

**2024 CTE Faculty Fellow**  
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Contemplatives in action, *cura personalis*, discernment, *magis*, formation, *eloquentia perfecta*...these are some of the buzzwords of Jesuit education. For faculty not steeped in the Jesuit, Marymount, and Catholic traditions of higher education, the buzzwords can often be alienating, a foreign language connected to a faith tradition and Church to which they might not belong. But how different are those ideas from the values that faculty identify as informing their teaching? At a recent CTE discussion, participating faculty listed off the following values as important to them: curiosity, empathy, compassion, empowerment, solidarity, reflectiveness, difference, experimentation, risk-taking, the Black radical tradition, vulnerability, authenticity, humility, community, active participation, wonder, transformative voice, and play. These commitments are shaped by various pedagogical and disciplinary frameworks, which can sometimes seem to have little in common with those buzzwords of Jesuit education.

We often use the [Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm](#) as entry point for faculty, a way to help faculty see themselves and their teaching in terms of Loyola Marymount University's mission. Ignatian pedagogy rests on five intertwined (non-linear) pillars:

Context (who) – that all learning is situated in a specific context;  
Experience (what) – that all learning is rooted in previous experience and the result of new learning experiences;  
Reflection (why/how) – that all learning is dependent on, and deepened by, reflection about those experiences;  
Action (what next) – that all learning is made meaningful when new knowledge is put into some kind of action; and  
Evaluation (how well) – that all learning is reinforced by explicit evaluation (and ultimately, self-evaluation) of those actions and the degree to which learning has occurred.

Surely, all faculty – regardless of background or discipline – can embrace such a student-centered approach to teaching, one that seeks to translate knowledge into action? But Ignatian pedagogy presented as such, with the intent of inviting in and including all faculty, can often seem neutral – and Jesuit and Catholic education is not a values-neutral undertaking.

Rather, as outlined in the AJCU's [Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education \(2021\)](#), Jesuit and Catholic education has a “commitment to a liberal arts and Christian humanistic education” (characteristic 2, p. 11), which “actively responds to the most morally urgent issues of our times,” including commitments to social justice, anti-racism, environmental justice, the inherent dignity of all people, and service to the global community (characteristic 3, pp. 15-17). These aims and guiding principles bring Ignatian pedagogy, understood within the specific mission of Jesuit education, into alignment with other pedagogical frameworks, including critical pedagogy, antiracist pedagogy, decolonial pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, access pedagogy, and trauma-informed pedagogy.

What does that mean for us as individual instructors? Perhaps our Jesuit, Marymount, and Catholic mission can reinforce and help us better enact the values that we want to inform our teaching. What does it mean for us as an institution, as a collective faculty? Perhaps our Jesuit, Marymount, and Catholic mission enables us to push back against the broader cultural trends that are shaping higher education today – the emphasis on pre-professional training, the idea of education as mere credential, the turn to AI – and to focus instead on fostering students’ curiosity and empathy, on enabling them to embrace complexity, on challenging them to think of education as a means to create meaning in their own lives and as emancipatory, and on empowering them to challenge and dismantle hierarchies of power and to strive to create a more just world.