A historical case study to examine the response of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) to Hurricane Katrina

Victoria McCardell Harpool

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A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF THE RESPONSE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (AJCU) TO HURRICANE KATRINA

by

Victoria McCardell Harpool

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

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Dedication

Written by Don Schlitz and Thom Schuyler, the song *Point of Light* was recorded by Randy Travis in 1991. I dedicate this labor of love to the points of light in my life and around the world that seek to provide support and love to those who live without. It is my greatest hope that, in part due to my struggled example, my boys will be points of light to the world.

There is a point, when you cannot walk away
When you have to stand up straight and tall and mean the words you say
There is a point you must decide to do it ‘cause it’s right,
That’s when you become a point of light.

All it takes is a point of light.
A ray of hope in the darkest night
If you see what’s wrong, and you try to make it right
You will be a point of light
Acknowledgements

I owe my deepest gratitude to the faculty members willing to serve on my committee. Dr. Eric Platt, your encouragement to follow my passion and the support I needed to see it through has been invaluable. Dr. Colton Cockrum and Dr. Bill Akey, I appreciate your feedback and your levity as I navigate through the dissertation process. Dr. Jane Chauvin, who began teaching me at Loyola University New Orleans in 2002, I cannot express my appreciation for your 20 years of inspiration and guidance from my earliest days in higher education to today.

I could not have completed this academic journey without the support of my family. The unwavering support and continuous encouragement I received from you all made this endeavor possible. The three years I spent working on my doctorate have been full of major life events, and I am lucky that y’all were able to make space for my education while raising little ones, growing professionally, and making houses into homes.

I must also thank the 14 individuals that shared their memories with me as participants in the oral history. I am honored that you all were willing to share your time and insights with me.
Abstract

The purpose of this historical case study is to examine the response of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The AJCU is a voluntary association of 28 Jesuit higher education institutions rooted in the Jesuit charism that centers on God’s desire for a direct relationship with creation, appreciation for the works of mankind as an expression of the goodness of God, and a deep call to service to God’s creation. In the days following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the Association extended an invitation to students at Loyola University New Orleans to attend one of the sister institutions for the fall 2005 semester. In addition to universal acceptance and enrollment, in all but one instance, displaced students were not charged tuition by the host institution.

The historic case study is an evaluation of how the Jesuit mission may have impacted the AJCU to assist students and the institution of Loyola New Orleans after the storm. Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory (OIT) serves as a conceptual framework to determine if the AJCU acted in alignment with the stated mission. OIT notes that a true assessment of how embedded an institution’s mission is can only be made in times of great disruption or crisis as mission is not challenged in the day-to-day governing of an organization. OIT establishes three criteria that compose an institution’s identity – those characteristics which are central, enduring, and distinctive to the organization. For mission to be upheld, institutions act in accordance with those characteristics.

In addition to historical and archival research, 14 individuals participated in oral history interviews to provide recollections of accepting and enrolling students and the motivation behind those actions. Participants include institutional Presidents, leadership, and Loyola University New Orleans students. The study is a first step in evaluating how mission impacts the ways
higher education institutions act in times of crisis and suggests that a pre-established network rooted in a shared mission is crucial for postsecondary institutions to continue to serve students as the incidence and severity of natural disasters increase.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Just days after Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans, Louisiana, students from Loyola University New Orleans were afforded the opportunity to attend any of the other 27 sister Jesuit higher education institutions in the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) in 2005 (AJCU). Moreover, most of the displaced students were provided these positions free of tuition and fees by the AJCU (M. Di Leonardo, personal communication, September 7, 2005). No other religious or Catholic postsecondary institutions made the same comprehensive offer of unrestricted acceptance; due to the timing of the hurricane just days before the start of the fall 2005 semester, state and federal financial aid had already been disbursed to Loyola University New Orleans, making rapid shifts in enrollment difficult for students.

The Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits, is a Roman Catholic order of priests known for their work as missionaries and educators around the world. While the role of missionary was an articulated tenet, the papal bull establishing the order made no mention of the Jesuits as teachers (O’Malley, 2014). With the approval of Pope Paul III and the help of nine other University of Paris graduates, Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1540 to act as missionaries across the globe, expressly serving at the will of the Pope (O’Malley, 1993). The charge to spread the Gospel globally, coupled with Ignatius’ view that God could be found in all things, made for a unique dedication to the Creator and creation.

The 28 independent universities of the AJCU developed with a foundation in Jesuit learning theory and pedagogy, an integral belief that learning is a never-ending journey. Furthermore, each facet stems from two central Jesuit beliefs: God is present in
the lives of humans and learning should be communal in nature. While “Thinking Globally and Acting Locally” the AJCU forms a network of institutions across the United States with a central mission of service to others (Leighter & Smythe, 2019). As the world is ever changing, knowledge cannot be stagnant; to be alive is to be learning about the world and searching for one’s place within the world.

AJCU Response to Hurricane Katrina

Jesuit spirituality couples the ability to see God in all things with service to those in need. This spiritual foundation largely facilitated the AJCU’s assistance to Loyola University of New Orleans’ students after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Numerous charitable organizations offered some financial support to students, while many universities waived or extended transfer deadlines and provided advisor services to displaced students. Answering the call to assist those in need in the community, the AJCU quickly coordinated with the 27 other institutions to offer a solution—just nine days after the levee breach and only three days after Loyola University New Orleans officially announced its fall semester closure. The rapid action was not only unique under the circumstances but provides an opportunity to examine the Jesuit response in times of crisis. According to Jesuit philosophy, God seeks direct communion with people, and as a result, service to humanity is service to God (Gray, 2000). The Jesuit charism compelled AJCU institutions to act in service of students from Loyola and New Orleans; the devastation of Hurricane Katrina provided opportunity to live up to the call to be of service to the most in need.

After Hurricane Katrina, the AJCU welcomed students displaced from Loyola New Orleans, as well as postsecondary institutions across the city of New Orleans and
Mississippi Gulf Coast. These weathered, displaced college students were entreated to continue their studies rooted in Ignatian pedagogy - an example of how the Jesuits are guided by their belief in God’s presence in all people. AJCU institutions accepted displaced students in their totality - as scholars in pursuit of a degree and individuals grieving a dramatic loss. The Association, both as an institution and through its thousands of priests, professors, and staff, provided aid to transient students. These students often travelled with only a few possessions as the catastrophic failure of the levee system was not anticipated at the time of evacuation (Lorenz, 2006). In addition, all but one institution, Saint Louis University, did not charge students additional tuition and allowed all tuition revenue generated to remain with Loyola New Orleans (K. Wildes, personal communication, May 25, 2022).

Members of the AJCU attempted to model humble service as directed by Ignatius of Loyola by extending support and services without the expectation of tuition compensation from students. God is in all things, including the postsecondary student displaced by Hurricane Katrina; therefore, AJCU institutions felt called to the challenge of living out Ignatian spirituality in the community. For example, Boston College reopened a residence hall set for remodeling to house evacuated students (N. Drier, personal communication, April 12, 2022). Loyola University Chicago’s faculty and staff also opened their homes to help facilitate the difficult transition. Alumni from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama worked with local businesses to provide students with school and living essentials as most evacuated with only a few base possessions. Loyola New Orleans students were also given the opportunity to continue their Jesuit education via the Jesuit Distance Education Network (JesuitNET) which provides access to over
300 interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate courses: all anchored in the ideals of Jesuit spirituality (Di Leonardo, Melissa 2005).

**Overview of Society of Jesus**

In order to analyze the response of the AJCU in response to Hurricane Katrina, it is necessary to have a greater understanding of the traditions and teachings of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius of Loyola developed the *Spiritual Exercises* in the early 16th century as a guide for religious teaching, meditation, and spiritual transformation (Platt, 2014). For the purposes of this dissertation, Jesuit charism and Ignatian spirituality are used interchangeably. Ignatian spirituality centers on the understanding that God desires to engage with creation – to engage with God’s creation is to engage with God. Therefore, the Jesuit motto Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam, “for the Greater Glory of God,” is a reminder that God can be found even in the most mundane of human tasks and lowliest of creatures (Platt, 2014). Today, Jesuits and students of Ignatian spirituality understand: to act as men and women for others is to act in service of God (Mitchell, 1998).

In 1599, the Ignatius produced the *Ratio Studiorum* which contained the structure and principles that are the backbone of Ignatian pedagogy in formal education. Foundational to Jesuit learning theory are the ideas that individuals are active participants in learning and that education is a lifelong pursuit. Schooling should not focus exclusively on the acquisition of information and acceptable behaviors; rather, learning is forging a path of self-exploration of the mind, body, and spirit (Boston College Jesuit Community, 1994). Abbé Claude Yvon, a freemason and controversial Catholic historian of the late 1700s, showed appreciation for Jesuit spirituality in that the charism encouraged - rather than dissuaded - critical thinking, intellect, and lifelong learning at a
time when blind acceptance of dogma was the typical expectation of Catholic laymen and priests alike (Burson, 2019). Jesuit principles also dictate that acquiring knowledge necessitates action for the betterment of the world as a means of recognizing the call do all things for the greater glory of God (Ganss, 1954).

Being men and women for others also means being stewards of God’s creation and necessitates a critical discussion of how people interact with the Earth. In 2015, Pope Francis, a Jesuit, released *Laudato Si*, “Our Common Home,” in which he notes that “our environment is a member of the world’s poor, and the solutions to environmental challenges are necessarily entwined with solutions to human poverty and inequality, including material, community and spiritual poverty” (Leighter & Smythe, 2019, p.6). Ignatian pedagogy necessitates being men and women for others and thinking critically about the wellbeing of all aspects of God’s creation, most especially marginalized communities, which leads to an interesting juxtaposition for those following Ignatian pedagogy. Those most affected by changes in the Earth’s climate are the least likely to have contributed to the issue (Leighter & Smythe, 2019). Therefore, Ignatian pedagogy requires all interactions—with humanity and nature—to reflect the belief that God is in all things.

**Statement of Problem**

While there has been significant study of how organizations and higher education institutions respond to emergencies and natural disasters, there is less known about how institutional mission motivates crisis response. Most research correlating Hurricane Katrina and other significant hurricanes along the Mississippi Gulf coast with higher education has centered on coordinating logistics for evacuations, locating emergency
placement of both student and staff, and focusing on the most immediate threats to individual and campus safety. At the time, Hurricane Katrina necessitated the longest closure of higher education institutions in modern history (McCullar, 2011). Current scholarship focuses on the actions taken by over 1,000 colleges around the US to provide assistance to displaced students, but the analysis lacks the inclusion of mission as a key factor in the motivation to provide assistance. To effectively understand the values and identity of the organization that caused the AJCU to respond to Hurricane Katrina in the way it did, further study is required.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain insights into how mission and organizational identity motivate institutions during times of crisis through an examination of the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina. Other philanthropic organizations and higher education institutions provided assistance to displaced students and staff, but the swift, coordinated efforts by AJCU may indicate a motivation more akin to a moral imperative than simple concern for the wellbeing of others. The study seeks to understand both how organizational identity motivated the AJCU and how the policies and practices that predate Hurricane Katrina facilitated the timely efforts to aid displaced students.

Disruptions in higher education linked to natural disasters are growing as climate change induces more dramatic weather events (Walsh, et al., 2014). Hurricanes, tornados, floods, fires, and blizzards can all cause significant physical destruction and the closure of higher education campuses. While the COVID-19 pandemic has provided insight on how higher education institutions may pivot students to online learning, there remains a need to investigate how natural disasters with more significant disruptions to
the physical plant of a campus can be addressed so students may remain enrolled and earning credits of value toward a degree. For example, on the 16\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana and caused major disruptions of the electrical grid in the Greater New Orleans area. As noted on Facebook two days after Ida’s landfall, Spring Hill College, a member of the AJCU located in Mobile, Alabama, welcomed Loyola University New Orleans students to campus with an invitation to remain as long as was necessary (Spring Hill College [status update], September 1, 2020). The identity of the AJCU is based on the Jesuit charism that necessitates action when others are in need. Spring Hill College President E. Joseph Lee noted, “This is part of our tradition of service. But most important, it’s following Christ’s example of helping those in need” (Girardot, 2021).

**Conceptual Framework**

The identity of the AJCU is rooted in Ignatian values, and as such, the actions of the organization can validate institutional claims of mission alignment. The study will utilize Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory to evaluate the alignment of the stated values of the Jesuit charism with the actions of the AJCU over time (1985). Organizational Identity Theory establishes three criteria by which to evaluate coherence between what an institution does and what it claims to be. The response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina will be measured through adherence to prior claims of central character, enduring nature, and distinctiveness. As the only AJCU network in the United States, there are no similar organizations to provide an exact comparison; therefore, the validity of the organization’s identity must be examined for alignment to the teachings of the founder and prior actions or the organization. A history of the Society of Jesus and
the development of the Jesuit charism will inform the analysis of why the AJCU was faced with an imperative to act in the assistance of students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Research Questions

The following research questions address the impact of mission on the actions of the AJCU following Hurricane Katrina.

1. What influence did the Jesuit charism have on the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina?

2. Did the AJCU act in alignment with its organizational identity as a Jesuit institution of higher education?

3. What can be learned about the importance of mission in the response of higher education institutions to increasingly frequent natural disasters?

Research Design

The historical case study utilizes interviews, historical documents, current publications, and communications to establish the actions of the AJCU and the Jesuit charism that provided the foundation for assistance. Through outreach and interviews with members of the AJCU, the comprehensively affected students and faculty from Loyola University were interviewed for their experiences. Jesuit writings and interviews with Jesuit university leadership provide both a proper context to understand the actions of the AJCU and are used to analyze the role of mission in the decision to provide comprehensive assistance. While the content of interviews range to include topics such as the overall mission of Jesuit higher education, analysis for this dissertation is closely linked to days leading up to and immediately following the AJCU’s decision to provide
assistance as the conceptual framework narrows in on the actual decision making for alignment rather than the long-term specifics of how plans are implemented.

**Significance of Study**

Climate change continues to produce more dramatic natural disasters, and higher education institutions must prepare a means to keep students engaged while physical damage to campuses is mitigated. The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities provides an example of an organization – group of higher education institutions brought together by mission and held together through mutual support – able to offer students the opportunity to continue their Jesuit education despite the overwhelming devastation in the city of New Orleans.

**Assumptions**

The study is accomplished with the documents provided by, and interviews with, staff members and institutional leaders from the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities; therefore, it is assumed that documents have not been altered, and the interviewees are honest with their recollections. The same must also be assumed of the prior Loyola students and staff interviews.

**Delimitations**

The study does not attempt to catalogue all actions taken by the AJCU, or its member institutions, for evaluation of alignment to the Jesuit charism. Undoubtedly, there are instances in which the organization or individual institutions made decisions in conflict with Ignatian spirituality. However, the historical case study analysis draws on the example of the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina as an example of dedication to community enshrined in the charism. It is appropriate to focus on Hurricane Katrina
specifically as Albert and Whetten (1985) stress an organization’s identity is not made in the trivial, day-to-day decisions. Living the mission happens when an organization chooses to act in alignment with stated values even when such action requires true sacrifice.

Limitations

Two obvious limitations are access to archival material and the willingness of Jesuit leaders to share both materials and candid thoughts. Also, the age of leadership at AJCU institutions may limit access or recollections of individuals. Particularly, Charles Currie, S.J. who was AJCU President at the time of Hurricane Katrina and spearheaded the response passed away in 2019 leaving some details and considerations unable to be examined. Additionally, the COVID-19 global pandemic restricts the frequency and probability of in-person interviews and access to physical archives. Conducting interviews via a visual internet platform may dampen the impact.

Summary

The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities provided admittance to all Loyola University New Orleans students in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In all but one case, students were allowed to attend sister institutions at no additional tuition expense, thereby able to continue their Jesuit education without additional financial burden. The Jesuit charism is rooted in the idea that God is present in all things; therefore, service to man and creation is a means of glorifying God. Natural disasters have increased and will continue to disrupt higher education studies, but whether higher education institutions are all ready for this change is uncertain. However, the AJCU was able to mobilize assistance for displaced students just days after the announcement that
Loyola University New Orleans would be closed for the duration of the fall 2005 semester. The organizational identity of being men and women for others required that the AJCU give assistance to displaced students and serves as a case study for how mission influences the decision-making of higher education institutions in times of crisis.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

As the rate of educational disruptions due to natural disasters increases and climate change spurns more dramatic temperature conditions and severe weather-related events, higher education institutions must prepare for situations of significant disruptions in the administration and delivery of higher education, as evidenced by Hurricane Katrina’s destruction of both New Orleans, Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2005. While there is significant literature on the effects of natural disasters on organizational identity, there is little study of how organizational identity and stated mission affect the response of higher education to crisis or catastrophic events. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the response of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities to Hurricane Katrina as a reflection of Jesuit charism and dedication to social justice. An understanding of the principles and practices that make up the Jesuit higher education identity and utilized by the AJCU can be used to inform higher education’s response to catastrophic events in the future.

Organizational Identity Theory

The conceptual framework by which the actions of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) following Hurricane Katrina will be analyzed is Albert and Whetten’s 1985 Organization Identity Theory updated in 2006 (Whetten, 2006). Albert and Whetten argue an organization’s identity is comprised of an organization’s distinguishing characteristics as well as its enduring characteristics. Organizational Identity Theory establishes three criteria to evaluate organization’s identity: central character, endurance, and distinctiveness (CEDs). These criteria are referenced in identity related discourse triggered by situations in which a simple cost-benefit analysis is
insufficient to guide organizational behavior. When an organization’s identity is challenged or the more practical pitted against the philosophical, organizational identity referents should act as anchors by which institutions make decisions to guide the organization. Organizational identity serves as a constitution for the organization, providing the foundational nature, justifying the organization’s existence, and creating the ultimate test of alignment with organizational mission (Whetten & Macky, 2002).

If an organizational identity is valid, CEDs will play an instrumental part in the institution’s decision making. Because the legitimacy of organizational identity is derived from adherence to CEDs, it is imperative the identity referencing dialogue produce CED aligned actions. Organizations make thousands of decisions each day, yet not all require a mindful examination of institutional mission. However, CEDs produce a type of categorical imperative for organizations; either the organization acts upon the identity claims or forgoes the unique organizational identity (Whetten, 2006).

Thus, the study of the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina serves as an important organizational identity case study, demonstrating the repercussions of grave external crises on institutions. The AJCU members are all higher education institutions with legitimacy anchored to academic excellence, with a rigorous curriculum facilitated by financial security. At the same time, the AJCU are all Jesuit institutions with an identity rooted in social justice and a call to serve the neediest of the community as a means of serving God. Thus, it is appropriate to examine organizational identity claims of the AJCU that allowed for such a swift, robust response to displaced students following Hurricane Katrina. The response of ACJU serves as a case study of
foundational policies and practices that made the ACJU response to Hurricane Katrina possible and aligned to organizational identity.

**Foundations and Assumptions**

Underlying Albert and Whetten’s Organization Identity Theory are two key assumptions about identity. First, organizations are greater than the sum of their parts. Organizations represent “a collective actor” rather than “a collection of actors” (Whetten, 2006 p. 221). Whetten and Mackey (2002) further clarify an organization examined with the Organizational Identity Theory is singular; it is the study of the identity of an organization – not the identity in organizations. Second, an organization’s identity is, to a degree, subjective. It encompasses the actor’s own sense of uniqueness and how the resulting value structure motivates the organization’s interactions within the community and society at large. Identity goes far beyond the traits used to describe an organization; it is an outward manifestation of how the organization’s collective identity is used to guide the actions of the organization when crucial decisions must be made.

Organizational Identity Theory includes the three components by which an organization provides legitimate identity claims in adherence to central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics (CEDs). When an institution has put forth an identity, it must be willing to work within the bounds of the CEDs or lose legitimacy. Organizational Identity Theory also examines the functional validation of CEDs when the organization is challenged. Decisions with few long-term consequences do not rely on CEDs and have few lasting effects. Decision-makers may feel the weight of the decision on the character of the organization, or for organizations with significant longevity in CEDs, Albert and Whetten (1985) note leaders may report not to have made a decision at all, countering
with “this is just who we are” as evidence of the “routinization of charism” (p 278).

Either way, when the very nature of the organization is challenged, the stakes are more than just the vitality of the organization; the validity of the organization is in question. In such situations, decisions become categorical imperatives for the organization, lest it lose the essence of its identity captured by CEDs (Whetten, 2006).

**Central, Enduring, and Distinctive**

The structural domain of the Organizational Identity Theory lays out three criteria necessary to establish the identity of an organization: central character, distinctiveness, and temporal continuity – also called enduring nature. These three criteria make up the CEDs that are used to validate an organization’s identity claims. Once the identity referents are established, the organization can be judged as effective or trustworthy in relation to its fidelity to self-identified standards (Whetten, 2006).

The first criterion of the Organizational Identity Theory is central character, which encapsulates the essence of the organization as established by its members and rooted in the ideal manifestation of such an institution. Character is everything the organization claims to be particularly in reference to similar organizations. Central character claims are validated through behaviors aligned to exemplary practices associated with the ideal manifestation of organization of that type. To establish an organizational identity, institutions need to occupy a unique social space based on self-determined attributes, distinguishing itself as an institution—truly separate from all similar entities. According to Rao, Davis, and Ward “organizations acquire a social identity from the industry to which they belong, the organizational form they use, and through membership in accrediting bodies” (Rao, Davis, and Ward 2000, as cited by
Whetten, 2006, p. 222). Organizational leaders use central character as a means of establishing who they are, who should be considered peers, and how they should relate to one another and society.

While the criterion of central character is integral in establishing what an organization is, it is just as important to lay out the characteristics articulating and defining what an organization is not. It is vitally important for an organization to establish how it is unique among peers. The institution leaves its survival to chance if it cannot distinguish itself fully from other organizations. If there are no discernable differences between institutions, members do not have a reason to select one organization over another. The importance of the central character and distinctiveness criteria help the organization carve out a unique niche from which to operate and allows for clarity of mission for those outside of the organization. Institutions with a mature organizational identity will be able to clearly articulate the character of the organization – what it is and what it is not.

The last criterion of Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory is the ability of central character and distinctiveness to endure both over time and across circumstances. The central character and distinctive criteria are defined by its members. These criteria establish the parameters by which to judge the consistency of an institution’s actions, thus determining the true enduring nature of an organization. Organizations that consistently act in alignment with stated values build trust among the community; reliability yields institutional security. “Organizations are best known by their deepest commitments – what they repeatedly commit to be, through time and across circumstances” (Whetten, 2006 p. 224). The enduring criterion evaluates the consistency
with which an organization lives up to the central character and distinctiveness identity referents to ultimately judge the validity of an organization’s identity.

Claims of central character and distinctiveness contribute to an organization’s identity, but it is ultimately the organization’s commitment to act upon the conceptual components—the enduring criteria—that completes a valid organizational identity. Albert and Whetten outline two means by which to contextualize actions for consideration as a demonstration of enduring nature. First, the actions of organizations can be compared externally to establish continuity. Alignment among peer institutions across circumstances would indicate such behaviors are demonstrations of continuity over time. Organizations can validate lasting nature with enduring behaviors consistent with the hallmark traits of a particular type of institution. Second, organizational actions can be compared internally to demonstrate consistency. Claims of an enduring nature can be verified against the prior actions of the organization itself. The use of internal validation to demonstrate continuity over time is more common for organizations with a significant history or charismatic founder (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Institutional leaders seek guidance in the context of the organizations previous decisions, or they simply act in alignment with what is believed to be the path of the founder. Both external and internal validation provide a means to validate an organization’s claims that central character and distinctiveness are indeed demonstrated consistently such that the behavior becomes one with the nature of the organization.

**Organizational Identity Theory and the AJCU**

Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory can be used to evaluate the functional decisions of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the
aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In the wake of the 2005 hurricane, thousands of students studying in Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast were unable to continue studies at their home institutions. One such affected institution and prime example of Organizational Identity Theory under pressure is Loyola University New Orleans. During this time, a difficult decision was presented to the AJCU pitting both the financial and practical against the functional identity of their organization—creating an imperative to provide hurricane assistance if alignment with CEDs was to be maintained. The AJCU establishes their organizational identity based on seeing themselves as higher education institutions rooted in Jesuit charism, maintaining academic legitimacy through regional accreditation and loyalty to the Jesuit identity. The Jesuit dedication to social justice and humanitarian efforts countered the necessity of the AJCU to remain educationally and financially viable higher education institutions; thus, aspects of the institutional identity came into conflict, requiring one set of obligations to be placed before another (Meyer & Scott, 1983). The AJCU considered CEDs when determining how to respond to the identity imperative regarding the assistance of displaced students from Loyola University New Orleans.

The central character of the AJCU is twofold. First, the AJCU is an association rooted in the teaching of Ignatius of Loyola requiring training in critical thinking coupled with an enduring dedication to service of others. The AJCU also makes clear the central claim of organizational identity as resting squarely with degree-granting colleges and universities. As a result, the AJCU requires all members maintain institutional level accreditation - considered a most basic criteria of all legitimate institutions of higher
The distinguishing criterion necessitates the AJCU articulate the characteristics required to claim the Jesuit higher education institution identity while also making clear those attributes that would necessitate exclusion. In addition to higher education, AJCU institutions have religion as part of their organizational identity; however, not all higher education institutions with a religious affiliation meet the standard for inclusion in AJCU. Not even all Roman Catholic universities meet the threshold for membership in the AJCU; yes, the institution must be Roman Catholic, but it must also be Jesuit. In addition, there are numerous institutions through which an individual may acquire knowledge, but the AJCU has defined itself as a grantor of recognized postsecondary credentials, not merely a site dedicated to teaching and learning.

In the case of the AJCU, the central character and distinguishing criterion are integral to defining what constitutes an organization, but they are not the only elements of identity to consider. As a collective of the willing (AJCU Constitution, 2020), the AJCU must seek optimal distinctiveness both outside and within the AJCU (Brewer, 2003). Brewer’s (2003) principle of optimal distinctiveness seeks to find the ideal balance between the competing desires for both assimilation for belonging and distinctiveness to remain unique. From the outside, the AJCU must balance between the desire for community with other higher education institutions and those characteristics which uniquely identify it as not just religious or Catholic - but Jesuit. While members of the AJCU do not discriminate against students, faculty, or staff on the basis of religion, Jesuit values hold a unique place in the organizational identity of member institutions. From
within, the AJCU must account for both its individual institutional autonomy and the characteristics allowing each organizational institution to remain uniquely identifiable—all while remaining recognizable as a single organization (Whetten, 2006). The AJCU website indicates the organization is made up of “28 Institutions: 1 Shared Mission” emphasizing the diversity of locations from coast to coast, and its educational offerings ranging from strictly undergraduate liberal arts to a major doctoral, research university (AJCU Jesuit Colleges and Universities, n.d-d). Even with the significant differences in institutional founding, history, and programs of study, all 28 ascribe to the collective without hindering individual autonomy or institutional accreditation.

The enduring criteria of Albert and Whetten’s (1985) Organizational Identity Theory is based on an institution’s ability to reinforce central character and distinguishing identity claims through action, ultimately maintaining a legitimate organizational identity. Validity of CED claims is solidified when an institution acts within the established organizational identity such that non-members may identify the organization through continuity of action. Organizations are most identifiable by the commitments made publicly and adhered to across time and circumstances. The enduring criteria measures the longevity of claims of centrality and distinctiveness. An organization’s identity is only as stable as it is enduring.

The legitimacy of organizational identity claims can be vetted through comparative and historical perspectives. In the case of the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina, providing limited admittance to colleges due to natural disasters is not outside of central character claims of higher education. In fact, other universities across the Gulf Coast and the nation made allowances for Loyola New Orleans students to register for
classes after traditional enrollments deadlines had passed (McCullar, 2011). To maintain the higher education characteristics of the organization’s identity, extending assistance was not required, nor did offering aid alter the nature of the organization itself. A unique feature of the support provided by AJCU is that students were not expected to pay tuition to the accepting institution, with St. Louis University being an outlier acting outside of the banded time frame of the historical case study (L. Thum, personal communication, April 27, 2022). On the practical side, federal student loans were already in process to be distributed to Loyola University New Orleans with little precedent for reassigning funds to different institution on such short notice; on top of which, the loans needed to cover costs at Loyola New Orleans could be significantly different than the accepting institution causing already displaced students to go further into debt. However, the CEDs associated with Jesuit charism moved the AJCU to view assistance as an act of service to students displaced from their university - especially poignant considering that many students were also experiencing the catastrophic loss of their homes, along with the lives of friends and family.

History can also be used to validate claims of CED alignment. In the case of the AJCU, Ignatius of Loyola and Jesuit ideology remains at the heart of each institution. While the AJCU is a young organization, the Jesuit order and resulting ideology are not; therefore, it is appropriate to evaluate an enduring organizational identity claim based on how Ignatius might have responded in the situation. The AJCU had a clear precedent set by Ignatius that the opportunity for education should not be inhibited by the ability to pay (O’Malley, 2000-b). Providing assistance to sister Jesuit universities has also been seen prior to the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina. In 1909, AJCU institutions aided
students after a fire damaged a portion of Spring Hill College’s campus in Mobile, Alabama (Kenny, 1931). Therefore, providing aid to students displaced by Hurricane Katrina is an ongoing expression of the enduring nature of the Society of Jesus and the AJCU.

**History of the Society of Jesus**

In order to more fully understand the context in which the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities made the decision to provide aid to displaced students, a history of the Jesuits order of priests is necessary. The Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, are a Roman Catholic order of priests founded by Ignatius of Loyola and approved by Pope Paul III in 1540 (O’Malley, 1993). The all-male order is known for the belief that God has a true desire to commune with creation. Because of that divine desire, the Jesuits have a willingness to see God in all things and have dedicated themselves in service to others. The Jesuits did not intend to be associated with teaching; nonetheless, the multidisciplinary approach and emphasis on critical thinking have secured the Jesuit’s a place among the more enduring pedagogical practices around the world.

**Founding of the Jesuit Order**

In 1491, Ignatius of Loyola was born a Basque nobleman and the youngest of 13 children. As a page to the Treasurer of the kingdom of Castile, Ignatius spent much of his young adulthood among the nobility where he developed a fondness for many of the vices associated with Court. Ignatius was known to be a hot-headed, womanizing, gambler easily provoked into a fight. As an officer in the Spanish military, he convinced his superiors to keep fighting a losing battle, despite being obviously outnumbered by the
French; however, fighting for one’s honor in the face of defeat is a luxury for officers remaining on the sidelines, not infantry men ordered into moral peril. During the battle, Ignatius’ legs were injured which left him bedridden for weeks and resulted in a perpetual limp, as one leg healed shorter than the other. As weeks of recovery dragged on, Ignatius submitted to the only entertainment available to him - books on the life of Christ and Catholic saints (O’Neal, 1995). It was during his convalescence from June 1521 to March 1522 that Ignatius experienced a religious conversion and decided to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem via Barcelona to walk in the ways of Christ. Eventually, the recuperated Ignatius laid down his sword and abandoned his fine clothing—humbly choosing the staff and sandals of a pilgrim—and traveled to a place of deep veneration to the Virgin Mary at the Catholic shrine to our Lady of Monserrat in Monserrat, Spain (O’Neal, 1995).

Ignatius’ journey to Jerusalem was derailed almost as soon as it began. After his dedication in Monserrat, a stop in Manresa turned into months of solitude and service. For 10 months, Ignatius worked with the ailing poor of the town, and praying for hours each day. Long periods of prayerful contemplation, along with his dedication to the most often forgotten in the community, formed the path Ignatius would use to lead others to know God (O’Neal, 1995). The ability to see God in all things would become a hallmark of the Order of the Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius.

Ignatius did eventually make it to Jerusalem but was soon sent home as tensions with the Turks made the area unsafe. Back in Spain, Ignatius considered joining the religious life; however, he could not speak or read Latin which was a basic requirement in the study of theology at the time. Therefore, at the age of 32, and among the young
boys of Barcelona, Ignatius began his journey into religious life (Ganss, 1954). After less than two years of somewhat disjointed study at the University of Alcalá, Ignatius transitioned to the University of Paris where he studied for the next seven years. Humanism guided the pedagogical practices such that “men sought for the thought of Aristotle in his writings, for the meaning of Scripture in the original text, and for the truths of theology in the works of the Fathers as well as in the scholastic commentators” (Ganss, 1954, p 13). At the age of 43, Ignatius earned his Master of Arts after years of training in grammar, logic, and rhetoric including study of works by Cicero, Virgil, and Boethius then culminating in extensive study of Aristotle’s treaties. The study of the secular and the spiritual in tandem is a unique aspect of the order and another unique facet of the Jesuit education philosophy (Ganss, 1954).

As a result of the unique conversion experience of Ignatius and his stated dedication to missionary work, the philosophy and practices of the Society of Jesus were markedly different than other apostolic religious communities of the time. Like other Catholic priests, Jesuits are all male and are not permitted to marry in order to live in full service to the Church. Diocesan priests, Roman Catholic priests associated with a geographical parish, take the vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty. Additionally, in the hierarchy of the church, Diocesan priests serve under the authority of a bishop. Furthermore, Jesuits take what is sometimes called the fourth vow - a vow of obedience to the Pope to serve as missionaries around the world – and work daily under the supervision of a Provincial reporting to a Superior General in Rome (Jesuits, n.d.-b). As directed by Pope Paul III, founding member Francis Xavier was already in route to India, to begin his ministry when the order establishing the Jesuits was signed by the pope in
For the Greater Glory of God

Ignatius wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* from 1522 to 1524 as a guide for Jesuit missionaries. In Ignatius’ teaching, he made it clear that coming to know God is a journey rather than a destination. Through his own conversion experience, Ignatius came to believe in *de arriba*, “from above,” as God’s desire to communicate with people (Gray, 2000). As described in *Exercises 15*, “the Creator deals directly with the creature, and the creature directly with his Creator and Lord” (O’Malley, 2014, p. 9). Jesuits were to act as facilitators to those on the path to communion with God; the *Spiritual Exercises* were explicit that the participant was to be shepherded by a Jesuit, but the road to knowing God was unique to each participant. The *Spiritual Exercises* lay out the roadmap for the journey but do not dictate the terms of the destination. The insistence that God communicates directly with people challenged the primacy of priests as the mouthpiece of Christ and lead to criticism of the Jesuits as not giving proper reverence to the sacraments. Other religious orders rebuked the Jesuits and left Ignatius to defend this position on the direct communication with God throughout the Inquisition (O’Malley, 2014). However, Ignatius and the Jesuits hold fast in the principle of *de arriba* as the backbone of Jesuit ideology. God desires to know his creation; thus, the Creator seeks to engage directly with people.

The Jesuit motto *Ad Majorem De Gloriam*, translated “for the Greater Glory of God,” asks the Jesuits to dedicate themselves to glorifying God through humble service to humanity and God’s creation – the grand and the mundane (Platt, 2014). Central to the
mission of the Jesuits is Jesus’ ministry to the poor; “the decision to follow Christ is to follow him as a humble, poor, and rejected within a culture that values wealth, power, influence, and prestige” (Gray, 2000, p. 8). Rooted in the Gospel of Matthew’s teaching that whatever is done for the least among the community is done for God, the Jesuits participated and taught others to complete corporal works of mercy (Bible, Matthew 25:40). These works included feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, acknowledging that the Gospel is best learned by seeing it lived out among the community (O’Malley, 2000-b; Gray, 2000). Rooted in the belief of de arriba that God seeks communion with man, a way to know God is to know his people, most especially those forgotten by the world as Jesus did in the Gospels. In fact, the first teaching done by Jesuits was educating children and adults in basic Catholic catechism, including basic prayers and fundamental beliefs; from the very beginning, Jesuits instilled a special awareness of social responsibility - engaging with the world as it is, while working to make improvements for the betterment of all (O’Malley, 2000-b).

The notion of de arriba makes for another defining feature of the Society of Jesus: their understanding of the world in the Renaissance humanism of the day (Codina, 2000). Ignatius put trust in the goodness of God during his convalescence and was therefore willing to see God in all things (Gray, 2000). All should be done for the greater glory of God; Jesuits use the word “magis” to suggest that in any situation there is always more to be done. Whether great or small, people can do more for one another as a means of amplifying the glory of God. As a result of this view, diverse cultures are not at odds with Christianity; in fact, they are complements (O’Malley, 2000-b). Truly revolutionary, Ignatius believed the Bible need not be in competition with great works of
humanity such as Aristotle; both are understood to be from God and could, therefore, lead to God (O’Malley, 2000-a). Art, science, music, and diverse world cultures are all beautiful reflections of God (Gray, 2000). Therefore, the great *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius are an exercise of the spirit, not just theory; these teachings require a journey to publicly engage with the contemporary culture as a source of inspiration and means of understanding God (O’Malley, 2014; Gray, 2000).

Influenced by humanism, Jesuits supported a philosophy of inculturation by which the gospels and Catholic teaching is presented within the context of the native culture rather than a Eurocentric understanding of faith (Traub, 2008). Today, Jesuits remain dedicated to developing “local churches” that seek “ways of creating indigenous theology, liturgy, and spirituality, and of promoting the right and freedom of people to encounter the gospel without being alienated from their culture” (Jesuit General Congregation, 34, 1995, p. 26). It is people that should be evangelized -- not cultures -- as “people of a culture are the ones who root the church and the gospel in their lives” (Jesuit General Congregation 34, 1995, p. 24) The practice of inculturation would later be criticized by scholars for inherently changing the culture of indigenous peoples (Presmanes, 2012). However, this criticism should be placed in the context of Jesuits as missionaries willing to engage with diverse cultures and languages as part of the belief that God is in all things.

While early in his conversion, Ignatius dressed in rags and engaged in severe fasting, but as his spiritual journey continued, Ignatius reentered society to begin his advanced education (O’Malley, 1993). When explaining the hallmarks of the Jesuit order to young men contemplating the religious life, Jerome Nadal, one of the first Jesuits,
reiterated again and again “We are not monks!” (O’Malley, 2014, p. 17). Following the example of Ignatius, quite dissimilar from other religious orders, Jesuits did not don particular vestments and retained their family names. Additionally, Jesuits did not require a church to preach the Gospel. If God was in all things and sought communion with his creation, it followed that Jesuits were encouraged to meet people - physically and spiritually - wherever they could gather interest (O’Malley, 1993). Any house, town square, or school could be a House of the Lord. Unlike other religious orders, Jesuits were not required to adhere to a strict schedule of prayer, possibly interrupting their work with the community. It would not do to have Jesuits stop feeding the hungry only to return to a monastery for their scheduled prayers; God is just as present in the community’s poor and sick as in any church or monastery. For Jesuits, ministry required flexibility to be in the moment with those they sought to serve and convert. In addition to serving the community, the Jesuits did not punish the body to cleanse the soul, as Ignatius did in the early days of his spiritual journey (O’Malley, 2014). Jesuit missionaries were more connected with those they sought to convert because they lived among the men and women of the world (Schwickerath, 2012).

**Jesuits in Education**

The Society of Jesus was specifically founded as a group of missionaries, not teachers; Ignatius even intended to use established universities to train young Jesuits. Nevertheless, the Jesuits became linked with teaching soon after founding. While the Benedictine and Dominican Roman Catholic orders predate the Jesuits with a stated mission to serve as teachers, the Jesuits still found a place in the education of lay youth—not just those seeking to be priests—to promote the common good (Schwickerath, 2012;
O’Malley, 2000-a). In 1548, just eight years into the history of the order, the Jesuits opened their first school in Messina, Italy (Schwickerath, 2012). Ignatius was recruited to have Jesuits provide secondary education in the humanist tradition to the young men of Messina. “The word humanitas translates from the Greek word paideia, which had come to mean both the process and studies that developed moral goodness, devotion to truth, and a disposition to act for the civic good” (Boston College Jesuit Community, 1994, p. 41). By making education available to the larger community—not just to the religious students or wealthy—Jesuits could magnify their impact on society, instilling both upright character and devotion to the betterment of society. The city of Messina offered full accommodations for both five Jesuit teachers and five Jesuits in training, convincing Ignatius to venture into traditional and religious education. Utilizing the Jesuits as teachers—those who took a vow of poverty—proved economical for a few reasons: it lessened the temptation to leave for more lucrative pursuits and provided a lifetime to perfect the craft of teaching (Schwickerath, 2012). The school in Messina saw such success that within months of opening, other Italian cities requested similar schools operated by Jesuits (O’Malley, 2000-a). By 1773, the Jesuits oversaw 800 education institutions around the globe specializing in both secondary and postsecondary studies (Schwickerath, 2012).

Once the Jesuits order evolved into an education enterprise, Ignatius insisted schools be sufficiently endowed to allow any capable student entrance regardless of social status or the ability to pay (O’Malley, 2000-b). As a result, some Jesuit schools were composed predominately of students from outside the ranks of the upper class (O’Malley, 2014). The majority of students in Jesuit schools completed schooling in their
late teens so they might go on to further professional studies or into trades (O’Malley, 2000-a). Thus, the Jesuits set themselves apart from other religious orders with an intentional focus on teaching lay individuals who would go on to become teachers themselves. Instead of simply teaching the clergy, the Jesuits believed lay individuals were more likely to influence their communities (Boston College Jesuit Community, 1994). Executive Secretary of the Society, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, explained that “those who are now only students will grow up to be pastors, civic officials, administrators of justice, and will fill other important posts to everybody’s profit and advantage” (O’Malley, 2000-b, p. 66). Jesuit values could be more easily woven into the fabric of a society by those living and working as upstanding people of faith within the community; the Jesuits believed one need not take vows to impact the world.

Furthermore, the Jesuits also became recognized for their curriculum and pedagogical approach. The first Jesuits were graduates of the University of Paris, rooted in the study of humanities, and known for a unique style of teaching known as “the Parisian Method,” which placed an emphasis on active learning. As early as 1599, the Jesuits had produced the *Ratio Studiorum*, containing the structure and pedagogy to be used in schools around the world; outlining the order’s model of teaching, students learn successively more complex disciplines rather than an introduction to all areas of study simultaneously (O’Malley, 2000-a; Schwickerath, 2012). Education should begin with language and humanities, progress to natural sciences, building to philosophy, and culminate with philosophy and theology. “Theology, focusing on the questions at the center of the mystery of God’s self-disclosing activity, completes and integrates the knowledge developed by all other disciplines of the university” (Boston College Jesuit...
Instead of providing students an introductory level to all subjects, the Jesuits scaffolded student learning from the tangible to the philosophical, believing that a solid foundation was necessary to fully and meaningfully engage with theology. Education should start with creation and culminate with the cosmos.

Not satisfied to merely provide the opportunity to acquire knowledge, the Jesuits further distinguished themselves in their dedication to excellence in teaching. Jesuits were expected to utilize particular methodologies and practices when teaching to maximize both student engagement and knowledge retention. The *Ratio Studiorum* discouraged excessively long lectures, stressing that educators to be fully prepared for providing instruction each day (Schwickerath, 2019). In accordance with the Parisian method, it was insufficient for students to read works by great authors and scientists; students must write, deliver speeches, and conduct experiments themselves (O’Malley, 2000-a; Schwickerath, 2012). In order to lead students in such exercises, Jesuits must do the same. The *Ratio Studiorum* leads Jesuit educators through a digression, illustrating how to adapt lessons to meet the needs of diverse students across the globe (Schwickerath, 2012). Jesuits were warned against repeating the same lecture year over year, as circumstances may have changed, and new discoveries must be taken into account (Schwickerath, 2019). If Jesuits were to train lay people to lead moral, upright communities, education had to be rooted in the reality and circumstances of the time. As necessitated, the *Ratio Studiorum* was updated through a meeting of Jesuit educators in Rome to incorporate the multiculturalism inherent in international education (Schwickerath, 2012). Just as lectures were expected to be revised, so should the
pedagogical practices contained in the *Ratio Studiorum* as it was disseminated to Jesuit schools across the world.

Jesuit pedagogy is rooted in the belief that God is present in all things and cultures. Therefore, studying Catholic doctrine need not be at the exclusion of all else; in fact, it is preferable that traditional subjects like reading, writing, and arithmetic be studies alongside theology seeing as one is truly the product of the other. God made man and seeks communication with creation; therefore, the great products of humanity must be a reflection of God’s goodness. Jesuits included classic literature, mathematics, sciences, and the arts as a means of instilling a both a sense of religious and civic duty (O’Malley, 2000-b). The Jesuit tradition required both knowledge of the world and religion, therefore, students read classic works of Greek, Roman, and Chinese literature alongside Scripture (O’Malley, 2014; Schwickerath, 2012). Jesuits were challenged to study great cultural works in the original language and worked to incorporate the native tongue of students into the classroom, rather than keeping a strict adherence to Latin as the traditional language of education (Schwickerath, 2012). Jesuits were willing to see God in all things, so great works of humanity were not inherently threatening to dutiful service to God.

In addition to being teachers, Jesuits were expected to be lifelong scholars. Schwickerath notes that the *Ratio Studiorum* requires educators to be reflective practitioners as “new progress is made every day, the professor must consider it part of his duty, to know the more recent discoveries, so that in his prelections he may advance with science itself” (Schwickerath, 2012, p. 194). Jesuit scholars studied and published on religious topics as well as secular works of literature, history, archology, and botany
(O’Malley, 2014). Generating and cataloging new knowledge and greater understanding of language, geology, agriculture, and cultural practices of the world was expected of the Jesuits if they were to be true educators of learned individuals capable of fostering good.

Given their global presence as both teachers and scholars, Jesuits also had access to study the vastness of creation. Indian, Chinese, Japanese and various dialects spoken in South America were included in the Jesuit studies and documentation (Schwickerath, 2012). The Jesuit’s work as missionaries necessitated learning the native tongue, but the order was unique in their dedication to cataloging and preserving language. The consistent, continual communication of Jesuits across the globe allowed for unprecedented access to information on species and natural phenomena from around the world. By sharing news and updates through regular letters, Jesuits were able to study far corners of the globe, regardless of where in the world they might be stationed for religious service. Jesuit exploration and documentation of the natural world, as well as dissemination of knowledge throughout the world, facilitated significant secular knowledge production, including some of the first accounts and maps of the Mississippi River provided by Jacques Marquette, S.J. (O’Malley, 2000-b; Schwickerath, 2012). The Jesuits scholars even corresponded and shared field notes with notable scientists of the day including Kepler, Galileo, Descartes and Newton; Jesuit access to specimens and dedication to scholarship proved vital to their mission to educate, and even became an identifying trait for the Jesuits as time went on (O’Malley, 2000-b). Jesuits collaborated with the great minds of the time and used the knowledge gained to advance the learning of their students and their scholastic contribution to history.
**Jesuits in the New World**

In 1789, Georgetown College (now Georgetown University), in Washington, D.C., became the first Jesuit—and first Catholic—university founded in the United States after the Jesuits’ previously unsuccessful attempt in New York (Schwickerath, 2012). By the beginning of the United States Civil War in 1861, the Jesuits operated 14 colleges across the country from Massachusetts to California. Jesuit colleges were generally able to remain open and structurally intact throughout the war by agreeing to house occupying troops or serving as medical facilities in exchange for sparing the campus (Platt, 2014; Curran 2014). By 1900, Jesuits operated 26 colleges in the United States and provided either secondary school or postsecondary education to over 50,000 students across the globe (Schwickerath, 2012). Thanks to the GI Bill that followed World War II, Jesuit education institutions grew alongside secular peers as thousands of veterans entered college for the first time (Boston College Jesuit Community, 1994).

The Jesuits are dedicated to scholarship, and expected the same of their students; however, Catholic students were typically excluded from academic honor societies around the country. In 1915, John Danihy founded the Jesuit honor society, Alpha Sigma Nu, at Marquette University to recognize both outstanding academic achievement and dedication to Jesuit education; as its cornerstone, the honor society challenged its members to live out the Jesuit mission of working for social justice in their own communities and around the world (Alpha Sigma Nu [ASN] history, n.d.-a). Membership in Alpha Sigma Nu was never restricted on the basis of religion, though initially women were inducted into a separate all female organization until 1964. Still considered one of the highest honors on a Jesuit campus, initiates of Alpha Sigma Nu
continue to pledge their intellect to the pursuit of justice and service of others (ASN membership, n.d.-b). Alpha Sigma Nu followed the example of the Jesuits and founded a newsletter in 1940 to continuously share information and engage both collegiate students and alumni. Today, Alpha Sigma Nu collegiate chapters are located throughout Jesuit institutions in the United States, Europe and South America for students that have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, loyalty, and service (ASN Student Chapters, n.d.-c).

Keeping with the Jesuit tradition of sharing information and experiences, communication was maintained between the Jesuit universities in the US through privately circulated correspondence known as the *Woodstock Letters*. From 1872 to 1969, Woodstock College published the *Letters* quarterly to catalogue the history of the order in the United States, provide updates on fellow Jesuit brothers, and exchange information regarding the growth and development of Jesuit schools (Platt, 2014). In addition, Jesuits used the *Letters* to exchange information on the application of pedagogical techniques prescribed in the *Ratio Studiorum*, including how other Jesuits taught specific lessons and comparing teaching practices to those used in secular colleges (Schwickerath, 2012). The *Woodstock Letters* established an important precedent for regular collaborative communication among the American Jesuit educational institutions and demonstrated the dedication of the Jesuits to continuous improvement in teaching rooted in the *Ratio Studiorum*.

The Jesuits have also used publishing to continuously engage with Catholics in the United States on both religious and secular topics. Founded in 1909 by John Wynne, *America* magazine is a weekly publication to guide the faithful in the deliberation of
significant world events and scientific discoveries; *America* was used to reconcile, as much as possible, the teachings of the Church and the reality of modern life (Keane & McDermott, 2008). Jesuits are challenged to see God in all things and lead others to do the same; just as in the early years of the order, Jesuits were expected to meet people where they are. *America* allows the Jesuit order to address issues of the day, focusing on their dedication to social justice. For example, in the 1950s, *America* publicly admonished Senator Joseph McCarthy despite his popularity among some Catholics for his anti-communism views. The magazine even provided some commentary questioning Pope Paul VI’s encyclical prohibiting Catholics from using artificial birth control. *America* sought to strike a balance between providing spiritual guidance and creating an authentic dialogue between the Church and its members (America: The Jesuit Review, n.d.).

The Jesuits have remained reflective on their work as educators, meeting and publishing about what it means to be educated by Jesuits. In 1973, at the 10th International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe, Superior General Pedro Arrupe gave a directive to Jesuit education institutions that “our prime educational objective must be to form men-for-others; […] men who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors” (Kolvenbach, 2001, p. 151). While Arrupe addressed mostly male alumni, the notion of “men and women for others” became a means of rededication to the Jesuit traditions of justice and corporal works of mercy for Jesuit institutions around the world. Jesuit institutions were not to shrink away from the issues of the day; rather, students at Jesuit institutions should be challenged to engage
with complex social issues, using the research and reflection practices required in higher education (Mitchell, 1998).

The curriculum of Jesuit universities has remained rooted in the arts and sciences as the pedagogical paradigm: requiring that all students, no matter the area of specialization or career specialty, be equipped to think critically about the current day and beginnings of civilization (Mitchell, 1988). While maintaining a dedication to Jesuit ideals and Catholic tradition, Jesuit postsecondary institutions remain dedicated to research and the generation of knowledge of the highest quality as, according to Jesuit Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, “only excellence is apostolic” (Mitchell, 1988, p. 111). Ignition pedagogy is integrated across disciplines in Jesuit universities requiring even the most practical of professionals as healthcare workers to think critically and reflective continuously on themselves, their work, and the impact on their community as a result of service (Pennington, et al., 2013). As was done in the past through a dedication to lay education, Jesuit institutions wanted to maximize their contribution to wisdom and truth by working in conjunction other institutions; by working together, they hoped to learn best practices, share perspectives to challenge their thinking, and expand the use of best practices in the service of best student learning (Jesuit General Congregation 34, 1995).

Ignatian pedagogy’s dedication to developing men and women for others extends care for the individual student to all peoples, culminating in a deep dedication to the poor. Service is a key tenant of Jesuit pedagogy as it brings reflective practice out of the theoretical and into the real world. Today, service-learning is a key means in which postsecondary students engage with Ignatian pedagogy. Unlike community service,
service-learning intertwines engagement with those in need with facilitated reflection on theological and philosophical texts. In the study Public Service Motivation of College Students, a study of student participation in service-learning at an unidentified American Jesuit university, it was seen that service-learning with a social justice orientation increased public service motivations, belief in the ability to affect social change, likelihood to enter a service career, and tolerance for others. Students reflected that it was the Jesuit pedagogical practice of combining practical experiences with academic reading and guided reflection that made the experience so impactful. While the study acknowledges limited participation from the control group, service-learning rooted in Jesuit pedagogy had a significant effect on students. For Jesuits being inherently religious, it is interesting that the magnitude of effects differed based on student self-identified religiousness; those students that describe themselves as religious saw less effects than the other groups of students which may speak to the association of Ignatian pedagogy to human actions, experiences, and products as all reflecting the goodness of God (Seider et al., 2011).

**Loyola University New Orleans**

The history of the Jesuits in New Orleans is nearly as old as the city itself. After being granted permission to establish a Jesuit House in 1725, just seven years after the founding of the city of New Orleans, the order was given the directive to serve as missionaries (Cook, 2012). Sustained by a plantation on land in what is now Uptown New Orleans, the Jesuits focused on conversion of the Native Americans; Capuchin order of priests had been granted the ecclesiastical order to provide education to the European youth of the colony. Before the Jesuits were able to make significant inroads establishing
schools in New Orleans, international distrust of the Jesuits grew to untenable proportions. King Louis XV of France expelled the Jesuits from the Louisiana Territory in 1763, and Pope Clement XIV disbanded the order in 1773 (Platt, 2012). Both the New Orleans plantation and property of the Jesuit order were confiscated and sold. Jesuits were suppressed worldwide until 1814 when Pope Pius VII restored the order. The Jesuits were welcomed back to Louisiana by Bishop Blanc in 1835 (Biever, 1924). However, even after securing permission for a school from Rome in 1836, establishing a Jesuit college proved far more difficult than anticipated. While there was an assumption that Jesuit schools would have sufficient enrollment due to the substantial Catholic population, there was a secondary motivation to increase education opportunities in order to keep the children of wealthy Louisianans in the state (Cook 2012; Garraghan, 1938). However, the first attempt at establishing a Jesuit college in Grand Coteau, Louisiana was a failure such that town Catholics had to guard Jesuits against threats of violence and expulsion from other residents (Garraghan, 1938).

By 1840, New Orleans was the third largest city in the United States and in need of educational opportunities for the growing community. With a permanent Jesuit residence established in New Orleans in 1848, Jesuits founded the College of the Immaculate Conception in 1849 to educate the young men of the city (Garraghan, 1938). Situated in the current Mid-City area of New Orleans, the primary focus the College of the Immaculate Conception was educating youth, though the college grew to include professional schools granting advanced degrees. Soon after purchasing land in the Carrolton area of New Orleans, the Jesuits opened Loyola College in 1904 for the religious and academic formation of men. In 1911, the Jesuit schools in New Orleans
were reorganized to centralize college preparatory education the at Immaculate Conception campus and higher education at Loyola College. All the while, Albert Biever, S.J., the first President of Loyola College, was adamant that non-Catholics be admitted and “their religious opinions scrupulously respected” (Cook, 2012, p. 38).

Loyola University New Orleans received its university charter from the state of Louisiana in 1912 and saw rapid expansion. In just a few years, Loyola University had incorporated the New Orleans College of Pharmacy and New Orleans Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art and founded a College of Dentistry and Law. While the Colleges of Pharmacy and Dentistry were phased out beginning in the 1960s, the other colleges incorporated into what is today the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Music and Media, and Nursing and Health (Loyola University New Orleans history, 2012; Loyola University New Orleans program-degrees n.d.).

**Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities**

In 1936, the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the Jesuit Educational Association (JEA) was founded to serve as a coordinating organization for the growing number of American Jesuit secondary and postsecondary institutions. However, as Jesuit education became more prolific in the United States, JEA was dissolved to allow for differentiation between education sectors. In 1970, the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA) and Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) were founded as umbrella organizations for Jesuit education in their respective sectors (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities [AJCU], n.d.-e). Collegiate membership in AJCU is voluntary, although all 28 existing American Jesuit higher education institutions served as founding members in 1970 (AJCU, 2020). Today, 28 institutions
make up the AJCU including 26 institutions in 17 states, Georgetown University in the District of Columbia and St. John’s College in Belize (AJCU, n.d.-d). Only Wheeling University in West Virginia voluntarily withdrew from the Association in 2019 (AJCU, n.d.-e).

The AJCU Constitution outlines the mission of the organization as supporting and promoting Jesuit higher education through cooperation and collaboration among member institutions (AJCU, 2020). All institutional Presidents serve as members of the AJCU Board of Directors, with a chairman elected from among them. A non-institutional President is elected to serve as both chief executive officer and principal liaison for the Association with Jesuit Provincials, Jesuit Secondary Education Association, and Providence Prefects of Studies. While each institution retains full autonomy, AJCU serves as a coordinating body to relate information among members and to those outside of the organization (AJCU, 2020). The governance by institutional presidents, rather than the Jesuit provincials, was a significant departure from the centrality of Jesuit priests to the mission understood to belong to Jesuit higher education (Burchaell, 1998). The shift in the role of Jesuits is particularly noteworthy in the examination of mission using Albert and Whetten’s organizational identity theory.

The Association also facilitates professional development for faculty and staff aligned to the Jesuit mission (AJCU, 2020). In the early years, the AJCU President had a small staff mostly dedicated to planning and implementing professional development conferences; today, AJCU holds over 30 conferences annually using a relatively small staff. These conferences are used for faculty, staff, and administrators to exchange ideas, best practices, and methods to advance both teaching and learning across Jesuit campuses.
ranging from organizations of deans from individual member institution colleges, all the way to the Jesuit Universities Humanitarian Action Network (JUHAN) (AJCU Conferences, n.d.-b). The JUHAN bringing together students at various institutions to raise awareness of and coordinate efforts for communities in need (AJCU Conferences, n.d.-b). The AJCU assisted in the drafting of Pope John Paul II’s 1990 Apostolic Constitution, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* which clarified the mission and expectations of Catholic universities in relation to the Church and the communities they serve. Upon publication of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, the AJCU provided counsel to members on ensuring alignment with Pope John Paul II’s vision and the Jesuit tradition (AJCU, n.d.-e).

The Association maintains a Government Relations Network with offices in Washington, DC, with all 27 American AJCU members represented by the Network in lobbying the federal government. As a means of increasing postsecondary access, the Government Relations Network partners with the Student Aid Alliance and Committee for Education Funding to advocate for increased federal financial aid, including federal loans and Pell grants (AJCU Affiliations, n.d.-a). The Network represents the interests of its members in higher education policy, including testifying before Congressional committees and working toward the reauthorization of the 2020 Higher Education Act (AJCU, n.d.-c). In alignment with Jesuit ideals, the AJCU Board of Directors has taken a firm stance in support of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). In 2016 the AJCU Presidents published a statement affirming that “experience has shown us that our communities are immeasurably enriched by the presence, intelligence, and committed contributions of undocumented students, as well as of faculty and staff of every color and
from every faith tradition” - committing the AJCU to protect undocumented students on campus (Clarke, 2016).

Summary

While there is significant literature on how organizations are affected by disaster, there is less known about how organizational identity influences institutional response to crisis. The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities’ response to displaced students following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina provides a case study of how organizational identity, or institutional mission driven by Jesuit charism, is maintained. Albert and Whetten (1985) lay out three criteria to identify organizational identity: central character, enduring nature, and distinctiveness (CEDs). Central character and distinctiveness act as foils to establish what the organization is and is not. The AJCU is an organization of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. Like other higher education institutions in the United States, AJCU institutions are regionally accredited as postsecondary degree-granting institutions. However, AJCU institutions are distinct, even among religious institutions, in that they not just religious, Christian, or Catholic - they are Jesuit. The enduring nature of AJCU institutions can be seen in the persistent willingness of sister institutions to aid one another rooted in the Jesuit philosophy of service to those in need. While Ignatius of Loyola may not have foreseen the work of the Jesuits as teachers, the Society of Jesus has historically been, and continues to be, a significant provider of educational training around the world. The Jesuit charism including the belief that God is in all things and the call to do more for the community lead the AJCU to act in accordance with established CEDs of extending assistance to those in need, including students displaced after Hurricane Katrina.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study examines the response of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The dissertation is a historic case study of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities through the use of Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory as a conceptual framework to situate and analyze the behavior in relation to mission alignment and organizational legitimacy. Chapter III will detail the research methodology used in the study and provide a detailed description of data collection and analysis along with safeguards for source validity.

Purpose Overview and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina as a case study in the alignment of actions to Jesuit ideology. Using Albert and Whetten’s Organization Identity Theory (OIT), the actions of the AJCU are evaluated to determine if the organization acted within the categorical imperative established by both the prior actions of the institution and alignment with the stated mission of the organization. The actions of the AJCU are examined through use of the historical case study which requires mixed methods of both archival research and oral history. Keeves asserts that ‘education research possess a unity that extends across different disciplinary perspectives’ through its search for any form of knowledge ‘that is available for transforming the real world through human agency and social action’ it is incumbent on researchers to make use of all appropriate data sources and methodologies – including mixed methods (Keeves, 1998, p. xvi).

The study is by nature a qualitative endeavor as it seeks to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and experiences. As such, the
researcher is the both the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. In the case of this study, the researcher gathers data through historiographical, archival, and oral history around the case study of the AJUC’s response to Hurricane Katrina and uses the OIT framework to evaluate the congruence with stated mission and ideals of the Jesuit charism.

**Positionality statement**

Positionality describes both the researcher’s world view and the lens through which they view the research task along with any social or political context associated with the subject of research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). There are three parts to the researcher’s world view which include ontological and epistemological assumptions along with the researcher’s beliefs regarding human nature and how individuals interact with the world. Ontological assumptions regard the researcher’s view of what is knowable about the social reality of the world. Epistemological assumptions relate to the researcher’s understanding of the nature of knowledge (Holmes, 2020). It is incumbent upon the researcher to continuously reflect on how these assumptions may influence the written product throughout the research and writing of the dissertation.

For the purposes of this dissertation, it must be made known that I was a student at Loyola University New Orleans from 2002 to 2006. Hurricane Katrina made landfall on what was to be the first week of my Senior year. My housemate and I evacuated to my parent’s home in Lafayette, Louisiana with clothes and supplies for a long weekend – not expecting the catastrophic damage that was to come. It quickly became clear that New Orleans and Loyola University were not going to be able to support students for months to come, so I enrolled in the University of Louisiana Lafayette to continue my
studies. I recall my housemate flying back to her parent’s home in Birmingham, Alabama to gather some belongings before heading to Boston College as our mutual friend learned that the AJCU institutions had extended acceptance to all Loyola New Orleans students. Just as important, AJCU made clear that students would not be charged additional tuition; the expectation was that balances due to Loyola University New Orleans were sufficient payment for the semester. I did not consider accepting the offer made by AJCU because of the need to complete my student teaching in order to qualify for a Louisiana teaching license. While I do not have firsthand experience of the welcome provided by individual AJCU institutions, I have unique knowledge of the offer extended by AJCU and countless secondhand recounts of how the AJCU institutions and staff provided for students displaced by the storm.

Because of my experiences with Hurricane Katrina, I chose not to research the effects of the storm on either Loyola University New Orleans or displaced students. My attendance at a Jesuit institution of higher education and experiences as a displaced student due to Hurricane Katrina allow me unique insights; however, a direct study of the impacts of Hurricane Katrina on the school or students could have proven too large a challenge for the researcher. Even in a study of the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina, my experiences do now allow for a completely neutral investigation or evaluation. Therefore, it is necessary that I implement several safeguards to ensure my personal experiences do not have undue influence over my analysis. First, like most qualitative researchers, I employed bracketing of my own beliefs and experiences in order focus on the essence of the behaviors of the AJCU. As with topics that may elicit an emotional response, bracketing allows the researcher to separate herself from the
individual intricacies of primary and secondary accounts in favor of the larger narrative around the AJCU response to the needs of displaced students (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Second, I will used journaling to supplement bracketing to ensure I am continuously reflecting on how personal experiences might color my interpretation of the actions of the AJCU. A critical question for consideration was if I would come to similar conclusions if I had not experienced the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as a displaced student at a Jesuit institution. I am careful to note when topics challenge my objectivity or evoke an emotional response. At these times, I stepped away from writing to allow myself time to process my thoughts before returning to an academic evaluation of the topic. Third, I frequently debriefed with my dissertation chair and methodologist in order to ensure my personal connection to the topic did not have undue influence over my examination of the AJCU response to Hurricane Katrina. It is particularly helpful that my chair is a scholar of Jesuit education as he is able to guide my reflections as both a scholar of history and Jesuit charism (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

**Historical Case Study**

The primary method for review of the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina is the historical case study. For years there has been tension between academic historians and educationalists that study history regarding the appropriate use of historical research. Academic historians study the past as an end in itself; the past is to be catalogued so it is not lost to posterity. Prior events are documented and analyzed for their own sake. Alternatively, educational historians look to the past for lessons on how to address the current problems in society. Education historians seek to utilize the past to understand the present while preparing for the future (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000). While there
have been detractors of the use of historical research by educationists, some historians have seen the practicality in the study of history, noting that using the past to craft responses to current problems is a natural progression of historical analysis (Good, et al., 1936). The researcher aligns with the more progressive view of education research exposed by McCulloch and Richardson (2000) that, as long as the appropriate research methods are observed, any discernable distinctions between academic history and educationalists’ use of historical research is of less importance than the aims of the research to contribute to solutions to the very real problems of the day (2000). Studying educational systems and practices of the past has the real potential to provide guidance for the educational systems of today (Button, 1979).

Despite philosophical differences between academic historians and educationalists regarding the aims of historical inquiry, the methods of inquiry for historical case studies mirror traditional historical research; both rely on primary sources, archives, document analysis, and, when available, oral history (Richardson, 1999-a, 1999-b). Therefore, an analysis of historiographical and archival research methods is necessary for this dissertation in addition to the historical case study. A full examination of the methodology is provided in the following archival research section of the methodology chapter. No matter the aim, it is necessary for any examination of history to safeguard against four missteps in historical research. First, it is important for those studying history to not infer causation when there is merely correlation or association between events. Second, accurate understanding of vocabulary is key. The use of terms develops and change over time, so it is imperative that those studying history seek out the meaning of terms in the context of the period in which they were written. Third, those
studying history must make clear the difference between evidence concerning how past societies defined appropriate behavior and evidence of how people actually engaged in society. Sources explaining the expectation of behavior are not the same as documentation of how individuals behaved. Last, it is important not to conflate consequences of actions with the intent of those actions. While it may be tempting to make assumptions about the motivations of individuals based on the consequences of their actions, such leaps in logic must be avoided (Kaestle, 1988).

The case study is a methodological approach to research that seeks greater understanding of individuals, organizations, or groups within society (Yin, 1989). For that reason, the use of the historically grounded case study aligns with the objective of assessing the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina. Stake (2000) identifies three types of case studies. Intrinsic case studies investigate with the purpose of increasing information and understanding. Collective case studies utilize a multitude of cases in order to provide additional validity with the same aim of learning more about a particular area of interest. This historical case study is an instrumental case study which investigates with the intent to draw generalizations (Stake, 2000). It is only through use of a conceptual framework that generalizations are able to be made using a historical case study which underscores the importance of the use of Albert and Whetten’s Organization Identity Theory (Yin, 1989).

Case studies require the use of a bounded system to clearly delineate the bounds of the inquiry. It is important to have a clear sense of what is inside and outside of the scope of the case study as it is the piecing together of various parts of the case that allows for greater understanding (Stake, 2000). The events analyzed as part of this dissertation
will be banded around the weeks immediately following Hurricane Katrina as it is the
decisions made by the AJCU soon after the devastation of New Orleans and the Gulf
Coast that speak to the alignment of the stated mission as analyzed through
Organizational Identity Theory. However, to complete the analysis, a history of the
Society of Jesus and Jesuit charism is necessary to establish the Order as a unique culture
for study and provide context in order to apply the OTI conceptual framework.
Therefore, while the historical case study is bound to the weeks immediately following
Hurricane Katrina, the dissertation includes relevant historical data for context
throughout the analysis. The inclusion of historical data beginning in the 16th century
enriches the historical case study as it provides a more comprehensive understanding of
the organizational culture and more robust analysis of the response of the AJCU
(McCullough & Richardson, 2000).

Historical case studies require researchers to be mindful of the reliability and
validity of both primary and secondary sources just as is required in archival research.
Yin identifies six sources that can be utilized to triangulate validity including
documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation,
and physical artifacts. Steps to ensure reliability work to minimize errors and biases.
Researchers should be able to reproduce a similar analysis from the same documents if
the study were repeated. To this end, researchers should standardize as much of the
research process as possible and document both the academic citation and, particularly in
the case of archival research, the physical location of sources (Yin, 1989).

Validity ensures that any generalizations rooted in the conceptual framework are
consistent. Researchers can increase validity with redundancy of data and avoid
overreliance on a single source for context or analysis (Yin, 1989). Both primary and secondary sources are appropriate for use in establishing validity and should undergo diligent scrutiny in line with any historical document analysis (Shkedi, 2005). When educational historians execute historical research methods in conjunction with a conceptual framework, generalizations can be made and new information generated to increase understanding of individuals, events, or organizations (Button, 1979). Therefore, based on the use of Organizational Identity Theory, the researcher can responsibly generalize lessons learned from the AJCU’s response to Hurricane Katrina to evaluate mission alignment of postsecondary institutions when facing prolonged disruptions in campus availability.

**Archival Research**

Historical case studies draw heavily upon historical research methods as it employs historical inquiry and involves asking questions and assembling documentation for analysis and interpretation (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Both educational and historical research lend themselves to identifying and analyzing trends and themes which align to the historiographical method of utilizing source material to evaluate actions and identify relationships between individuals and organizations to society at large (Berg, 1989). The examination of the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina is a microhistory in that it examines a smaller historical or cultural occurrence that effects a community within society. Microhistories are particularly effective when examining culture as it allows for examination down to the individual level (Iggers, 2005). However, it is important to engage both the macros history of the development of the Jesuit charism with the microhistory of the AJCU’s response to displaced students.
Historical research generally follows three main steps: identification of historical sources, validation of sources, and the combination and interpretation of data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Historical works are often held in archives or special collections in libraries, museums, or higher education institutions. Historical sources can be categorized as primary and secondary sources. Primary sources generally are produced by or with individuals that are directly involved in events or bore witness to the occurrence documented (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000). Primary sources are observations that cannot be repeated. The documentation can be reread or reviewed, but the event cannot be relived. As such, primary sources should be evaluated for authenticity, creditability, and relevance to the topic of study (Good, et al., 1936). Primary sources should be authentic to the period in which the event took place. Oftentimes, researchers rely on the close scrutiny of archivists and historians to validate that the origins stated in the source match actual author and date put forward in the document (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). An internal review of reliability includes a review of several factors. First, was the individual present at the event for which they are giving an account? If so, what was the level of involvement or engagement? Second, does the individual have the necessary qualifications to describe the event? Third, does the author show undue emotion that may give the researcher pause as to the trustworthiness of the account? Lastly, does the author have any vested interest in the outcome or characterization of the event (Merriam & Grenier, 2019)? By the nature of a first-hand account, primary sources will never be completely impartial, but it is important for researchers to be fully aware of the potential explicit or implicit motivations of primary accounts. Finally, primary sources should be examined for relevancy to the topic of study (Good, et al., 1936). When sources are rich,
researchers may be enticed to wander from the original research question because of the vivid primary documents available. However, researchers must be mindful to ensure that the documents included are squarely relevant and provide unique insight into the particulars of the research question.

Secondary sources are accounts or interpretations of events provided by individuals that were not present at the event under consideration (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000). Secondary sources also require high levels of scrutiny to ensure validity before they can be included as data by historical researchers. Validity of documents establishes a trustworthy source for information. Researchers should critically examine the authorship, timeframe, and author affiliation to the reported event (Good, et al., 1936). Critical examination of secondary sources does not differ wildly from steps for validating primary sources. In both instances the author of the document and motives for producing the document are questioned and evaluated for creditability and clarity. While both primary and secondary sources provide valuable information to researchers, it is important that researchers make clear which sources are primary and secondary, how the sources were assessed by the researchers and the nature of the sources as they apply to the research to provide maximum transparency of the report and findings (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

**Oral History**

Oral history is a multidisciplinary research method that is utilized across the humanities and social sciences. What is now called oral history was first used by anthropologists but was adapted and standardized as a valid research methodology by historians in the 1940s seeking to supplement more traditional historical records with the
memories of significant Americans (Leavy, 2011). As such, oral history is rooted in the belief that the experiences of individuals are worthy of study and offer knowledge of value. Depending on the discipline of the researcher, oral history can be used as a tool for exploration, description, explanation, theory building, or social action. Perhaps, most importantly, oral history allows for the building of macro histories or theories based on the collection of multiple micro experiences of individuals (Levy, 2011). Shopes (2002) highlights that oral history is not just a means of cataloging the narratives of individuals, it is a methodology of sensemaking that provides insight beyond individual participants.

There are several key aspects of oral history that set it apart from other interview-based methodologies. Ontologically, oral history views research as a process rather than a single event. Meaning is developed through the sensemaking process of the participant and the interviewer; knowledge is not intact waiting to be discovered. Therefore, oral history is based on the idea that there is shared authority between both parties (Frisch, 1990). As such, Leavy (2011) distinguishes what would otherwise be called the “interviewee” or “subject” as a “participant” since the two collaborate to make meaning. By the very nature of the methodology, the perspective given by the participant is subjective and the researcher plays a role in the creation of knowledge.

A second important aspect of oral history is the highly inductive nature or the methodology. Researchers use broad, open-ended questions regarding the experiences of the participant. As a result, the narrative may be guided by either the participant or researcher. There are no set protocols for completing an oral history interview as the researcher must adapt to the narrative provided by the participant. It is the flexible nature of the oral history methodology that allows researchers to capture such rich narratives
(Leavy, 2011). Oral history acknowledges that there is no right way for an individual to share their story (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

The purpose and aims of oral history research vary depending on the discipline and research question being investigated; however, there are several trends in the use of oral history. First, as historians helped to standardize the method, oral history is used to compliment previously documented primary and secondary accounts of history. Second, oral history allows researchers to gain insight on people’s subjective experiences related to historical periods, times of significant change or upheaval, or current events. While there is debate on when it is appropriate to begin collecting oral histories after a catastrophic event like Hurricane Katrina, oral history research places value on the narratives of those who bore witness to events of interest (Sloan, 2008). Third, oral histories can contribute to the greater understanding of phenomena that have emerged or developed over time (Leavy, 2011). Last, and most relevant to this dissertation, is the use of oral history to gain information on the experience of a community. A community may indicate a group of people identified by particular geographic bounds; however, Shopes (2002) notes that for the purposes of oral history, community may also be defined of individuals with a particular shared social identity. For the purpose of this historic case study, oral history is utilized to examine the shared identity of members of the AJCU that would prompt their unique response to Hurricane Katrina as oral history provides an opportunity to explore the thought processes behind decisions allowing researchers to examine the how and why rather than just the what of events of interest (Patel, 2005).
Geography of New Orleans

One of the most iconic features of New Orleans is the above ground mausoleums that dot the city drawing both mourners and tourists alike. However, the architectural beauty of the white marble tombs is the result of physical necessity rather than solely a decision on the aesthetics of the city. The city of New Orleans is largely below sea level; there is no way to provide a final resting place six feet under as one significant rainfall will, quite literally, exhume the dead (Hillinger, 1990). Therefore, long ago, New Orleanians learned to make adjustments to standard burial practices in order to inhabit the land at the mouth of the Mississippi River. At times, second only to New York as the busiest port in the United States and fourth busiest in the world, the port of Orleans was the entry and exit point for all commerce for lands drained by the Mississippi River and related tributaries (“Coffee Trade and Port of New Orleans,” n.d.). Thus, the rich soil and commerce that came with the port of Orleans proved too great a draw, and the swamp land was settled despite the clear an apparent risk of building on marshland below sea level.

The city of New Orleans was originally built on a sliver of land that had formed as a natural levee in the Mississippi. Prior to permanent settlement by Europeans, Native Americans would migrate north to higher ground as the river and marsh land flooded with the seasons. As the city grew and the port expanded, marsh land was reclaimed to provide residential space for the growing population bolstered by embankments, levees, and, eventually, a pumping system. The sliver of land that was the original setting of the
city was expanded to the land between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, creating a permanent settlement between two significant bodies of water held back only by levees and kept dry with a series of elaborate drainage pipes and pumping stations throughout the city. However, it is the draining of land that originally served as a temporary flood plain that created the bowl shape that would prove so disastrous to the city when the levees failed during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (Campanella, 2018).

The New Orleans area fights a continuous battle to remain dry. However, should a hurricane or severe weather threaten the city, residents face another difficulty. Having settled land between two bodies of water, there are few avenues to leave the city. Evacuating a city nearly surrounded by water is exceptionally difficult as bridges provide the only means of escaping the city and allowing people to seek refuge on higher ground. As a result, city evacuations become nearly impossible. When New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin ordered the mandatory evacuation of New Orleans, it marked the first-time residents were forced to evacuate (“Katrina + 10: Documenting Disaster,” 2015). To assist in the evacuation of the New Orleans area in advance of Hurricane Katrina, emergency management teams and law enforcement personnel from Louisiana and Mississippi utilized the state’s contraflow plan to have drivers utilize both east and westbound lanes of interstates and bridges out of the city in the hopes of speeding up the process and encouraging residents to comply with the evacuation order (Challenges in a Catastrophe: Evaluating New Orleans in Advance of Hurricane Katrina, 2006). Even then, the New Orleans Superdome had to be provided as a shelter for individuals without means to leave the city. This proved to be an additional tragedy as those tens of
thousands of residents had to be evacuated after the levees failed and the Superdome roof was severely damaged by the storm (Rushton, 2015).

**Hurricanes, Global Warming and Storm Intensity**

Tropical cyclones, typically called hurricanes in the United States, occur most commonly during the summer months when waters are warm and feed the atmospheric circulations that form into the iconic conical storms. In the United States, hurricane season officially runs from June through November when conditions in the atmosphere and waters of the northern hemisphere are most conducive to producing hurricanes (Whang, 2020). However, in the past decade it has become common to have named storms occur before the official start of hurricane season, so much so that the National Hurricane Center issues their annual tropical weather outlook on May 15 of each year rather than June 1 (Southwick, 2022).

Hurricanes are given names from a set list established by the World Meteorological Organization in order to limit confusion as multiple tropical depressions, tropical storms, and hurricanes must be tracked simultaneously. Names are less subject to confusion than a series of numbers or coordinates and allows for easier communication between weather agencies, law enforcement, and individuals that may be impacted by the storm. While the list of names rotates every six years, “Katrina” is among a list of 94 names retired from use in respect for those individuals that suffered extreme loss due to the storm (Flood, 2021).

Hurricanes are given a category to denote severity based on sustained windspeeds. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1-5 ranking of wind with a category 1 storm having sustained
winds between 74 and 95 miles per hour with the expectation of dangerous winds and some physical damage to roofs, loss of shingles, damage to tree limbs, to power outages. At the far end of the scale is a category 5 storm with winds 157 miles per hour and above where it is likely that homes, roofs, trees, and power lines could be completely destroyed with power outages lasting between weeks and months (Rice, 2022.). The first time Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Florida, it was as a category 1. The storm returned to the Gulf, and by the time Katrina made landfall for the second time on the Gulf Coast, it had been downgraded from a category 5 to a category 4 storm with winds of 145 miles per hour (Katrina update: Black colleges in New Orleans on the comeback trail, 2007). However, landfall is determined by the center of the storm passing over land, rather than outer rain bands, so the winds experienced and storm surge generated along the Gulf Coast could have been greater than the maximum sustained winds of a category 4 hurricane.

Hurricanes are fueled by warm waters, thus in the Northern Hemisphere, storms tend to be more destructive later in hurricane season. The warming of ocean waters due to climate change is also contributing to an increase in the severity of hurricanes. According to Holland and Bruyère (2014), major hurricanes (categories 4 and 5) have increased 25-35 percent per increase in degree centigrade of human-linked global warming. So, while the number of hurricanes per year has not necessarily gone up, the hurricanes produced have higher winds and a greater potential for destruction. In addition, hurricanes are strengthening more quickly than in decades prior which increases the potential for destruction and makes storms more difficult to accurately track and predict landfall (Bhatia, et al., 2019).
A case study of a major hurricane like Hurricane Katrina is both valuable and necessary as higher education is more likely to encounter significant weather events in the future; therefore, it is appropriate to examine how the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities responded to Hurricane Katrina and what can be learned from the assistance provided as institutions prepare going forward. It is also important to recognize as part of this dissertation that due to the evolving nature of such a catastrophe, there are sometimes inconsistencies between sources on exactly when events took place or the exact nature of exchanges between individuals. Even some initial reporting on Hurricane Katrina was later discovered to be incorrect or could not be substantiated due to the highly volatile situation that was unfolding and the inability to reliably communicate with individuals on the Gulf Coast (Rodriguez et al., 2006).

**Hurricane Katrina**

The name Katrina was assigned to the storm that would devastate the Gulf Coast on August 23, 2005, as a tropical depression approximately 350 miles east of Miami. Katrina first made landfall on the tip of the Florida peninsula as a category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson 5-point tropical cyclone wind scale with sustained winds between 74-95 miles per hour. Katrina then reentered the warm August waters of the Gulf of Mexico where it would ultimately intensify and become a category 5 storm (“Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Underprepared,” 2006). On Friday, August 26, then Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco issued a State of Emergency for Louisiana and National Guard troops begin heading to the Gulf Coast (Rushton, 2015). Despite urging from FEMA Director Michael Brown on the morning of Saturday, August 27 to call for people to leave low-lying areas like New Orleans, then New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin did not call for a
voluntary evacuation of the metropolitan area until later that evening after contraflow had already begun to facilitate the mass evacuation of the city nearly surrounded by water (Brinkley, 2006).

By the early morning of Sunday, August 28, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced Hurricane Katrina had reached a category 5 storm with sustained winds upwards of 160 miles per hour. At 9:30 am, that day Mayor Nagin ordered the first mandatory evacuation of the city of New Orleans with the Superdome acting as a shelter of last resort; only 15 hours remained until the storm was expected to make landfall (“Katrina + 10: Documenting Disaster,” 2015). The National Weather Service warned that because of the storm “most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks…perhaps longer” as storm surge could crest above the levees in New Orleans (Brinkley, 2006, p. 626; Rushton, 2015). Despite the warnings, some individuals either had no way out of the city or “evacuated up” into one of the high-rise hotels in the Central Business District near the Mississippi River levee (Rodriguez et al., 2006). By the time the first bands of rain from the now category 4 Hurricane Katrina fell on the city, it is estimated that eighty percent of the city’s 485,000 residents had evacuated leaving an unknown number of people in their homes or hotels and approximately 10,000 citizens, including 300 medical personnel, and 550 National Guard troops, attempting to ride out the storm in the Superdome (Brinkley, 2006).

By the time the storm made landfall on Monday, August 29 near Buras, Louisiana, meaning the eye at the center of the tropical cyclone passed over land, Hurricane Katrina was a category 3 hurricane with sustained winds of over 110 miles per hour. While flooding in the city had already begun due to the torrential rains associated
with the slow-moving storm and massive storm surge, it was ultimately breaches in the Industrial Canal, 17th Street Canal, and London Avenue Canal that brought hundreds of thousands of gallons of water rushing into New Orleans and the surrounding area, in some places up to 20 feet deep (Brinkley, 2006). Because the land between Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain is largely below sea level, water continued rushing into “the bowl” that is New Orleans until the lake leveled off within the city on August 31, though the Corp of Engineers anticipated that it would be at least 30 days before water was largely gone from the city (“Katrina + 10: Documenting Disaster,” 2015). “Many forget that the real damage to the city came not directly from the storm, but for the failure of the infrastructure that was supposed to protect the city. This failure left over 80 percent of the city (more than seven times larger than the size of Manhattan) under water for almost three weeks” (Wildes, 2008, p. 127).

Much media attention came to New Orleans and the harrowing rescue of residents stranded on their roofs by members of the US Coast Guard, but it was the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) that were the first official rescue team to reach New Orleans with 70 vehicles and boats. LDWF had over 200 flat bottom boats aiding in search and rescue sometimes assisting people that had been clinging to trees or floating debris for hours in the hopes of rescue. A Wildlife and Fisheries warden recounts, “We’d load a boat with people, run to the nearest high ground or road, unload them, and go back out” (Brinkley, 2006, p. 632). Initially, the United States Coast Guard arrived with just seven helicopters to begin emergency evacuations, though over the next days that figure would increase to 4,000 personnel, 37 aircraft, and 63 boats ultimately being sent to assist with the devastation of Hurricane Katrina (Brinkley, 2006).
By Tuesday, August 30, in addition to the individuals stranded in the New Orleans Superdome without power, approximately 20,000 individuals had arrived at the at the New Orleans Convention Center seeking refuge, about half of whom would eventually be transported to Houston’s Astrodome days later. Nearly 4,000 National Guardsmen were stationed in the city as Mayor Nagin ordered the evacuation of all city residents and authorized officers to use force as necessary (Brinkley, 2006). By nightfall on August 31, martial law was declared as Mayor Nagin assigned New Orleans Police Officers to focus solely on maintaining order in the city rather than on search and rescue of the flooded areas as reports of looting and violence began to increase (Brinkley, 2006).

Governor Kathleen Blanco publicly requests upwards of 40,000 troops be sent to Louisiana to provide support and assist in the relief effort (“Katrina + 10,” 2015). On Friday, September 2, after earlier attempts by roughly 90 New Orleans police officers failed to take control of the Convention Center, 1,000 National Guard troops reclaimed control of the massive building and brought with them 200,000 meals for those that had managed to survive the days with no food, water, or electricity (Brinkley, 2006).

On Friday, September 2, the U.S. Congress passed, and President George W. Bush signed the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising from the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, which made $10.5 billion available to the areas and individuals effected by Katrina. National Guardsmen engaged in the relief effort increased to 19,500, over 6,000 of which were in the city of New Orleans (Brinkley, 2006). Just one week after the voluntary evacuation order, 13,000 US National Guard troops were on the ground in New Orleans, and finally the Superdome and Convention Center were empty (“Katrina + 10: Documenting Disaster,” 2015). A
total of 40,000 troops were deployed to the area impacted by Hurricane Katrina, and the American Red Cross oversaw care for approximately 96,000 individuals across nine states (Rushton, 2015).

Sociological disaster researchers who examine natural disasters and the impact on society define Hurricane Katrina as not just a disaster; it was a catastrophe. Researchers note that catastrophes are marked by massive physical impacts, the inability of local officials to complete standard work practices, interruptions of normal community activities, assistance provided largely from outside the community, nonlocal media providing most of the coverage, and direct involvement of national departments and agencies (Quarantelli, 2006). The physical devastation of New Orleans was such that institutions from educational to safety to sanitation could not provide for the citizens of the city. National media coverage of New Orleans residents being evacuated from rooftops due to the rising flood waters filled the airways for weeks after the levees breached. Outside assistance was required to mitigate the human and environmental suffering and provide basic human services in the immediate aftermath and months that followed. On August 30, the Secretary of the U.S. Health and Human Services department declared a public health emergency in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida (Rushton, 2015). The United States Army 82nd Airborne arrived in New Orleans on September 3 to bring much needed assistance to those individuals that remained in the city as the 4,000 Louisiana National Guard troops that had been deployed to New Orleans on August 27 were no longer sufficient to address the worsening situation in the city (Brinkley, 2006).
By the end of September, it was estimated that 1.3 million people were displaced across all 50 states due to Hurricane Katrina. Though evacuees were spread around the country, the majority of evacuees fled to Louisiana’s capital city Baton Rouge which became the largest city in Louisiana just days after Katrina. Though some individuals did not have a say in where they were relocated, the majority stayed within 250 miles of New Orleans with Texas accepting nearly a quarter of a million individuals who fled Hurricane Katrina (El Nasser & Overbert, 2005; Brinkley 2006). For higher education, it is estimated that 30 colleges received significant damage, displacing approximately 100,000 college students (Malgieri, 2005). At the time of Hurricane Katrina, “the catastrophe generated the largest and most complicated mobilization of federal resources and personnel that had ever occurred in the country’s history in the face of national or technological disaster” as multiple states were directly impacted and individuals were displaced across the country (Rodriguez, et al., 2006, p. 93). Congressional investigations in the months after the storm concluded:

Hurricane Katrina was an extraordinary act of nature that spawned a human tragedy. It was the most destructive natural disaster in American history, laying waste to 90,000 square miles of land, an area the size of the United Kingdom. In Mississippi, the storm surge obliterated coastal communities and left thousands destitute. New Orleans was overwhelmed by flooding. All told, more than 1,500 people died. (Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared, 2006, p. 2).

In the end, “the National Guard and active-duty military troops and assets deployed during Katrina constituted the largest deployment of military forces since the Civil War (Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared, 2006, p. 7). The destruction of New
Orleans and the Gulf Coast, in terms loss of lives, environmental devastation, and infrastructure collapse, makes Hurricane Katrina an important case study on multiple levels; however, this dissertation narrows in on the impact of the AJCU to mitigate some loss for college students impacted by the storm.

Hurricane Katrina and Loyola University New Orleans

Loyola University New Orleans students were to begin classes on Monday, August 29, 2005; instead, multiple levee failures brought on by Hurricane Katrina resulted in mass flooding and devastation across the Mississippi Gulf Coast (Rushton, 2015). Loyola, like the city of New Orleans, is not new to severe weather. However, the physical geography of New Orleans compounds the gravity of both severe weather and city evacuations. On Saturday, August 27, in line with the city’s voluntary evacuation order, Loyola’s website indicated classes would be postponed and instead begin Tuesday, August 30 to allow individuals to leave as necessary and return once the storm had passed. Student Affairs staff anticipated condensing the residential students that could not evacuate into two dorms on the main campus and riding out the storm as New Orleanians and members of the Loyola community have done for decades. However, it became clear by the evening of August 27, that all students would have to be evacuated. On Sunday, August 28, approximately 140 Loyola students and several staff members evacuated to Baton Rouge, Louisiana – a 90-mile trip that took 8 hours due to the logistics of a mass evacuation of the city nearly surrounded by water. Once news of the levee breaches reached staff in Baton Rouge, arrangements were made to find more permeant accommodations for students including some international students (Lorenz, 2006).
Loyola University New Orleans President, Kevin Wildes, S.J., remained on the campus with several campus police and physical plant staff members. When they were able to leave the maintenance building in which they had taken refuge, Wildes surveyed the campus noting that it escaped mostly unscathed. Initially he anticipated classes could begin mid-September because unlike the faculty, staff, and students that evacuated New Orleans, Wildes did not initially know of the levee breaches. The campus is located near the Mississippi River levee – the opposite end of the bowl where the levees of Lake Pontchartrain which were breached. Without electricity, internet, or cell service to phones with New Orleans area codes, Wildes was initially unaware of the devastation that had befallen the city. Of course, he would eventually be told of the flooding and work to make a plan for how to address the unprecedented situation just over a year into his tenure as president (Lorenz, 2006).

Loyola announced it would be closed for the duration of the fall semester on September 3, though Tulane University and other colleges in the metropolitan area had already announced their closure (Brinkley, 2006). The campus remained dry, but the city was mostly uninhabitable between the catastrophic flooding of 80 percent of the city and complete lack of city services. However, the campus holds a prime location on the approximately mile-wide strip of land running along the Mississippi River levee that was not flooded. Known by locals as the Sliver on the River or the Isle of Denial, the campus was one of the few places that remained inhabitable, though it would be an additional six weeks before electricity was restored to the campus (Burnett, 2007; Lorenz, 2006). With buildings out of use, Wildes allowed the campus to be used as a National Guard camp, with some troops remaining well into the spring 2006 semester. The campus was a

When the damage could be assessed, approximately 60 percent of the university faculty and staff sustained significant damage to their homes. Faculty were spread around the nation, with some teaching or continuing research at various host higher education institutions. Then Provost Walter Harris established an office in Houston; numerous Jesuits taught classes at their sister institution Spring Hill University in Mobile, Alabama as the campus was only 150 miles from New Orleans yet did not sustain significant damage to the physical plant or city (Lorenz, 2006). Wildes assured both faculty and staff that despite the closure of the institution, they would be paid through the fall semester, in part because nearly all of the AJCU institution that accepted students did not charge students additional tuition and allowed those funds to remain at Loyola New Orleans (Boken, 2006).

Students spent what was sometimes called their “domestic semester abroad” across the country. Several hundred Loyola law students, particularly first-year students, and around 20 faculty were hosted by the University of Houston with students being taught by Loyola faculty mostly on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Because of Louisiana’s unique system of law based on the Napoleonic Code, students who wanted to practice law in Louisiana would have been at a significant disadvantage if they tried to take classes elsewhere (Jaschik, 2005). Some students enrolled in public colleges and universities, some in AJCU institutions, and some sat out the semester entirely (Kumar, 2006).
Loyola University New Orleans was grateful that, given the state of the city, approximately 85 percent of students returned to the university when it opened in January for the spring 2006 semester (Lorenz, 2006). While Loyola was happy to welcome home so many students, housing students became a challenge Loyola had not anticipated. At the time, nearly two-thirds of students lived off-campus in a city that had been 80 percent destroyed. Rents were rising and housing was scarce, so Loyola had to employ some of the same housing strategies used by their AJCU counterparts and rapidly expand the housing capacity to facilitate students returning to campus. In January, Wildes announced that while the campus was mostly intact, the university suffered a $20 million dollar deficit as tuition accounted for nearly 75 percent of the institution’s budget; thus, numerous faculty, staff, and academic programs would be terminated from the university over the next semester (Fogg, et al., 2006).

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities Response

On September 7, just days after Loyola New Orleans President Wildes, S.J. announced that Loyola New Orleans would be closed for the duration of the fall 2005 semester, students from Loyola received an email stating that they would be welcomed by the other 27 member institutions from the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (K. Watson, personal communication, April 4, 2022). Records indicate approximately 1,200 Loyola students attended AJCU institutions; the largest numbers of students attended Loyola Chicago (286 students), Boston College (84 students), Spring Hill College (82 students), and University of San Francisco (82 students), though interviews and institutional recollections vary from published records in part because institutions often accepted any students impacted by Hurricane Katrina rather than
exclusively from Loyola New Orleans (Lorenz, 2006). However, planning for student assistance began even before the hurricane made landfall facilitating some of the quick response. According to Dr. Robert Kelly, then Assistant Vice President for Student Development at Seattle University, student affairs staff from several AJCU institutions were gathered for a job alike meeting at Fordham University in New York when they got word that New Orleans would likely be affected by the impending storm.

We knew Katrina was approaching the Gulf region. We were all at a meeting off-campus and they began to say there’s something going on, and I was at a meeting of just the student development group. And the person at the time who was the Vice President said “Rob, I need you in this meeting.”…This [storm] is gonna to be bigger than everyone’s thinks it’s’ gonna be and it’s heading right for New Orleans. And so, we are going to have to accept people. We probably should do the right thing and accept some students from there, just for a couple of days, and then of course, send them all back. (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

However, some presidents were cognizant that moving too quickly and getting ahead of Loyola could have been difficult for students as well. Robert Niehoff, S.J., then President of John Carroll University outside Cleveland, Ohio, states, “we didn’t want the students of Loyola to think Loyola had abandoned them. So, it took a few days for it to be clear that continuing [at Loyola] was not an option” (personal communication, April 22, 2022). Even among the individual AJCU institutions presidents, there was a balancing act between anticipating the needs of others without taking away the agency of
Loyola New Orleans leadership to make decisions about how they would attempt to deal with the unprecedented situation.

Then President of the AJCU, Charles “Charlie” Currie, S.J., spearheaded the discussions of how to assist the students from Loyola New Orleans (Lederman, 2019). Michael Sheeran, S.J., then President of Regis University in Denver, Colorado and later President of the AJCU, recalls Currie taking swift action among the AJCU presidents emphasizing the importance of acting quickly for the benefit of students and Loyola. Sheeran recalls:

I think he [Currie] was in touch with various of us presidents to let us know, but you got to remember times were different technologically. One practical thing was he could not reach anybody in the administration at Loyola while that was going on. So, as I remember, he was sending out that notice without being sure that Loyola was going to be happy with this, and that could have been rather tricky (personal communication, May 23, 2022).

Michael Garanzini, S.J., then President of Loyola University Chicago and current President of the AJCU recalls:

We met, I forget whether it was a kind of an emergency session, on the phone and Father Charlie sort of organized it, and we had a discussion from there. The presidents determined as a group that we should take them [students] as quickly as possible. Ask our staff to work through the weekend, get them registered for classes as quick as possible. We had a week before we really knew what the damage was, so we got them in within two weeks. We determined, number one, open our doors immediately and put out that students are welcome to come. You
do not need your records; you do not need a transcript (personal communication, April 11, 2022).

An email entitled Loyola University New Orleans Students Welcomed by Sister Jesuit Institutions went out to all Loyola students on the afternoon of September 7, 2005 (Appendix B). Once Wildes was able to reestablish communication with the Association via satellite phone on the rooftop of a campus building, he was pleased the network had begun working to meet the needs of Loyola’s students, even if Currie had acted without confirming the plan with him beforehand (K. Wildes, personal communication, May 25, 2022). It was the continued influx of tuition funds that allowed Loyola to pay faculty and staff through the fall semester despite being closed. Thomas “Tommy” Screen, then a member of the Loyola New Orleans government relations staff and later Vice President of Government Relations and General Counsel, recalls that the arrangement “was just communication from Father Currie to Father Wildes…which obviously was hugely beneficial for Loyola. I’m not entirely certain there was a legal agreement with any of the schools. It was simply part of our brotherhood” (personal communication, April 22, 2022). AJCU President Currie would remain at the forefront of the effort throughout the semester, reminding presidents of the importance of accepting students as part of the Jesuit mission (W. Kauffman, personal communication, April 29, 2022).

While the decision to accept students was simply a gentleman’s agreement, there was also an unspoken understanding that institutions would not recruit students to remain at the host institution once Loyola New Orleans reopened. President Garanzini, S.J. recalls, “these students belong to our sister institution, and we have to treat them like our own, and we have to send them back home” (personal communication, April 11, 2022).
President Niehoff, S.J. recalls that not only did John Carroll University make the decision to not charge students tuition, they followed through on the understanding among the presidents that students were to be supported but not recruited despite the revenue shortfall occurring at John Carroll.

We had the capacity in the residence halls. We knew we had the capacity in our classrooms because we had not met our enrollment goal. So, it isn’t that we didn’t need the revenue, but we chose not to. Because we knew that it would damage Loyola, and we weren’t going to kill Loyola, one of the 28 of us, for a little bit of payoff (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

Jeffery Gray, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs of Fordham University recalls that, much like the understanding between presidents, staff was under the same directive that Loyola students were to be welcomed, accommodated, and prepared to return to New Orleans when the Loyola opened (personal communication, April 26, 2022). President Sheeran, S.J. of Regis University recalls the arrangement with students being friendly but finite.

When Loyola reopens, your arrangement with us is over. If you choose to stay with us, then we'll treat you just like any other brand-new student. We guarantee no financial aid. You have to meet entry standards that you didn’t have to meet for just this semester. And my impression is that it worked very well all around (personal communication, May 23, 2022).

Loyola Chicago is among the institutions that allowed Loyola New Orleans to retain tuition for the fall semester, and in order to do so, the President was clear that transcripts of the coursework completed in Chicago would not be sent to any other higher education
institution unless there was confirmation that tuition had been paid to Loyola New Orleans. Loyola Chicago both supported the students by not having them incur additional tuition expenses and Loyola as an institution by allowing the tuition revenue to support faculty and staff that could not work, highlighting the understanding that students, while welcome, did need to prepare to return to New Orleans (M. Garanzini, personal communication, April 11, 2022).

When Loyola opened for the spring 2006 semester, a significant number of students that returned despite the condition of the city. Tommy Screen of Loyola New Orleans reflects on how students attending an AJCU institution may have impacted their decision to return to Loyola more than students that may have attended a public or non-Jesuit, private institution.

The retention number in January was something like 90 percent of those that were enrolled for the fall that came back in the spring, which is pretty remarkable given what the city looked like. I would argue that them being at home at a Jesuit school helped grease the skids for them to come back to Loyola six months later. I have no empirical evidence, but I can’t help but think that them being on a Jesuit campus, continuing to go to mass at whatever school they were at, continuing to have a mission and ministry office, or continuing to have retreat work on the weekends - all those things that are part of the Jesuit education - didn’t make them stay somewhat connected to Loyola while they were gone and helped make it easier to go back despite the condition of the city (personal communication, April 22, 2022).
President Sheeran, S.J. recalls the affirmation of the Jesuit curriculum to students,
faculty, and staff as welcoming students did not require a complete overhaul of the
courses offered at Regis for the semester. It required expansion of seats, but not the
creation of additional coursework.

So, what it meant in practice for us, it didn't cost us anything more in any serious
way. You were just adding students to classes. But on the other hand, students
saw Jesuit education in a different light. The philosophy was there, the literature
was there, the history was there, the theology was there - but in a different mode
in each school. And I've heard a number of people say that they realized suddenly
what it was to have a Jesuit education because it was so different on the surface
and so much the same underneath. The net result is that if you go from Marquette
over to Loyola Chicago, even though it'll be different course name, the goals are
the same (personal communication, May 23, 2022).

While AJCU institutions appear to have been cognizant to establish themselves as a
temporary refuge, the Jesuit traditions may have provided a continuity of experience that
helped students remain connected to the Jesuit charism and want to return to Loyola New
Orleans in a way that experiences at other higher education intuitions may not.

While the decision to accept students was made by 27 men, most of them
members of the Jesuit order of priests, it is the faculty and staff on campus that did the
work to enroll evacuated students in classes and assist with appropriate housing.

Garanzini, S.J. of Loyola Chicago recalls when he told senior staff of the agreement, “the
Vice Presidents did not ask questions. People immediately jumped. I mean, we said, ‘Do
you know the Registrar? Do you think you can have your staff here all weekend?’ Yes”
President Niehoff, S.J. was in his eighth day as President of John Carroll University when he was part of the decision to accept students from Loyola and recalls,

Yeah, well, it was not a hard sell on the phone call. The more difficult pieces were all of the mechanics of this. …One of the realities is even the President can’t actually cause that mid-level administrator to do what is necessary to make this happen. So, I can’t imagine that the response was universally positive on our campuses. And so that’s just a great sign of what the spirit can do in the midst of great need (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

President Sheeran, S.J. recalls a great sense of pride among faculty and staff at Regis regarding their support of students impacted by Hurricane Katrina. “For the faculty, it was, well, it’s about time these Jesuit schools did something we can be proud of. I know it was that way on my campus, but I didn’t hear about there being problems elsewhere either” (personal communication, May 23, 2022). Robert Kelly of Seattle University also reflects that campus faculty and staff were unphased by the request to take on additional students.

How did the faculty take it? Great, it’s the right thing to do. I don’t remember anyone having a problem or concern. It was very natural. We had one person who was in charge of simply accepting and then enrolling them in classes. I remember, I was in charge of the residential situation. There wasn’t a lot of hand wringing over it. You know if anything, it was, can we take more? What we were wring our hands over – there was a feeling that we should take as many as we physically could. The issues were, did we want to go over the faculty to
student ratio in the classroom? Did we want to create situations where there were triples in the residence halls (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

The acts of enrolling and housing students were not the only factors for consideration by staff in accepting students from Loyola and other Gulf Coast institutions impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Tommy Screen of Loyola New Orleans reflects that, while, it is absolutely inherent in the association, a desire to help the other institutions, my guess is that their General Counsels were freaking out because of the liability. I can’t image they tracked down every student and forced them to sign a Code of Conduct like you would regularly have students do when the register…It’s like they said, “Ok, I’m the President, and I am willing to take students, so let’s go forward,” but you want to look at what the hell was going on in all those General Counsel’s offices as it related to trying to protect their own intuitions. But I think it highlights that at the end of the day, there is something greater. There is an association that is greater than the legal concerns or legal risk (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

So, while the decision to accept students from Loyola University New Orleans may have been a relatively easy one for the institutional presidents, delivering on the promise of service to students required additional support from faculty and staff on campus. AJCU institutions opened their doors to students from Loyola, many of whom lacked the essentials of daily life in addition to the tools to continue their education effectively. The physical, scholastic, and mental health needs were addressed by their host AJCU institutions. Starting with the most basic of needs, students required a place to sleep having evacuated their homes. Fordham University, which is typically
oversubscribed, put out a call to their students to collect names of those willingness to
have an additional bed placed in their dorm room to accommodate a Loyola student (J.
Gray, personal communication, April 26, 2022). Numerous institutions recall having to
get creative about how to get evacuated students settled in a new city and new institution.
Robert Kelly of Seattle University recalls putting campus renovations on hold to assist
evacuated students.

We had a residence hall offline. We were going to do some renovations, and we said, “No, we have room.” But we already had a list of faculty and staff who said, “I got an extra bedroom”, or “My kids all went off to college, so I am an empty nester, I’ll take students,” or “What if they don’t want to live on campus, and they want to live in a place where they can have home cooked meals.” So, the issue was how many could we take, but it was never should we do it (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

Like faculty at Seattle University, faculty at Loyola Chicago and Boston College also
made offers to personally house evacuated students until campus housing could be arranged or for the duration of the semester (M. Garanzini, personal communication, April 11, 2022; N. Drier, personal communication April 12, 2022). Like at Seattle University, a residence hall at Boston College that was currently not occupied was opened for students that evacuated from the Gulf Coast (N. Drier, personal
communication, April 12, 2022).

In addition to a place to live, few students brought what they needed for an entire semester having evacuated the sub-tropic climate of New Orleans expecting a temporary
stay elsewhere before returning to begin the semester just a few days late. President Niehoff, S.J., recalls the range of needs presented by evacuated students.

We wanted to support them, and they needed everything you can imagine. And maybe, you know, many of them didn’t have much more than a suitcase of clothes. Those who are not from the North were not prepared for the beginning of winter in Cleveland, all of which our community took care of as much as they could (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

The displaced students were also in need of academic materials. The Vice President of Academic Affairs at Loyola University Maryland, then Loyola College, told Gulf Coast students that were short on funds, “just go into the bookstore and get your books and tell them your name. We’ll help” (quoted in Lorenz, 2006, p. 3). While not every institution was able to be so generous, Thayne McCulloh, then Vice President of Academic Affairs and current President of Gonzaga University, recalls that his team tried to view students individually and not just as a collective that in helping the group of students they would help Loyola New Orleans financially. “We also look at them [students] as individuals who themselves had probably been impacted by Katrina in ways that had significant financial ramifications, and we didn’t want to add to that” (personal communication May 3, 2022).

Once institutions had students on campus and helped with the basic necessities, the next step was getting students enrolled in classes. For some evacuated students, part of the draw of attending an AJCU institution was that Loyola New Orleans might be more likely to accept transfer credits for the core curriculum based in the liberal arts if they were taken at another Jesuit institution (K. Watson, personal communication, April
Therefore, it fell to the institutions to ensure that the students they received were placed in coursework that would further the path to graduation, not just serve as an accumulation of hours. Since the institution had not yet started classes, Seattle University allowed evacuated students priority in scheduling courses and had courses in the common curriculum pre-approved by the Provost for evacuated students to place into to ensure there were courses available that were sure to transfer (R. Kelly, personal communication, April 7, 2022). However, not all students could be accommodated with coursework within their academic major. John Carroll University received a music major from Loyola, but the institution did not have a music department for him to take courses within this major. President Niehoff, S.J. did not recall what courses he took, but remembers clearly that every attempt was made to meet the needs of the student, even if it was not within the four walls of a traditional classroom.

One of the things we did was make sure that he had a piano available to him because, for him, that was therapeutic. And then, on a couple of occasions, hired him to play the piano for alumni events and of course identifying him as a Katrina student and introducing him to campus. So, he became a real star on campus (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

AJCU institutions were looked upon favorably by students hoping to not fall behind academically due to the “domestic semester aboard” but the individual institutions varied in what was available to students. However, institutions appear to have made attempts to accommodate students’ academic needs, even if it did not come with credit hours articulated on a transcript.
Once students were settled on campus, it became clear to school leaders and administrators that the evacuated students had significant mental health needs that required addressing if they were to have success in the semester. President Robert Niehoff, S.J. recalls the emotional state of evacuated students.

The students can’t do much if they don’t feel secure. And part of that security isn’t just our own, but those we care about. So, we had to address that in order to serve the individual, and in this case, be willing to go down roads we had never gone before…. We should have anticipated the psychological, the emotional [trauma]. But we saw it early on, and people called it out. We brought in counselors. We brought in people to talk with our faculty advisors as to what to look out for. Luckily, I don’t think we had any, you know, serious student issues, other than anxiety….And the other piece, which was true, our professional consultants in the external community, whether it is the Cleveland Clinic or the other facilities there, were all there whenever we called upon them in order to be helpful. Jesuit schools have a commitment to the care for the person. This was care for the person, but we learned over time how comprehensive that care had to be (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

Other AJCU intuitions had similar realizations about the mental health needs of evacuated students and worked to support students on campus by providing an engaging environment while acknowledging students were likely missing their school, friends, and the city of New Orleans. Robert Kelly of Seattle University recalls Seattle University students welcoming evacuated students and trying to make them feel at home.
I just remember it brought everyone together. Our campus was excited that we could come together and welcome others into our family. It’s like your cousins are coming to visit. …We did a Mardi Gras celebration. We did everything you can image to make people feel at home and welcome (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

Some of the support students felt in attending an AJCU institution could have been the familiarity and routine that comes with attending a Jesuit institution. From the physical structures, emphasis on mission, and liberal arts curriculum typical of a Jesuit institution, familiarity and routine may have provided some emotional support for students experiencing so much upheaval. Tommy Screen of Loyola New Orleans sees a link between the common experience of Jesuit institutions and mental health of evacuated students.

I think you’d be silly not to think that it provided some sort of comfort to be able to go to another campus that was similar to yours. The 28 schools follow the same mantra of *cura personalis*, Men and Women for Others, etc. Now, Loyola New Orleans is much different from Detroit Mercy, is much different from Loyola Marymount. But the fact is when you have the core principles in place and the ability to go to an environment that was similar to the one you left behind - it had to be comforting (personal communication, April 22, 2022).

Evacuated students got to experience the diversity of Jesuit institutions but remain in an environment structured around the same guiding principles of Jesuit charism with attention to *cura personalis*, a Latin phrase used by the Jesuits to emphasize that care for an individual includes the acknowledgement of the physical, emotional, and spiritual
needs of a person (Gallo, 2016). William Kauffman, then General Counsel and current Secretary of the University at St. Louis University recalls,

Not only is it in the spirit of Jesuit service, but it is also really sort of continuity of education too. The students who were coming were still being taught sort of in the same methodology, in the same spirit of the Jesuit mission that I expect they were getting at Loyola (personal communication, April 29, 2022).

In line with the Jesuit charism, AJCU institutions attempted to address the varied needs of the evacuated students from the physical to the psychological.

The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities was able to publicly offer evacuated students from Loyola University New Orleans acceptance and enrollment just days after President Wildes, S.J. announced the university would be closed for the duration of the fall 2005 semester, though planning had begun before the hurricane hit and before Wildes could be consulted. Several aspects of the Association facilitated the quick response. The first is highly practical; there was a preestablished network to activate in a time of crisis. Though it is a voluntary association, it is still an association complete with bylaws, semiannual meetings of all 28 institutional presidents, and convenings across academic areas or special areas of interest (K. Wildes, personal communication, May 25, 2022). The Association also encourages and facilitates relationships between individuals in similar roles across member institutions. When it was clear that Loyola New Orleans would not be open for the fall semester Robert Kelly of Seattle University recalls preparations occurring within the network, particularly with Santa Clara University.
A number of people in the network began to talk to each other and say, “Well, how many are you taking?” For some people it was based on, you know, we have 10 beds available – so we can do that. It was immediate organization. We already had a structure by which we could organize. ...I mean, literally, I can have a question at 8:49 in the morning, and I could put a question out to my Listserv, and by noon I’ll have 15 responses. Within the Student Affairs group, we communicate a lot. We share struggles, and we also share successes. So, yeah, without a doubt, having that organized is why we were able to do as much as we did (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

William Kauffman of St. Louis University describes the relationship between the General Counsels at the AJCU institutions:

My counterparts, the AJCU attorneys, we connect once a month and have an hour-long conversation about what’s going on. We are extraordinarily close. And that is true throughout. I know the Financial Aid Officers, the admissions people, and the Provosts are all engaged in regular activities. So, when all heck broke loose in New Orleans, it was seen that if anybody is going to help, it’s the sister institutions that are going to reach out.

Tommy Screen of Loyola New Orleans recalls that Hurricane Katrina catalyzed the governmental relations teams across the AJCU institutions, including Cindy Littlefield at the AJCU who was graduate of Loyola New Orleans. Screen credits Littlefield and the coordination with and among AJCU institutions with some of the disaster relief that was appropriated by Congress for higher education intuitions impacted by Hurricane Katrina in the months after the storm (T. Screen, personal communication, April 22, 2022).
Second, the Association fosters a deep sense of community and shared responsibility. Michelle Wheatly, Mission Officer at Gonzaga University, notes the emphasis on community seen during Hurricane Katrina and through AJCU today.

I think another piece that is distinctive is the network piece and the idea of a call going out to the network. And, though this would have come well after Katrina, in the most recent Jesuit General Congregation decrees, I feel like there was a heightened emphasis on networking and collaboration (personal communication, April 11, 2022).

The Association uses the slogan “The Great 28” to emphasize the connection between institutions in the network (R. Kelly, personal communication, April 7, 2022). Robert Kelly of Seattle University reflects on Loyola New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina.

We didn’t want any of the Great 28 to not do well. Loyola New Orleans – it’s one of the Great 28. We can’t stand by. We needed to do. We need to think about how we can be better partners to our sister institutions. This is what we are. This is what we do. We make ourselves available. We give of ourselves. Loyola is part of our family, and if any in our family is hurting, then we are all hurting (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

Gonzaga President Thayne McCulloh further emphasizes the connection felt between the American Jesuit institutions and Jesuit institutions across the globe.

We are in little Spokane, Washington, but we are part of a world-wide network of institutions that are bonded together by the Society. The Society talks about itself as being a company – companions - so it very communal in theme and orientation. So, when a member of the family is affected, other members of the
Institutions are also cognizant that there may come a time in which their institution could be the one in need, and they would want the same hospitality and concern extended to their campus and students. Robert Kelly of Seattle University explains,

I remember thinking, it is really good we are doing this because, what if we had an earthquake. Seattle sits right along the fault line for the West Coast. Literally, the fault line goes through campus. Wouldn’t we want someone to help us in that way (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

St. Louis University is also near the New Madrid Fault in Missouri and recognizes that they too could see a significant natural disaster and hope to have the aid of the other AJCU institutions (W. Kauffman, personal communication, April 29, 2022). The sense of community and shared ownership laid a foundation for the AJCU to respond to the needs of Loyola New Orleans and the students as one part of a whole.

Third, more than the network structure or sense of community among network members, the participants noted the Jesuit mission of service prompted institutions to action. In fact, mission is so engrained in the minds of institutional leaders that to not act would have shaken their identity as Jesuit institutions. Current AJCU President Garanzini, S.J. notes, “there is no way we could not do it. We could not have done it any
other way and lived with ourselves” (personal communication, April 11, 2022).

President Sheeran, S.J. reflects on Hurricane Katrina as a key example of the Jesuit mission of service.

There have been a couple of events in my lifetime that have underscored that common Jesuit mission. One of them was the murders in El Salvador of the Jesuits, and the other was the hurricane. The idea that we are all in this together and we’re going to step in really came through. You suddenly had people stop talking about their individual institutions and it was, “We gotta do something for these kids.” This is what we got into the business for, and we have got to make sure that these kids finish their education… My hunch is that Ignatius would have been very concerned for the students and only secondarily concerned for the institution. The reason you’d want the institution to survive and begin to thrive again is because of more students who are out there. But the whole goal for him was to help people to realize they have a vocation to make a better world. That’s what it means to be called into existence. And if we don’t realize that, and commit to do it, then we failed when we ran the school (personal communication, May 23, 2022).

Lay Presidents and staff echo the sentiments expressed by the institutional leaders that are members of the Jesuit order. Thayne McCulloh of Gonzaga University reflects on the aid given after Hurricane Katrina and the Jesuit mission.

That kind of ethic is very strong here, and so I am sure our president at the time, Father Spitzer and the Cabinet, probably didn’t even bat an eye. We were just like, “Well of course; this is what we do.” It is just who we are, and nobody
expected anything down the line. It is just what you do. I think at the end of the day, there is a sense that we belong to one another, and we are in service to God’s will for us individually and collectively. I think that’s very strong in our culture and our community and I identify that as guided by Jesuit charism and values (personal communication, May 3, 2022).

Susan Teerink, then Assistant Director for Financial Aid and current Associate Vice Provost for Financial and Enrollment Services at Marquette University recalls there being no need for discussion regarding accepting students.

There was never a question that we were going to take students in if they wanted to come. I just remember it happening, and it was just what we were going to do. I mean, it was no hesitation whatsoever. There were questions around some of the logistical things, but it wasn’t a question that we weren’t going to take these students in. I remember it was just well, “This is what we do. This is our sister institution, so we are going to bring them in” (personal communication, April 8, 2022).

Robert Kelly of Seattle University reflects the call to service that emanates from the Jesuit mission was not limited to students from AJCU institutions.

I remember feeling like this is one of our schools that is doing the real work of transformation and how do we make the world a more just and humane place. Therefore, we are compelled to act. And so, we didn’t limit the invitation to just Loyola New Orleans. We said if you’re a kid from the Gulf region who can’t go back to their school, come here until you can go back…I think that is part of the charisms. The Catholic part is one part, and I’ll be honest with you, in some
situations that does not draw people in. But the Jesuit stuff draws people in. This is who we are, and this is what we do. We make ourselves available. We give of ourselves even when times are challenging (personal communication, April 7, 2022).

Fordham University, along with most other AJCU institutions, also accepted students from other higher education institution impacted by Hurricane Katrina including Tulane University, Xavier University, and University of New Orleans citing mission as only valid if acted upon, therefore, all students in need had to be welcomed (J. Gray, personal communication, April 26, 2022). President Niehoff, S.J. recalls, “We found the Katrina students helped our other students be more empathetic because they could relate to them. They were like them, even though they might otherwise not know what was going on in New Orleans (personal communication, April 22, 2022). Michelle Wheatly, Chief Mission Officer at Gonzaga University, emphasizes that the Jesuit charism requires action, and welcoming students from the Gulf Coast to campus was an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to live the mission.

I think something we’ve tried to emphasize here is that our mission always needs to be made concrete in our time and place. We are supposed to be deeply engaged with the world with particular attention to those that are on the margins, the most underrepresented and unrecognized. Those who are suffering…Our mission calls us to think on a systems level. So, we don’t get to just look at things in their own narrow way. We have to look at the bigger pictures of how the pieces fit together (personal communication, April 11, 2022).
The network, the sense of community, and the Jesuit mission all contributed to the AJCU’s willingness to accept students impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

As part of the oral history, participants reflected that if a similar situation occurred today, all the AJCU institutions may not respond in the same unified manner. The participants were split over how the AJCU would respond to a similar situation today. Tommy Screen of Loyola notes the overall divisiveness in the country today that may make sacrificing for the good of others less likely to occur today (personal communication, April 22, 2022). Michelle Wheatly expresses uncertainty regarding how the Association would respond given concerns with the growing number of institutions, particularly religious, liberal arts institutions, with financial viability issues.

You know, I am really glad. I am glad that it happened, but I think – and maybe part of this is thinking back – even the difference a decade and a half will make because some of our institutions are in a much more precarious financial position than they probably were then. Now I hear more expressions of fear network-wide about the solvency of some of our institutions. And so, I would have been curious to maybe be a part of some of those conversations to hear was it really just a stretch and we did it because it was the right thing to do. Or, did we not have the same amount of fear that we have now, so it felt like we could extend and be more generous (personal communication, April 11, 2022).

Interestingly, the Jesuit participants had a more hopeful outlook on the potential response of the AJCU should a significant natural disaster disrupt the education of students and put an institution in questionable financial territory. Wildes is hopeful that if the AJCU were to call on members to assist students again, they would be willing to do so (personal
President Sheeran, S.J. concurs with Wildes’ belief that, if needed, students would be assisted today.

Yes, I think that it would now be taken for granted that of course we will do this.

And if anything, I think the lay presidents would be quicker to move than the Jesuits might be simply because they lay presidents have heard about this, they know it is part of the tradition, and they just take for granted that this is the way the school operates (personal communication, May 23, 2022).

Hopefully, there will not be another natural disaster to challenge the AJCU to act in such coordination to aid students and a member of the Association, but if the day comes, community and mission will likely be part of the decision-making process for the Jesuit organization.

Summary of Findings

This chapter chronicled the events of Hurricane Katrina and the impact on the Greater New Orleans areas and Loyola New Orleans. The chapter also examined the response of the AJCU to both students and Loyola University New Orleans as an institution. The AJCU, under the leadership of President Charles Currie, S.J. engaged Presidents at the other 27 sister institutions to facilitate the extension of an invitation to attend a sister institution on September 7, 2005, just four days after President Wildes, S.J. announced the university would be closed for the duration of the fall semester. All institutions acted quickly to enroll students in courses and attend to both the physical and psychological issues. The needs of evacuated students ranged from housing, clothing, and books to mental health services as they began to work through the trauma of loss associated with an emergency evacuation and destruction of the city of New Orleans and
the Gulf Coast. In addition to caring for students, all AJCU institutions, except for St. Louis University, did not charge students tuition and allowed tuition dollars for the fall semester to remain at Loyola New Orleans.

Three themes emerged regarding how the AJCU was able to respond so quickly to the great need of students. First, the Association predates the storm. Having a network of institutions and individuals from which to draw upon immediately made swift action possible. On a practical level, the 28 institutions, including presidents, faculty, and staff, knew each other personally and knew how to reach one another. The importance of quick communication is underscored by the fact that AJCU began planning for how to assist students even before Loyola New Orleans could be contacted because the hurricane left President Wildes cut off from outside communication for several days. Second, the association nurtured a sense of community and shared responsibility among institutions. The email sent to students referenced sister institutions. The institutions refer to one another in terms of family, and as part of the oral history interviews, both presidents and staff discussed a feeling of reciprocal obligations to family. Several participants noted that even if they disagree like siblings during the best of times, members of the Association come together to support one another when times are difficult. Third, participants cited the Jesuit charism and Ignatian spirituality as motivation for quick action in the inherent call to serve those in need. Ignatian spirituality calls followers to be men and women for others and the evacuated students of Loyola, and other Gulf Coast higher education institutions, were viewed as an opportunity for service to mankind, which is seen as service to God.
Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this oral history case study is to explore how the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities responded to Hurricane Katrina. The conceptual framework used is Organizational Identity Theory (OIT) developed by Albert and Whetten (1985) to determine how the AJCU’s actions aligned with the group’s stated mission. The study utilized primary and secondary historical materials, current research and publications, and oral history interviews of students at Loyola New Orleans and leadership at AJCU and AJCU institutions to examine the alignment of the response of AJCU to the stated mission of the organization during Hurricane Katrina. The following research questions grounded the study in order to evaluate the impact of mission on the actions of the AJCU following Hurricane Katrina.

1. What influence did the Jesuit charism have on the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina?

2. Did the AJCU act in alignment with its organizational identity as a Jesuit institution of higher education?

3. What can be learned about the importance of mission in the response of higher education institutions to increasingly frequent natural disasters?

Analysis is guided by the tenants of Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory for determination of alignment between an institution’s stated mission and their behavior in a given situation (1985). Since there is no comparable organization to compare to the AJCU for response to Hurricane Katrina, analysis focused on the alignment between the actions of the AJCU with Jesuit charism and a particular focus on the central, enduring, and distinctive organizational characteristics criteria established for evaluation by OIT.
The oral history case study is tightly bound to the three weeks after Hurricane Katrina made landfall in order to concentrate analysis around the invitation and reception of students rather than the entirety of experiences throughout the semester. OIT indicates that mission is articulated in actions in times of crisis; therefore, the review is limited to the time in which students and Loyola New Orleans were in the greatest immediate need.

**Research Question 1**

What influence did the Jesuit charism have on the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina?

The Jesuit charism is rooted in several key principles that should guide the decisions of Jesuit institutions, including the AJCU. I will examine key aspects of the Jesuit charism in relation to the central, enduring, and distinctive criteria established by Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory (1985) in order to determine if, or to what extent, Ignatian spirituality influenced the response of the AJCU after Hurricane Katrina. There are three central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics of the charism that have been established. First, Ignatian spirituality is built on the understanding that God has a unique desire to connect with creation. The *Spiritual Exercises* written by Ignatius tell of his spiritual journey toward finding communion with God. Underlying this journey is the belief that God has a desire to engage deeply with humans and know them as individuals. For that reason, the *Spiritual Exercises* also serve as a guide for others to know God and engage personally with their Creator. As a result, the Jesuits are distinctive in their foundational understanding that there is direct engagement between humans and the Divine (Gray, 2000).
The second central, enduring, and distinctive characteristic of the Jesuit charism is the belief that God is in all things. The Jesuits do not require churches or vestments to preach the Gospel; the Good News surrounds them. The Jesuit motto of *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, “For the Greater Glory of God,” recognizes that because God is all around; almost any action completed with love for another can be a form of praise. For that reason, Ignatian pedagogy engages deeply with both theological and secular writings. The great works of mankind are not detractors from the goodness of God; they are expressions of that goodness. The Jesuits are distinctive in that teaching was not limited to those with wealth or means to pay for education; education is to be available for all capable students. Though students in Jesuit schools learned Latin, Jesuits translated prayers and performed religious services in the vernacular of the area. While other religious teachers and missionaries required the converted to divest of their cultural practices and language, the Jesuits are distinct in their willingness to see the creations of humans as a means of praising God (O’Malley, 2014).

The third central, enduring, and distinctive characteristic of the Jesuit charism is a call to be men and women for others. Ignatius saw the greatest way to honor God and show thankfulness for the great bounty of creation was in acts of service, most especially to the lowliest and forgotten of society. Ignatius spent years among the poorest of society in his journey to finding God and that connection and appreciation for the less fortunate was carried throughout his life and into the foundations of Jesuit charism and Ignatian pedagogy. The call to be humble servants to all of God’s creation as a means of worship is distinct among religious organizations as even the simplest acts of service are an
exaltation of God. For the Jesuits, a life of service to creation is a powerful expression of worship (Mitchell, 1998).

Media coverage during and in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina reported on both substantiated and unsubstantiated reports of looting, fires, rapes, murders, and attempts to shoot down emergency helicopters trying to rescue individuals from the rising waters. While a significant amount of national media coverage, particularly from 24-hour cable news networks, narrowed in on the antisocial behavior that occurred during and in the days and weeks after Katrina, research indicates that while there will always be bad actors, most behavior after catastrophic natural disasters is actually prosocial. Researchers from the University of Delaware’s Disaster Research Center found that natural disasters, and Hurricane Katrina in particular, brought forth extraordinary behavior from individuals and groups to assist one another in dire need. While their research focused particularly on individuals that remained in New Orleans during and after the storm, they note the devastation of Katrina caused groups to either expand their current structures to provide aid to those impacted by Katrina or develop new organizations to specifically meet the needs of those impacted by the storm (Rodriguez et al., 2006). In the case of the AJCU, the organization and membership established prior to the storm allowed a more rapid response. Members had provided aid to one another in prior times of need; however, the association had never attempted such a comprehensive invitation to assist an entire institution of students.

The Jesuit charism clearly influenced the response of the AJCU to Hurricane Katrina in several ways. First, displaced students were cared for physically and emotionally when they were in great need. Staff at AJCU institutions began planning for
how to accommodate students impacted by Hurricane Katrina even before the levees were breached. Institutions were preparing should there be a need as the charism motivates institutions to be at the ready to serve. AJCU institutions quickly welcomed students knowing that they lacked even the most essential resources including clothing and shelter. In addition, faculty and staff even offered to house displaced students, acknowledging that security is foundational for any person to survive. All but one of the AJCU institutions were willing to not only forgo tuition payments, but they also incurred additional expenses to provide for displaced students including room and board and mental health services above what would have traditionally been made available to students at the institution.

Second, in addition to acknowledging and supporting the displaced students as individuals, AJCU institutions also worked to ensure they continued to make progress on their academic journey. Of course, the basic necessities were taken care of first, but AJCU institutions extended an offer not just to house students, but to educate them as well. Staff worked overtime to advise students and enroll them in classes. Faculty added seats to classes or opened new sections to accommodate the students that arrived on campus – most after traditional drop/add dates. The AJCU institutions acted as higher education institutions rooted in Jesuit charism in providing continued access to coursework knowing that for these individuals to delay or postpone education on top of the trauma of the hurricane could have significant consequences in degree attainment.

In addition to serving students, the AJCU acted in service of Loyola University New Orleans as an institution and by extension the faculty and staff of Loyola. In all but one instance, AJCU institutions allowed tuition revenue from the fall 2005 semester to
remain at Loyola New Orleans which enabled Loyola to pay faculty and staff despite their inability to complete the typical responsibilities of their employment. New Orleans was under a mandatory evacuation order for weeks, and even once the city was reopened, a significant number of faculty and staff sustained damage to their homes. In service to those in need, the AJCU institutions were willing to forgo tuition revenue that would have been generated by the additional students in favor of allowing Loyola to provide some level of financial stability to employees unable to work in the fall 2005 semester.

**Research Question 2**

Did the AJCU act in alignment with its organizational identity as a Jesuit institution of higher education?

The organizational identity of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities is built upon Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit charism. Albert and Whetten (1985) identify that mission is lived in times of crisis. The everyday decisions of running an organization are not testaments to the integration of mission into the culture; it is the choices made by institutions when times are difficult that indicate if the mission is being lived. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, the AJCU acted in alignment with their stated mission by extending assistance to students displaced by the storm. As institutions that retain independent governance, they did not have to come together to assist Loyola and displaced students; however, in the face of great need, the AJCU acted in alignment with their mission as higher education institutions dedicated to service.

The historical case study indicates that all institutions extended the invitation to Loyola New Orleans students to attend one of the sister institutions. Any student who was able to make it to the campus was assisted with finding housing and enrolling in
courses. While leaders at some institutions like Regis University in Denver and Fordham University in New York did not note exceptional financial hardships associated with receiving displaced students, they made the decision to require more of faculty and staff in order to accommodate students. In some instances, faculty, staff, and students at the host institution shared their living spaces with displaced students making a very concrete sacrifice for other students and institution in the Association. For other institutions like John Carroll University, displaced students could have provided much needed revenue in tuition and room and board in the fall 2005 semester and as transfer students should John Carroll decided to recruit evacuated students. However, when there was a choice between acting in their own self-interest or in the interest of the displaced students and impacted university in need, John Carroll chose to live their mission and provide assistance.

Organizational Identity Theory also notes that when mission is truly integrated into the day-to-day practices of the institution, members may report not having made a decision; they simply act in alignment with the mission on instinct (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Numerous participants in the oral history and historical documents point to a lack of contemplation among AJCU members after Hurricane Katrina. Multiple individuals reported sentiments like, “this is just what we do” or “it was never a question of if, but how many students we would take” (R. Kelly, personal communication, April 7, 2022; S. Terrink, personal communication, April 8, 2022). In addition to students displaced from Loyola, numerous institutions extended similar offers to students from any higher education institution on the Gulf Coast impacted by the storm. It is one thing to help a member of your own association, as there is an argument to be made that by helping the
organization, you help yourself in the long run. However, in the records that could be collected and the responses for oral history participants, numerous institutions worked with students regardless of what New Orleans higher education institution had been their home institution. The mission of the AJCU is one of service; care for and service to students was extended to all students in need, collegiate affiliation did not determine the invitation for aid.

Albert and Whetten (1985) also note as part of OIT that when an organization is faced with a mission-based decision, a moral imperative can be created because the actions taken are defining moments for institutional legitimacy in terms of mission alignment. AJCU President Garanzini, S.J. noted the gravity of the decision to assist displaced students, and secondarily Loyola New Orleans, when he stated that when it came to assisting students and Loyola New Orleans, “we could not live with ourselves otherwise” (personal communication, April 11, 2022). The sentiment expressed by Garanzini highlights that for AJCU members, the decision of how to act when a member institution and students faced significant challenges is, indeed, a mission defining decision. Other participants echoed the Jesuit mission as being an imperative to act as they believe Ignatius would have in a similar situation. Again, President Sheeran, S.J. states, “But the whole goal for him [Ignatius] was to help people to realize they have a vocation to make a better world…If we don’t realize that, and commit to do it, then we failed when we ran the school” (personal communication, May 23, 2022). One participant pointed to the insistence of Ignatius that all Jesuit schools be fully endowed to ensure capable students were able to study as evidence that Ignatius would have acted to serve students in continuing their education (K. Wildes, personal communication, May
While AJCU institutions now charge tuition, the focus on the comprehensive needs of students as seen after Hurricane Katrina was at the forefront of how the founder would have approached the situation. Participants reflected the magnitude of the call to service embodied in Ignatian spirituality that made inaction impossible in the face of Hurricane Katrina.

While the historical case study is closely bound to the three weeks after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, it is important to acknowledge the decision of St. Louis University to charge displaced students tuition and retain those funds rather than send them to be used by Loyola New Orleans as was the case for all other AJCU institutions. In relation to this case study, St. Louis University acted along with the other 26 AJCU institutions in extending acceptance and enrolling students from Loyola and other Gulf Coast institutions. However, in early October, St. Louis University notified students that they would indeed be collecting tuition, though SLU would honor any scholarships or financial aid a student had earned at Loyola and apply it toward the sum of expenses incurred and that students would be expected to pay (Boken, 2005). When questioned by students on the perceived mixed messages regarding the email from the AJCU welcoming students and the experiences of other displaced students at both AJCU and non-AJCU institutions, SLU leadership explained that students were indeed welcome, but they would be expected to pay for the educational services received (W. Kauffman, personal communication, April 29, 2022). The results for displaced students were mixed; some paid the amount required by SLU and others withdrew from the university (L. Thum, personal communication, April 27, 2022). So, while all 27 sister institutions acted in unison in the three weeks included in this historical case study, it must be
acknowledged that the actions of leadership at SLU are a significant outlier in both how students were treated and how Loyola New Orleans was supported.

**Research Question 3**

What can be learned about the importance of mission in the response of higher education institutions to increasingly frequent natural disasters?

While working in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Homeland Security Institute, the research and development division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, studied the ability of faith-based organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance post-Katrina in order to document the types and methods of assistance in order to facilitate greater collaboration and relief in the wake of future disasters. The Homeland Security Institute notes faith-based and non-governmental organizations had a significant effect on disaster relief with the greatest impact occurring when the organizations had aligned missions, familiarity or closeness to those in need, and access to resources directly applicable to the needs of the individuals and communities they sought to assist (Arroyo, 2008). Mission, encompassed by the central, enduring, and distinctive components of the Organizational Identity Theory, is linked to effective natural disaster management and recovery (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

Based on the findings of the Homeland Security Institution, the AJCU was poised to provide some of the most impactful assistance to both the institution and students of Loyola New Orleans. First, the 28 member intuitions share the Jesuit mission of service to those in need. Nearly every AJCU institutional staff members that participated in the oral history mentioned mission as central to the response. In this case, it is the Jesuit mission which stresses service that is noted by AJCU members, but a shared mission can
catalyze efforts through a shared understanding even if that mission is not service oriented. For higher education institutions, the central and enduring characteristics include the mission of educating students, therefore, institutional leadership should consider how to establish relationships prior to natural disasters rooted in a shared mission.

Second, the Homeland Security Institute noted that the most impactful assistance after Hurricane Katrina was from organizations that had a familiarity with the individual or organization in need. As an association that existed prior to the natural disaster, the AJCU was clearly familiar with Loyola University New Orleans; they share many aspects of an organizational identity and regularly meet as institutions and across job positions. Oral history participants discussed knowing their colleagues at AJCU institutions personally; thus, the logistics and services could be worked out more quickly between trusted colleagues rather than individuals offering assistance with no prior relationship to call upon. In times of disaster, familiarity and established connections are key as emphasized by the inability of President Wildes, S.J. to be reached in the immediate aftermath of the storm. As soon as he was able to get a connection via satellite phone, Wildes knew who to call for assistance. He did not have to wait for the government, religious, or non-governmental agency to contact him. He could move quickly because as soon as he able to regain communication capabilities, he had a network in place to call upon. Higher education leadership should consider collaborating with similar organizations across professional roles to facilitate responses during natural disasters based on some prior level of engagement.
Third, availability of adequate and appropriate resources is cited by the Homeland Security Institution as an important element of response to facilitate effective assistance. Albert and Whetten’s Organization Identity Theory highlights those central and enduring characteristics as key to an organization’s identity (1985). All AJCU institutions share the central characteristic of being higher education institutions; thus, in line with the findings of the Homeland Security Institution’s analysis, other higher education institutions would be in the best position to provide assistance after a natural disaster. Higher education institutions have a familiarity with key aspects of federal and institutional financial aid regulations, regional and specialty area accreditation requirements, faculty promotion and tenure processes, and research and service expectations that are all unique to higher education. On the most basic level, they share a lexicon of specialized terms like Provost, Bursar, and Registrar, along with a multitude of acronyms that streamline communication between postsecondary institutions but would be a hindrance to even the most dedicated organizations seeking to provide aid that are outside higher education system.

Mission is critical in the ability of institutions to respond in times of disaster. A uniting mission is important for both the institution in need of assistance and the organization seeking to provide assistance. A shared mission lays the foundation for effective collaboration between organizations. In the case of the AJCU during Hurricane Katrina, the Jesuit mission of service was a driving force in the decision to extend aid. While the offer of assistance is a pivotal first step, two additional factors increased the chances that the aid would have the desired positive impact on the organizations and individuals in need as reviewed by the Homeland Security Institute. In times of natural
disasters, quick action is imperative; therefore, familiarity between staff and leadership is key to maximizing the impact of assistance. Organizations, both literally and metaphorically, cannot call for help, if they do not know who to call. Third, aid is more effective when the two organizations match up in the resources available. For higher education, a resources match is not just about finances and endowments, it is also about the human capital to recognize resources and navigate systems that allow for effective, efficient support.

Limitations

The historical case study has several limitations. The first limitation is the time constraints of the dissertation process to allow for a larger number of oral history participants. I was able to speak with fourteen individuals including five institutional presidents, two of which were also presidents of AJCU, six senior administrators, and three students from Loyola University New Orleans. However, the compressed timeline of the dissertation defense and the very full schedules of senior staff at postsecondary institutions limited the number of oral histories that could be conducted. In addition, Holy Week and graduations fell in the timeframe for oral histories, both of which call for extra attention from staff, particularly staff that are Jesuit priests who have professional religious obligations in addition to higher education leadership roles.

Second, given the nature of the emergency and the relative newness of technology, very few records have been kept regarding the AJCU decision to provide aid to Loyola New Orleans. Online platforms did not have automatic backup systems, and as was pointed out by a participant, conference calls in 2005 were just not the same as what technology allows for today. In addition, participants noted that institutions categorized
students from the Gulf Coast in different ways, non-degree seeking, transfer, traditional student, such that extracting records 17 years later is difficult, even when there has been no staff turn-over at an institution. Therefore, precise counts of students that attended AJCU institutions as a result of Hurricane Katrina are difficult to verify or compare across institutions.

Third, the oral history case study is tightly bound around the extension of aid to Loyola New Orleans students when leaders made the decision to provide aid; however, the decisions of St. Louis University several months after students were welcomed to campus could impact the analysis of alignment to mission, most especially for a service-oriented organization. A broader examination of mission alignment, in light of the actions of St. Louis University in charging students tuition, could impact the analysis of alignment to Organizational Identity Theory as outlined by Albert and Whetten (1985).

Implications for Practice

With natural disasters on the rise in the United States and worldwide, it is important that higher education prepares to address significant campus disruptions before they occur. Hurricane Katrina caused the longest closure of a postsecondary institution’s physical plant in a city that was 80 percent flooded (McCullar, 2011). The dramatic devastation of Hurricane Katrina prompted documentation and guidance on necessary preparations and lessons learned about higher education survival after Katrina, but much of that research has focused on higher education institutions outside of the Greater New Orleans (Bacher, et al., 2005). Hurricane Katrina may be the exception on the scale of physical devastation, but the intensity of natural disasters is on the rise globally (Ladd, et al., 2007). Postsecondary institutions can hope that such devastation is never seen again;
however, the likelihood that a campus will be impacted by some kind of natural disaster is increasing. Therefore, institutions must devise strategies and response frameworks prior to the crisis if they are to mitigate losses when natural disasters impact their campuses (Laframboise, 2012; Rohli, 2018).

While the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant upheaval in the day to day functioning of postsecondary institutions, campuses remained intact, instruction moved online, and meetings went virtual. It should not be discounted that the stakes are incredibly high for individuals, students, and institutions during a pandemic, but campuses and infrastructure were not damaged or lost. There will certainly be best practices around online learning and emergency preparations gleamed from the difficulty of the COVID-19 pandemic, but natural disasters pose a different kind of threat that can destabilize both the physical infrastructure of campus as well as the daily routines of students and staff.

The historical case study has included mission as part of the examination of how higher education institutions approach disaster response. The Homeland Security Institute found that after Hurricane Katrina, mission and prior association were key to getting the right aid to the right organizations and individuals. Therefore, while planning for natural disasters as a single campus is important, doing so in isolation from institutions with similar missions is insufficient to ensure the students, faculty, staff, and institution will endure. In order to ensure the values and mission of the institution remain in place through natural disasters, collaboration across institutions is imperative. It is not enough to simply be an institution under a governing board or have a passing collaboration with another higher education institution; partnership should be deliberate.
and extend beyond the institutional presidents (Arroyo, 2008). While mission-centered higher education disaster literature is limited, Ladd, Gill, and Marszalek (2007) surveyed over 7,000 students displaced by Hurricane Katrina and found that the “historic Gulf Coast exodus that followed created significant psychological, economic, and social impacts for college students in New Orleans” (p. 52). For institutions rooted in the Jesuit charism, addressing the comprehensive needs of students is aligned with the religious order’s mission; however, all higher education institutions must develop a student-centered strategy to address the multifaceted response necessary to support the individuals and institution through crisis.

Collaboration outside of the institution for natural disaster mitigation may take a variety of forms and could occur within the existing structure of a governing or coordinating board. However, the engagement must be authentic, substantial, and rooted in mission if trusting relationships are to be built that lead to successful disaster impact mitigation (Arroyo, 2008). For example, the AJCU is a voluntary association with each member retaining complete autonomy over their institution; yet, multiple oral history participants stressed that they knew their counterparts at AJCU sister institutions and built relationships that were important to the nature and speed of emergency response. The institutions are rooted in the Jesuit charism requiring them to think globally and act locally thus focusing both on the spirit of collaboration and the utility of familiarity (Leighter & Smythe, 2019). There is great variety in the size, scale, and scope of postsecondary institutions, so there may be greater success in collaboration between institutions of similar size or populations of students served than, perhaps, physical
proximity. In that way, mission can provide a unifying theme around which to build a relationship that can be called upon should there be a substantial need.

**Opportunities for Additional Scholarship**

An oral history based historical case study of the response of the AJCU is one layer of the scholarship that can be done around how higher education prepares for and addresses natural disasters. While there is scholarship regarding the logistics inherent in preparing a campus for natural disaster and evacuating students, this dissertation is a first step in examining what are best practices for mission-centered preparation that can be done before an institution is faced with the threat of natural disaster (Brinkley, 2006; FEMA, 2003; Ladd et al., 2005; Rohli, et al. 2018). Future research should examine how other institutions and organizations have responded to crisis, particularly natural disasters, and how mission was impacted. While Hurricane Katrina is a dramatic example of a catastrophic weather-related event, other natural disasters have caused significant campus closures; those instances should be examined for if and how institutions were able to maintain their organizational identity. Theories like Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory (1985), though not developed exclusively for review of mission alignment in postsecondary institutions, can provide a structure on which to begin evaluating mission alignment of higher education institutions in times of natural disaster.

St. Louis University decision to charge displaced students tuition and not pass those funds along to Loyola New Orleans is an unquestionable outlier. The actions of St. Louis University appear to be outside of both the mission of the Jesuit institutions rooted in Ignatian spirituality and Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory (1985)
that uses central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics to evaluate if actions are consistent with mission (Gray, 2000). Institutions live their mission in times of trial when the values of the organization come into conflict with the practical, often times the financial interests, of the organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). All other AJCU institutions made the decision to forgo revenue, assist students, and financially support Loyola when the city experienced a catastrophic disaster, but leadership at St. Louis University made a very different decision – one that caused evacuated students to either incur additional debt or withdraw from the university and forfeit the academic progress that had been made in the semester. The AJCU should investigate why the decision was made and if or how that action impacted the organizational identity of the Association especially in light of research indicating the storm’s impact on students was complex and affected far more than just academic progression (Ladd, et al., 2007).

Conclusion

The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities was influenced by the Jesuit charism in their response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The foundational principles of God’s desire to engage with creation and service to the less fortunate motivated the AJCU to accept and enroll students from Loyola New Orleans and other higher education students impacted by the storm (Gray, 2000). The oral history case study finds that the AJCU acted in alignment with the central, enduring, and distinctive (CED) characteristics that comprise their stated mission based on the conceptual framework provided by Albert and Whetten’s Organizational Identity Theory (1985). In addition, the oral history case study highlights the importance of mission in how postsecondary institutions act during natural disasters. Institutional missions are lived in times of crisis. Legitimacy of the
organization depends on how institutions respond to the moral imperative established through the central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics. Within the bound framework of the case study, the AJCU fulfilled their mission of service and retained alignment with organizational CEDs.

In alignment with the findings of the Homeland Security Institution regarding religious based and non-governmental agencies providing assistance after Hurricane Katrina, preexisting organizational structure and trusting collaboration that occurred prior to Hurricane Katrina facilitated immediate action on the part of the Association to assist students (Arroyo, 2008). The uniting mission of the AJCU organizations played a crucial role in the comprehensive nature of services provided to students, but collaboration need not be centered on religious values. A student-centered, mission-based relationship between higher education institutions would allow higher education institutions to continue to fulfill their missions such that their organizational identity, those central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics, are not lost in times of natural disaster.

The oral history case study is limited by the narrow timeframe associated with dissertation defense and the lack of records kept regarding the decision-making process utilized by the AJCU. In addition, the tightly bound nature of the conceptual framework does not provide an opportunity to examine further the actions of St. Louis University as the only AJCU institution that charged displaced students tuition which is particularly relevant in light of research documenting the significant impact on students displaced by Hurricane Katrina (Ladd, et al., 2007). There is significant research and guidance surrounding the planning and logistics for the mitigation of campus destruction, but there is limited understanding of how institutional mission impacts the response of
postsecondary institutions to the growing threat of natural disaster. However, as mission is a key aspect of any organization, not just those rooted in the Jesuit charisms as is the case for AJCU institutions, higher education institutions must prepare to safeguard both the campus and the mission of the institution ahead of the threat of natural disaster.
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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Waiver

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

April 7, 2022

PI Name: Victoria Harpool
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Ronald Platt
Submission Type: Admin Withdrawal
Title: The Response of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities to Hurricane Katrina
IRB ID: PRO-FY2022-401

From the information provided on your determination review request for "The Response of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities to Hurricane Katrina", the IRB has determined that your activity does not meet the Office of Human Subjects Research Protections definition of human subjects research and 45 CFR part 46 does not apply.

This study does not require IRB approval nor review. Your determination will be administratively withdrawn from Cayuse IRB and you will receive an email similar to this correspondence from irb@memphis.edu. This submission will be archived in Cayuse IRB.

Thanks,

IRB Administrator
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
315 Administration Building
Memphis, TN 38152-3370
P: 901.678.2705
F: 901.678.4409
Appendix B: AJCU Email to Loyola Students Regarding Sister Institutions

From: AJCU-owner@ajcunet.edu <AJCU-owner@ajcunet.edu> On Behalf Of Melissa C. Di Leonardo
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2005 1:23 PM
To: mdileonardo@ajcunet.edu
Subject: Loyola University New Orleans Students Welcomed by Sister Jesuit Institutions

Loyola University New Orleans Students Welcomed by Sister Jesuit Institutions as Part of Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

Washington, DC (September 7, 2005) – In an effort to assist the students from Loyola University New Orleans that were impacted by Hurricane Katrina, the 27 sister Jesuit institutions in the United States have agreed to welcome Loyola students as visiting, non-matriculating students for the fall semester. Loyola made the official announcement to close for the upcoming term on September 4; the institution plans to reopen in January 2006.

Loyola University New Orleans students will be admitted to the other Jesuit campuses on a space-available basis, with the expectation that they will return to Loyola in the spring semester with credits earned transferable back to Loyola. Parents will not lose any payments made to Loyola, and efforts will be made to fit these students into classes related to their Loyola program.

For those Loyola students that might be seeking an alternative to enrolling in traditional classroom courses, they have the opportunity to take entirely online courses that are offered through the Jesuit Distance Education Network (JesuitNET), with a catalog of over 300 undergraduate and graduate online courses (see http://www.jesuit.net).

“In response to this tragedy, it was important for our colleges and universities to offer Loyola students the opportunity to continue their Jesuit education,” said Fr. Charles Currie, S.J., president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) in Washington, DC. “Our Jesuit network is reaching out to members of the Loyola community in impressive ways as they recover from this devastating natural disaster. We will continue to do all we can to make their recovery as smooth as possible.”
There are many special services that are being offered to Loyola students to address their needs. The faculty and staff at Loyola University Chicago are offering to house students in their own homes to accommodate them, and Boston College has converted an entire residence hall to house the displaced students. At Marquette University, Loyola students are receiving assistance with registration and academic advising to help them create a course schedule that will most easily transfer back to their home institution. At Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, alumni, friends of the College, local businesses and retail stores have donated school supplies and dorm room essentials to transient students who don’t have the means to purchase new items. The Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Loyola is currently at Spring Hill, and he will be helping to advise Loyola students.

“We are overwhelmed by the support and generosity extended to us from our sister universities around the country,” said Fr. Kevin Wildes, S.J., president of Loyola University New Orleans. “As the nation faces this enormous tragedy and loss, we are deeply grateful to all the Jesuit universities who have accepted our students so that we may continue to keep the Loyola University community together at one of the most challenging times for the City of New Orleans and the university.”

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