

PURPOSE AND GOVERNANCE

Governance is crucial for any university: it guides decisions, defines strategies, and manages resources. In this regard, all universities share common needs, clear objectives, managerial quality, and efficiency.

But what role does purpose play in all of this?

- How is it integrated into the vision and strategic planning?
- In what way is it reflected in the style of governance?
- What distinguishing features characterize the governance of a Catholic university compared to other institutions?

PURPOSE AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

A university's culture is expressed through behaviors, policies, norms, and relationships. It encompasses teaching, research, and both the internal and external dynamics of the institution.

This culture makes the university's foundational values visible and tangible.

In this section, we will reflect on questions such as:

- How is purpose embodied in teaching practices and in relationships between students and faculty?
- What impact does it have on the choice of research topics and methodologies?
- How does it translate into the working style and campus life?
- In what way is it connected to the university's "third mission," that is, its social and cultural impact?
- What core values should the culture of a Catholic university concretely express?

PURPOSE AND PEOPLE

People are the beating heart of the university. Professors, students, researchers, technical and administrative staff, all need a purpose that gives meaning and motivation to their daily efforts.

We will ask ourselves:

- How can institutional goals be harmonized with personal ones?
- In what way can the university's identity be reconciled with individual freedom?
- Can participation, communication, and attentive listening help align individual and collective motivations?
- What content and educational methods can a university offer to foster a shared and mature culture?

During the conference, participants will engage in dialogue with twenty-four speakers to explore these and other questions that may arise throughout the discussion.

LANGUAGE

The course will be held in English, Italian, and Spanish. Simultaneous translation will also be available.

CONTACTS

communication.research@pusc.it

PLACE

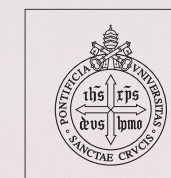
Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

Aula Magna Giovanni Paolo II

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INFO



Pontificia
Università
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**SANTA
CROCE**

Laboratorio di Ricerca



University and Catholic Identity

CONFERENCE PRECEDING THE
JUBILEE OF THE WORLD OF EDUCATION

29-31
October
2025

Purpose of the University:

to inspire the governance, culture
and people of the organization



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025

Purpose and Governance

- 12.00 Welcome and Participant Registration
- 14.00 Welcome Address (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
José Maria La Porte, *Organizing Committee of the Conference*
- 14.15 INAUGURAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Purpose as the Inspiring Principle of Institutional Governance
Fernando Puig, Rector, *Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Italy)*
- 15.00 PANEL (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
The Mission as the Beacon of Strategy
Moderator: Alessandro Pernigo, *Vice-President, University Campus Bio-Medico (Italy)*
Francis Campbell, *Rector, University Notre Dame (Australia)*
Carlos Díaz Vergara, *Rector Duoc - Pontifical Catholic University of Chile*
- 16.00 Break
- 16.30 PANEL (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Holiness in the Classroom - The University’s Purpose Embodied in Ordinary Life: Blessed Armida Barelli (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italia) and Card. S. John Henry Newman (Oxford University, United Kingdom)
Moderator: Carla Rossi Espagnet, *Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Italy)*
S.E.R. Mons. Giuliodori, *President of the Episcopal Commission for Education of the Italian Bishops’ Conference and Ecclesiastical Assistant, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy)*
Giuseppe Tanzella-Nitti, *Full time professor of Fundamental Theology (Pontifical University of the Holy Cross) and Founder of DISF Research Center (Italy)*
- 17.45 - 18.45 CASE STUDY
The Importance of Purpose in a Neutral or Polarized Context
Yago de la Cierva, *Villanueva University Foundation (Spain)* (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Paulina Guzik, *Pontifical University of John Paul II at Kraków (Poland)* (Aula 101)
Mercedes Castelló, *University of Navarra (Spain)* (Aula Minor “Álvaro del Portillo”)
- 19.00 Closure of the palace

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2025

Purpose and Institutional Culture

- 9.00 LECTURE (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
The Mission as a Guide to Institutional Culture
François Mabile, *Secretary General of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU)*
- 10.00 PANEL (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Expressions of Purpose in the Three Dimensions of the University: Research, Teaching, Third Mission
Moderator: Fernanda Llergo, *Rector, University Panamericana (México)*
Marco Clark, *President, Holy Cross College (United States)*
Marya Svetlana Camacho, *Vice President for Faculty and Research, University of Asia & Pacific (Philippines) (2016-2025)*
- 11.00 Break
- 11.30 CASE STUDY
Institutional Culture and Cultural Trends on University Campuses
Yago de la Cierva, *Villanueva University Foundation (Spain)* (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Paulina Guzik, *Pontifical University of John Paul II at Kraków (Poland)* (Aula del Senato “Benedetto XVI”)
Mercedes Castelló, *University of Navarra (Spain)* (Aula Minor “Álvaro del Portillo”)

- 12.30 Break
- 14.00 **Communications and experiences** [two 25’ presentations in each classroom]
- 15.00 LECTURE (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Governance and Internal Processes for Forming an Institutional Culture Inspired by the Catholic Faith
Luis Romera, *Professor of Metaphysics, Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Italy)*
- 16.00 Break
- 16.15 PANEL (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Students and Universities Searching for Their Mission: Common Paths or Diverging Roads?
Moderator: Winston Conrad B. Padojng, *Rector, University of Asia & Pacific (Philippines) (2015-2025)*
Elisabeth Gachenga, *Deputy Vice Chancellor, Strathmore University (Kenya)*
Renée Köhler-Ryan, *Vice Rector, University of Notre Dame (Australia)*
- 17.30 - 18.30 CASE STUDY
Internal Crisis: Debates among Faculty and Debates among Students
Yago de la Cierva, *Villanueva University Foundation (Spain)* (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Paulina Guzik, *Professore Pontifical University of John Paul II at Kraków (Poland)* (Aula 101)
Mercedes Castelló, *University of Navarra (Spain)* (Aula Minor “Álvaro del Portillo”)
- 19.00 Closure of the palace

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2025

Purpose and People

- 10:30 **Meeting of the Pope with educators attending the Jubilee of the World of Education**
Paul VI Audience Hall, Vatican
- 14:30 LECTURE (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Cultivating Hope: The Purpose of Higher Education in an Era of Global Challenges
Edward Brooks, *Executive Director of the Oxford Character Project, Oxford University (Great Britain)*
- 15:30 PANEL (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
People Guided by Mission in Mission-Oriented Universities
Moderator: Cristina Errázuriz, *Vice-President of Communications, University of Los Andes (Chile)*
Álvaro Lleó, *Director of Managing People in the Organization’s Master Program, University of Navarra (Spain)*
François Moog, *Rector, Catholic Institute of Toulouse (France) (2023-2025)*
- 16:30 Break
- 16:45 LECTURE (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
University’s Mission and the Art of Generating Essential Questions: Professors and Students Shared Thinking
Aloysius Ventham, *Head of Student Enrichment Paris Lodron University of Salzburg (Austria)*
- 17:30 CLOSING LECTURE (Aula Magna “Giovanni Paolo II”)
Shaping the Future through Creativity in Catholic Universities
Ricardo Piñero, *Director of Core Curriculum Program, University of Navarra (Spain)*
- 18:15-18.45 FINAL CONCLUSIONS
- 19.00 Closure of the palace

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2025

- 10:00 **Celebration of the Eucharist presided by Pope Leo XIV for the entire World of Education and proclamation of John Henry Newman as Doctor of the Church**
St. Peter’s Basilica

In a growing and competitive educational context around the world, many challenges arise for Catholic universities to increase the quality of their teaching and research, as well as their leadership role in a world of constant change.

In recent years, business literature has highlighted a distinction that can also be applied to universities: mission as distinct from purpose. The mission of universities relates to their ends, and purpose relates to their whys: why does a Catholic university emerge and develop? Why does it exist? What is its reason for being? Returning to the source of the "why" helps navigate an educational world pressured by an excessively commercial logic:

"At a time when, unfortunately, education itself is becoming a “business”, and great impersonal economic systems are investing in schools and universities as they do in the stock market, the Church’s institutions must show that they are of a different nature and act in accordance with a different mindset. An educational enterprise is not only based on perfect programmes, efficient equipment or good business practices. A greater passion must animate the university, as evidenced in a shared search for truth, a greater horizon of meaning, lived out in a community of knowledge where the liberality of love is palpable." (Pope Francis 2024).

In the current context, the study of purpose seems key as a shaping element, as an active principle that inspires the entire university organization: its governance and leadership, the institutional culture, and the people who are part of it (professors, students, non-teaching staff).

This conference is part of a larger project. It is promoted by a research group on the Christian identity of the university: what it consists of, how it manifests itself, and how it is cultivated or diffused. The group is made up of professors from nine universities in different countries, who intend to research these issues over the coming years.

This research project aims to create a forum for debate where university leaders and professors can share fundamental ideas, creative analyses, and practical experiences, as well as gain insight into the trends that are already beginning to influence university teaching and the educational context in general. Purpose is a good topic to relaunch dialogue in this field: it is something essential that inspires all activities and motivates people.

This conference is aimed at professors, communicators, and members of various governing bodies from universities on five continents. It is structured into three sections that correspond to the life of every educational institution: purpose and governance; institutional purpose and culture; and purpose and people.

