

Loyola College

**What Do New Students and Parents
Expect From Jesuit Education?**

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Methodology</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Executive Summary.....</i>	<i>2</i>
DETAILED FINDINGS	3
<i>Learning</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Leading and Spirituality.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Serving in a Diverse World</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Jesuit Distinction.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Learning.....	8
Leading and Spirituality	9
Serving in a Diverse World	10
SUMMARY	11

Figures

FIGURE 1. IMPORTANCE OF LOYOLA'S JESUIT MISSION.....	3
FIGURE 2. EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING AT LOYOLA	4
FIGURE 3. EXPECTATIONS FOR WELL-BEING AND SPIRITUALITY AT LOYOLA.....	5
FIGURE 4. EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY AND SERVICE	6
FIGURE 5. SAMPLE CHART FOR DISTINCTIVENESS DATA.....	7
FIGURE 6. THE JESUIT DISTINCTION IN LEARNING OUTCOMES	8
FIGURE 7. THE JESUIT DISTINCTION IN LEADERSHIP PREPARATION AND SPIRITUALITY.....	9
FIGURE 8. THE JESUIT DISTINCTION IN SERVICE AND DIVERSITY	10

<p>This report prepared by The Office of Institutional Research Using data collected on the New Student/Parent Surveys</p>
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What Do New Students and Parents Expect From Jesuit Education?

Introduction

Each summer, new students and their parents are invited to campus to take part in summer orientation sessions. During this orientation students and their parents complete a *New Student [Parent] Survey*. This report summarizes the findings from the survey of the class of 2011 and their parents that are related to Jesuit values and education.

Methodology

During summer orientation for the class of 2011, students and parents were given a paper-and-pencil survey to complete. The survey context was developed through collaboration between Student Development and Institutional Research. The student surveys asked them to respond about their own opinions, expectations and behaviors. Parents were asked to respond based on their own opinions but also asked, in some case, to indicate how they felt their student would respond. In other words, parents were asked about themselves and also about their perceptions of their student's opinions and behaviors.

This report focuses on those items related to Jesuit mission. In addition to being asked about the overall importance of the Jesuit mission, students and parents were asked about their expectations relative to a number of attributes of Jesuit education.¹ The survey language did not identify the attributes as being associates with Jesuit education.

Surveys were distributed to and collected from to students and parents/guardians by *Evergreen* orientation leaders.² The students and parents received their surveys at different points in time and were asked to complete the surveys independently of each other. Over the four summer orientation sessions, 801 students and 637 parents completed surveys.³ All group differences noted in this report are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level unless otherwise specified.

¹ The survey language did not identify the attributes as being associated with Jesuit education. Respondents were simply asked "To what extent do you expect your [your student's] experience at Loyola to include . . ."

² For simplicity the term "parents" will be used throughout this report to refer to those individuals who accompanied the student to orientation.

³ In cases where a student was accompanied by multiple parents each parent group was asked to complete only one survey.

Executive Summary

- ◆ Most students and parents felt that the Jesuit mission was at least “somewhat important” to them.
 - The Jesuit mission was much more important to parents than to students and parents thought the mission would be more important to their student than it actually was.
- ◆ Preparation for a career is the top expectation of a Loyola education for both students and parents.
 - Students had higher expectations for experiences at Loyola that would help them serve in a diverse world than they did for experiences that would enhance their personal well-being and spirituality.
 - Across the board, parents had higher expectations than did their students for the mission-related experiences and types of preparation that were queried.
- ◆ Students seem to associate the liberal arts, an emphasis on ethical standards in professions, an emphasis on interpersonal ethics, opportunities for spiritual growth, commitment to diversity, opportunities for non-classroom cultural activities, and community service with Jesuit education.
 - Parents associate physical wellness as well as spiritual growth with Jesuit education.

Detailed Findings

When asked about the importance of Loyola’s Jesuit mission, a small minority of students (4%) and parents (2%) indicated that they were unfamiliar with the College’s Jesuit mission. Most students and parents felt that the Jesuit mission was at least “somewhat important” but interesting differences were found between students, parents, and the perceptions that parents had about their students.

The Jesuit mission was much more important to parents than to students. Further, when parents were asked how they thought their student would respond, a much larger proportion of parents (14%) indicated that their student did not know about the Jesuit mission than actually occurred (4% of student said they “did not know” about Loyola’s Jesuit mission). Parents also indicated that the missions was “very important” to their student in greater proportion than was found among the student responses (25% of parents versus 18% of students). See Figure 1.

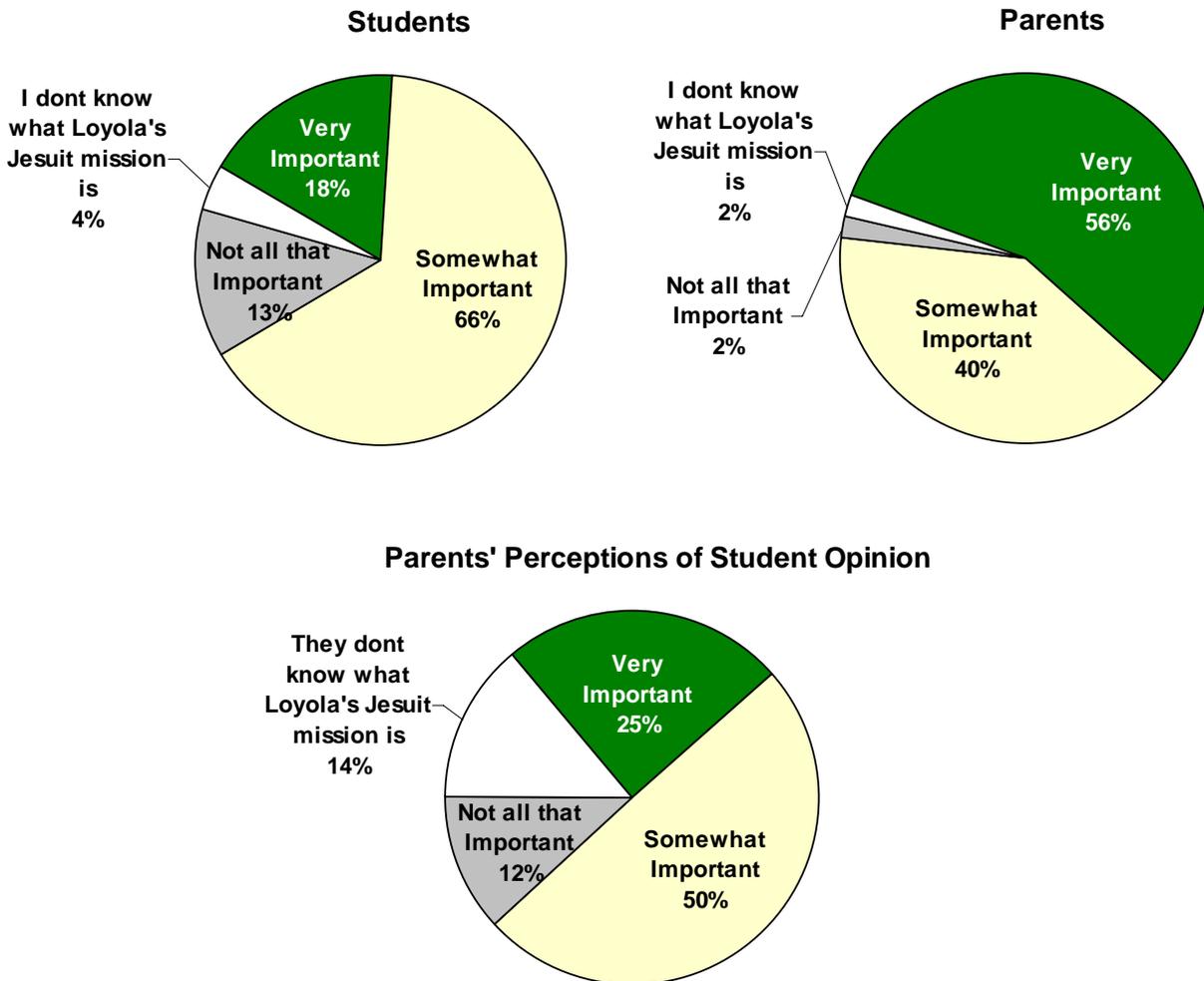


Figure 1. Importance of Loyola’s Jesuit mission

Learning

Career preparation is the number one expectation of students and parents with nearly nine out of ten students and parents saying that they expected “a great deal” of emphasis in this area while at Loyola. Career preparation was followed by preparation for graduate school and a foundation in the liberal arts both of which were highly expected by approximately three-quarters of the parents but only half of the new students. The differences between student and parent expectations are even more pronounced in the area of ethical standards in professions with only 27% of students expecting “a great deal” of experience with this at Loyola while 64% of parents have high expectations for this as an element of their child’s Loyola education. See Figure 2.

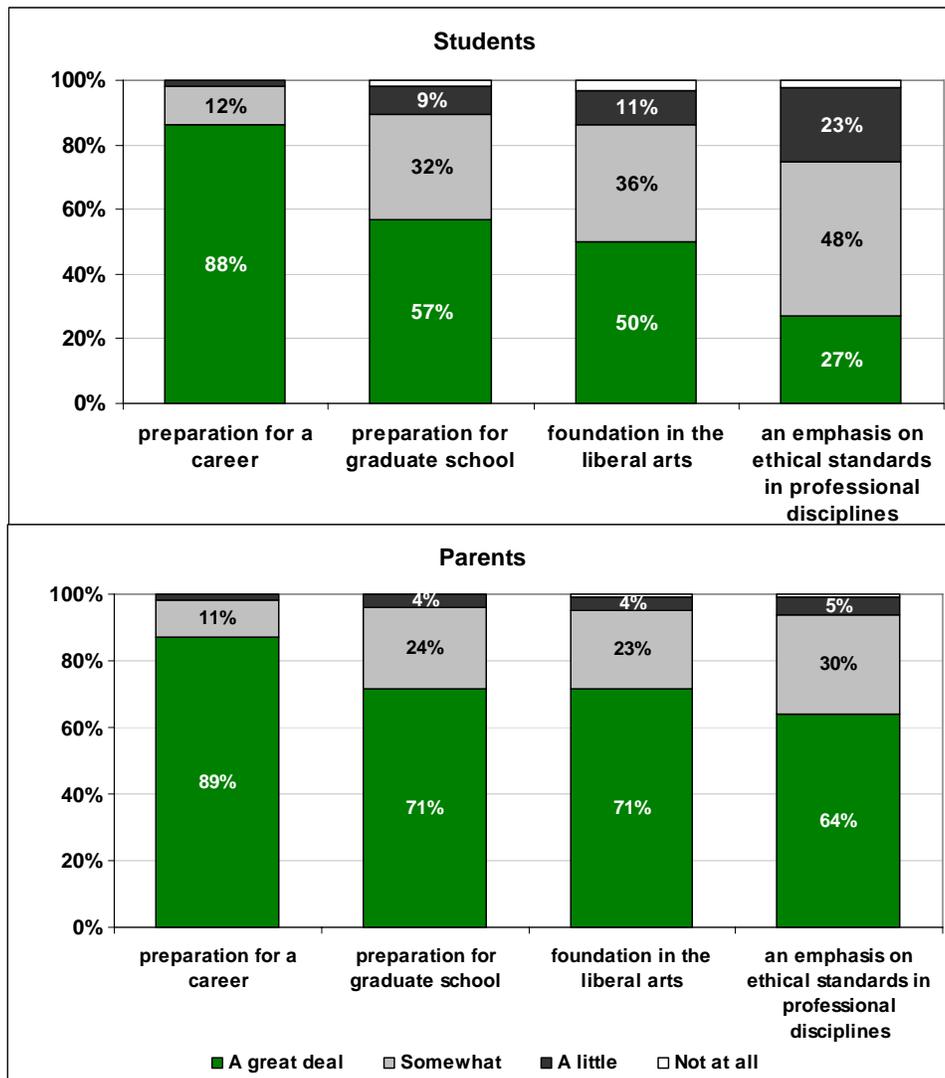


Figure 2. Expectations for learning at Loyola

Leading and Spirituality

Several of the attributes that were included in the survey addressed areas of personal well-being and spirituality that would prepare students for leadership. These included physical wellbeing, interpersonal ethical conduct, spiritual growth, and opportunities for reflection. Overall, students' expectations that their Loyola education would include these attributes were more modest than were their parents' expectations.

The largest differences between student and parent expectations were in the areas of interpersonal ethical conduct and spiritual growth. Nearly two-thirds of parents expect “a great deal” of emphasis on interpersonal ethical conduct in their student’s educational experience at Loyola while only 26% of students feel the same. Fifty-four percent of parents expect spiritual growth to be a significant part of the Loyola experience while only 21% of students stated that they expect that to be “a great deal” of their Loyola experience. See Figure 3.

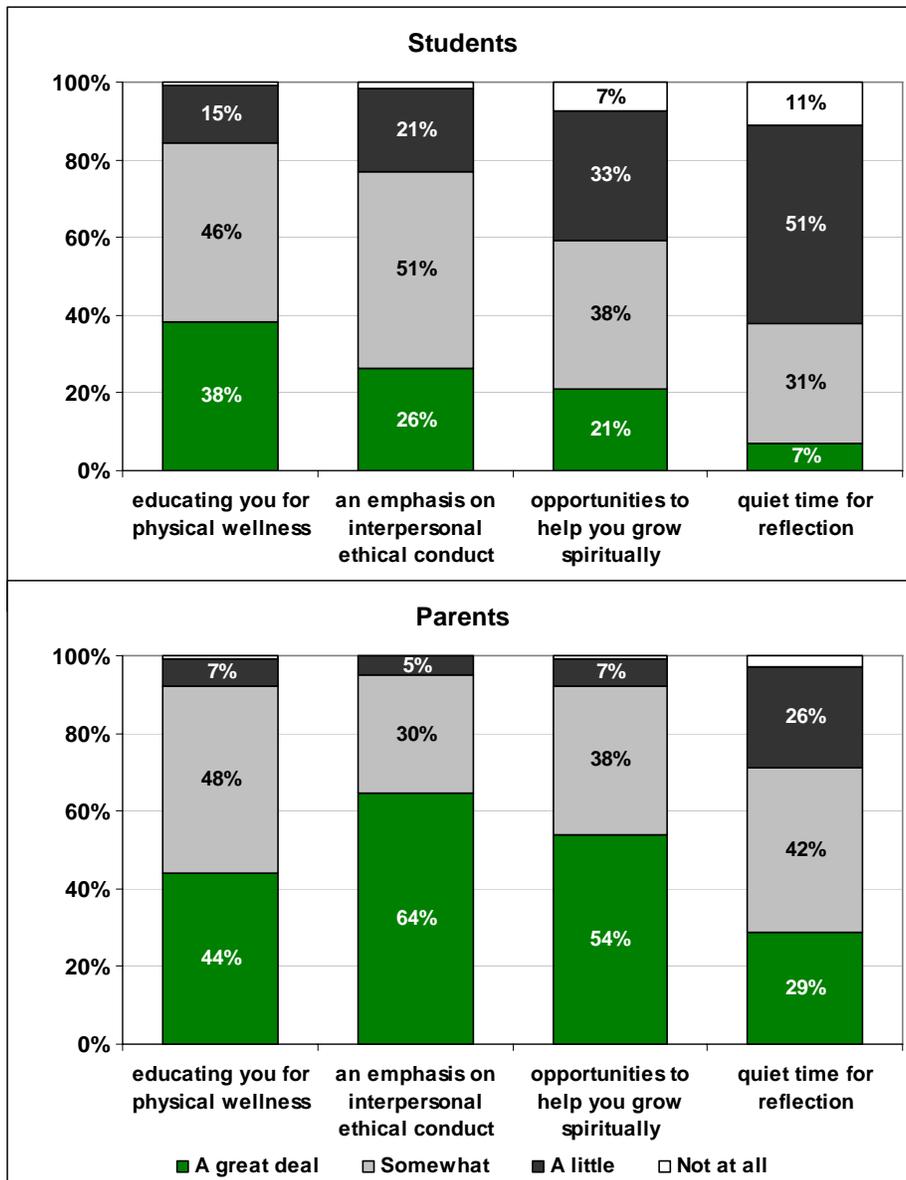


Figure 3. Expectations for well-being and spirituality at Loyola

Serving in a Diverse World

Students had higher expectations for experiences at Loyola that would help them serve in a diverse world than they did for personal well-being and spirituality described in the previous section. Still, across the board, parents indicated a greater level of expectation than did students.

Although still significantly different in their response, the area where parents and students were the closest in expectation was in regard to cultural activities, with 48% of parents and 41% of students indicating that they expected their Loyola experience to involve “a great deal” of opportunities for cultural activities outside of the class.

Parents and students both had lower expectations about the extent to which they/their student would learn about people who are marginalized by society than any other attribute with the exception of time for reflection. Over half of parents did, however, expect their student to get “a great deal” of experience with commitments to diversity and inclusion and community service while at Loyola. See Figure 4.

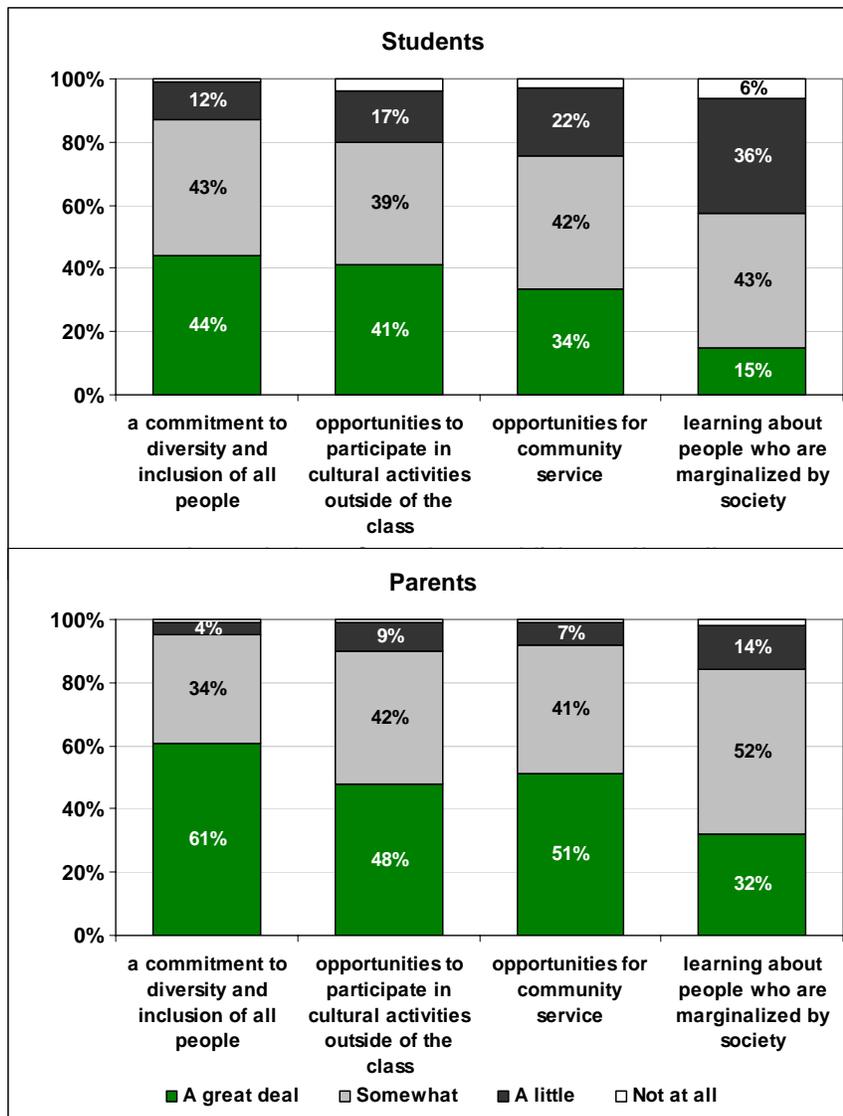


Figure 4. Expectations for learning about diversity and service

The Jesuit Distinction

By examining the intersection of the importance of Loyola’s Jesuit mission with the expectation of various attributes of Jesuit education we can begin to know how students and parents understand “Jesuit education” and what they associate with a Jesuit education.

Figure 5 is a sample of the charts to be found in this section. By looking at the slope of the line for each attribute we can see the extent to which the survey respondents associate each attribute with Jesuit education. For example, preparation for a career was expected in high proportions from those who felt the Jesuit mission was important to them as well as among those who indicated the Jesuit mission was not important; this indicates that preparation for a career is not, in the minds of the students, distinctive to Jesuit education. On the other hand, an emphasis on ethical standards is expected in greater proportion among those who indicated the Jesuit mission was important to them when compared to those who said it was not important; this indicates that learning about ethical standards is associated with the Jesuit educational mission.

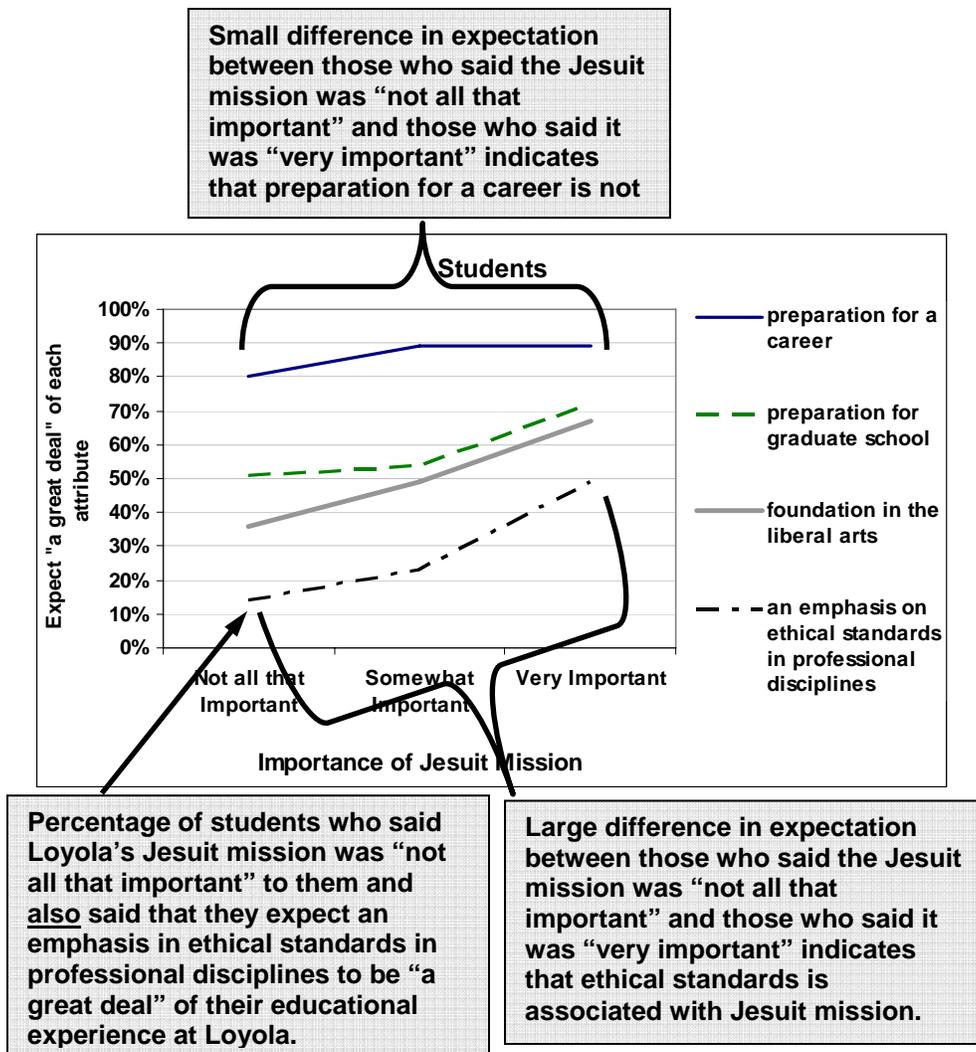


Figure 5. Sample chart for distinctiveness data

As evidenced by the upward sloping lines, most of the educational attributes resonated with students and parents as being “Jesuit” but some resonated more strongly than others. In the following analysis, a difference of 25% points between the expectation of any particular educational attribute between those who said the Jesuit mission was not important and those who said it was “very important” is deemed to be an indicator of distinctiveness of the attribute.

Learning

Student responses indicate that a foundation in the liberal arts and an emphasis on ethical standards are more highly associated with Jesuit education than are preparation for graduate school or a career. Parents, on the other hand, tend to expect all of those educational aims regardless of their feelings about the importance of Loyola’s Jesuit mission. See Figure 6.

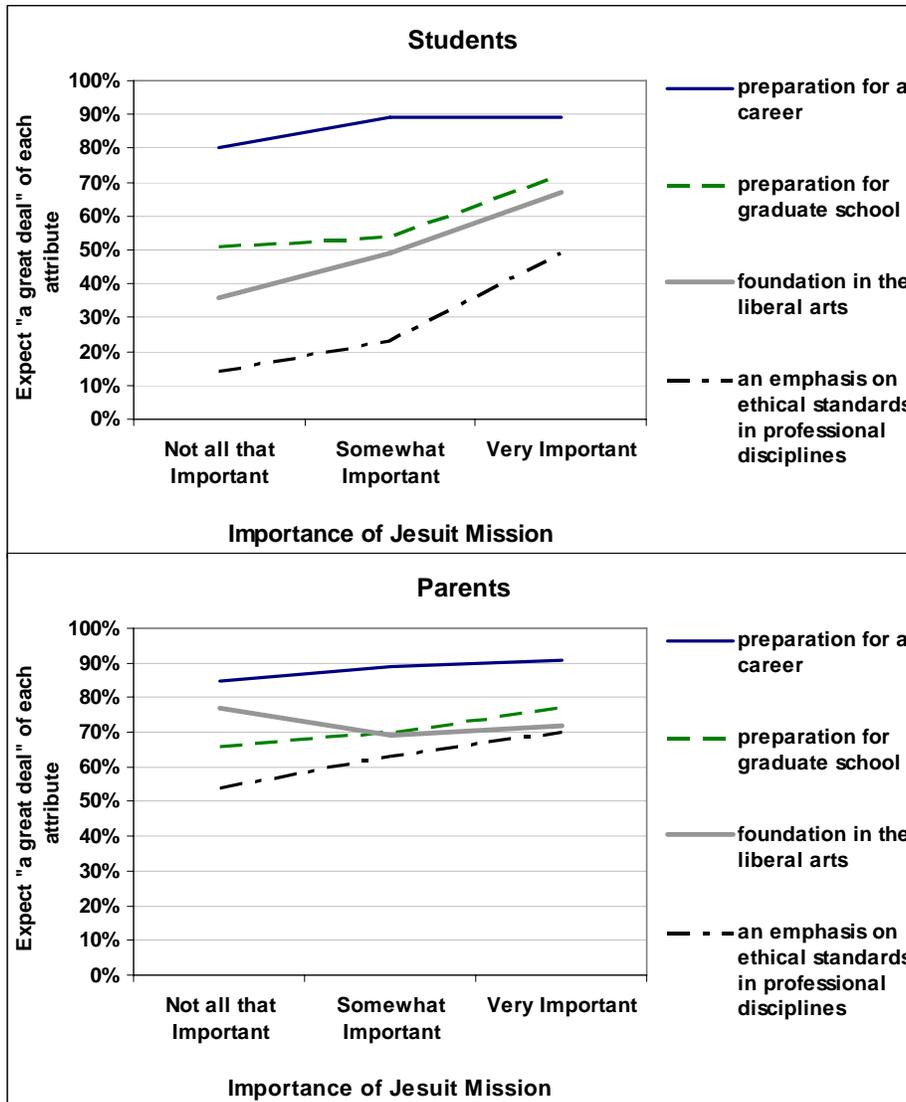


Figure 6. The Jesuit distinction in learning outcomes

Leading and Spirituality

Students view opportunities for spiritual growth and an emphasis on interpersonal ethics as being distinctly Jesuit. Quite time for reflection also appears to be strongly associated with the importance of Jesuit mission but because the expectation for that is so low among students—only 29% expect it to be “a great deal” of their Loyola experience—it does not fall within our 25% difference threshold. See Figure 7.

Parents are similar in their views about spiritual growth but also associate physical wellness with Jesuit education. While parents’ expectations for education around interpersonal ethics and reflection do increase with the importance of Jesuit education, the differences are not as strong as they are among students. See Figure 7.

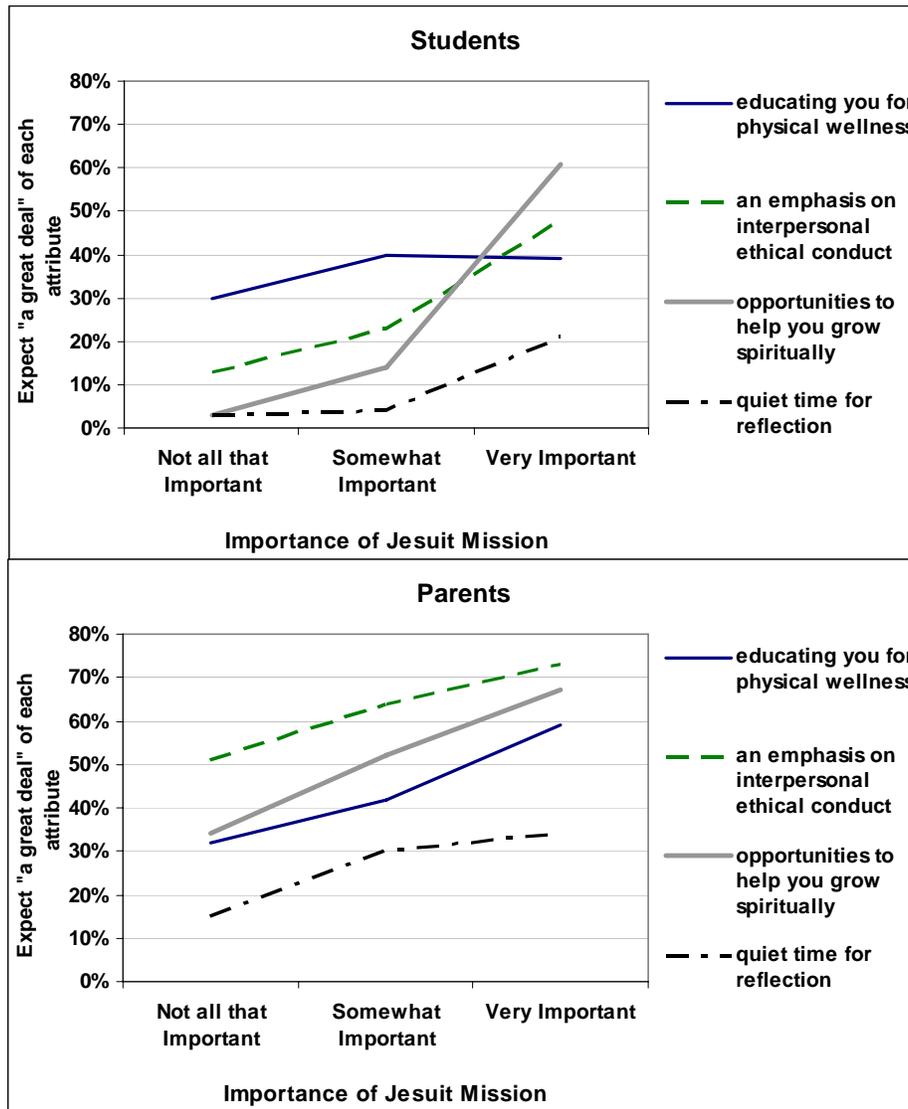


Figure 7. The Jesuit distinction in leadership preparation and spirituality

Serving in a Diverse World

Some of the largest differences in expectations among students with regard to Jesuit education are in the area of preparation for serving in a diverse world. Commitment to diversity, opportunities for non-classroom cultural activities, and community service opportunities were all expected at higher rates among students for whom the Jesuit mission is very important as opposed to those who do not find the Loyola's Jesuit mission important to them personally. The trend among parents is similar although it does not meet the 25% difference threshold for distinctiveness. See Figure 8.

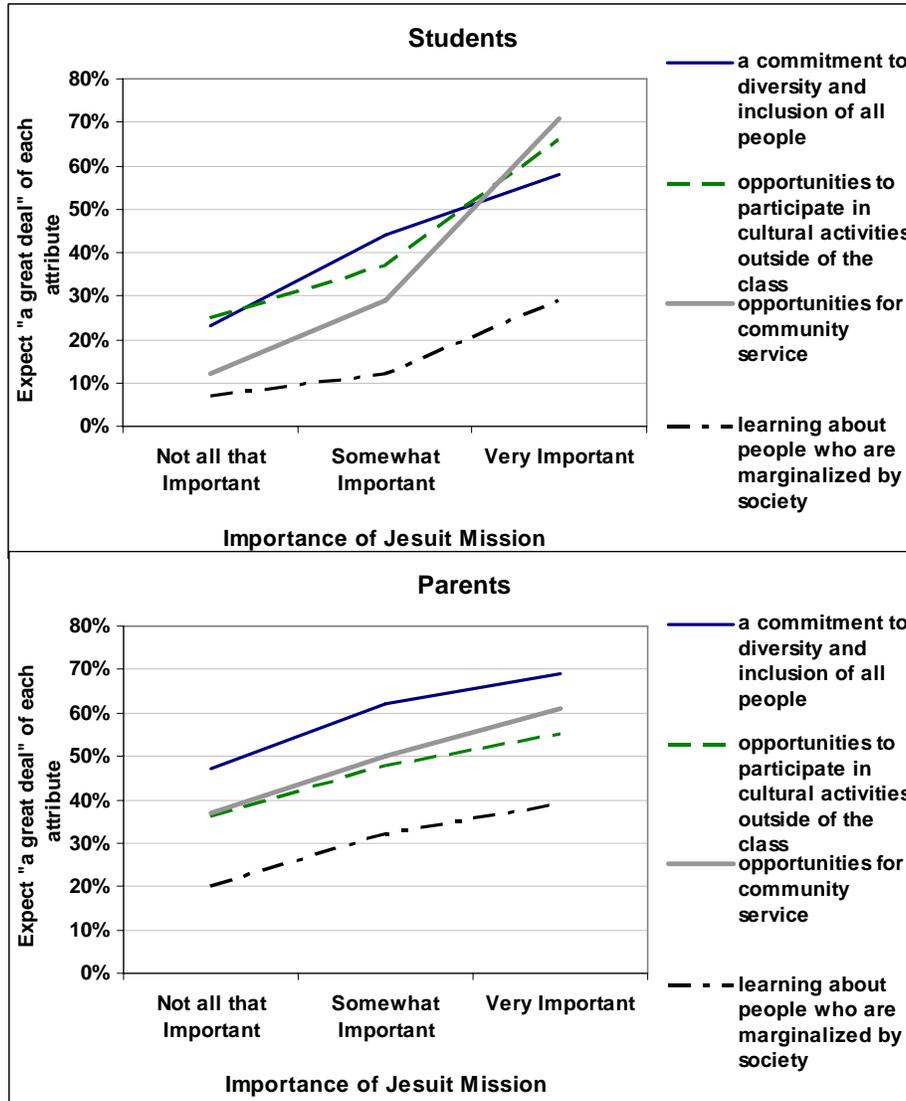


Figure 8. The Jesuit distinction in service and diversity

Summary

While the Jesuit mission is important to both students and parents, parents tend to be more invested in the Jesuit mission and also feel that is less important to students than it really is. While parents may underestimate the importance of Jesuit education—as a whole—to their students, there are some elements of Jesuit education where students and parents have clearly different expectations. These include: emphasis on ethics both professional and interpersonal, opportunities for spiritual growth, commitments to diversity and inclusion, and community service.

Students seem to associate the liberal arts, an emphasis on ethical standards in professions, an emphasis on interpersonal ethics, opportunities for spiritual growth, commitment to diversity, opportunities for non-classroom cultural activities, and community service with Jesuit education. This suggests that students have a better understanding of the characteristics of a Jesuit education than their parents realize.