Maryland and Northeast Provinces Protocol for
A Mission Priority Examen:
A Mechanism for Self-Study, Peer Review, and Assessment

PURPOSE
The purpose of the self-study and peer review process is to help the Boards of Trustees and the Society of Jesus understand the extent to which the College or University is fulfilling its mission as a Catholic and Jesuit institution, and to suggest ways in which it might better pursue its mission. The following “Protocol” is not intended as something written in stone. It attempts to anticipate many of the questions that will arise in the course of a team visit, but it can be readily adapted to meet the needs and desires of a particular institution or visiting team.

PREPARATORY WORK
A major part of what will be involved in the visitation is the self-study which each Institution will produce. The self-study will focus on three items: the document published by the AJCU and the Jesuit Conference, Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument; the questions formulated by the Jesuit Conference Coordinating Committee; and the institution’s own “Statement of Shared Purposes” with the Province and Jesuit Community. (Reflection questions based on Some Characteristics… are also offered below.)

At least six months prior to the visit of the team, the institution’s President, in consultation with the Mission and Identity Officer, will establish a representative committee to draft the Self Study. (Ideally, this will use mission-related self-study material from other accreditation processes.) This committee may choose to establish task forces to produce specific parts of the self-study. The material to be studied will include the Seven Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, the questions formulated by the Jesuit Conference Coordinating Committee, and the “Commitments” or “Intentions” expressed by the Board of Trustees in its Statement of Shared Purposes. It should also comment on the extent to which it perceives the Jesuit Community and the Province to be fulfilling their commitments.

The self-study will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the institution’s mission-effectiveness, evaluate its current mission priorities, and determine appropriate goals for improvement. The self-study process will seek input from a variety of stakeholders, including the local Bishop.

SOME DETAILS
The visiting team will be composed of approximately four people from colleges and universities other than the one being visited. The members of the team will be decided upon by the President of the institution under review and the Provincial Assistant for Higher Education. Throughout the
process, the Provincial Assistant will work with the team as a resource and guide and will accompany the team on its visit.

The visits will take place once every five years. If possible, the institution may want to coordinate its visit with the schedule for its Middle States or NEASC Accreditation or Review.

The President will appoint a “Coordinator” who will accompany the visiting team during their visit and be available to attend to any needs or requests they may have. This person will also supervise the preparation of all details on campus prior to the visit and living arrangements for the team. The Coordinator will work closely with the Chair of the Visiting Team.

There will be a work room with appropriate technical support provided for the Visiting Team where they can meet among themselves and work on the preparation of their report.

All expenses incurred for the visit, including travel, room, and meals, will be paid by the college or university.

**TASKS FOR THE VISITING TEAM**

Each member of the visiting team should receive from the President or Mission and Identity Officer a copy of the self-study at least four weeks prior to the visit. The Chair of the Visiting Team will schedule a conference call or meeting to discuss their initial reaction to the self-study, and any issues of significance.

The visit will normally take two-to-three days (i.e., around 72 hours). The Chair of the Visiting Team will create an agenda for the visit, based on the following suggestions: The Team will arrive by mid-afternoon of the first day. A tour of the institution, to take place that afternoon or the next morning, will be arranged for them by the President. There will be brief meetings scheduled for the Team to meet the President, the Chair of the Board, the Mission and Identity Officer, and the Jesuit Rector or Superior. In the late afternoon, there will be a meeting of the visiting team with members of the team that produced the Self Study. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the Visiting Team to ask questions about the report and members of the self-study team to provide clarifications or additional information. After the Visiting Team has returned to its living quarters (either on campus or at a hotel), it will have a social and dinner by themselves. During or after dinner they will discuss final details about how they intend to proceed on the next day.

Over the next two full days, there will be a schedule of meetings with representative stakeholders of the institution which will give the Visiting Team the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the self-study. These will include:

- The President, who will meet alone with the Chair of the Visiting Team at the beginning of the day
- Representative members of the Faculty, as selected by the Faculty Senate or similar academic body
- Representative students, as selected by the Student Government or similar body
- Members of the Jesuit Community, as selected by the Rector or Superior
- Members of the Administration, as selected by the President
- Members of the Campus Ministry Team
- Members of the Board of Trustees, as selected by the Chair of the Board
• Others, as determined by the members of the Visiting Team.

Each day will conclude with a working dinner for the members of the Visiting Team by themselves. On the final evening, they will discuss how they will proceed with the writing of their Peer Review Report. For whatever time is remaining, they will commence the writing of the first draft of the Report.

The morning of the final day will be spent drafting the Peer Review Report. In the late morning, the Chair will meet alone with the President to give an oral preview of the report, followed by a meeting of the Chair of the Board of Trustees (and other Trustees who are able to attend), the President, the Academic Vice President, the Mission and Identity Officer, the Head of Campus Ministry, and Fr. Rector or Superior with the Visiting Team. The President may choose to invite other members of the leadership team to attend this meeting. The Chair of the Visiting Team will give a concise summary of the major points in the Peer Review Report. He/She will detail the areas on which the institution should be complimented, will single out instances of areas for improvement, and will assess the school’s mission priorities and make recommendations. If the Visiting Team wants to suggest other goals that the institution should strive to achieve prior to the next visit, the Chair of the Visiting Team will mention these goals. There will be an opportunity for questions of clarification addressed to the Chair of the Visiting Team or other members of the team. After this meeting there will be an informal lunch, followed by the departure by the Visiting Team.

**TASKS AFTER THE VISIT**

The Chair of the Visiting Team will produce a final version of the Peer Review Report and circulate it for accuracy to the other members of the team. He/She will then send copies of the Report to the President of the host institution, which will have the opportunity amend its priorities in light of the committee’s recommendation, as well as to correct factual errors or express objections. The Visiting Team then presents the Peer Review Report to the Jesuit Conference Coordinating Committee, which sends the Report to the local Provincial, the President of the Jesuit Conference of Provincials, and the President of the AJCU.

The Provincial and his Assistant for Higher Education will discuss the report with the Chair of the Board, President, and Rector or Superior at the time of their next scheduled visitation or at some other time, as appropriate.

**Guide for Mission Review Self-Study**

1. Please provide a copy of your institution’s Shared Purpose document, with an evaluation of the degree of compliance.

2. The following questions, derived from “Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument,” are offered to guide the development of your institution’s Self-Study:

**Characteristic 1: Leadership’s Commitment to the Mission**
1. How does your institution’s Mission Statement describe its Catholic and Jesuit inspiration?
2. What do your institution’s by-laws state about the institution as Catholic and Jesuit?
3. Are Trustees introduced and oriented to what it means to be an academic institution, as well as what it means to be one as Catholic and Jesuit?

Characteristic 2: Academic Life

1. In what ways does the core curriculum provide an understanding of what it means to be Catholic and Jesuit?
2. In what ways can cura personalis, education and formation of the whole student, be shown to be a clear outcomes objective?
3. What are other academic programs, initiatives, events, and celebrations that give witness to the Catholic and Jesuit nature of your institution?

Characteristic 3: Catholic, Jesuit Campus Culture

1. To what degree is there access to spiritual direction, the Spiritual Exercises, and the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist?
2. What challenges exist for maintaining and promoting a Catholic, Jesuit campus culture? What opportunities?

Characteristic 4: Service

1. To what extent are faith and reflection connected to service programs, initiatives and experiences?
2. What is the quality of service-learning, and are there adequate resources and opportunities for all those interested?
3. In what ways does the institution offer itself as a resource to the local, regional, national and international communities?

Characteristic 5: Service to the local Church

1. In what ways does the institution serve the local Church?

Characteristic 6: Jesuit Presence

1. What are the institution’s policies in regard to recruiting qualified Jesuits for employment? Is there adequate funding?
2. In what ways are vocations to the Society of Jesus promoted?
3. What opportunities and programs are in place for lay Ignatian formation?

Characteristic 7: Integrity

1. What institutional policies are in place to insure fairness in hiring, compensation, benefits, and promotion?
2. How is “hiring for mission” understood and practiced?