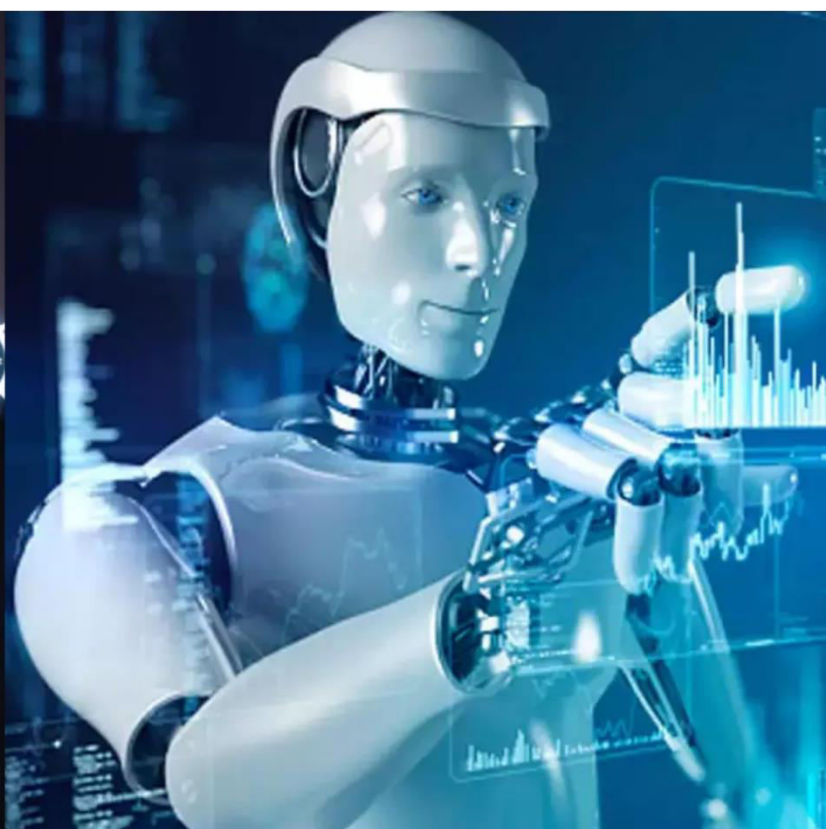




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Graduate Academic Experiences in Light of Institutional Vision and Mission: A Qualitative Analysis of Exit Interview Narratives

Jonathan P. Leal¹, Golingan, Ruth T.²

Dean, College of Teacher Education, Filamer Christian University, Inc., Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines ¹

Faculty, College of Teacher Education, Filamer Christian University, Inc., Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines ²

ABSTRACT: This phenomenological study explored the academic experiences of sixteen (16) graduating students in relation to the university's vision and mission during the academic year 2025–2026. Data were gathered through semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews to capture rich and detailed narratives of students' lived experiences. Findings revealed that the university's core values—spirituality, service excellence, and social responsibility—were strongly reflected in students' academic and personal experiences through classroom instruction, faculty mentorship, co-curricular engagement, and faith-based activities. These experiences were consistently described as meaningful contributors to their development, helping them build discipline, empathy, moral integrity, leadership, and a sense of purpose. Students also highlighted that activities such as Christian Emphasis Week, devotionals, outreach programs, and collaborative academic tasks strengthened both their spiritual life and academic engagement. The integration of faith and learning was seen as a defining feature of their education, shaping not only their academic performance but also their character formation and community involvement. However, participants also identified challenges, including heavy academic workloads, scheduling conflicts, limited institutional resources, financial constraints, and unequal access to some activities, which occasionally restricted full participation in mission-oriented programs. Despite these challenges, students demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and sustained commitment to the university's values. Overall, the findings indicate that the university's vision and mission were effectively translated into practice, significantly influencing students' holistic growth and shaping them into competent, responsible, and Christ-centered graduates prepared for professional, personal, and civic life.

KEYWORDS: Graduate academic experiences, Institutional vision and mission, Qualitative analysis, Exit interview narratives

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions articulate their identity, values, and long-term aspirations through vision and mission statements that guide curriculum, student development, and institutional culture. These statements serve as strategic tools intended to align institutional goals with student learning and success (Luebbe, 2025). However, the extent to which these ideals are reflected in students' lived experiences varies and requires critical examination (Bryson, 2018; Ralston, 2020). In Christian and value-driven institutions, vision and mission statements emphasize academic excellence, character formation, ethical responsibility, leadership, service, and spiritual growth, with the ultimate goal of developing graduates who embody both intellectual competence and moral integrity (Strange & Banning, 2015; Nuñez, 2019).

Exit interviews with graduating students provide a valuable means of assessing how institutional vision and mission are experienced and internalized. Through reflections on their academic, personal, and relational journeys, students reveal whether institutional values have been translated into meaningful educational practices. These narratives help identify strengths and gaps in pedagogy, faculty engagement, and student services, thereby informing institutional improvement and mission fulfillment (Boyd, 2016). By centering the student voice, the study contributes to the broader discourse on mission integration in higher education and reinforces the importance of ensuring that institutional values are actively lived rather than remaining abstract statements (Graham & Zook, 2016).

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical frameworks. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory explains that learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, making exit interviews a valuable process for understanding how students construct meaning from their educational experiences (Villaroel et al., 2020). Boyer's Mission-Driven Education Theory emphasizes that institutional mission should be authentically integrated into curriculum, pedagogy, student services, and campus life to promote meaningful learning and organizational integrity (Herlein, 2022). Schön's Reflective Practice Theory further highlights reflection as a foundation for deep learning and professional growth, positioning exit interviews as an effective mechanism for evaluating how students perceive and internalize the university's vision and mission (Suphasri, 2021).

This study aimed to describe the perceived academic experiences of graduating students concerning the university's vision and mission for the academic year 2025-2026. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What aspects of their academic journey do students associate with the core values expressed in the university's vision and mission?
2. In what ways do students believe the university has fulfilled its vision and mission through their academic experiences?
3. How do students interpret the influence of the institution's Christian values and developmental goals on their personal and academic growth?
4. What challenges or gaps do students identify in aligning their academic experiences with the university's stated vision and mission?
5. How might student reflections inform future efforts to align institutional practices with the university's vision and mission?

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Graduate Academic Experiences

Higher education institutions depend on clearly articulated vision and mission statements to guide curriculum, institutional culture, and student development while communicating their values and strategic direction (Akter, 2021; Kooli, 2019; Keefe, 2020). As higher education continues to evolve, these statements must remain relevant to address globalization, technological change, and workforce demands (Salmi, 2017). Studies show that students who perceive strong alignment between institutional values and their educational experiences demonstrate greater engagement, motivation, belonging, academic achievement, and career readiness (Egbuhuzor et al., 2025; Digitemie et al., 2025; Komi et al., 2025; Ajayi, 2024; Awoyemi et al., 2025; Ajiga et al., 2025). In mission-driven and Christian institutions, such alignment is fostered through curriculum, faculty engagement, service-learning, and leadership opportunities that promote academic excellence, character formation, ethical responsibility, and faith integration (Nuñez, 2019; Strange & Banning, 2015; Hoult, 2019; Watzke et al., 2018; Boyd, 2016). However, research also identifies persistent gaps between institutional aspirations and students' lived experiences due to weak mission communication, inconsistent implementation, and limited stakeholder engagement (Ralston, 2020; Herlein, 2022; Hyatt, 2020; Allen et al., 2018; Baildon & Arabi, 2023; Fullan, 2021). Consequently, reflective practices such as exit interviews are valuable for assessing whether institutional commitments to holistic education, leadership, and ethical development have been realized, while providing evidence for continuous improvement through effective leadership, mission integration, and collaboration among faculty, parents, and the wider community (Lean & Emery, 2021; Helyer, 2015; Larsen et al., 2016; Persson et al., 2018; Day et al., 2020; Bowen, 2018; Calder, 2014; Hofstrand, 2016; Li & Zhang, 2023; Hamm et al., 2021; Cordova Jr. et al., 2024; Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Suphasri, 2021).

Institutional Vision and Mission

Institutional vision, mission, and core values define the identity, purpose, and strategic direction of higher education institutions, guiding decision-making, curriculum, and student development while promoting institutional coherence and public accountability (Luebbe, 2025; Graham & Zook, 2016; Jonyo, 2018; Holosko et al., 2015; Aib & Shehzad, 2023). Research shows that clearly communicated and consistently implemented VMGO statements strengthen students' academic engagement, institutional pride, sense of belonging, and personal development (Valenzuela & Antonio, 2022; Yuen, 2019). In Christian higher education, core values such as integrity, excellence, service, faith, and compassion are intentionally integrated into academic and co-curricular programs to promote holistic formation and responsible citizenship (Strange & Banning, 2015; Nuñez, 2019; Ahmad & Masroor, 2020). However, gaps often exist between institutional aspirations and students' lived experiences when mission and values are inadequately

communicated or inconsistently practiced (Bryson, 2018; Ralston, 2020). Strong institutional practices, faculty commitment, and reflective assessments such as exit interviews are therefore essential for evaluating mission integration, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that institutional values are authentically embodied across the university community (Boyd, 2016; Herlein, 2022; Suphasri, 2021; Lean & Emery, 2021; Paycor, 2022; Kirova, 2022; Schoenlaub, 2015).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to describe the perceived academic experiences of sixteen (16) purposively selected graduating students regarding the university's vision and mission during the academic year 2025–2026 (Patton, 2015; Bliss, 2016; Bullard, 2024). Data were collected through validated semi-structured interviews consisting of eleven questions, supplemented by audio-recorded face-to-face or online interviews to capture rich and authentic narratives (George, 2022; Wolff, 2024). Ethical procedures, including informed consent, confidentiality, participant validation, and debriefing, were strictly observed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were analyzed using phenomenological analysis through open coding, the constant-comparative method, thematic analysis, and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to identify patterns and interpret participants' lived experiences (Caulfield, 2019; Chun-Tie et al., 2019; Smith & Nizza, 2022). To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, the study employed triangulation, member checking, audit trails, thick description, and theoretical triangulation, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of how graduating students perceived the alignment between the university's vision, mission, and their academic experiences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Core Values Reflected in Students' Academic Journey

The data revealed how students experience and interpret the university's core values — spirituality, service excellence, and social responsibility — are instilled through their academic and personal journeys. Thematic analysis identified five interrelated themes that capture students' reflections on how these values are lived out within the university context.

Spirituality as the Foundation of Learning

Students consistently described spirituality as central to their academic journey. Activities such as Christian Emphasis Week (CEW), devotional sessions, Bible subjects, and prayer before classes strengthened their faith, reinforced Christian values, and guided their academic and personal decisions. Participants emphasized that these spiritual practices cultivated gratitude, humility, and purpose, making faith an integral part of everyday learning rather than an isolated religious activity.

Service Excellence through Quality Education

Participants viewed service excellence through the quality of instruction, mentorship, and academic support provided by faculty. Professors' commitment to high standards, timely feedback, and professional guidance encouraged students to pursue excellence, develop discipline, and take ownership of their learning. Internship experiences and classroom activities further reinforced the value of dedication, professionalism, and continuous improvement.

Social Responsibility through Community Engagement

Students recognized social responsibility through outreach and extension programs that allowed them to serve local communities. These activities helped them apply their knowledge while developing compassion, servant leadership, and a deeper appreciation of education as a means of helping others. Their experiences demonstrated that meaningful community engagement strengthened both personal growth and civic responsibility.

Commitment to Excellence and Lifelong Learning

Participants highlighted that academic programs, research, teaching demonstrations, internships, and classroom presentations challenged them to think critically and continuously improve. These experiences fostered intellectual growth, self-discipline, and lifelong learning while encouraging them to pursue excellence beyond academic requirements, consistent with the university's mission of holistic development.

Integration of Faith and Character Formation

Students perceived that the university effectively integrated faith with character formation through academic experiences, faculty mentorship, and community service. They reported becoming more responsible, compassionate, humble, and service-oriented while strengthening their spiritual, intellectual, and personal development. Overall, participants viewed their education as a transformative process that prepared them to become competent professionals grounded in faith, leadership, and service.

Table 1 Thematic Analysis on Students' Experiences Reflecting the University's Core Values

Codes	Themes	Supporting Statements
Spirituality	Spirituality as the Foundation of Learning	D1: CEW, devotions, and Bible subjects reinforced Christian belief. D2: CEW and devotional sessions reflected spirituality in action. D10: Beginning classes with prayer strengthened faith and gratitude. D12: Joining CEW, worship, and the FCU Chorale deepened commitment to faith and perseverance. D14: CEW reminded students of faith, humility, and leaning on God. D16: CEW served as a reminder to keep faith as the foundation of learning.
Service Excellence	Service Excellence through Quality Education	D1: Faculty and staff exert effort to deliver quality instruction. D2: Teachers and mentors model service excellence through quality education. D4: Professors guide students to strive for excellence in both academics and behavior. D5: Service excellence inspired a mindset of hard work and responsibility. D6: Departmental standards and timely feedback nurtured excellence. D9: Class presentations encouraged discipline and continuous improvement. D15: Faculty mentorship modeled professionalism and commitment. D16: Professors' expectations during internships promoted high standards.
Social Responsibility	Social Responsibility through Community Engagement	D1: University promotes community extension services. D2: Outreach programs like Munting Paaralan sa Barangay reflect social responsibility. D4: Community outreach instilled the importance of serving others. D11: Teaching children in Munting Paaralan sa Barangay nurtured faith, patience, and compassion. D14: Community outreach fostered servant-leadership and social awareness. D16: Extension programs taught the value of learning to serve others.
Intellectual and Personal Growth	Commitment to Excellence and Lifelong Learning	D3: Internship and teaching demos developed responsibility and enthusiasm for service. D6: Academic activities encouraged applying knowledge beyond grades. D8: Research participation strengthened intellectual

		growth and critical thinking. D₉: Academic performance inspired discipline and perseverance. D₁₀: Research defense and presentations promoted critical thinking and confidence. D₁₃: Academic and physical challenges fostered balance and holistic development.
Faith and Character Formation	Integration of Faith and Character Development	D₁₁: Outreach experience reinforced faith, responsibility, and empathy. D₁₃: Experiences strengthened spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth. D₁₄: Faith inspired humility and kindness in dealing with others. D₁₅: Mentoring and student leadership fostered discipline and servant-leadership. D₁₆: Combining faith, service, and leadership prepared students to serve others faithfully.

B. Realization of the University's Vision and Mission in Academic Life

The participants' reflections collectively reveal that Filamer Christian University's mission is vividly embodied in its programs, faculty practices, and institutional culture. Across discussions, students emphasized that their academic journey was not limited to intellectual training but was deeply grounded in Christian values, community engagement, and character formation.

Faith-Based Programs and Curriculum Integration

Students identified faith-based programs and curriculum integration as the primary means through which the university's mission was realized. Bible subjects, Christian Emphasis Week, devotional activities, and values-oriented instruction strengthened their faith, moral development, discipline, and commitment to service, while research and innovation encouraged them to apply learning to address real-world needs.

Faculty Mentorship and Value Formation

Participants emphasized that faculty members modeled the university's core values through mentorship, guidance, and compassionate teaching. Professors not only developed students' academic competence but also nurtured integrity, humility, service, and leadership, preparing them for professional and personal responsibilities.

Research and Innovation for Development

Students viewed research as an avenue for critical thinking, innovation, and problem-solving. Through research projects, technology integration, and practical applications, they developed solutions to real-life challenges, reflecting the university's commitment to transformative and development-oriented education.

Community Engagement and Service Orientation

Outreach programs, extension services, and community partnerships enabled students to connect academic learning with social responsibility. These experiences fostered empathy, leadership, teamwork, and servant leadership while reinforcing the university's mission of serving communities through meaningful engagement.

Institutional Commitment to Mission Fulfillment

Participants affirmed that the university consistently lives out its mission through academic programs, student organizations, leadership opportunities, and community initiatives. Overall, they perceived the mission as deeply embedded in university life, producing graduates who are academically competent, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible.

Table 2 Students' Views on the Fulfillment of the University's Vision and Mission through Academic Experiences

Codes	Themes	Supporting Statements
Programs and Curriculum	Integration of Mission through Faith-Based and Holistic Education	D1: Integration of Bible subjects, CEW, and research initiatives reflects the mission. D2: Curriculum and devotional activities nurture moral and spiritual growth. D4: Community outreach and research demonstrate learning with purpose. D5: Courses and research promote critical thinking, creativity, and service. D14: Faith-based programs like CEW emphasize humility, compassion, and service. D16: Professors integrate faith and innovation through research and training.
Faculty Mentorship	Mission Lived through Transformative Teaching and Leadership	D3: Internship under faculty guidance embodied mission-driven learning. D6: Professors instilled patience, care, and faith-based professionalism. D10: Faculty modeled values of faith, creativity, and empathy. D13: Faculty modeled Christ-like leadership and moral integrity. D15: Professors integrated Christian principles and servant leadership in teaching.
Research and Innovation	Mission Expressed through Critical Thinking and Model Development	D5: Research and innovation reflected the mission to "innovate models of development." D7: Research encouraged innovation grounded in Christian values. D10: Research, discussions, and demonstrations enhanced critical and creative skills. D14: Research connected theories to real-world problem-solving.
Community Engagement	Service as Expression of Faith and Mission	D8: Outreach programs allowed students to apply knowledge beyond the classroom. D9: Community outreach and collaborative activities nurtured teamwork and service. D11: MPB and OJT reflected service and character formation. D12: Student organizations and outreach groups embodied service and leadership. D14: Community engagement projects promoted practical social transformation.
Institutional Commitment	University Culture as Embodiment of Mission and Vision	D1: Integration of faith-based curriculum, CEW, research, and international partnerships exemplified the mission. D2: Institutional linkages provided real-world learning. D11: Academic and extracurricular achievements reflected global competence and Christian excellence. D12: Diversity of student organizations and outreach initiatives proved holistic institutional dedication. D15: CEW, research, and service projects confirmed the mission in practice.

C. Students' Perspectives on Christian Values and Developmental Growth

The results reveal that Filamer Christian University's Christian values and developmental goals serve as a strong foundation for students' holistic formation. Participants described their faith as an integral part of their learning journey, influencing not only their academic performance but also their moral character, discipline, and outlook in life. The following discussion presents the key themes that emerged from the responses.

Faith as the Foundation of Learning

Students consistently viewed faith as the foundation of their academic and personal lives. Through Christian Emphasis Week, devotional activities, and a faith-based learning environment, they developed spiritual growth, discipline, purpose, and a deeper commitment to Christian values that guided their studies and daily lives.

Holistic Student Formation

Participants emphasized that the university promotes holistic development by integrating spiritual, academic, and moral formation. Faith-based instruction and faculty guidance fostered ethical decision-making, discipline, perseverance, and intellectual maturity, producing well-rounded and values-driven graduates.

Transformative Christian Education

Students described their education as a transformative journey that nurtured empathy, compassion, leadership, and a sense of purpose. Christian teachings inspired them to view learning as a calling, preparing them to serve others with integrity and commitment.

Faith in Action

Respondents highlighted that faith is expressed through outreach programs, community involvement, and servant leadership. These experiences allowed them to put Christian values into practice by demonstrating compassion, humility, and service beyond the classroom.

Developmental Growth through Faith

Participants shared that Christian values strengthened their resilience, self-awareness, gratitude, and moral character while helping them align academic goals with a meaningful life purpose. Faith served as a source of guidance in overcoming personal and academic challenges.

Faith-Driven Lifelong Learning

Students believed that the university's Christian formation extends beyond graduation by inspiring lifelong learning, integrity, and a sustained relationship with God. Overall, they viewed faith as the cornerstone of their academic, personal, and professional development, shaping them into competent, ethical, and service-oriented individuals.

Table 3 Influence of Christian Values and Developmental Goals on Students' Personal and Academic Growth

Codes	Themes	Supporting Statements
Faith as the Foundation of Learning	Spiritual and Moral Growth Anchored in Faith	D ₁ : Emphasized that the university's Christian foundation guided both academic and personal growth, fostering faith-driven discipline and service. D ₂ : Highlighted Christian Emphasis Week (CEW) and devotional gatherings as vital sources of spiritual renewal and direction in studies. D ₃ : Reflected that studying in a faith-based environment deepened spiritual understanding and strengthened appreciation for diverse beliefs.
Holistic Student Formation	Integration of Faith, Academics, and Character Development	D ₄ : Expressed that Christian-centered lessons strengthened moral responsibility and encouraged ethical decision-making. D ₅ : Shared that faith-based guidance from faculty fostered discipline, perseverance, and humility. D ₆ : Mentioned that integrating faith with academic excellence promoted both intellectual and spiritual

		maturity.
Transformative Christian Education	Character Building through Faith-Based Experiences	D ₇ : Explained that faith integration through reflection and prayer nurtured empathy and leadership. D ₈ : Reported that Christian teachings in coursework inspired purpose-driven education and compassion toward others. D ₉ : Believed that faith-based instruction developed a sense of calling, reinforcing a lifelong commitment to service and learning.
Faith in Action	Application of Christian Values in Service and Leadership	D ₁₀ : Shared that participating in outreach programs deepened faith and strengthened a sense of mission. D ₁₁ : Noted that faith encouraged service and humility, especially in community involvement. D ₁₂ : Described that acts of kindness and servant leadership were direct expressions of Christian learning.
Developmental Growth through Faith	Personal Transformation and Purposeful Living	D ₁₃ : Reflected that Christian values encouraged self-awareness, gratitude, and perseverance during challenges. D ₁₄ : Shared that faith-centered learning molded resilience and emotional maturity. D ₁₅ : Stated that faith helped integrate academic goals with life purpose and moral direction.
Faith-Driven Learning	Lifelong Growth Rooted in Christian Commitment	D ₁₆ : Concluded that Christian values instilled by the university inspired lifelong learning, integrity, and a sustained relationship with God beyond graduation.

D. Perceived Challenges in Aligning Academic Experiences with FCU's Vision and Mission

While many students experienced the university's mission effectively, challenges, including heavy academic workload, relevance of activities, calendar alignment, limited resources, mentorship needs, facilities, and balancing personal responsibilities, highlight areas for improvement to ensure that all students can fully live out FCU's mission.

Academic Workload and Limited Participation

Students identified heavy academic workload as a major challenge that limited their participation in outreach, leadership, and other mission-related activities. Some also noted unequal opportunities for involvement, which reduced students' ability to fully experience the university's mission.

Resource and Recognition Support

Participants emphasized the need for improved facilities, greater institutional support, and better recognition of student achievements in academic and co-curricular activities. These improvements were viewed as important in enhancing student engagement and motivation.

Positive Mission Implementation

Despite the challenges, several students reported that they experienced the university's mission effectively. They described the institution's programs and activities as well-organized, values-centered, and successful in promoting faith, service, and community engagement.

Activity Relevance and Engagement

Some students perceived that certain activities emphasized compliance rather than meaningful participation. They recommended designing more engaging and mission-centered programs that promote authentic learning and personal growth.

Calendar Alignment and Internship Challenges

Participants cited misalignment between the university and DepEd calendars, particularly during internships, as well as limited resources and support during field experiences. These issues affected the effective application of classroom learning in professional practice.

Balancing Academic and Personal Responsibilities

Students found it challenging to balance academic requirements, spiritual formation, community service, and, for some, employment responsibilities. They suggested increased mentorship, time management support, and flexible arrangements, particularly for working students.

Facilities, Equity, and Learning Resources

Respondents also highlighted concerns regarding limited facilities, technology, funding, and equitable support for student organizations. They recommended improving learning resources, expanding opportunities, and strengthening institutional support to ensure that all students can fully experience the university's vision and mission.

Table 4 Challenges and Gaps in Experiencing the University's Mission

Codes	Themes	Supporting Statements
Academic Workload	Academic Load and Participation	D ₁ : Noted that heavy academic workload sometimes limits participation in mission-oriented programs; unequal access to activities.
Recognition & Facilities	Resource and Recognition Support	D ₂ : Highlighted the need for better recognition of student achievements in contests and improvement of school facilities.
No Challenges	No Major Issues	D ₃ : D ₁₄ Reported no major challenges; activities well-guided and aligned with mission.
Activity Relevance	Activity Relevance and Engagement	D ₄ : Expressed that some activities felt compliance-based rather than genuinely mission-driven.
Calendar Issues	Calendar Alignment	D ₅ : Mentioned that the university calendar misalignment with the DepEd schedule complicated teaching internships; need for organizational support.
Superficial Participation	Engagement Quality	D ₆ : Suggested that some activities focused more on attendance than meaningful student growth.
Time Management	Balancing Academics & Mission Activities	D ₇ : Shared difficulty balancing academics, spiritual, and community service activities.
Internship Support	Internship Resources	D ₈ : Reported limited resources and guidance during internship, affecting the application of classroom learning.
Financial & Equity	Financial and Equity Challenges	D ₉ : Described financial constraints and unequal support for student organizations; overlapping commitments created challenges.
Mentorship Needs	Mentorship and Guidance	D ₁₀ : Mentioned the need for mentorship and time management support to balance academics with mission-related activities.
Facilities Gap	Facilities and Infrastructure	D ₁₁ : Highlighted that limited facilities and practical gaps hinder the full experience of the university's mission. D ₁₅ : Limited facilities and infrastructure affected the full experience; suggested tech and international collaboration improvements.
Work-Study Balance	Work-Study-Life Challenges	D ₁₂ : Indicated challenges in balancing work, academics, and mission-related activities for working students. D ₁₆ : Difficulty balancing work, academics, and mission-related activities; suggested more flexible opportunities.

E. Student Reflections on Enhancing Alignment of Institutional Practices with the University's Vision and Mission

This section presents the insights of the students regarding how the institution can better align its practices with its vision and mission. Through their experiences, participants reflected on the university's academic programs, community engagements, faith-based initiatives, and faculty mentorship. Their testimonies reveal both the strengths and areas for improvement in integrating the university's core values into daily student life.

Active Student Participation

Students emphasized that actively participating in academic, leadership, and service activities is essential to fully embody the university's vision and mission. They encouraged future students to engage in organizations and co-curricular programs while recommending that faculty continue providing strong mentorship.

Appreciation of Faculty and Student Commitment

Participants recognized faculty members as key role models in promoting faith, compassion, and excellence. They appreciated the collective efforts of administrators, faculty, and students, while encouraging consistent mentorship and stronger institutional support for student organizations.

Student-Centered Approach

Students recommended adopting a more student-centered approach by designing meaningful programs that promote servant leadership, community engagement, and faith formation. They emphasized that activities should focus on students' holistic growth and meaningful participation.

Community Service and Research Opportunities

Participants suggested expanding community outreach, research, sustainability initiatives, and global partnerships to strengthen the practical application of learning. They also emphasized the importance of faculty serving as role models in faith and service.

Balance of Academics, Faith, and Service

Students highlighted the need for better support in balancing academic responsibilities with spiritual formation and community engagement. They recommended mentorship, flexible opportunities, and continued faculty guidance to help students achieve holistic development.

Experiential Learning and Internship Support

Participants emphasized providing more opportunities for experiential learning through internships, outreach, and practical applications of classroom knowledge. They also recommended strengthening internship mentoring, resources, and exposure to diverse learning environments.

Inclusivity and Equal Opportunities

Students stressed the importance of equitable access to resources, leadership opportunities, and organizational support. They believed that greater inclusivity would promote collaboration, fairness, and holistic student development.

Faith-Based Mentorship and Balanced Development

Respondents encouraged stronger Christ-centered mentorship that integrates academic excellence, spiritual growth, and community service. They viewed faculty guidance as essential in developing students into transformational and servant leaders.

Facilities and Global Opportunities

Participants recommended improving campus facilities, expanding international partnerships, and increasing opportunities for outreach, research, and global engagement to better align institutional practices with the university's vision and mission.

Table 5 Participants' Recommendations for Aligning University Practices with its Vision and Mission

Codes	Themes	Supporting Statements
Active Student Participation	Encouraging proactive involvement in academics and service	D1: "My advice for future students is to actively participate and excel in both academics and service opportunities, since transformative leadership starts and is grounded through these experiences, not only in the classroom. For faculty, I would encourage continued emphasis on mentorship..."
Appreciation of Faculty & Student Traits	Recognition of efforts and modeling good behavior	D2: "In the College of Teacher Education, I commend and appreciate all collective efforts of our dean, teachers, and students... For the future students, I encourage them to take the education seriously... For the faculty, may you continue living the goodness, love, and compassion to teach every kind of student..."
Student-Centered Approach	Prioritizing activities that internalize university values	D3: "I hope that FCU continues to prioritize a student-centered approach, particularly in developing and implementing activities... My advice to future students is to embrace every moment of college life and make it more meaningful by participating in organizations and activities..."
Community Service & Research Opportunities	Expanding engagement in social and academic initiatives	D4: "The university can better align by continuing to strengthen its community services, expanding research opportunities, and involving students more in global linkages and sustainability projects... For faculty, I'd encourage them to keep being role models of faith and service..."
Application of Values in Real-World Context	Providing practical opportunities for leadership and service	D5: "The university can better align its practices with its vision and mission by creating more meaningful opportunities where students can apply Christian values, leadership, and academic excellence in real-world contexts... Strengthening mentorship between faculty and students would also help ensure that values are not only taught but modeled..."
Organizational Support & Faculty Continuity	Ensuring consistent guidance and backing for student organizations	D6: "The university is already doing a lot, but changes like earlier schedules for enrollment or giving real support to organizations that serve the community could make a big difference... For the faculty, I hope they keep showing consistency, since we really feel it when the mission is practiced and not only talked about."
Servant-Leadership & Collaboration	Fostering leadership, faith-based initiatives, and community projects	D7: "The university can better align its practices with its vision of transformative leadership... by designing programs and activities that foster servant-leadership, community engagement, and faith-based initiatives. Future students and faculty can benefit from participating in mentorship

		programs, workshops on Christian leadership, and collaborative projects...”
Adaptable Learning Environment	Supporting participation despite academic workload	D ₈ : “Based on my experience, the demand of academic workload limited opportunities for contemplation, leadership participation, or service-learning experiences... For students, enjoy and participate in every event where you can grow and develop your true self. For the faculty, be more encouraging and set an example as a motivator rather than a competitor that degrades students.”
Balance of Academics, Faith, and Service	Managing time and responsibilities effectively	D ₉ : “I believe the university can improve how it aligns with its mission by supporting students in balancing their studies, spiritual growth, and community service... My advice to future students is to stay proactive, take every opportunity to grow academically, spiritually, and socially... To faculty, I would suggest continuing to mentor and encourage students...”
Experiential Learning Opportunities	Applying classroom learning to service and community projects	D ₁₀ : “The university has already shown a strong commitment to its vision and mission, but it can still better align its practices by giving students more opportunities to apply what they learn outside the classroom... My advice to future students is to embrace these opportunities wholeheartedly... For the faculty, continue guiding students not only with knowledge but also with wisdom and encouragement.”
Internship & Leadership Development	Strengthening support, mentorship, and exposure for students	D ₁₁ : “The university already reflects much of its vision and mission, but there are areas for better alignment. For example, strengthening support during the internship program—through more resources, mentoring, and exposure to diverse teaching environments... My advice to future students is to fully embrace both academic and extracurricular opportunities. For faculty, continue integrating Christian values into teaching while innovating methods...”
Inclusivity & Equal Opportunities	Ensuring fairness and equal access to resources and programs	D ₁₂ : “To better align practices with its vision and mission, I suggest the university provide equal rights, support, opportunities, and exposure to every relevant organization, student, and faculty member. This approach would foster inclusivity, promote collaboration, and ensure holistic growth.”
Faith-Based Mentorship	Strengthening spiritual guidance in academics and service	D ₁₃ : “The university can strengthen its mission by helping students truly embody the Christian name, since Filamer is a Christian school. Students should live out faith in both academics and service, while faculty continue guiding them with Christ-centered

		mentorship.”
Balanced Development	Integrating academic excellence, faith, and community engagement	D ₁₄ : “The university can better align its practices with its vision and mission by strengthening the balance between academic excellence, spiritual growth, and community engagement... My advice to future students is to take every opportunity to grow academically, spiritually, and socially... To the faculty, my advice is to keep serving as mentors who guide students beyond the classroom, modeling the Christian values and transformational leadership the university upholds.”
Facilities & Global Opportunities	Improving infrastructure and international collaboration	D ₁₅ : “The university can better align its practices with its VMG by continuously improving facilities, expanding global partnerships, and providing more avenues for practical application of learning through outreach and research... My advice to future students is to embrace academic training as well as faith-based and service-oriented opportunities. For faculty, continue modeling servant-leadership and integrating Christian values in teaching.”
Community Connection	Linking academics to real-world community impact	D ₁₆ : “The university is already living out its vision and mission, but it can align even better by giving more platforms where students can connect their academic work with real community impact... My advice to future students is to embrace every opportunity the university offers... For faculty, continue being approachable and supportive, because your guidance really inspires us to carry the values of faith, service, and responsibility into our future careers.”

V. CONCLUSION

The institution has transformed its vision, mission, and core values from written ideals into lived realities. Students' experiences reveal that spirituality, service excellence, and social responsibility are not merely institutional aspirations but are deeply embedded in classroom instruction, faculty mentorship, community engagement, and campus life. Through these experiences, students develop not only academic competence but also Christian character, ethical responsibility, compassion, and a genuine commitment to serving God and society.

The university's educational environment demonstrates that transformative Christian education is achieved when faith, learning, leadership, and service are intentionally integrated. Students perceive their education as more than academic preparation—it is a formative journey that shapes their identity, strengthens their values, and equips them to become competent professionals, servant leaders, and responsible citizens. This holistic approach enables graduates to view their future careers as opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their communities while remaining grounded in Christian principles.

Despite these strengths, the journey toward fully realizing the university's vision and mission remains an ongoing process. Heavy academic demands, scheduling conflicts, limited resources, unequal opportunities for participation, and the realities faced by working students occasionally restrict full engagement in mission-driven activities. These

challenges do not diminish the university's accomplishments; rather, they present valuable opportunities to strengthen institutional practices and make transformative learning more accessible to every student.

Ultimately, the students' voices affirm that sustaining a mission-driven university requires continuous reflection, innovation, and responsiveness. Expanding experiential learning, strengthening faculty mentorship, enhancing community partnerships, improving facilities, and creating more inclusive opportunities will further deepen the integration of faith, learning, and service. As the university continues to evolve, its greatest strength will not simply be the vision and mission it proclaims, but the lives it transforms—graduates who embody Christian values, pursue excellence with integrity, and lead with compassion in service to both God and humanity.

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