

Humans

of the

Jesuit

Community

The Jesuit community at LMU is composed of administrators, faculty, staff and campus ministers. Jesuits at LMU partner with and work alongside other religious congregations in living out a shared commitment to faith. We sat down with four priests of the Jesuit Order to discuss their experience shepherding the academic advancement of students.





"AS A JESUIT, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ENCOURAGED TO REALLY ACTUALIZE MY POTENTIAL IN OTHER FIELDS."

—EDDIE SIEBERT, S.J.



"I TRY TO DO A 30-MINUTE WALK EVERY DAY. AND SO, I'VE DISCOVERED ALL THE NOOKS AND CRANNIES OF THE CAMPUS."

—ROBERT CARO, S.J.

"I LOVE RUNNING AROUND CAMPUS. RUNNING IS PROBABLY THE WAY IN WHICH I DECLUTTER MY MIND BUT IT'S ALSO IN WHICH I THINK ABOUT CLASSES, THINK ABOUT WHAT I PREACH."

—MARK ALOYSIUS, S.J.



"I THINK I'M A JOYFUL PERSON, AND THAT COMES OUT WHETHER IN CLASS OR WHEN I'M PREACHING IN CHURCHES."

—ROY PEREIRA, S.J.





Q&A

ROBERT CARO, S.J.

on the importance of liberal arts in a Jesuit education.

What have you noticed in terms of how the academic aspect of LMU has changed over the years? One thing is the diminishment of the liberal arts across the board. Perhaps with the exception of psychology, most of the majors in liberal arts and the humanities have seen a drop off. There's a huge emphasis on STEM programs. All

of that has affected the humanities. I see it to the extent that I'm aware of the enrollment figures or when we hear about those things. In some ways, that troubles me because, certainly as a Catholic Jesuit university, traditionally, the liberal arts and the humanities are at the core of that educational experience. And I think we still try to

hold onto that within the core curriculum. You know, everybody participates in the core curriculum. It's an ongoing battle to maintain the emphasis on the liberal arts and the humanities as the core of a Jesuit education. And I think at the university, we do pride ourselves on being a Catholic Jesuit university. Those values should

be at the core and then influence the university, whatever the college, whether it's science and engineering, film and television, communication [and] fine arts or business. There should be a core there where all the students are exposed to courses in philosophy, theology, literature, history and political science and so on.

Where's your favorite place you've traveled to? I haven't done as much traveling as some people. Most places I travel to, I love. It's hard to single one out. I will say this. I have very strong, fond memories of the visit to Prague, some people have referred to it as the Paris of Eastern Europe. The reason I mention Prague is that several of us

Jesuits were visiting there during the year immediately following the fall of the [Berlin Wall]. It was exciting to be in Prague at that time. I have wonderful memories of my visit with the Jesuit community there. Anyway, I mention that because it's a little bit off the beaten path, but it's hard to say that it's nicer than Rome. Maybe it's just

that we happened to be there at a defining moment, geopolitically, in the Cold War era. It was kind of the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The memorials, the flowers, the candles, and so on were still there in Wenceslas Square. All of that was memorable.

Q&A

EDDIE SIEBERT, S.J.

on students' changing approach to academics over the years.

How long have you been a Jesuit? Oh, okay! So, I've been a Jesuit since 1984. Let's see, 'Alexa, what is 2024-1984?'

ALEXA: '2024-1984 is 40.'
Has it been 40 years? That's crazy! I'm a 40-year Jesuit, but I was ordained in '97. Yeah, that's right. I'm 58 and started at 18 years old.

Wow, you were very young when you started! I was really young. I didn't even know what I was thinking! I'm 40 years a Jesuit this year, but whatever it was, 1997 I became a priest. So, 40 years! You are bringing all this light into my world. I had no idea it had been that long! It just seems like yesterday. You're not even 20.

I'm 20.
That's double your life!

Jesuits are known for navigating different cultures and customs through learning different languages. Is that true for you? How many languages do you speak? I only know elementary level Spanish. I've been to Guatemala, Central America throughout

and Brazil — that's Portuguese — but Spanish speaking parts of the world.

What is your favorite class to teach and why? Well, I teach in the School of Film and Television and my favorite class — well, the one that I teach right now — Production Planning. It's a producing class. I'm more of a producer than say, a director. So, it's really good for me to be able to teach what I know best.

Have students changed over the years in how they approach academics? If so, how? I think I'm not used to having people with their laptops and cellphones always engaging in the classroom. So, sometimes I always wonder, "Are they listening to me or surfing the net for something?" Probably a little bit of both. Some of the students, they feel — everything — they're [sensitive]. I used to be able to banter with

students, and for maybe good reasons, I can't banter with students the way I used to. Everyone's very sensitive to their own things, their own issues, their own styles, so it's not as playful as it used to be. I don't think I was ever offensive but now I can't be as playful. Now, that doesn't mean I can't be playful, but I'm not as playful — it's changed — and also parents call. Parents take an active role in their students' lives now.





Q&A **MARK ALOYSIUS, S.J.**
*on helping students
become better people.*

How long have you been a Jesuit? Oh gosh, 21 years.

Do you have a favorite class you teach and why? I love all the classes I teach, otherwise I would not teach them, but I think I really enjoy this class I teach called The History of Mysticism. The reason why I like it a lot is because students just learn to read a text carefully. You're getting sense of how people through the ages have dealt with fundamental questions on love, on death, on loss, on joy, on detachment, on fulfillment, but all of these questions within a theological framework. Within what we consider the question of the good life.

In your opinion, have students changed throughout the years and how they approach academics? If so, how? Yeah, I started teaching here during the Covid years and I think those were really difficult years for students. I think what has become really difficult, in recent years, is getting students to read, so I think this loss of a habit of reading and learning to read closely is how things have changed. And when you don't read stuff that is written well, I think you become a poorer writer as well because you learn how to

write by reading good stuff.

What brings you joy about being a Jesuit? Here in LMU we often talk about the professor as being a teacher scholar, so your scholarship feeds into what you teach and the people encountering teaching kind of effects the questions you pursue in scholarly research, so this model is interesting, teacher scholar. The questions that I encounter in an academic setting I hope I translate it somehow in the way I preach, for example, the way I minister the people. But also the other way around, I think I bring these concerns of being a priest to the classroom, so I'm not just interested in academic performance, I am — but I'm also additionally interested in how what we study helps the student become a better human person. We use that language a lot in Jesuit education, it is care for the whole person. When opportunities like that arise, when I can care for the whole person who's intellectual, who's effective, who is more than just intellect as well, when I'm able to care for the whole person those are the moments that give me the most joy.



Q&A **ROY PEREIRA, S.J.**
on the life-changing possibilities of college.

How long have you been a Jesuit? I have been a Jesuit for 36 years. This will be my 37th year.

Jesuits are known for navigating different cultures through learning different languages. Is that true for you? How many languages do you speak? I have celebrated Mass in seven languages, and I speak about four fluently. Spanish,

French, German, English, Hindi, Marathi and Konkani. Regarding cultures, I have had the privilege of moving around because of my work in education. I feel blessed because even just to be in another culture, that has been a rich experience.

How have you impacted campus culture? The first thing I designed here when I came was

Timeout Tuesday, 30 minutes of meditation from different cultural traditions. A lot of students have been helped so they can look after themselves during the stressful time for examinations.

What is your favorite class to teach? Psychology, Spirituality, and Transformation. I tell

[students] this course is not something you just learn to tick off a check box. It's for life. What I teach in the course is, "How do you understand your brain? How do you use that to transform your life?" I also access a lot of spirituality because I believe we need to use that to become who we are.

How have you seen students' approach to academics change over? I think there's an emphasis on

just the grade. My message to students is this is the only time that you're really going to be free and happy. The work world, it's going to be a different game. So take courses that you enjoy. Focus on the work and what can I get out of this course for my future life.

How do you find joy? I think a lot of people say Roy is joy... it's not that things have been going all hunky dory...I choose to be joyful in spite of

things hitting me. Life is going to throw you a lot of bricks. How do you try to keep your joy in spite of that?

Where's your favorite place you've traveled to? I spent two weeks in Guadalajara and two weeks in Puebla learning, immersing myself in Spanish courses. I really had a great time there. Maybe there was a kindred spirit, but I felt very comfortable.