity (13%), and Values Development (7%).

Sense of Mission

Student model. Table 5 suggests that students at Catholic institutions held a generally a more positive perception of their institution's Sense of Mission ($B=.465$; $p<.001$) compared to students attending an independent institution, after controlling for individual characteristics, students' college experiences, and other institutional characteristics. Students attending Master's level institutions also held a more positive perception of Sense of Mission compared to students at other Carnegie types ($B=-.240$; $p<.01$).

As for students' college experiences, model results reveal in the presence of all other independent variables, STEM majors held a slightly lower perception of Sense of Mission than non-STEM majors ($B=-.112$; $p<.001$). Seniors who earned mostly As in college were more likely to hold a more favorable perception of Sense of Mission compared to those earning mostly B grades ($B=-.121$; $p<.001$) and C grades or lower ($B=-.439$; $p<.001$). As for individual characteristics, results from the model found being a first-generation student ($B=.058$; $p<.05$)

had a small positive effect on students' Sense of Mission. Statistically significant differences were also found by gender identity. Compared to men, woman ($B=.118$; $p<.001$) held a slightly more favorable perception of the institution's Sense of Mission while students who identified with a gender identity other than man or woman ($B=-.768$; $p<.01$) as well as students who selected "prefer not to respond" ($B=-.595$; $p<.001$) held a significantly lower perception of Sense of Mission. Model results show race and ethnicity is also a significant predictor of students' Sense of Mission. Compared to white students, Asian ($B=.147$; $p<.01$), African American ($B=.135$; $p<.01$), and Latino or Hispanic ($B=.220$; $p>.001$) students held a more positive perception of their institution's Sense of Mission. However, perception of Sense of Mission was similar among white students and students from multiracial background after controlling for other student demographics, a host of college experiences, and institutional characteristics. Religion was among one of the strongest predictor of students' Sense of Mission. Compared to Roman Catholic students, students who did not identify with a religion ($B=-.351$; $p<.001$) reported a significantly lower perception of Sense of Mission as well as students from religions other than Christianity ($B=-.214$; $p<.001$) and students from other Christian-based faiths ($B=-.110$; $p<.001$).

Faculty model. Table 5 displays regression results for the faculty model. Controlling for faculty demographics, academic characteristics, and institutional type, the differences in agreement among faculty were found by gender, religion, teaching experience, age, and institution size. Specifically, women agreed more than men ($B=.120$, $p=.032$), faculty with no religion agreed less than Roman Catholic faculty ($B=-.263$, $p=.001$), faculty with more years of teaching experience agreed less than faculty with fewer years of teaching experience ($B=-.086$,

$p=.027$), older faculty agreed more than younger faculty ($B=.076$, $p=.037$), and faculty at larger institutions agreed less than faculty at smaller schools ($B=-.136$, $p<.001$).

Respect for Diversity

Student model. Results from the senior student model (see Table 4) show students' perceptions of others' Respect for Diversity on campus varied by college characteristics, demographic background, and institutional context. For example, students enrolled at Catholic institutions held a slightly more favorable perception of the institution's overall Respect for Diversity ($B=.084$; $p<.01$) compared to senior students at independent institutions when controlling for other institutional characteristics, student demographics, and college experiences. Further, selectivity ($B=-.039$; $p<.01$) had a small negative effect on students' perception of Respect for Diversity. Students at baccalaureate arts and science colleges ($B=-.071$; $p<.05$) held slightly lower perception of the institution's Respect for Diversity compared to students enrolled at Master's level institutions.

As for students' academic experiences, the results revealed their perceptions of faculty, staff, and students respecting diverse others was positively related to college grades. Students who earned mostly As in college held a more positive view of Respect for Diversity than those who earned mostly Bs ($B=-.100$; $p<.001$) or averaged Cs or lower grades ($B=-.355$; $p<.001$). Students who lived on campus ($B=-.008$; $p<.01$) had a slightly lower perception while transfer students ($B=.008$; $p<.01$) reported a slightly more favorable perception of students, faculty, and staff's Respect for Diversity. First-generation students reported a slightly more positive view of the campus climate than those whose parents earned a college degree ($B=.101$; $p<.001$). Gender identity and age also significantly influenced students' perception of Respect for

Diversity. While men and women held similar views of the campus climate, students who identified with another gender identity ($B=-1.16$; $p<.001$) held significantly lower perception. Asian, Black, and multiracial students reported similar perception of the campus environment as White students; however, Latino students, on average, reported a significantly higher level of Respect for Diversity than Whites ($B=.208$; $p<.001$). Senior students identifying as Roman Catholic reported a significantly higher perception of the institution's Respect for Diversity than students from other Christian-based religions ($B=-.099$; $p<.05$), other non-Christian-based religions ($B=-.188$; $p<.001$), and students with no religious affiliation ($B=-.338$; $p<.001$).

Faculty model. Table 5 reveals differences were found among faculty by disciplinary area, religion, teaching experience, age, and institution size. Faculty in Health Professions ($B=.241$, $p=.016$) and Social Service Professions ($B=.359$, $p=.012$) agreed more than faculty in Arts and Humanities; faculty with other Christian religions ($B=-.457$, $p < .001$), other religions ($B=-.192$, $p=.034$), and no religion ($B=-.369$, $p<.001$) agreed less than Roman Catholic faculty; faculty with more teaching experience agreed less than faculty with less teaching experience ($B=-.133$, $p<.001$); older faculty agreed more than younger faculty ($B=.181$, $p<.001$); and faculty at larger institutions agreed less than faculty at smaller schools ($B=-.168$, $p<.001$).

Values Development

Student model. Regression results from the senior student model show major; self-reported college grades; gender identity; race and ethnicity; religious background; attending a Catholic institution; selectivity; and Carnegie type were significant predictors of senior students' perception of Sense of Mission. Specifically, controlling for college experiences, student demographics, and other institutional characteristics, Table 5 suggests students at Catholic

institutions ($B=.215$; $p<.001$) held a more favorable perception of Values Development compared to students attending an independent institution. Selectivity ($B=-.030$; $p<.05$) had a slight negative effect on students' perception of Values Development. Students attending Master's level institutions held a more positive perception of Values Development compared to students at other Carnegie types ($B=-.224$; $p<.01$).

Table 5 also shows in the presence of all other independent variables, STEM majors held a slightly lower perception of Values Development than non-STEM majors ($B=-.160$; $p<.001$). Seniors who earned mostly As in college were more likely to hold a more favorable perception of Values Development compared to those earning mostly B grades ($B=-.109$; $p<.001$) and C grades or lower ($B=-.446$; $p<.001$). Controlling for other student demographics, college experiences, and institutional characteristics, students who selected "prefer not to respond" ($B=-.595$; $p<.001$) held a significantly lower perception of Values Development compared to students who identify as a man. Model results also show statistically significant differences by students' racial and ethnic background. Compared to white students, African American ($B=.122$; $p<.01$), and Latino or Hispanic ($B=.263$; $p>.001$) students held a more positive perception of their institution's Values Development. No differences were found among Asian and multiracial students compared to white students when controlling for other student demographics, college experiences, and institutional characteristics. Similar to the Sense of Mission and Respect for Diversity student models, regression results revealed Roman Catholic students reported more favorable sense of Value Development compared to students who did not identify with a religion ($B=-.292$; $p<.001$), identified with a religion other than of Christianity ($B=-.126$; $p<.001$), and another Christian-based faith ($B=-.109$; $p<.001$).

Faculty model. Table 5 indicates differences were found among faculty by discipline, race/ethnicity, religion, age, and institution size. Faculty in Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Science fields agreed more than faculty in Arts & Humanities ($B=-.415, p<.001$); Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander faculty ($B=.304, p=.026$) and Hispanic or Latino faculty ($B=.371, p=.013$) agreed more than White faculty; faculty with other Christian religions ($B=-.200, p=.001$), other religions ($B=-.369, p<.001$), and no religion ($B=-.531, p<.001$) agreed less than Roman Catholic faculty; older faculty agreed more than younger faculty ($B=.076, p=.036$); and faculty from larger institutions agreed less than faculty at smaller schools ($B=-.080, p=.004$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Milner and Ferrari (2010) argue “the most successful and focused campuses are defined by their mission and driven daily by a sense of mission” (p. 259). This study attempts to understand the impact of mission on college campuses, particularly how students and faculty perceive the efficacy of an institution’s mission. Using three scales, (1) Sense of Mission, (2) Respect for Diversity, and (3) Values Development, this study reveals how various individual and institutional characteristics, including religion, race, and institutional size, shape perception of mission engagement. With the critical relevance of mission at religiously-affiliated and independent institutions, these results can guide institutions in strategic areas of improvement for mission engagement.

From this analysis, senior students’ results provide some interesting challenges and affirmations on religiously-affiliated and independent institution campuses. Senior students who preferred not to respond with their sex/gender showed significantly higher, negative

results on all three scales, and students who identified as “another gender identity” also had significantly more negative perceptions on two scales: Sense of Mission and Respect for Diversity. Additionally, senior students who identified as Christian (non-Catholic), other religion, and no religion reported more negative perceptions on all three scales. These results suggest two particular demographic groups on which to focus institutional efforts. Institutions should consult with groups who report more negative perceptions of mission engagement to better understand the causes and experiences that have created these perceptions. With this information, campus leaders can develop informed programming and outreach to increase effectiveness in engaging these students in ways that will develop a more positive sense of climate in regards to the institution’s mission.

Additionally, statistically significant positive results were reported in the experiences of first-generation students, when compared to their counterparts, in regards to Sense of Mission and Respect for Diversity. Non-white students reported statistically significant positive results across the scales compared to White students. Latino or Hispanic students reported significantly more positive perceptions than their White peers on all three scales. Black, African American students reported significantly positive responses to the Sense of Mission and the Values Development scales and Asian, Asian American students had significantly positive results on the Sense of Mission scale as compared to their White classmates. These results show that students from diverse backgrounds and races are reporting positive experiences with institutional mission, experiences of respect for diversity, and in their values development on the represented campuses. If institutions gain a better understanding of these students’

experiences, they can potentially harness these experiences to improve (or sustain) the engagement of all students on their campuses.

For faculty, the most notable and consistent predictors of agreement with mission were individual religious identification and institution size. Faculty who identified as “no religion” had significantly more negative perceptions on all three scales. Institutions should consider why these faculty’s perceptions differ from their religious counterparts—what about their experiences as a group negatively impacts their perception of mission engagement on campus? Since issues of diversity are often a part of mission statements, campuses have the opportunity to better understand how subgroups of faculty understand their campus climate in regards to mission engagement. This study also found that the size of the institution had an effect on all three scales, with the larger institutions having significantly negative effects on all three scales. This provides larger religiously-affiliated and independent mission-centered colleges and universities an opportunity to pursue a focused effort in better understanding how their size may negatively influence faculty’s perception of their institution’s sense of mission, respect for diversity, and values development. Again, gaining a deeper understanding may lead to actionable items such as developing a new program for faculty, e.g., adding a discussion of mission to new faculty orientation.

Overall, these results offer religiously-affiliated and independent-mission-centered colleges and universities opportunities for growth as well as results to celebrate. Measuring the efficacy of mission is a difficult thing to do, but this study offers an entry point into understanding how students and faculty perceive their campuses sense of mission, respect for diversity, and values development.

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Table 1. Mission Engagement Scales and Component Items

Scale	Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements: <i>Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree/disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree</i>	NSSE α	FSSE α
Sense of Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mission of this institution is widely understood by students. Ethical and spiritual development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution. This institution offers opportunities for volunteering and community service. Social and personal development of students is an important part of the mission at this institution. This institution offers opportunities for developing leadership skills. Preparation for a career is an important part of the mission of this institution. The heritage of the founders/founding religious community of this institution is evident here. At this institution, there are opportunities for students to strengthen their religious commitment. The mission of this institution is reflected in its course offerings. 	.90	.87
Respect for Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty and staff here are respectful of people of different religions. The students here are respectful of people of different religions. Students at this institution feel free to express their individual spirituality. The faculty and staff here are respectful of people of different races and cultures. The students here are respectful of people of different races and cultures. People of different sexual orientations are accepted socially here. The environment here encourages students to develop an appreciation of diversity. 	.91	.90
Values Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of my experience here, I am more aware of social justice (fairness and equality) issues in the world. The faculty at this institution discuss the ethical implications of what is being studied. As a result of my experience here, I am more aware of my own personal values. 	.85	.82

Table 2. Select Senior Students Characteristics (N=8,316)		Percentage (%)
Enrolled full-time		84
Online learner		6
STEM major		14
Self-reported college grades	Mostly As	58
	Mostly Bs	39
	Mostly Cs or below	3
Transfer student		40
Lived on campus		27
Member of social fraternity/sorority		8
First-generation		49
Traditionally-aged (23 or younger)		68
Gender identity	Man	29
	Woman	69
	Another gender identity	.2
	Prefer not to respond	1
Race and ethnicity	White	70
	Asian, Asian American	5
	Black, African American	8
	Latino or Hispanic	6
	Biracial or Multiracial	5
	Unknown /Other race or ethnicity	2
Religion	Roman Catholic	41
	Christian (i.e., Lutheran, Methodist)	35
	Other Religion (i.e., Buddhist, Jewish)	7
	No Religion	17
Institution Religious-Affiliation	Independent Christian College	24
	Catholic Institution	76
Barron's Selectivity	Very or Highly Competitive	26
	Competitive	58
	Less, Noncompetitive	13
	Not available, special	3
Institution Undergraduate Enrollment	Fewer than 1,000 students enrolled	10
	1,000 - 1,749	24
	1,750 – 2,499	21
	2,500 – 4,999	29
	5,000 – 9,999	13
	10,000 or more students enrolled	3
Carnegie Classification	Research/Doctoral universities	3
	Master's colleges and universities	18
	Baccalaureate A&S	55
	Other Carnegie types	25

Table 3. Select Faculty Characteristics		Percent (%)
Discipline	Arts & Humanities	27
	Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	6
	Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Science	10
	Social Sciences	12
	Business	10
	Communications, Media, & Public Relations	3
	Education	13
	Engineering	1
	Health Professions	9
	Social Service Professions	4
Other disciplines	6	
Academic Rank	Full Professor	20
	Associate Professor	26
	Assistant Professor	30
	Full-time Lecturer/Instructor	7
	Part-time Lecturer/Instructor	17
Gender Identity	Man	46
	Woman	50
	Another gender identity	<1
	I prefer not to respond	4
Racial/Ethnic Identification	Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander	4
	Black or African American	4
	Hispanic or Latino	3
	White	76
	American Indian, Alaska Native, Other, Multiracial	4
	I prefer not to respond	9
Tenure Status	No tenure system at this institution	16
	Not on tenure track, but this institution has a tenure system	36
	On tenure track but not tenured	18
	Tenured	31
Highest Degree Earned	Doctoral degree	63
	Professional degree	3
	Master's degree	31
	Bachelor's, Associate's, other degree	3
US Citizen		98
Religion	Roman Catholic	42
	Other Christian	32
	Other religions	10
	None	16
Years of Teaching Experience	4 or less	19
	5-9	19
	10-19	29
	20-29	19
	30 or more	15
Age	34 or younger	12
	35-44	21
	45-54	24
	55-64	29
	65 or older	15

Table 3. (continued) Select Institution Characteristics for Faculty		Percentage (%)
Institution Undergraduate Enrollment	Fewer than 1,000	4
	1,000-1,749	31
	1,750-2,499	42
	2,500-4,999	16
	5,000 or more	8

Table 4. OLS Regression Statistics for Senior Models

	Sense of Mission ¹			Respect for Diversity ¹			Values Development ¹		
	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig.	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig.	Unstd Coeff	SE	Sig.
Constant	-.263	.067		.180	.069		.094	.067	
<i>College experience</i>									
Full-time enrollment status	-.032	.036		-.033	.036		-.010	.036	
Online learner	-.020	.051		-.051	.052		.047	.050	
STEM major	-.112	.032	***	-.008	.032		-.160	.032	***
Mostly Bs ²	-.121	.023	***	-.100	.023	***	-.109	.023	***
Mostly Cs or below ²	-.439	.068	***	-.355	.069	***	-.446	.067	***
Transfer student	.017	.030		.088	.030	**	-.012	.029	
Lived on campus	.013	.028		-.088	.028	**	-.017	.028	
Member of social fraternity/sorority	-.055	.041		.052	.042		.049	.041	
<i>Student Demographics</i>									
First-generation	.058	.023	*	.101	.024	***	.038	.023	
Traditionally-aged (23 or younger)	-.030	.035		-.079	.035	*	.004	.035	
Woman ³	.118	.024	***	-.020	.025		.018	.024	
Another gender identity ³	-.768	.265	**	-1.16	.270	***	-.341	.264	
Prefer not to respond ³	-.595	.107	***	-.601	.109	***	-.551	.106	***
Asian, Asian American ⁴	.147	.056	**	.073	.057		.089	.056	
Black, African American ⁴	.135	.044	**	-.001	.045		.122	.044	**
Latino or Hispanic ⁴	.220	.046	***	.208	.047	***	.263	.046	***
Biracial or Multiracial ⁴	.016	.050		-.038	.051		.053	.049	
Unknown /Other race or ethnicity ⁴	.126	.078		.128	.080		.188	.078	*
Christian ⁵	-.110	.027	***	-.099	.027	***	-.109	.027	***
Other Religion ⁵	-.214	.047	***	-.188	.048	***	-.126	.046	**
No Religion ⁵	-.351	.032	***	-.338	.033	***	-.292	.032	***
<i>Institutional characteristics</i>									
Catholic institution	.465	.028	***	.084	.028	**	.215	.027	***
Selectivity	-.020	.012		-.039	.012	**	-.030	.012	*
Enrollment size (in thousands)	.008	.008		.010	.008		.000	.008	
Research/DRU ⁶	-.037	.046		-.057	.047		-.010	.046	
Baccalaureate A&S ⁶	.021	.029		-.071	.030	*	.045	.029	
Other Carnegie Type ⁶	-.240	.075	**	.076	.076		-.224	.074	**
Adjusted R-squared			.088			.049			.044

¹ The dependent variable was standardized prior to entering the model.

² Reference group: College grades-mostly A's

³ Reference group: Man

⁴ Reference group: White

⁵ Reference group: Catholic

⁶ Reference group: Master's level

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 5. OLS Regression Statistics for Faculty Models

	Sense of Mission			Respect for Diversity			Values Development		
	Unst. B	SE	Sig.	Unst. B	SE	Sig.	Unst. B	SE	Sig.
(Constant)	-.190	.257		.189	.245		.109	.251	
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	-.069	.114		-.131	.109		-.190	.113	
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Science	-.164	.098		.047	.094		-.415	.097	***
Social Sciences	-.071	.093		.052	.088		-.118	.090	
Business	.057	.104		.141	.099		-.028	.103	
Communications, Media, & Public Relations	-.020	.163		-.102	.155		.190	.161	
Education	.179	.094		.140	.089		.015	.092	
Engineering	.191	.306		-.052	.291		-.086	.286	
Health Professions	-.027	.104		.241	.099	*	-.046	.102	
Social Service Professions	.226	.150		.359	.142	*	.231	.146	
All Other disciplines	-.348	.133	**	-.302	.127	*	-.263	.130	*
Associate Professors	-.009	.083		-.114	.079		.112	.082	
Assistant Professors	-.026	.098		-.077	.093		.075	.095	
Full-time Lecturers/Instructors	.103	.133		.017	.127		.161	.131	
Part-time Lecturers/Instructors	-.200	.114		.064	.108		-.042	.112	
Woman	.120	.056	*	-.049	.053		.043	.055	
Prefer not to respond to gender identity	-.440	.237		.131	.226		-.200	.231	
Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	.159	.138		.234	.133		.304	.137	*
Black or African America	-.136	.157		.018	.152		.059	.151	
Hispanic or Latino	.083	.152		.072	.145		.371	.150	*
American Indian or Alaska Native, Other, and Multiracial	.037	.138		.084	.131		.010	.135	
I prefer not to respond to racial/ethnic identification	-.091	.107		-.156	.102		-.078	.106	
Tenured	-.043	.084		-.046	.080		.019	.082	
Earned doctorate	-.044	.070		-.021	.067		-.036	.069	
U.S. citizen	.276	.228		.074	.217		.082	.222	
Christian	.023	.063		-.457	.060	***	-.200	.062	**
Other religion	-.077	.095		-.192	.090	*	-.369	.093	***
No Religion	-.263	.080	**	-.369	.077	***	-.531	.079	***
Number of years teaching at ANY college or university	-.086	.039	*	-.133	.037	***	-.053	.038	
Age	.076	.037	*	.181	.035	***	.076	.036	*
Institution enrollment size	-.136	.028	***	-.168	.027	***	-.080	.027	**
Adjusted R-squared	.060			.129			.072		

Key: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note: Reference groups are Arts & Humanities, Professor, Man, White, Catholic. All continuous variables were standardized before entry into models.