

## “Research in a University of the Society of Jesus from the Perspective of the Mission”<sup>1</sup>

Julio Martínez SJ.

Julio L. Martínez, a professor of Moral Theology and former Rector at Universidad Pontificia Comillas, discusses university research within Jesuit universities from a mission perspective. His article delves into how Jesuit educational institutions integrate their mission with academic research. Martínez provides detailed insights into the relationship between university research in Jesuit institutions and the perspective of the Ignatian mission.

### Key Concepts: Research, Jesuit University, Mission

#### Jesuit University Mission:

While maintaining their identity as Catholic institutions, Jesuit universities must adhere to the core university missions of research, teaching, and service to society. Integrating Jesuit and Catholic values, they must uphold their autonomy, integrity, and honesty as academic institutions. A Jesuit university is characterised by its commitment to Ignatian spirituality, faith, justice, culture, and dialogue. This non-neutral stance acknowledges its ethical commitments openly.

#### Internal Goods of University Activity

1. Teaching-Learning:

- **Comprehensive Development:** Teaching is geared towards comprehensive student development, aiming to produce competent professionals and individuals of moral character.
- **Jesuit approach to education:** The Jesuit model, particularly the Ledesma-Kolvenbach model, emphasises forming students into well-rounded individuals with informed solidarity and responsibility.
- **Intellectual Rigour and Creativity:** Teaching should integrate intellectual rigour with practical reflection and creativity to foster a more humane, just, and sustainable world.

2. Research:

- **Advancing Knowledge:** Research aims to advance knowledge and its application, driven by the pursuit of truth within each scientific discipline.
- **Impacting Society:** Development and innovation are essential components, with research impacting society positively.

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<sup>1</sup> Original text in Spanish. “Investigación en una Universidad de la Compañía de Jesús desde la perspectiva de la Misión”.

- **Publishing and Scrutiny:** Publishing research and subjecting it to scientific scrutiny is crucial.
- **Academic Freedom and Rigour:** Maintaining academic freedom and rigour is vital to ensuring that research upholds human dignity and justice.

### 3. Complementarity of Teaching and Research:

While some debate exists, teaching and research are complementary, especially at the doctoral level. Jesuit universities in Spain must balance their strong teaching reputation with enhanced research efforts to effectively serve faith and justice.

#### **Preambles for Effective Research**

**Search for Truth:** Universities must passionately pursue truth, integrating it with teaching, learning, and research. This pursuit is not neutral; it inherently involves ethical and value-laden dimensions.

**Motivation and Institutional Support:** Researchers' motivation is crucial but must be supported by institutional policies and resources. Institutions should ensure research teams have the necessary support and critical mass to thrive, often benefiting from inter-university collaborations.

**Necessary Infrastructures:** Effective research and teaching require comprehensive university infrastructure and services. All university roles, regardless of perceived prestige, are essential and should be valued equally. The Jesuit distinction between "mission" and tasks emphasises that even humble tasks are significant when viewed as part of a broader mission.

#### **Balancing Research, Teaching, and Service**

The author highlights the importance of balancing research, teaching, and service to society while stressing the autonomy, integrity, and honesty inherent to Jesuit universities. Emphasis is placed on the practical application of research for societal transformation, with active involvement from relevant stakeholders.

#### **Ethical and Quality Standards in Research**

The document delves into internal goods within university activities, particularly in teaching and research, and underscores the imperative of upholding rigorous ethical and quality standards in research endeavours.

#### **Setting Research Priorities**

The document highlights the necessity of setting research priorities in light of resource constraints. It advocates for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. It emphasises the importance of research being oriented towards the practical transformation of society, with a clear connection and participation of social actors. In summary, the document

advocates for a research approach in Jesuit universities that combines the noble ideals of the Ignatian mission with the pragmatic need to respond to society's challenges.

### **Conclusion**

Martínez's article emphasises the unique mission of Jesuit universities, which integrates rigorous academic research with their commitment to faith, justice, culture, and dialogue. This mission-centric approach demands that these institutions balance their teaching and research efforts, ensuring both are conducted with integrity, ethical commitment, and a focus on the common good.

By: Susana Di Trolio, Spain, 2024.