

CONFERENCE^{for}MERCY
HIGHER EDUCATION

Mercy Roundtable 2025 DRAFT Schedule

Theme: Immigration

June 9-11, 2025

Saint Xavier University – Chicago, Illinois

Monday, June 9, 2025

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Registration & Check-in – Location TBD

3:30 p.m. Welcome from Dr. Keith Elder, President, Saint Xavier University
Prayer, Introductions – The Board Room

4:30 p.m. Keynote Presentation on Immigration
Mercy Sisters Pat Murphy, JoAnn Persch, and Rita Specht
Title, bios forthcoming

5:30 p.m. Dinner – The Board Room

Session I: Support for Immigrant Families

7 p.m.

**Jorge Arevalo, M.B.A.; Kathleen Carlson, Ph.D.; Imelda Macias, Ed.D.; and Natalie Page, Ed.D.,
Saint Xavier University**

Bridging Data and Belonging: Supporting Immigrant Students Through Risk Assessment and Community Engagement

This session explores how Saint Xavier University supports immigrant students through a data-driven risk assessment system and holistic family engagement. With 65% of first-time freshmen speaking a language other than English at home, SXU leverages predictive analytics and community outreach to enhance retention and belonging. Presenters will discuss immigrant student risk profiles, success behaviors, and institutional strategies that integrate data with advocacy to promote student success and social mobility in Catholic higher education.

8:15 p.m. Optional Social – Location TBD (outside, weather permitting)

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

7:30 a.m. Breakfast – The Board Room

8:30 a.m. Welcome & Prayer – The Board Room

Session II: Immersion Experiences

8:45 a.m.

Gail Presbey, University of Detroit Mercy

The Work of the Sisters of Mercy on Immigration

Based on attending two Border Immersion experiences with the Sisters of Mercy, seeing their programs such as Arise Adelante, and meeting Betty Campbell and other Sisters, I will describe the philosophy and actions of the Sisters of Mercy addressing the key social concern of immigration.

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9:45 a.m.

Dr. Steven Bridge & Camilla Bridge, Saint Joseph's College of Maine

Saint Joseph's College's International Service Trip Program: Addressing the Contributing Factors to Immigration at their Source

In some respects, those who are able to immigrate to the United States are the fortunate ones. Often, they leave behind communities that struggle with poor economies, food insecurity, broken infrastructure, educational barriers, inadequate health care, and violence. Through our International Service Trips, Saint Joseph's College has found innovative ways to respond to the systemic challenges and acute needs of these communities. This presentation will showcase two such initiatives – one in Haiti, one in Guatemala.

10:45 a.m.

Break

Session III: Intersection of Immigration and Racism

11:00 a.m.

Dr. Carol Etlen, Ed.D. and Dr. Marilyn Pendelton, Ed.D., Gwynedd Mercy University

Immigration, Racism, and the Challenges Faced by School Leaders

This session will focus on the challenges faced by School Leaders regarding immigration and racism. The importance of fostering a growth mindset in teachers and staff to develop actionable solutions to these challenges. Strategies to minimize prejudice and bias, increase cultural humility and equity, and best practice teaching strategies will be discussed. This session is for k12 and Higher Ed educators and school leaders.

12 p.m.

Tabletop Lunch Discussions – The Board Room

1:30 p.m.

E. Prasad Venugopal and Wala'a Bazoun, University of Detroit Mercy

"They're poisoning the blood of our country": Teaching the Racial Science Behind Anti-Immigrant Sentiments and Policies

This presentation discusses the long and dangerous history of racial science and its connection with contemporary anti-immigrant sentiments and laws. Our purpose is to connect the Mercy Critical Concern for Immigration with that of the evils of Racism to better understand the persistence of anti-immigration ideology in American society through the lens of the sciences. We also reflect on the epistemic violence inherent in the scientific and technological tools used in the enforcement of immigration laws. Example assignments used in a core curricular course to engage and educate students in these critical interdisciplinary conversations will be presented.

Session IV: Immigration & Community Engagement

2:30 p.m.

Alice Edwards, Ph.D., Mercyhurst University

A Mercy University in a Welcoming City: Living our commitments in uncertain times

University support for the Sisters of Mercy's critical concern for immigration is expressed in reflective academic community engagement with New Americans, as well as in the university curriculum, a primary indicator of our values. This session will present three initiatives that reflect Mercyhurst's commitment to this critical concern. The discussion will explore how these activities are grounded in reciprocal

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relationships with our New American partners, how they affect our students' learning, and how we can respond as Mercy communities to the anti-immigrant sentiment and policy.

3:30 p.m. Break

3:45 p.m.

Zepure Samawi PhD, MSN, BSN, RN, ANEF; Fulbright Scholar Professor of Nursing, Saint Xavier University

Nursing Students as Leaders Promoting Health of Communities: Learning about Mercy Critical Concerns
SXU nursing students are required to have a community clinical immersion experience to promote the health of communities. In this, the students learn the implications of the Critical Concerns. This presentation will set the groundwork for discussion about how numerous factors impact immigrants' health and quality of life, provide outcomes of the students' learning, and the benefits gained by the community members.

Session V: Integrating Immigration into the Curriculum

4:45 p.m.

Margaret Rakus, Ed.D. and Jessica Richmond, Gwynedd Mercy University

Integrating mission and critical concerns

Active Learning & Serving Mission Through the Digital Communication capstone course students research, produce and publish critical concern content. We share pedagogical frameworks, process and results of exploring immigration, women and environment. Immigration and Intersectionality An Antiracism GMercyU Service course explores immigration systems, gender inequality and nonviolence. Mercy Teas engage in immigration, racist rhetoric and nonviolence. We offer an intersectional perspective and resources including modules, library materials, and service trips.

5:45 p.m.

Jinsook Sara Kim, Georgian Court University

Mercy and Design

This presentation explores how design serves as a medium for Mercy by engaging students in creative projects addressing Immigration and Women—two of Mercy's Critical Concerns. Showcasing posters, videos, and collages from Georgian Court University's Critical Concerns Week, it highlights pedagogical strategies and creative methodologies that foster empathy, social responsibility, and leadership through design, inspiring advocacy and meaningful dialogue.

7:00 p.m. Dinner – The Board Room

8:15 p.m. Optional Outdoor Social (weather permitting)

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

7:30 a.m. Table Top Breakfast Discussion – (Location TBD)

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Session VI: Barriers Immigrants Face

8:30 a.m.

Monica M. Saltarelli, Trocaire College

"Remember the Ladies": Recognizing Gendered Gaps in Refugee Resettlement

Over the years with my work with refugees and new immigrants, I have noticed a pattern of concern with the women that are new to the American culture. They have had more difficulty with adjustment on many levels. Overcoming personal hurdles with their new culture here in the United States has been most challenging on them as well as their children. The immigration system and the current political climate in the United States clearly causes serious disadvantages towards women. Through research as well as engaging in personal interviews of new immigrant women, I hope to illustrate that the tragic reality is that women of all ages are overlooked and left behind.

9:30 a.m.

Break

9:45 a.m.

Dr. Tamara Cella, Georgian Court University

Exploring the Impact of Migration on Literacy Development

This roundtable will explore how we can better support the language and literacy development of first generation migrant families. We will discuss the unique challenges faced by migrant families as they balance heritage language retention with English language acquisition.

10:45 a.m.

Concluding Discussion

12:00 p.m.

Prayer & Departure