Women in Mission At the Intersections of Race, Faith & Justice

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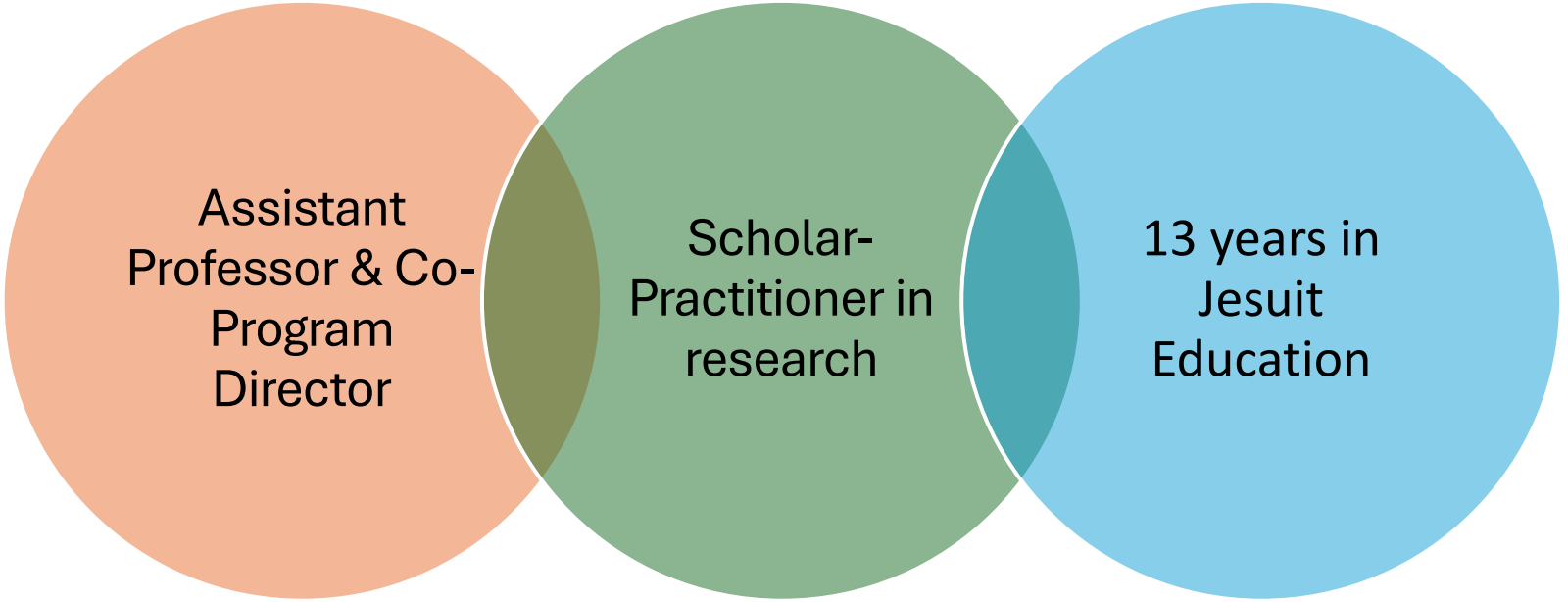
Seattle University

Agenda

- Friendly Introductions
- Exploring Women in Mission
- Significance of Study and Research Questions
- Research Design and Methodology
- Preliminary Findings
- Future Thoughts & Closing

Who am I?



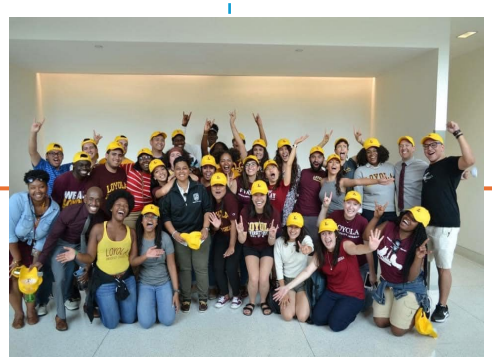
Fun Facts of Education & Career Journey
Proud RedHawk Alumna '09
Proud Rambler Alumna '20

My Path to Women in Mission

2011-2013: Program Coordinator for Women Initiatives "LUCES"

2013-2015: Specialized in Identity-based mentorship programs

2022: Attended a WIM lunch to learn about the community



2023 to present, Expanding WIM to include WOCIM

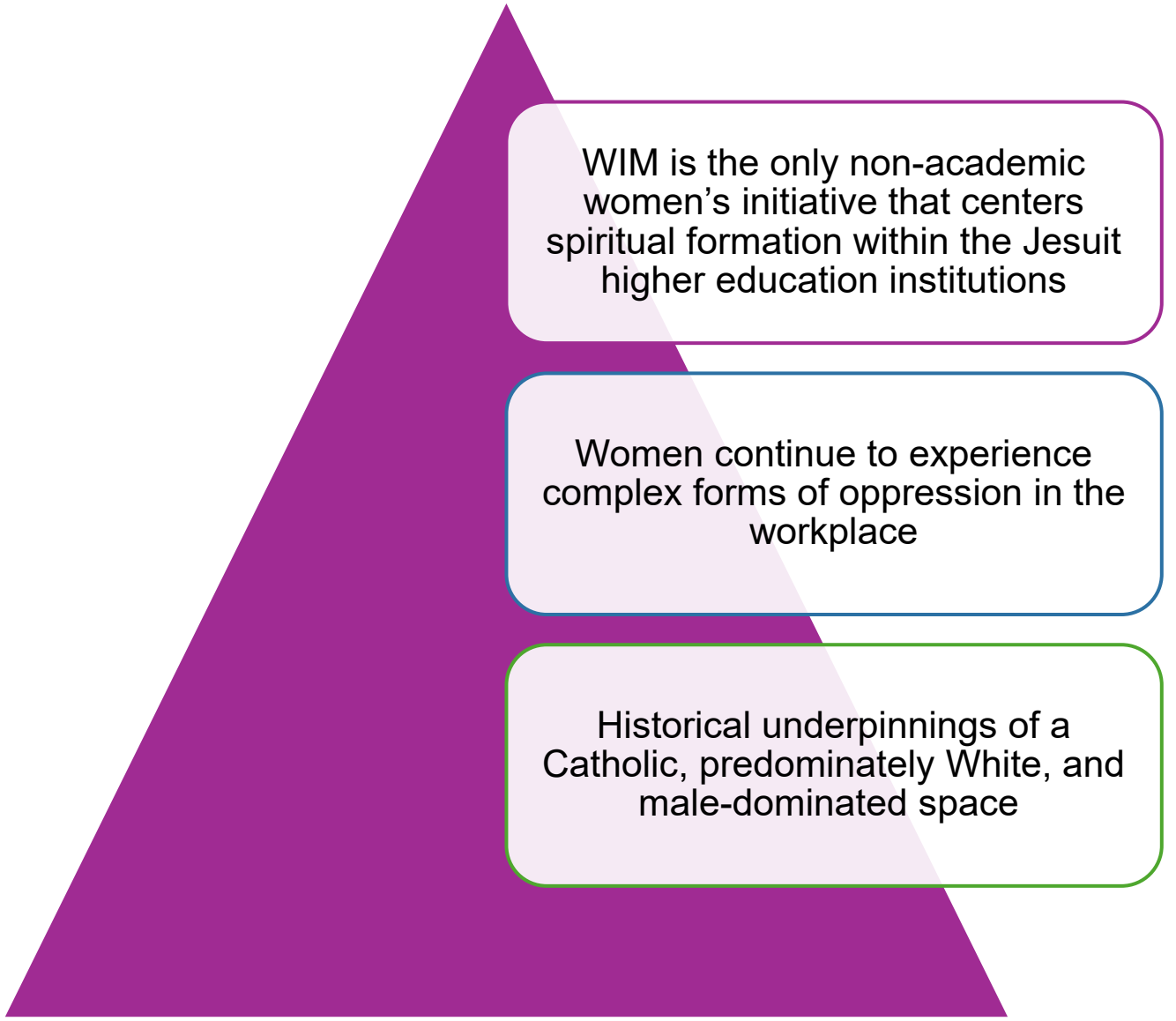
Women in Mission

"I always wanted to be a Jesuit..."

-Dr. Punsalan-Manlimos

A Jesuit replies:
"Why can't you be?"

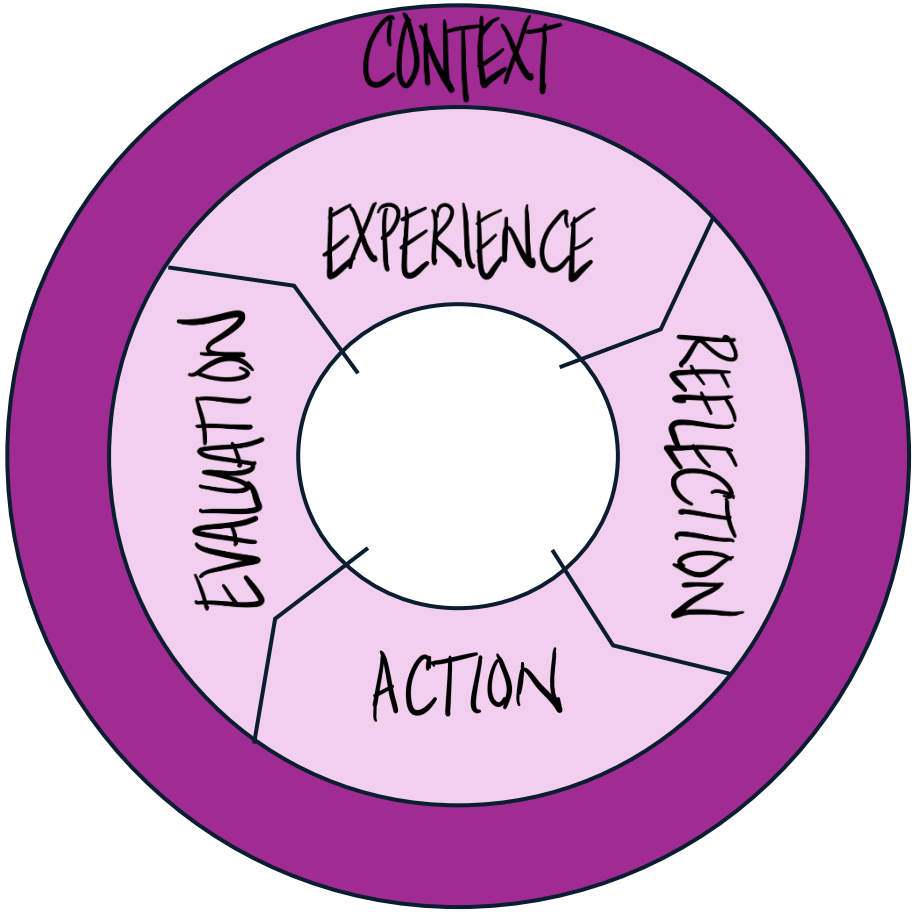
The Significance and Impact of WIM



Women in Mission

- WIM is an institutionalized initiative supported by Center for Jesuit Education
- Curates space for women to engage in spiritual formation and identity development
  - Deep listening, reflection, accompaniment, care for the whole person (self and others)
- WIM empowers women to examine their professional calling and mission-centered leadership within their respective roles at Seattle university
  - Quarterly engagement and opportunities to experience community on and off campus

Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm



CONTEXT: WIM is a space for women to make meaning of their spiritual journey and a space to explore the connection between our spirituality and professional practice at Seattle U.

EXPERIENCE: WIM members engage in service projects, lunch gatherings, story-telling circles, retreats, at Seattle U and the surrounding neighborhood.

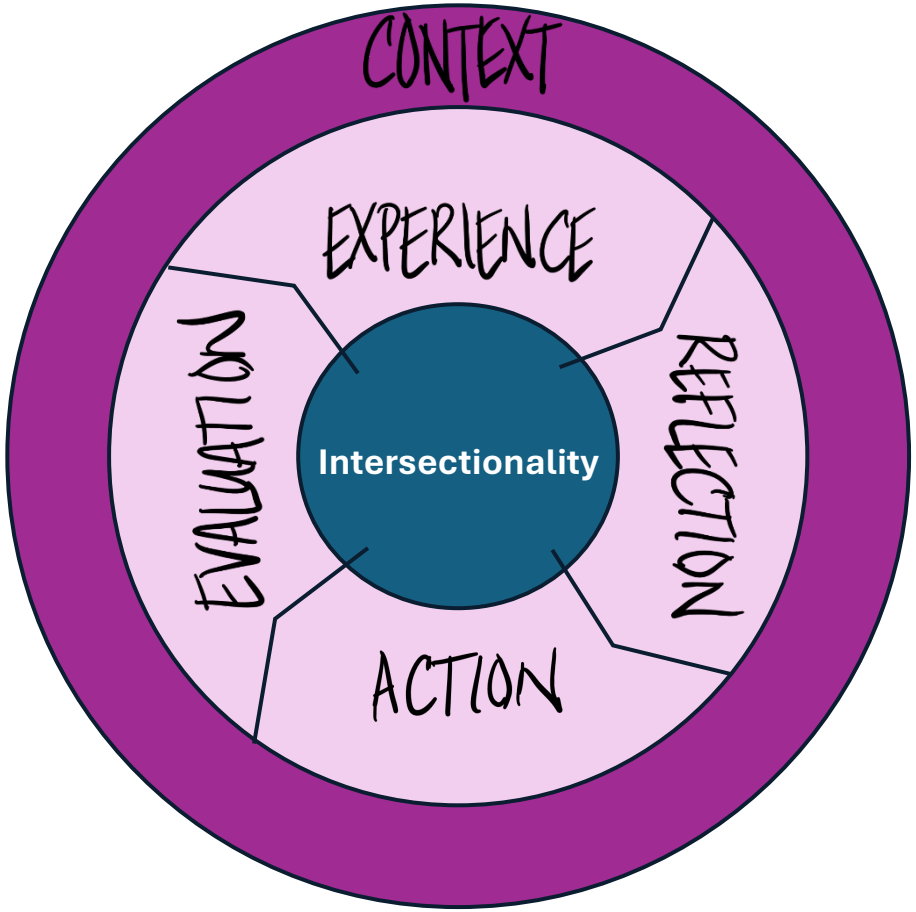
REFLECTION: Creating space to deepen our understanding of the Jesuit mission and make meaningful connections through community.

ACTION: Participating in WIM empowers women to lead with purpose, listen deeply, and care for the whole student/colleague.

EVALUATION: WIM members complete reflective assessments where they can critically reflect on the challenges, opportunities, and growth.

Adapted from: CDLI, Seattle University

Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm with an intersectional throughline



All members of WIM hold intersectional identities, some identities are more salient than others.

Intersectionality provides a critical lens from which to evaluate how power, privilege and oppression show up in our personal and professional lives (Crenshaw, 1991):

- **in our professional practice**
- **in our decision-making process**
- **in our professional relationships**
- **in the way we care for others**

This study invites WIM members to reflect, enact and evaluate how race, faith, and justice are interconnected.

Adapted from: CDLI, Seattle University

Expansion of Women in Mission

Overview of Growth & Expansion

In 2022 WIM expanded to include an affinity space for Women of Color in Mission

20 WOC attended a "Listen and Learn" session to contribute to the development of WOCIM

A program coordinator led the development of

General Needs & Desires

- Looking to gain a sense of belonging and empowerment among WOC
- Create new traditions
- Joy centric and a space to rejuvenate
- A space to experience advocacy and opportunity to uplift the community

Intrinsic Case Study Methodology

Intrinsic Case Study

- Case Study examines the expansion of WIM which now includes WOCIM
- Not designed to create theory and does not address a particular issue (Bedrettin, 2015; Baxter & Jack, 2008)
- Instead, this case study can be utilized by any other Jesuit institution

Research Questions

1. How do women experience the WIM program offerings?
2. How, if at all, does faith and spiritual development contribute to our professional formation and practice at this institution?
3. How, if at all, do members of the WIM community make meaning of their own racialized experiences and integrate justice into their practice?

Methods & Data Collection Process

27 WIM/WOCIM participants completed an online questionnaire

6 WIM/WOCIM participants consented to engage in a 90-minute semi-structured interview

1 virtual dialogue gathering with 4 co-founders of WIM

Review of WIM/WOCIM artifacts (photos, agenda's, EOY report)

Meet 3 WIM Participants

Moonchild

- White American and European descendant
- Faculty in Nursing & Midwifery
- Fallen Quaker, Marxist and Eco-Feminist Mystic
- First year with WIM, only attended the retreat

"Solidarity, collectiveness, vulnerability, like all of those things, are really different about being in women's space."

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Katherine

- Korean Immigrant
- Faculty & Administrator
- Christian and spiritually engaged
- Casually engaged in WIM
- Regularly attends WOCIM and serves on the Advisory Team

"I feel called to represent possibilities for other WOC or advocate for other staff who aren't at the table"

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Savannah

- Black American
- Staff in academic unit
- Christian
- 1.5 years with WOCIM and serves on the Advisory Team

"Not so much as a tangible thing, but it's a contributor to belongingness at SU. Honestly, it's a space and time where I belong"

Preliminary Findings

Race

- Opportunity to be in solidarity with women of all races
- WIM retreats and gatherings provide a safe space for women to vulnerable with each other
- Finding opportunities to exercise "deep listening" as a way to be in solidarity

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- Spirituality integrated into practice looks like giving grace, connecting cura personalis to decision-making
- Taking pause in the day to pray or reflect - integrating reflections into team meetings

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Justice

- Feel empowered to advocate and support their WIM sisters
- Savannah said, "it boils down to love, if you love somebody you tell the truth and you don't allow them to be disregarded or suffer injustice"

Lingering Points of Discussion

Faculty and Staff have a different experience in WIM

WIM members described participation in WIM as protected time and permission to infuse spirituality into their eveyday practice

WIM members view this initiative as institutional investment in their SU experience

WIM members view events as sacred space for socio-emotional support

More Work to be Done

Dynamic Discussion with WIM Co-Founders

Interview the last 3 interviewees of the study

Facilitate focus group discussions with faculty

Writing a second piece on WOC and spirituality as Community Cultural Wealth

View the WIM & WOCIM Praise Report

Women in Jesuit Mission

(from https://www.seattleu.edu/jesuit-education/women-in-jesuit-mission/)

Women in Jesuit Mission is a group of faculty and staff women at Seattle University and who come together regularly for prayer, reflection, volunteer service and community-building.

The goal of the program, originally funded by an Endowed Mission Fund grant and founded in 2009, is to offer opportunities for women to deepen their knowledge and commitment to the Jesuit Catholic mission of the university in order to claim their mission-centered leadership within their respective roles at the university.

Recognizing that this kind of formation happens within a safe, nurturing environment, Women in Jesuit Mission provides opportunities for creating intentional community and building relationships across departments, disciplines and divisions.

Programs for Women in Jesuit Mission include:

- Monthly reflection luncheons and walks
- An annual Women's Retreat
- Community service opportunities
- Opportunities to engage with and learn from women who are spiritual leaders

After events like WIM, it reinforces how the mission here carries over into my life outside the university.
—from WIM Fall 2023 Leadership Lunch evauation

Bring WIM to your Campus

Find Institutional Sponsorship

Identify a Faculty or Staff Lead

Select 5-7 Advisory Board Members

Plan Quarterly or Semesterly Gatherings

Assess the Experiences and Impact of Work

Integrate Reflection, Companionship, and intersectional Sense of Belonging

Closing Reflective Connections

1. What were the gifts or key points that struck you from today's presentation?
2. What might these gifts or key points be inviting you to back on your campus?

References

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*. 43(6). 1241-1299.

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Bedrettin, Y. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 134-152.