In December 2009, I received approval from the Library Dean to take my leave during the summer of 2010. In spring 2009, I applied for and received a $1000 grant from the USF Jesuit Foundation to fund books, media, and supplies to support my research.

My Library Professional Research Leave outlined three goals:

1. Through readings and interviews with members of the Jesuit community, explore the concepts of Ignatian pedagogy.
2. Investigate Carol Kuhlthau’s “Information Search Process” model.
3. Read recent research in the field of “information and emotion”.

When I applied for the grant, the project’s purpose evolved and was now explicitly related to the Foundation’s mission:

_The USF Jesuit Foundation is grounded in five aspects of the Ignatian and Jesuit vision:_

- **The Ignatian ideal of “finding God in all things.”** For the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola, all of reality was an arena of God’s self-revelation.

- **The practical spirituality of The Spiritual Exercises.** This way of Christian prayer developed by Ignatius, is premised in the belief that one can discover God’s presence in one’s life and the freedom to respond to that presence though a series of prayer exercises and personal conversations.

- **The focus on education of the whole person** that seeks to integrate all aspects of individuality: the intellectual, moral, spiritual, affective, aesthetic, physical, and social. This approach to education is holistic and calls on the learner to reflect on his or her experience in the context of the larger community.

- **The magis, seeking what is more.** In the University context, this dimension of the Ignatian tradition calls for passionate engagement in social analysis and commitment to rigorous research in the academic sphere.
The commitment to faith that works for justice in the world. The intellectual aspect of faith in God inevitably drives beyond itself. It necessarily seeks an engagement with persons prevented from fulfilling the divine purpose of full integration by oppressive social systems and unjust structural realities.

These criteria are not meant to restrict proposals to religious or spiritual themes. Jesuit education has historically endorsed a wide range of humanistic, artistic, scientific and technical activities that help society and nature to flourish. It is inspired by the confidence that God is glorified wherever creation becomes fully alive. The Foundation is premised on the belief that all members of the University community, regardless of their religious affiliation, can make important contributions to the evolving Catholic and Jesuit identity of USF.

http://www.usfca.edu/Provost/Jesuit_Foundation_Grant/

My research goals were now:

1. How does the learning process described in the modern interpretation of Ignatian pedagogy compare to the latest findings in the field of the information seeking behavior (e.g. Guided Inquiry)?
2. How do the emotional components of information seeking behavior compare to the emotional/spiritual components of the Ignatian way?

and had expanded to include more context, for instance the latest brain research on emotions, learning, and beliefs:

3. How does the latest research on neuroscience and learning and teaching; and neuroscience and religion fit into this process?

But what captured my attention as my leave began in June, turned out to be this new goal:

4. Being outside the belief system, I want to understand the Jesuit mission as best I can, both to compare with my own ethics, and to teach the students I encounter using the strengths of this tradition.

In other words:

What distinguishes the Jesuits from other Catholics?
Why are the Jesuits known for education in particular?
What is the Jesuit mission?
Is there value in it for me?
If so, what is the value?
How can I teach it?

Surprisingly, I realized I first needed to feel settled with my own philosophical/spiritual/religious stance to answer these questions:

What are “my own ethics”?
How do they “compare” to the Jesuit mission?
Can I comfortably co-exist with both in my professional life?

**Tuition/Intuition**

*Tuition* is something we are given from outside ourselves.

*Intuition* is something that dwells within us.


Throughout the seven weeks, I allowed myself the freedom to follow my intuition. My subject areas were such that I could delve deeply into one - say, a literature review on information literacy - for a day or two, then switch to another - perhaps neuroscience and learning - when a news report caught my attention. It was luxurious to spend a few hours of uninterrupted focus on my interests. Every reference librarian’s dream?

The learning models I’m examining emphasize the value of 1) being open to emotional responses and 2) making good choices through decision-making or *discernment*.

_For Ignatius the process [of discernment] involves prayer, reflection, and consultation with others - all with honest attention not only to the rational (reasons pro and con) but also to the realm of one’s feelings, emotions, and desires (what Ignatius called “movements” of soul)._ 

_Do You Speak Ignatian?_ George Traub, S.J. (2000, p. 1)
As my leave began, I was unexpectedly plunged into an experiential/existential journey. I realized I needed to reach clarity on what I believe and how my beliefs could conflict with those professed by the Catholic, Jesuit university I serve. Bringing this realization to consciousness allowed me to proceed with a sharper focus.

Early in my leave, I spotted two just published titles on the library’s New Book Display: *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* by James Martin, S.J. and *Confession of a Buddhist Atheist* by Stephen Batchelor. I knew I had to take the first one, but was strongly pulled to read the second, which I found more personally relevant. Both authors are a little older than I am and we share some of the same cultural/historical markers. Yet, *The Jesuit Guide* made me uncomfortable, assuming I should fit into one of a few styles of a spiritual person. Then I picked up the Buddhist book and read what is a combination spiritual memoir and history of the Buddha and Buddhism, based on recent translations of the earliest authentic texts.

**The ironic atheist**

Batchelor (2010) says he writes “from the perspective of a committed layperson who seeks to lead a life that embodies Buddhist values within the context of secularism and modernity” (p. xi). His book is a spiritual autobiography wrapped around the historical, spiritual biography of Gotama, the Buddha.

> Gotama rejected any assumption of a transcendent reality - irrespective of whether you call it God, Self, or Consciousness - and encouraged instead a contemplative examination of the complex, fluctuating, and highly specific world that is present to our senses here and now. (p. 137)

> On the few occasions in the Canon... where Gotama explicitly addressed the question of God, he is presented as an ironic atheist. The rejection of God is not a mainstay of his teaching and he did not get worked up about it. This approach is in contrast to the aggressive atheism that periodically erupts in the modern West. ... Their position is premised on a denial of God every bit as fervent as the believers’ affirmation of Him. It would be more accurate to call this “anti-theism”. Then “atheism” would be free to recover its original meaning of simply “not-theism”. Gotama was not a theist but nor was he an anti-
theist. “God” is simply not part of his vocabulary. He was an “atheist” in the literal sense of the term. (p. 179)

By the time I’d finished Confession, I felt I’d met a fellow traveler, who’s way of approaching the world was more similar to mine. Within this context, I could start studying the Ignatian way of living, better attuned to appreciating its originality.

More context

Gradually I began to place the Ignatian model in its historical context among the world’s religions and, as in Picart & Bernard’s remarkable publication from 1723 Religious Ceremonies of the World, (described in Hunt’s (2010) The Book That Changed Europe), did my best to include all possible contemporary categories for the “spiritual life” - the humanists, agnostics, atheists and non-theists - in what is now popularly referred to as our post-Christian era. This thread continued to the place of religion in contemporary society, and in particular, its place in the lives of American students and young adults. The 2008 American Religious Identification Survey is particularly illuminating, especially concerning Latinos and the American nones, the no religion population.

On the information behavior side, I studied Kulthaus’ (2007) Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st Century; ordered a copy of her dissertation, and tracked down the work of her theorists: George Kelly’s original work on personal constructs and Vygotsky’s “Zone of Proximal Development”.

Pulling back a bit, I learned from Case’s (2008) Looking for Information, that Kelly is one of many “social and psychological theorists, theories and theory groups often invoked in information behavior research”. A colleague suggested Bandura’s theory of Self-Efficacy as being more aligned with that of Ignatius and I wonder if I’ve chosen the wrong model to study. Knowing from my research that doubt is a common emotional response in the research process and is also greatly admired by the spiritual guides, I continued as planned.

*Research and Theory*, one of the initial inspirations for this project, offered several fascinating pathways to follow.

**Pedagogy**

Pragmatically, I found grounding in Cook’s (2009) *Practical Pedagogy for Library Instructors*, where I learned my focus was best described as comparing models rather than theories. On one of the foggiest days of the summer, I curled up with Badke’s (2008) highly recommended *Research Strategies: Finding Your Way Through the Information Fog*.

Coincidentally, Badke uses a research example the history of the Lollards, early predecessors of the Reformation. This again triggered my interest in the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, when the Society of Jesus began, the history of Christianity, and the other “religions of the Book” (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

**Back to the Jesuits**

Before my leave began, I read Lowney’s (2005) *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-year-old Company that Changed the World*. I thought I had a good overview of the history of Ignatius and the Society of Jesus. Martin’s book (*The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*) however is both more personal and more illuminating. He does an excellent job of bringing the practices of the order to light, while describing his spiritual journey with humorous honesty. Much of my leave time was spent reading this book. My understanding of the Spiritual Exercises, the Examen, discernment, prayer, and the running of the order within the Church hierarchy grew deeper.

As planned, I interviewed one of my Jesuit colleagues, David Robinson, S.J., and lined up at least one more interview with Tom Lucas, S.J., to take place during the fall. During my annual July trip to the USF Orange campus, I met with Fr. Robinson over a two-day period. The first night we talked about my spiritual dilemmas related to the project. The second day we sat down for a formal interview in his office. This thirty minute video recording is being edited with the hope of using segments in the future. I asked him about Ignatian pedagogy and how I as a librarian might incorporate this model into my teaching. His advice was
not what I expected: put myself in the picture Tell the students about my experiences, where I am with my spiritual questions, how I see these models working or not working in my life.

He also told me where to find the Society’s documents on education and pedagogy from Father General, R. P. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.: (1986) The Characteristics of Jesuit Education; (1993) Ignatian Pedagogy: a Practical Approach; and (2001) The Jesuit University in the Light of the Ignatian Charism. I finally had the primary sources I needed. As I read I began to better understand the challenges the post-Vatican II contemporary world pose for the Order. Can the unique qualities of the Ignatian tradition survive these times?

The brain


Change & Motivation

To learn is to change. How do people change? What motivates people to change? How do they learn new behaviors? To investigate these questions, I switched gears and read Chip & Dan Heath’s business bestseller (2007) Made to stick: why some ideas survive and others die and their latest (2010) Switch: how to change things when change is hard.

Then I identified more to read on motivation in the edited work (2009) Social Psychological Perspectives from the series Advances in Motivation and Achievement, along with a few other articles on attention and the unconscious. Another essential component of change is decision-making. Martin in his Jesuit Guide recommends Margaret Silf’s (2007) Wise Choices: a Spiritual Guide to Making Life’s Decisions, which I found thought-provoking and refreshingly free of references to any particular tradition.
Religious/Spiritual vs. Secular Motivations

Kuhlthau’s model works to relieve the psychological suffering of individual students and to build collaborative relationships with teams of mentors. Investigations into emotions and memory offer insights into learning while advances in digital technologies are transforming social communication as I write, creating new teaching and learning tools. As I progressed through my readings, I began to wonder about the differences and similarities between the motivations driving the religious/spiritual person and the secular person.

Ignatius is quite clear in his teachings. His motivation is first and foremost *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* “For the Greater Glory of God”, the motto of the Society. *Cura Personalis* “Care for the Whole Person”, especially the poor and those treated unjustly, permeates his teachings.

What is the equivalent motivating ethic in the public sector? To be “a good citizen” in a democratic society? How is that defined, lived, taught? I would like to identify and reflect on the over-arching educational philosophies that shape the secular world. A brief look at Secular Humanism offered a starting place.

What I think now

Are there similarities between the two models? Both value the emotional and the experiential; and both stress the importance of a mentor, whether as spiritual advisor or as librarian/teacher. I have learned the importance of context. By placing these two models in context, my understanding deepened. I have much more to explore in the sources I’ve identified. I want to continue reading, rereading, listening, and reflecting. The most important skill I came to appreciate? Reflection - supremely valued by Ignatius, Gotama, philosophers and educators alike.

My action items

In the Jesuit Foundation Grant application I proposed assembling a collection of readings on Ignatian pedagogy; information and emotion; and neuroscience as it relates to religion, emotions, teaching and learning, and using technology into an annotated bibliography that is accessible to the academic
The works referred to in this report form the core of this collection. The report to the Foundation and is due November 2010.

I also proposed interviewing members of the Jesuit community to learn more about the experiential aspects of the Ignatian Jesuit vision described in the Foundation’s mission. As mentioned, the first recorded interview took place during the summer and another is planned.

In both my Professional Research Leave and the Foundation Grant, I stated my immediate goal is to infuse my teaching with a more Ignatian-based approach to research. In a Performing Arts and Social History class this fall, I experimented with presenting a bit of my story and how I understand the stages of the Ignatian pedagogical model. There was some engaging dialogue with a few students. However I am far from feeling secure enough in my rudimentary understanding to try this approach in all my teaching.

Another goal is to share my findings with the Reference & Research and Regional Libraries’ staff who also teach research methods. I reported on my preliminary experiences at the Regional retreat in August and received encouraging comments from my colleagues. David Robinson, S.J. is scheduled to visit in October for a conversation with the Reference staff. Eventually I would like to share my findings at a library Town Hall presentation.

Thank you to the Committee for allowing me this time to explore and reflect.