



# Regis University

**Emerging Themes  
Regis University Self Study  
Focus Groups and Individual Interviews  
February - May  
2007**

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## FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Over fifty individual interviews with faculty chairs and senior department heads across the University were conducted by the Self-Study Chair.

Forty-nine focus groups were conducted by a trained team of focus group facilitators selected from across the University. Focus groups were: Jesuit community, Regis College faculty chairs, ROI (Regis Operations Improvement Group), RHSHP faculty forum, SPS Undergraduate faculty/staff luncheon, RC Core Curriculum Committee, Senior Student Staff Residence Life, Jesuit Mission Group, Multi-Cultural Faculty/Staff Committee, Regis College Executive Committee Student Government, SPS Academic Council, SPS Graduate faculty/staff luncheon, APPC (Academic Planning and Policy Council), Staff Advisory Council, Las Vegas alumni/students, Las Vegas faculty/staff, Regis College students (three meetings), SPS Graduate students (Lowell), SPS Teacher Education faculty/staff, Libraries faculty/staff, Regis College Teacher Education Mentor Group, SPS Undergraduate students (Ft Collins), SPS Undergraduate students (Denver Tech Center), SPS Graduate students (Colorado Springs), SPS Colorado Springs faculty/staff, SPS Affiliate Faculty (Lowell), SPS Ft Collins faculty/staff luncheon, open meeting for faculty (Lowell), University Ministry staff, SPS Affiliate Faculty (Colorado Springs), open meeting for students (Lowell), Chicago Alumni, Residence Life Staff, SPS Affiliate Faculty (Interlocken), open meeting for staff (Lowell), online students in SPS and RHSHP, online faculty in SPS and RHSHP, SPS Undergraduate Affiliate Faculty (Annual Spring Meeting). Two RHSHP graduate and undergraduate student meetings were scheduled but cancelled due to lack of response. However, some RHSHP students attended the open meetings, and were active in the online student focus group.

Focus group facilitators were: Peter Bemski, Joan Buckley, Paul Burson, Diane Cooper, Beth Dillon, Ivan Gaetz, Linda Helwig, Sajit Kabadi, Steve Jacobs, Bob Kaffer, Jeremy Lee, Barry Martin, Lynne Montrose, Laura Padgett, Barb Schroeder, Russ Shaw, Ramon Walker, Libby White.

The questions of the Focus Groups were put forth by the five task forces addressing the various criteria of the Higher Learning Commission: 1) Mission and Integrity; 2) Preparing for the Future; 3) Student Learning and Effective Teaching; 4) Acquisition, Discovery; and Application of Knowledge; 5) Engagement and Service. A complete list of questions is available from the Self Study Chair.

This report includes eight interviews with employers of Regis graduates. It does not yet include a number of external interviews with agencies with whom Regis has a relationship (including service learning sites, etc).

## UNIVERSAL THEMES

Across all departments and schools there is an overwhelming sense that the world has radically changed since 1998, which has had tremendous impact on Regis in all sectors. With this is a pride that Regis has responded and adapted in ways that serve Regis' various learner populations – a Jesuit quality throughout its 450 year history -- and there is confidence that the University will continue to do so.

In response to the question, “How has the world changed in the last ten years?” the most frequent responses came in these areas:

- By far the most frequent response was technology – which has changed our way of life in higher education, in society, in our personal relationships, and has added the stress of a 24/7 lifestyle.
- The world is bigger, faster, more complex, and unpredictable. Change is no longer an option but a way of life.
- The “millennials” are bringing new values, habits, skills and characteristics into our institutions. Many wonder if Regis is prepared.
- Students of all ages are consumers more than ever before. We are living in a time of “marketization” in all dimensions of our lives, including religion. Education is becoming more of a transaction.
- As education costs keep rising, institutions of higher education are under scrutiny in three areas: access, accountability, and adaptability.
- Many see an increased urgency around issues of climate change and the environment. They do not feel Regis has adequately responded in its curriculum around these concerns.
- There is an increased gap between rich and poor. Higher education must increase its connectedness to a global community very different from the world we have known.
- The careers for which we are preparing or enhancing our students are increasingly unstable and transient.
- Certain fields in the U.S. – notably health care and K12 education -- are in crisis.
- Regis is now competing at a national level which is requiring more resources and clearer definition of Regis' distinctiveness.
- 9/11, the Iraq War, and the Virginia Tech tragedy have increased people's angst about the world we live in, with more concern about security (including on campus).
- There is perceived to be a widespread lack of trust in society. Many believe that underlying this is a hunger for meaning, purpose and justice. Thus, many feel Regis' mission is more important than ever.
- At Regis there is a growing importance and competence of the leadership of the laity.

## Technology

- Technology has ramped up our workload, changed our pedagogies, altered the way we market our programs, expanded our student base across continents, and increased competition among higher education institutions. There are an increasing number of stealth applicants in all schools who apply without consulting a representative of the University. Many traditional students use Face Book, often bypassing the University's modes of communication. This is juxtaposed by many administrators and faculty who are unfamiliar with the newly arising communication methods of younger generations.
- There is general affirmation that Regis has advanced significantly in technology since the 1998 accreditation Self Study. The community also acknowledges that the need for resources and improvements are endless, that Regis is competing with many other universities who are more sophisticated technologically, that students are increasingly techno-savvy, and they are judging us by high standards. "In technology we've moved from childhood to adolescence. What are we going to be in adulthood?"
- Questions in the area of technology include: how do we leverage I.T. to distinguish us – where all student services are online and every course has some online component? What does the future hold if we are currently spending less on technology than comparable institutions? How do we better train faculty across all schools in technological skills and pedagogies? How soon can we provide smart classrooms that support multiple learning activities? As we use more technology in online and hybrid courses, how do we continue to instill the mission, carrying out the "cura personalis" that distinguishes us?
- In contrast to the suspicion of distance learning in the 1990's, there is widespread respect that SPS and RHSHP were early adopters of adult and online learning, and that Regis is seen as a leader among the Jesuit universities in these areas. Advocates see distance learning as inherently Jesuit, changing with the times to keep its mission vibrant and relevant in the world. In the words of the Jesuit who has been chairman of the Regis Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee: "Regis has had a pioneering, entrepreneurial spirit that goes back to its founding. This is a strength." RC faculty describe how younger faculty are bringing technology and new teaching methods into the classroom. There is acknowledgement that because of technology, Regis has learned a great deal about learning in recent years, moving from technologies that only advance traditional pedagogies to better understanding the diverse, and sometimes new, learning styles that technology provides.
- The University community – from faculty to students – applauds the Dayton Memorial Libraries response to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Student and faculty usage, however, varies dramatically. Electronic databases and distance access are seen as substantial assets to learning. Suggestions include a desire for more online library orientations for faculty and students, and more structured library use in the curriculum.

- There are some voices among faculty of all three schools that are cautious about technology. While seeing technology as “here to stay,” they nevertheless value the small, face-to-face classes as a preferred learning method inherent to Jesuit education. Those who are cautious entertain the possibility of hybrid courses, and using technology for communication, assignments, and research outside of the classroom. There is acknowledgement that this may vary with our different schools, learners, and faculty interests.
- Many faculty who teach online courses see this format as enhancing student learning, expanding the diversity of learners, and in many cases broadening classroom discussions across continents and cultures. These same supporters see that we are still evolving in these methodologies, and look forward to more enhancements as they become feasible for Regis, from video-streaming to video-conferencing. They want improved communication with students prior to the first night, and more comprehensive professional development opportunities for faculty as technology and learning platforms change.
- SPS and RHSHP students in these focus groups are generally satisfied with their online learning programs and believe they are receiving a quality education from Regis’ online programs. Many like the straightforward aspect of the online environment. Others prefer it for its convenience. Online students interviewed were aware of the University mission, and could reference it from web-based materials.
- Not all online students are satisfied, however. Criticisms include inconsistency of instructor caliber; inconsistency of engagement and interaction by instructors; absence of tutoring beyond Smarthinking; seemingly awkward migration of some assignments and materials that are appropriate for classroom but not online; and, in some instances, out-of-date syllabi.
- There is widespread dissatisfaction with the current University website at a time when a user-friendly website is essential to University success.

<b>The People of Regis</b>
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There is universal acknowledgement that Regis’ strength is in its people – faculty, staff and students. Few doubt that this will be Regis’ strength for the future, as well.

- The vast majority of staff and faculty in these discussions say this is a good place to work, or use stronger words like “I love Regis.” Many comment on the sense of community and that Regis has a culture of being the best we can be for our students. “There’s not cut-throat competition here.”
- People use “family” language to describe their sense of belonging. Many comment on the Regis community as being consistent with their own values, and they see those values as making a difference in the lives of faculty, students, staff, and the communities wherever Regis is located (geographically or online).
- The Regis community frequently talks with pride about its students. Students across all schools are seen as bright, value-oriented, drawn here because “Regis is different.” Students of all ages talk about how important Regis is not only in preparing them for, or enhancing, their careers, but also changing their lives.

- Staff and faculty at Regis’ extension campuses take pride in being at Regis and feel that they provide increased personal care of students because of the smaller campus size. Those at the extension campuses express frustration at not being more central in the life of the Regis community. Most feel left out of decision-making and have little budget autonomy. Many external campus faculty and staff verbalize untapped possibilities in their communities about which they have garnered little Lowell support.
- As in the Self Study in 1998, affiliate faculty are proud of their affiliation with Regis and generally desire to be here over other institutions. Many also seek more connection with the University, and more acknowledgment of their role in the University’s success. Suggestions include more extensive orientation, more direction on where the University stands on certain issues, higher compensation, comprehensive professional development opportunities, more interaction with faculty colleagues, opportunities to learn from one another and share best practices, and more options for health care and retirement benefits.
- Where there is faculty and staff unhappiness at Regis, it is most often expressed in the areas of workloads leading to burnout; inadequate space; recent changes in health care benefits and prescription drug policies, dissatisfaction with Regis’ health care claims administrator; leadership styles in certain departments that are top down and/or squelch creativity and reflection; and absence of comprehensive ongoing professional development.
- SPS faculty voice concerns about the absence of a strong faculty culture such that faculty have less voice in planning and budgeting.
- Administrative assistants in some departments do not feel valued for their contributions (“We have leaders in service to others, but not to each other.”)
- There is a perception across the University that there is an increased bureaucratic and corporate culture with increased focus on revenue and numbers, and that the University “asks us to suck it up” rather than provide resources that would lighten the load and increase the quality of our institution on behalf of our students.
- There are doubts by some that these focus groups will lead to anything productive.

<b>University Mission</b>
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There is University-wide admiration and respect for the mission of Regis, with an acknowledgment that Regis has done much since the 1998 accreditation visit to deepen its mission in all sectors. “Mission is a shared responsibility here.” “Mission matters.”

- Students across all three schools – including online students – can articulate how Regis is different and what it stands for. Most are not able to quote the mission, but consistently they know it is about values, service to others, and making a difference. Many say “that’s why I came.” Students articulate this mission in the personal care extended by faculty and staff, small class sizes, and a focus on service learning. Those Regis faculty, staff and students who are aware of it are proud of the Billups-Porter Academy in the summer.
- There is general respect for the service learning sectors of the three schools, peace and justice initiatives, immersion experiences, the addition of the Office of

- Diversity, and what the Institute on the Common Good is doing behind the scenes in the community.
- There is the sense that the Catholic conversation has ramped up since 1998. This has brought mixed reactions, some seeing it as essential, others feeling excluded and threatened. The campus is polarized on this point: “Regis is either too Catholic or not Catholic enough.” There is acknowledgment that a more conservative external Catholic climate has created new challenges for Regis. “How do we celebrate other faith traditions?” There is also a sense that defining our mission and its distinctiveness in the competitive marketplace – both Catholic and Jesuit -- will be one of the most important agenda items into the future.
  - Students find themselves on both sides of the Catholic conversation. One focus group of RC students discussed how more conservative views are not supported in the classroom. Another focus group, also in Regis College, discussed their concern that the external Catholic climate squelches dialogue, particularly around issues of human sexuality.
  - Many faculty and staff talk about the flip side of mission. With the passing of the mission from the Jesuits to the laity, this has added new responsibility (some use the word “burden”) on the plates of already busy faculty and staff. Add to that more things like service learning, diversity, integrating mission into the curriculum, faculty mission development, conferences, and now assessment and accreditation, people are feeling their plates are too full. Few argue with the importance of these things, but don’t know how to manage them as “add-ons” on top of everything else.
  - There are some concerns that Regis is not living its mission “enough.” There are voices for stronger identity around peace and justice. Some express concern that Regis sometimes forgets what is best for the student.
  - There is some concern that new academic programs, partnerships or initiatives are not evaluated well-enough from a mission perspective, and that in this area Regis is more motivated by revenue. The Organizational Alliances Committee of the Regis Board of Trustees, which oversees new partnerships, discussed this issue for the purposes of the Self Study. They strongly acknowledge the contributions partnerships make to Regis. They also desire to have more frequent conversations around what the mission of each outreach is, with a clearer mission vocabulary.
  - Some describe Regis as a gated, white community sitting on Federal Boulevard between the increasingly Hispanic neighborhood to the east and the increasingly prosperous “white” neighborhood to the West.
  - There is a desire by some for stronger moral leadership in the University around pressing issues of our time (“not just the rah-rah mission”), and concern from Lowell campus students about recent hate crimes on campus.
  - Several faculty focus groups voiced a desire that SPS programs more strongly market Regis’ mission distinctiveness.

## Planning and Evaluation

There is a universal concern that Regis is not looking far enough out. “We’re in a high risk environment now. It’s no longer going to be stable.” “We’re reactive rather than strategic.” Regis plans and budgets for the short term, but lacks a long-term vision. Historically, Regis has operated well through a decentralized school planning model, but many feel that planning processes need to change in order to better manage our growth and its consequences. Not all know how such planning should happen, but concerns are expressed in these questions:

- What is the vision of Regis in ten years? “The University needs to decide what it wants to be.”
- What will it mean to be a Catholic and Jesuit University?
- What will it mean to be educating for global citizenship?
- How will our curriculum be relevant for the world of the future?
- Who will be our students in age/demographics? What will be their expectations of technology? What investment will be required for new learning models? What kind of scholarships and academic support will they need?
- Can we continue our decentralized, school-based model as we continually compete for resources and already face sizeable space needs?

Many talk about the competition between RC, SPS, and RHSHP. There is positive acknowledgement that the schools serve different learners, and that Regis’ success has risen out of these different schools and their particular ways of doing education. However, there is fatigue regarding the competition, distrust, and redundancy between the three schools. “We need to become a UNI-versity.” “We are putting a wedge between schools.”

- There are consistent voices for more sharing of resources, curriculum, distance learning talent and infrastructure, and faculty development. “There’s too much redundancy.” As models for the future many point to the current collaboration between the service-learning units, the shared curriculum and cross enrollments between SPS and RHSHP, as well as the doctorate in leadership designed jointly by SPS and RHSHP.
- Many faculty suggest a University-wide Center for Teaching and Learning for the purpose of sharing new pedagogies, mentoring, sharing best practices and experiences, developing younger faculty, mixing and mingling faculty across three schools, and offering affiliate faculty more development opportunities.

## The Cost of Commitment

Almost to a person, faculty and staff across the three schools and departments talk about being “maxed out.” “Institutional growth is asking more and more of us.” They acknowledge that this is influenced by the pace of our culture, technology, the massive amounts of information people must manage daily, the increased expectation of rapid response time, the student as demanding consumer, and new programs that demand much of Regis’ faculty and staff to get launched.

- Faculty and staff across all schools and many departments are worried about their workload, worry about the quality of their work, see themselves spending less time with students, and talk about having less time to reflect on new programs that are being implemented.
- Faculty say that they must increasingly do scholarship on their own time, even where in two schools (RC and RHSHP) scholarship is supported by faculty handbook policies. It is a 24/7 world – which was not as true in 1998.
- Adding to this “maxed-outness” is the perception that Regis’ drive for growth has exceeded its resources, that development of new programs is added to the workloads of already stretched people.
- With this increased workload is a frustration that there is lack of time to even strategize well about the resources needed for successful programs or personal time management.

## Succession Planning

There is universal concern about the aging leadership of Regis, citing that many of the top leaders have been at Regis 25+ years.

- People see the pro and con of this. The advantage is that there has been a stable senior leadership team that has shared a common history and a mutual commitment to Regis’ various student populations, schools and learning models.
- Concerns are expressed as: there is no apparent succession planning; with the retirement of so many leaders in the coming years, Regis will lose extensive institutional memory unless it promotes from within.
- There is some concern that an aging leadership may not fully understand the generational changes coming, nor the cultural and market differences that aren’t in their span of awareness or experience. “We are an old culture, and need new blood and new people.”

## Diversity

In the area of diversity, none are satisfied that Regis reflects the world we live in now, and certainly not the world of the future. “We’re world phobic.” While many acknowledge progress in gender diversity, the question is asked -- where are the African American and Hispanic students, faculty and staff? With general respect for the work of the diversity office, and acknowledgement that there has been progress since 1998, there is nevertheless a great concern that Regis is still a white, gated community, that much of its diversity work is still cosmetic.

- There is a concern that hiring for diversity is left up to the initiative of individual departments and not driven by the institution generally.
- Students of color do not find themselves reflected in faculty. Faculty of color have few peers.
- The multi-cultural faculty/staff committee suggests that the University should be asking how prominent diversity issues are in the curriculum.
- Those who are leading diversity initiatives are concerned that the University still perceives diversity only as an issue of attracting faculty and students of color. They site much work that needs to be done in areas of inclusivity and cultural competence.
- The strongest student voices around issues of diversity are found in Regis College. Students in these focus groups talked with concern about the recent hate crimes on campus, while speaking positively of the campus rally on the library steps, and praising the attendance at that event of the President and Provost. Most in focus groups felt positive about the way diversity is being addressed in classrooms, although some felt that inclusivity varies. Many are concerned that Regis is “a rich, white school.”

### **Rising Cost of Education**

There is universal concern that University tuition cannot keep going up. This will only continue to “keep people out.” “It’s becoming harder to show a return on the high investment in a college education.”

- SPS notes a reduction in corporation tuition reimbursement.
- Across the three schools there is a need for increased financial aid at the same time that the government is ratcheting down these resources.
- RC Admissions notes the difference now between “the ability to pay” and “the willingness to pay,” with more families being unwilling though able.
- There is a strong desire that Regis do more in scholarships, otherwise Regis will only increase being an institution for the elite.
- As voiced in RHSHP, “we will have students who, in order to go to school, must amass huge loans that will be a burden years after graduation.”

### **Lowell Campus Facilities and Learning Environments**

There is widespread pride in the advancement of campus facilities and beauty since 1998, from the new town homes, chapel, restoration of Main Hall, remodeled Carroll Hall, plazas, art and statues, landscaping, RHSHP simulation labs, the Science Building renovation, new extension sites, and the new SPS counseling lab. “This campus is beautiful.” “I love coming to work here.” Most are aware of, and speak with pride about, the successful capital campaign that has made many improvements possible.

- From faculty conversations to Staff Advisory Council, there is widespread frustration that Regis has run out of space on the Lowell Campus, scheduling classrooms is becoming a serious problem, Fine Arts performances are using the neighboring Berkeley Church, and there is no more office space.

- Besides quantity of space itself, faculty across all three schools are saying there is a real need to look at the design of classrooms for the learning models of the future that will be able to support more active learning experiences and technologies. “We need a signature classroom building.”
- Parking is “impossible” or too far to walk safely; there is little lounge space for faculty, staff or students, no viable recreation center, and little multi-use gathering space for large groups of people. Student focus groups and residence life staff talked about the need for the University to have more 24/7 space for students to congregate.
- Frustration around scheduling of space is a recurring theme, citing competition and multiple contact points to reserve rooms. People do not generally know if these issues are being addressed.

### **Changing Student Characteristics**

Faculty and staff describe that the student of all ages, in all three schools, is more a consumer than ever before. While SPS has said this for a long time, RHSHP and RC are saying this as well. Today’s students are demanding, “entitled,” want it now, are more aggressive, and are less patient in communicating their complaints.

- Across all schools and programs there is a general sense that the next two generations of students are changing/and will continue to change Regis. “The age of the boomers is soon to be over.”
- These students bring a desire for more interactive learning styles and experiential learning.
- Students of all ages are more technologically savvy and expect technology in all aspects of their education, services, socialization, information, and way of life.
- Many ask: “Is Regis ready for this student?” “Is Regis strategizing about the impact of these students and their preferred learning styles for the next ten years?”
- Many wonder if the generational changes are understood by the senior University leadership.
- There is a general sense across all three schools that entering student competence has declined in the areas of writing, critical thinking, basic math and communication skills. This is changing the way instruction is happening, with more need to focus on the fundamentals, and to offer more support services.
- Faculty of RHSHP and SPS comment on an urgent need for tutorial services, including a writing center as in RC. Staff and faculty are individually trying to address these increased needs, but they are overstretched due to lack of sufficient support in this area. Affiliate faculty echoed this concern as well. “If we’re going to have open admission policies in SPS, we need to provide students the support to succeed.”

### **Student Focus Group Details**

Sixteen student focus groups were scheduled, and fourteen materialized, with students across all three schools, at multiple campuses, and online. In most instances, focus groups were school-specific. Attendance at these groups varied, but most were modest in

size. The online student focus group mixed online students from RHSHP and SPS. Two ground-based focus groups with RHSHP students were cancelled due to lack of response. Several RHSHP students attended the open meetings on the Lowell campus.

Focus group facilitators noted frequently that though students had critical comments and suggestions, many ended the focus group saying: “Don’t get me wrong, Regis has been a positive experience.” While there are noteworthy exceptions noted below, students generally expressed positive support of faculty, faculty accessibility, smaller class sizes, the care of the person, values in the curriculum, and the personal attention they have received.

### **Rueckert-Hartman School for Health Professions**

Though a very small sample, RHSHP students positively note: the consistency of health care programs with University mission; pride in the new simulation labs; having classes and clinicals together in the accelerated nursing program.

RHSHP student concerns include: desire for more time (like a 14 month schedule) in the accelerated nursing program; varied quality of service learning sites and experiences; inflexibility of the School around service-learning placements for those with many years of life and volunteer experience.

### **School for Professional Studies**

Strengths include: Regis as a reputable degree; Regis’ distinctive mission values and interest in the whole person; good student/teacher ratio and camaraderie; knowledge that is applied to real work situations; Regis’ inclusivity of the adult student through accelerated formats, multiple campuses, online learning, and extended hours; down-to-earth professors who push students “to think outside the box;” individual attention; experiential nature of learning; quality of extension sites (except for absence of computer labs at Longmont and Aurora).

SPS student concerns include: need for tutorial support beyond Smarthinking; inconsistent quality and rigor from class to class and instructor to instructor in all formats (GIS, online, ground-based); “Regis shouldn’t be easy on us;” concern in some graduate courses that “it didn’t take it up a notch from undergraduate work;” desire for paid internship opportunities – seen as increasingly important in this economic climate; desire for more online and personal support in student accounts and financial aid; perception that Web Advisor is difficult to navigate; better job advising students; Webinars offered on various career and life topics beyond the classroom courses; limited course offerings at extension sites; some courses where curriculum is stale or out-of-date; inconsistent grading; the cost of online courses being higher than ground-based; too much material “crammed into five weeks.”

## **Online Students – RHSHP and SPS**

Strengths include: curriculum that focuses on making society better; integrity of faculty and students; “I came to Regis because of the mission;” practical knowledge; convenience of online learning; meaningful interaction with faculty; quality of the Regis education.

Concerns include: desire for more out-of-class support (Smarthinking is insufficient); inconsistent quality of online courses and faculty; desire for more faculty participation and direction (rather than students’ “blind leading the blind”); difficulty of meaningful online group assignments without personal contact; desire for online texts; concern that Angel/WorldClass seems slower than WebCT.

## **Regis College**

Strengths include: Dayton Memorial Libraries and online resources; Writing Center; service learning experiences; personal care they receive from faculty; technological improvements on campus; small classes; professional staff in University Ministry and Student Life; Insite, Sharepoint, and WebAdvisor; Career Services and Counseling Center.

RC student concerns include: faculty evaluations that don’t seem to have any effect; students with conservative views don’t feel free to talk; on the other hand some non-Catholic students expressed concern that they didn’t have the freedom to express their views that might be opposed to the position of the church; multiple courses with the same teachers; too many courses with 45 students; desire a more “green” campus, green buildings, recycling; more 24/7 places to hang out; lack of diversity among students and faculty; the recent hate crimes on campus are a real concern as well as the fact that there seems to be a lack of an effective process to deal with them -- “Something isn’t going on;” desire for administration to approach students more often in decision-making -- “We’re not heard as in SPS and RHSHP;” desire for more real life education; desire for the Deans and President to be more visible; some courses too lecture focused; some thought Regis would be more prestigious; desire for smart classrooms and large performance areas; better promotion of extracurricular clubs and activities; poor technology support in classrooms (machines that don’t work, bulbs that aren’t replaced for days); more close-in parking and more security in parking lots and on campus; cleaner residence halls; more scholarships; some professors are excellent but others are “just there;” mixed reviews of core seminars; more support in preparing for and applying for graduate school; confusion by students as to why some departments are expanded and others not.

<b>Staff Focus Group Details</b>
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Strengths include: mission leave; high caliber of faculty and staff; University involvement in community events; University’s “hearing us” around the proposed change in education tuition benefits; increased mission emphasis over the years; service

learning; enjoy people we work with; student focus of our work; Dayton Memorial Libraries; accessibility to highest leadership; immersion experiences for students; residence life as a learning environment; many opportunities for ministry.

Concerns include: desire that faculty get more involved outside of the classroom (in student activities and residence life); desire that our diversity conflicts on campus be better learning opportunities; shifting from diversity talk to inclusion talk; patriarchal top down model in some departments; mixed messages around Catholic teaching; inadequate academic support for students; mission not always modeled by the institution (citing student and personnel issues, and leadership styles in some departments); parking; space; ending of sick bank policy; desire for more professional development; University sometimes forgets not everyone is Catholic; need better feedback when proposals are made to the leadership; scheduling space; desire for day care for employees; more multi-use space; bringing online students into the fold; need for central events center and central calendar; University strategic plan is too vague and people feel disconnected from it; more collaboration between the three schools; power issues that prevent cohesiveness across the University; resources that do not keep pace with growth; low compensation at administrative support levels; desire for a better fitness center; staff at extension campuses feel Lowell is “the center of the Universe;” absence of HR benefits for same sex couples and unmarried heterosexual couples; stifling of creativity due to leadership styles in some departments; desire for more basic training in University systems (Datatel, etc); more incentive to enhance skills.

<b>Faculty Focus Group Details</b>
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**APPC – Academic Planning and Policy Council**

For purposes of the Self Study, APPC discussed the University’s strengths and challenges.

Strengths include: technology advances; converging good values and good business practices; University mission encourages students to question and change the ways they view the world; University mission is broad in scope and addressed in a variety of ways; the University strives to match mission and market fit in new programs; good pedagogy; Dayton Memorial Libraries.

Concerns include: adult students want practical application and sometimes resist theory; students in RC feel the need to be problem solvers and want it now; keeping up technologically and evaluating technology (not just technology for technology’s sake); need for more simulated learning; lack of appropriate space and need for more signature classrooms, field house, recreation center, performance space, and student center; satellite campuses need to feel more a part of the Regis community; increase the use of resources across all three schools that recognize uniqueness and build collaboration; increased scholarships for students.

## **Rueckert-Hartman School for Health Professions**

Strengths include: Regis mission; Dayton Memorial Libraries; faculty who are committed to students; strong peer support among faculty; strong online community; Regis ITS (especially noted the Center for Academic Technology); students who are recruited are appropriate fit for their programs; service learning; increased technology; mission leave; Regis College Writing Center and Commitment Program; faculty development support (RHSHP faculty in general felt better about this subject than RC or SPS faculty); innovation is encouraged; RHSHP strategic planning.

Concerns include: though progress has been made across many fronts, multi-culturalism is not reflected in the faculty, staff or student body; more collaboration and resource sharing between the three schools; more support for students who do not have English as primary language; limited classroom space and desire for better equipped classrooms; space scheduling; limited office space (many are sharing); no student lounge; more administrative support; more faculty so class sizes can be smaller; some faculty don't feel supported by administration when a student disagreement arises; students expect extra tutoring help which is available only through individual faculty; desire for more faculty forums for sharing with peers.

## **School for Professional Studies**

Strengths include: faculty meetings where dialogue happens; the "renaissance" of assessment in SPS; physical and aesthetic improvement of the Lowell campus; technology advancements; sense of community at Regis; Dayton Memorial Libraries; conscientious community service; helping students with problems needing to be solved; faculty and staff who are a positive face of Regis to our students; mission initiatives in recent years; SPS innovation in new learning models; practitioner faculty with work experience; small class sizes; Regis' commitment to adding value to students' lives..

Concerns include: quality of classrooms for the future; absence of areas for students to congregate; absence of diversity; power issues in SPS that shut down honest dialogue and conflict; top down school leadership that does not value faculty input; lack of response after SPS Mountain States Employers Survey and subsequent recommendations of the "D5" committee; lack of cooperation between the three schools; rocky transition from WebCT to Angel; low affiliate faculty compensation; unclear roles between faculty and the distance learning team; need for more administrative staff; no critical mass of academic scholarship or sharing of academic issues in one's field; friction around University's increasing emphasis on Catholic identity; tension between the business of SPS and the mission of SPS (perception that SPS is marketing-driven); managing quality and growth (and need for more re-investment); need for more financial aid for students; differing faculty load policies within SPS; lack of enforcement of pre-requisites; absence of computer labs in Aurora and Longmont campuses; desire by all faculty (full-time and affiliate) for more professional development (teaching styles, presentation skills, best practices; those teaching same courses meeting together); increased technology like streaming videos and video-conferencing; better academic support for students outside of

class; concern about the five-week and eight-week formats; increased support for global education (in curriculum, online, and international trips); desire for more employer feedback about Regis curriculum; desire for more direction for students by advising faculty; desire for better engagement of students with Dayton Memorial Libraries; desire for innovation with hybrid courses (online and classroom combined).

### **Regis College**

Strengths include: strong faculty; Dayton Memorial Libraries; prospector system; Writing Center; Career Services; increasing improvement in technology, disability services, service learning, study abroad; expanded learning opportunities in music and peace and justice; growing diversity of students and faculty in some departments; academic unit reviews; the current core curriculum review; new innovative teaching methods (cross-discipline, team teaching); RC attracting better students today; few restrictions on academic inquiry due to Jesuit environment and values; increased grant funding for tuition scholarships (Teacher Education); quality staff.

Concerns include: need a signature classroom building; absence of office space; absence of social space; need for classrooms “with learning in mind;” need for a performance hall; better access to information to improve advising; more scholarship resources to enhance diversity; incentive money to attract stronger faculty; administration rhetoric around diversity versus sustained discussion; campus not friendly to persons with physical limitations; professional development rhetoric without support; need for increased education in Jesuit pedagogies; little administrative support in proportion to student enrollment growth; desire for more social interaction among faculty; desire for increased team teaching opportunities; increased corporate culture that has become more adversarial between faculty and administration; need for increased faculty voice in setting budget priorities; HR issues handled by vendors (with seeming absence of advocacy for Regis employees); disconnection with University planning; the impact of the retirement of many RC faculty in several years; concern that there won’t be adequate resources to support the core revision; increased expectation by the University that faculty become involved in non-teaching activities; library already running out of room; library faculty not recognized as skilled professionals; need for improved library orientations for faculty, students, and staff; keeping pace with new library databases; faculty not as engaged with technology as their students are; more need for integration into curriculum of reality in the trenches; increased funding to bring experts into the classroom; need to improve the Regis website; “dynamite or renovate” Loyola Hall.

### **Online Faculty – RHSHP and SPS**

Strengths include: online faculty consistently feel there are many advantages to online learning. Advantages include: Dayton Memorial Libraries resources; online formats that allow time to focus on assignments and discussion forums; students have access to faculty all day with more frequent interactions; online formats provide faculty time to research a question and provide links; safe online environment for students to express themselves; students are diverse across many geographies and share best practices that

differ nationally; time for thoughtful reflection before response. Disadvantages include: managing student expectations; isolation of students; no non-verbal visual/audio context; staying in touch with students who hide; time management.

Concerns include: need for more deliberate student library engagement; desire for an online library orientation; desire more digital access to reference books; the future costs of staying technologically cutting edge; desire to bring online education to underserved international populations; desire to see more options in the WorldClass course hosting system; desire for better evaluation of week by week workload; desire for more ways to link students in audio interaction; desire for more interaction with fellow-faculty for sharing best practices; minimal evaluation beyond student evaluations; desire for more dedicated funding for professional development; desire for stronger emphasis on ethics, accountability, social consciousness and entrepreneurship.

### **External Interviews**

An individual familiar with Regis was contracted to perform interviews with employers of Regis University graduates or those organizations familiar with Regis' contribution to the workforce: King Soopers, Sun Microsystems, LEARN, American Physical Therapy Association, Exempla HealthCare, Deloitte, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, and Cherry Creek School System.

- Regis is highly respected in the Denver area. It is viewed as having excellent academic quality.
- The theme that repeatedly emerged was Regis' strong focus on the Jesuit mission of service and values. Values and service are what distinguish Regis from its competitors. These themes are seen as being woven into the total Regis experience -- as being real and tangible, and not merely attractive tag lines for Regis advertisements. Several interviewees who were also alumni spoke of how they chose Regis in order to get a good academic education and in the process found their lives changing at the level of deepest values and sense of purpose.
- Regis personnel go beyond the call of duty in their relationships with corporations and organizations. Many stories were told of how Regis staff do more than staff from other schools in promoting collegial relationships.
- Several interviewees contrasted Regis with the University of Phoenix, making the point that University of Phoenix is seen as a "diploma mill," or a business, while Regis is viewed as a provider of education of the whole person.
- Chris James, from Sun Microsystems, emphatically made the point that, in dealing with the corporate community, Regis (and other schools) need to act more like businesses, moving at the speed of business, with the efficiency of business, and less like slow moving academic institutions. By moving too slowly, Regis loses potential opportunities for partnering.
- Regis is perceived as having done little in any formal, structured way to solicit input on curricular matters and evaluation of its academic and other programs.
- In this era of tight competition, Regis was advised to develop a promotional strategy that involves going to the highest levels (CEO where possible) to make the case that in an age where corporations and other organizations are increasingly

- concerned with how to recruit and keep a quality workforce, Regis' education of the "total person" can be invaluable in meeting the need.
- Some of the interviewees would be eager and willing to serve on Regis Advisory Boards if asked.

### **In Conclusion -- the Future**

While not exhaustive of these many conversations across Regis University in the last several months, the following is a summary of the confidence embodied by the University community as well as its concerns:

- There is a wide consensus that "Regis is on a roll." "Our education is second to none." People have pride in the recent capital campaign and its accomplishments. Regis' faculty love teaching and are good at what they do. Staff bring a student service perspective to every day tasks. Regis attracts students because of its quality and mission. Students of all ages graduate with skills and values we are proud of. The University has responded well to the changes of the last decade with an increased awareness of the importance of its mission.
- There is widespread belief that the world of the future will need the values of Jesuit education more than ever.
- It is almost universally reported among faculty and staff that our community is currently operating at max. Many believe increased resources will be needed for faculty, staff, scholarships, student services, infrastructure, state-of-the-art space, and technology.
- There is concern that Regis has a fragility of financial assets to respond to the many changes that are coming. With a modest endowment, and concerns that tuition cannot keep rising, many are asking where the resources will be found.
- The University community widely believes that the rapid changes of the future are going to require a more compelling and carefully articulated University vision. Many feel Regis will no longer have the resources to be everything to everybody. The institution may have to make hard decisions as to what it wants to be.
- Most believe it is important that there be thoughtful succession planning for new leadership.
- Regis has succeeded thus far in a de-centralized school based planning model. Most see this as continuing in order to best serve the University's various constituents – but with a new challenge. Many are weary of the competition between the three schools. They are experiencing that schools' needs are colliding with one another (space being the most prevalent), and that there is increasing redundancy between schools (faculty development, online learning, technological needs, multiple Teacher Education programs, as just several examples). Many ask if the decentralized model is working for Regis, given that it is now a much larger organization.
- With increased competition for students and resources, some are concerned that Regis may be tempted to compromise its academic standards to attract and retain students. What will be required of the University to maintain its standards with sufficient faculty, staff, infrastructure, technology, new learning models, facilities, and student academic support?

- There is strong interest among faculty of all schools in something like a Center for Teaching and Learning that would undertake a more comprehensive, University-wide professional development program for faculty in a changing world, affording faculty and affiliate faculty a much greater opportunity to share best practices across the three schools.
- Most believe that the adult learning population nationally will continue to grow. How will Regis continue to manage and resource this population in SPS and RHSHP, as well as distinguish itself as a quality Jesuit product in a national market?
- The future is no longer a baby-boomer world. Preparedness for college-level work, values, skills, learning styles, work ethic, communication, and definition of community are already changing as millennials mature into the responsibilities of adulthood. Is Regis prepared for this in its vision, curriculum and support structures?
- Many believe the United States is losing its competitive edge. Regis will be educating students for, and in, a workplace that is increasingly unstable, with many jobs migrating overseas. Regis' curriculum must equip students of all ages not only to be critical thinkers, but creative thinkers in ways that put them ahead of the changes rather than playing catch-up.
- World-driving forces will require our students to be culturally competent, multi-lingual, technically literate, and wise ethical decision makers in complex moral situations. Our globally connected world is bringing to light the ever increasing disparity between rich and poor. Remaining true to its mission, many believe Regis will have to be even more intentional in preparing its graduates for these moral and spiritual challenges.
- In truth, the world won't become more diverse. Most of the Regis community is aware how diverse the world has always been. Most ask if Regis is prepared for this paradigm shift. Can it move beyond seeing diversity as "you come to us," to seeing itself in the world with improved competencies where inclusivity and shared experience -- not just tolerance -- are a way of life?
- Can Regis see its Catholicism as a contribution to diversity, but in a way "that invites rather than commands," and celebrates the religious and cultural differences within it?

Though the challenges are many, so are the University's successes since 1998. The Regis community looks to the future with optimism because of faith in its people, its commitment to students, and a Jesuit tradition that has always been open to change. In the words of one faculty chair:

"Jesuits see God in all things. Therefore we must live in the world with clarity, joy and hope."

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