

We Are UBNC
A pastoral plan to energize the Newman family
Final November 2nd 2022

The UB Newman Center is the Catholic community for the University at Buffalo: students, faculty and staff, and others who share a common commitment to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Newman Center offers a warm, welcoming environment for prayer and faith, a dynamic community that relishes in sharing time and energy, and that supports each other and outreach to the greater WNY community. We build a Catholic identity and understanding through education, reflection, discussion, and outreach to those in need.

At the UB Newman Center all are welcome!

No matter what your present status in the Church is...

No matter what your current marital or family situation is...

No matter what your current year, major or research topic is...

No matter what your personal history, age, race, or orientation is...

No matter what your own self-image is...

You are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved, and respected here at the Newman Center at UB.

The Vision of the UBNC is to prepare UB students and our larger community to transform their families, professions, churches, and communities through their faith in Jesus and their love for God and all other persons.

The Mission of the Newman Center is to listen, teach, support, and challenge our entire community, to become persons of transformative faith and love.

Challenges

As the campus ministry to the University, the Newman Center is primarily directed toward reaching out to UB students, to offer a welcoming environment for students to grow and mature in their faith. At the same time UBNC serves as a faith Center for a larger community who support the student ministry mission, align with the larger mission of the Center and also wish to grow in the practice of their faith. Our challenge, then, is for the Newman Center to be present for and to serve both these communities as one parish.

The UB Newman Center strives to overcome growing negativity toward religion in our national culture. Moreover, the Center exists in the Diocese of Buffalo that has been rocked by the sex abuse scandal and subsequent cover-up. The Center and all its members must be examples of how to live in the world as Christian, Catholic people of God. In addition, in this immediate post-Covid time, the Newman Center must emerge from lockdowns and zoom masses with renewed energy and purpose.

These factors bring us to this important time, a time to carefully consider what UBNC will be, and how it will carry out its mission.

This Planning Process

As a component to Pope Francis' call to Synod, and the Diocese of Buffalo's Road to Renewal, the Diocese of Buffalo participated in a survey developed by Catholic Leadership Institute to learn where the Catholic community was in its spiritual life and how that community might grow. UBNC promoted participation in that survey, and 459 individuals responded. Appendix 1 contains a summary of survey findings for our parish.

Msgr. Keleher then brought together a team of parishioners charged with examining the survey findings and developing a plan for responding to those findings. This document is a product of that team.

Our Goals

Drawing on survey responses, the survey review team identified five areas for the Newman Center to explore:

1. Foster greater Community integration with Campus Ministry to enrich overall student well-being and their experience with Church;
2. Formalize lay involvement in Parish leadership as a means to sustain Parish culture, increase transparency and unleash talents of laity in parish life;
3. Engage young adults, broadly defined as those age 45 and under along with their families, in Parish life, - those single, married, and parents;
4. Strengthen and formalize social justice education and outreach ministry with emphasis to serve those in need and marginalized;
5. Foster individual spiritual growth to deepen our Catholic faith.

Strategy

UBNC has in place an organizational structure to address campus ministry. Further there is an active and vibrant parish community involved in many ministries that are currently reactivating post-pandemic. However, to address goals 2-5 new structures should be initiated. The strategies and action plans needed to achieve these goals must be designed cognizant of the history and organization of the Center, and with a deep-seated appreciation of the “Newman Way” – the culture of the Newman Center and the way UBNC works.

To engage lay members of the parish and address ongoing needs of the UBNC, several strategies should be put in place to achieve these objectives:

- Establish a Parish Planning and Coordinating Council (PPCC)
This Council will facilitate adoption of the Goals and support coordination of the various activities within UBNC, aiding the Pastor, clergy, and the paid Center staff in carrying out their duties. The goal of this planning group is to assist with coordination and communication and is not meant to be an approval or rule making group.
- Re-engage the UBNC Finance Council
The Finance Council will assist to the Pastor and the paid Center staff in his fiduciary responsibilities keeping the UBNC financial healthy.
- Increasing transparency in operational and financial activities of the parish
The larger Newman community is very supportive of the Center’s principal Ministry to UB students, and greater communication about the Center’s operational and financial health will strengthen this bond.
- Establish lay Groups and leaders to work together with clergy and staff to foster participation in achieving the Goals.

In acting on these goals, we must embody the Newman community’s openness to all, and make every effort to reach out to those who may feel alienated or marginalized by the Church.

The Groups will be charged to articulate in writing their unique charter. At the same time there is need for coordination, and to explore opportunities for collaborative work across these Groups. We envision Finance and any other Groups that might be formed, providing representation to the Parish Planning and Coordinating Council, who will help in cross-Center communication and coordination, and who will work with the Finance Council if such support is needed.

Further, a Communications Group within the Planning and Coordinating Council should be established, to support and streamline the needs of all the Groups and the Center. This Group can assist in conducting “market” research and advising on tools and methods to reach desired audiences. As the plan unfolds it should be reinforced in communication to the larger community that actions taken respond to what was asked for in the Survey.

Actions

Here we suggest several specific actions that the UB Newman Center generally, and the several Groups in particular, may consider to achieve our five goals. The Groups responsible for these goals should design and articulate several specific, measurable outcomes they will work towards. (Appendix 2 contains recommendations for future survey remeasurement), and progress towards these outcomes should constitute a part of the Group report to the PPCC.

1. Foster greater Community integration with Campus Ministry to enrich overall student well-being and their experience with Church.
 - Design and execute joint Community/Student programs;
 - Develop collaborative service and social outreach opportunities;
 - Continued relationship-building offerings such as dinners.
 - Increase on Campus presence and events, engagement with university faculty and staff
 - Develop new methods of Communication to reach students
2. Formalize lay involvement in Parish leadership as a means to sustain Parish culture, increase transparency and unleash the talents of laity in parish life.
 - Establish and populate a finance council by the end of 2022, with schedule of meetings (at least quarterly) in 2023, and provide a finance report to community at least annually;
 - Establish and populate a Parish Planning and Coordinating Council by the end of 2022, with schedule of meetings (at least quarterly) in 2023; publish meeting summaries;
 - Embrace synodality in Parish leadership through regularly scheduled community and/or town hall style meetings and forums.
 - Develop a workflow for communication to expand outreach to the community, including traditional and electronic approaches.
 - Identify opportunities to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion within the community.
 - Cultivate new engagement through directly inviting participation of parishioners to become involved in ministries and activities. Identify roles for youth and young adults.
3. Engage young adults, broadly defined as those age 45 and under, along with their families, in Parish life – those single, or married, or young parents

- Develop programming to invite those who recently celebrated the sacraments of marriage or baptism to ongoing engagement;
 - Create events for younger families and parents;
 - Invite these younger member into roles in formal councils or events;
 - Develop means to offer babysitting for events.
4. Strengthen and formalize social justice education and outreach ministry with emphasis to serve those in need and marginalized. Broaden knowledge of Catholic Social Justice, and anchor activities within Church teachings about social justice;
- Collaborate, partner with, and learn from, St. Joe's University Parish
 - Develop opportunities for service engagement; especially one-time commitments
 - Connect volunteers to needs.
 - Explore Community and campus collaboration opportunities for service.
5. Foster individual spiritual growth to deepen our Catholic faith
- Provide more liturgical offerings, i.e. reconciliation, Advent, Lent activities, adoration;
 - Offer retreats to cultivate personal prayer life;
 - Develop offerings addressing Catholic teachings such as lectures on Catholic Social thought;
 - Nurture and support our Faith Sharing programs for youth and work to expand the involvement of young children in parish life.

In developing this Planning Document, the survey team was cognizant of the special character of UBNC, the deep affection of Newman members for the Pastor and clergy serving the Center, and the tremendous opportunity for the Newman Center to lead the Diocese as a vibrant and inviting faith community.

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Appendix 1

University of Buffalo Newman Center 2022 Disciple Makers Index Survey Results

Our Parish is doing great!

We love our Pastor and Priests. We are a welcoming Parish. But we also desire to grow and improve.

A team of volunteers from the Parish is reviewing the results of Disciple Makers Survey. Here are some of the findings from the Survey:

459 Surveys were completed. Demographics of the respondents:

- We are an older community, with 73% of the respondents over 55 years of age; 19% are 35-55;
- Only 16% of respondents have school age children;
- More women responded than men (65%-35%); we are 95% Caucasian;
- Most of the respondents are married (76%), but 11% are divorced or widowed;
- 60% of the respondents have been part of the Newman Center for more than 10 years;
- 81% of the respondents attend mass daily or weekly.

Strengths of the Newman Center across all age groups:

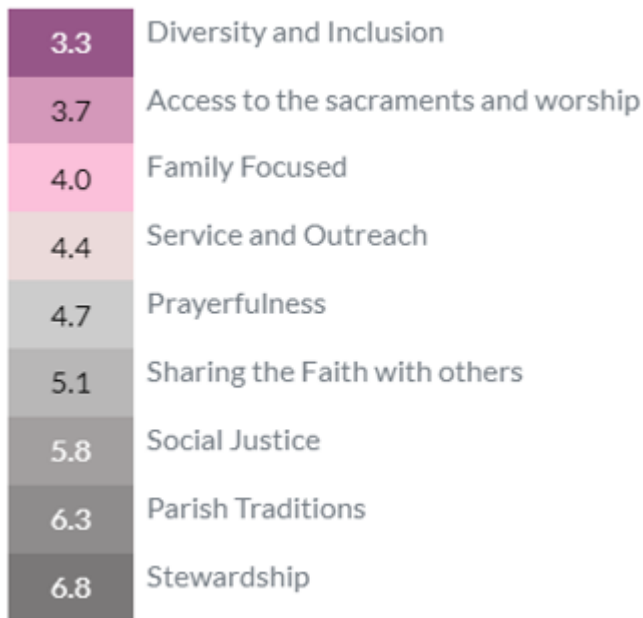
- Recommend the Pastor;
- Recommend the Parish;
- This is a Welcoming Community.

The following survey questions identify features of the Newman Community that are important to us:

All parishes have opportunities for growth. If you could **only select 3 of the following things** that the parish needs more of, which would they be:



Rank the community values that would best describe the culture of your parish community.



Which of the following best describes the pace of your Spiritual Growth?

Responses	Answer
168	Growing in my faith, but would like to grow more than I am
112	Growing in a steady, continued pace
88	Content staying right where I am spiritually
62	Stalled in my spiritual growth
29	Other

Areas showing most interest for spiritual growth are:

- Providing high quality events and other opportunities to which I can invite people.
- Growing in my confidence in the Church's teachings so I can answer other's questions.
- Helping me develop a personal prayer life that connects me with God.

My Parish provides me with opportunities to serve those in need.



Attachment 2 Remeasurement Examples for the Goal Setting Process

Smart Goals:

Enhance lay engagement in Parish leadership as a means to sustain Parish culture

- Increase those who indicate “that having a relationship with the Paster is (one of) the most influential in your current experience” from 23% to 30% by the end of 2023.
- Increase those who indicate “that having a relationship with other parishioners is (one of) the most influential in your current experience” from 23% to 28% by the end of 2023.

Post-covid revitalization of campus Ministry

- Increase “daily/weekly Mass attendance” from 81% to 85% by the end of 2023.
- Decrease those who indicate they “never attended a Parish social event” from 24% to 20% by the end of 2023.
- Increase those indicating “they have attended a parish social event at least monthly” (daily/weekly/monthly) from 15% to 18% by the end of 2023.

Engage those under 45 in Newman center community life

- Increase attendance at the student Mass by 20% by the end of 2023.
- Increase the demographic profile of those 45 years of age or younger from 15% to 18% by the end of 2024.

Explore more opportunities for service and outreach

- Increase those indicating “they strongly agree they have been provided with opportunity to serve those in need” from 56% to 60% by the end of 2023.

Foster individual spiritual growth and learning more our Catholic faith and social learning

- Increase those who indicate that they strongly agree that their Parish “helps (them) to grow spiritually as a Catholic” from 58% to 62% by then end of 2023.

J. Lojacono