

A UNITED ENDEAVOR

PROMISING PRACTICES IN GENERAL EDUCATION
AT CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

2009
PROJECT ON GENERAL EDUCATION & MISSION



Core Education Center, Saint Joseph's College

Project Financial Support

The members of the Project on General Education and Mission gratefully acknowledge the financial support they received from the following three sources:

The Cincinnati Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood,
The Helen Brach Foundation, and
Another foundation that has asked to remain anonymous.

Authorship

This booklet is published by the Project participants as individuals. Neither their institutions nor the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, which has graciously volunteered to assist with the distribution of the booklet, are responsible for its content.

Additional Copies

A reasonable number of print copies of the booklet can be requested, free of charge, from either of these two addresses: aacu@accunet.org or nichols@saintjoe.edu. It is also possible to download a PDF version of the whole booklet from either of these Web sites: www.accunet.org ("Research and Publications") or www.saintjoe.edu ("PGEM booklet").

© 2009 John P. Nichols. All rights reserved. This material may not be used for commercial purposes without prior written permission. This material may be used for strictly educational purposes without permission.

Front Cover: Alumnipark at Calumet College of St. Joseph



PARTICIPANTS IN PGEM Institutions & People

Project Staff

John P. Nichols - Project Director - Saint Joseph's College
Sandra Estanek - Consultant on Student Personnel Administration - Canisius College

Lisa Kirkpatrick - Dean of Students - St. Edward's University

Calumet College of St. Joseph [ccsj.edu] - Whiting, IN - Missionaries of the Precious Blood

Gene Finnegan - Director, Religious Studies

Walter Skiba - Humanities

Carlow University [carlow.edu] - Pittsburgh, PA - Sisters of Mercy

Andrea Beranek - Assoc. VP, Learning Services & Assessment

Chrys Gabrich - Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Linda Schifino - Coordinator, Core Curriculum

The College of St. Scholastica [css.edu] - Duluth, MN - Sisters of St. Scholastica (Benedictines)

Elizabeth Domholdt - Vice President for Academic Affairs

Lezlie Oachs - Director, General Education

Dominican University [dom.edu] - River Forest, IL - Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters

William George - Director, Core Curriculum

Sr. Diane Kennedy, O.P. - VP, Mission & Ministry

Misericordia University [misericordia.edu] - Dallas, PA - Sisters of Mercy of Dallas

Mary Hinton - Director, Core Curriculum

Sr. Pat Lapczynski, R.S.M. - Computer Science

St. Bonaventure University [sbu.edu] - Olean, NY - Franciscan

David DiMattio - Dean, Clare College Core Curriculum

Rod Hughes - Philosophy

St. Edward's University [stedwards.edu] - Austin, TX - Brothers of Holy Cross

Marianne Hopper - Dean of University Programs

Sr. Donna Jurick, S.N.D. - Executive Vice President & Provost

Cory Lock - Capstone Director

Saint Joseph's College [saintjoe.edu] - Rensselaer, IN - Missionaries of the Precious Blood

MaryAnn Janosik - Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

Fr. Jeff Kirch, C.P.P.S. - Chaplain, Theology

Fr. Tim McFarland, C.P.P.S. - Core Coordinator

Br. Rob Reuter, C.P.P.S. - Senior Core Director

St. Thomas University [stu.edu] - Miami, FL - Augustinians; then Archdiocese of Miami

Fr. Ed Blackwell - Director, Institute for Education

Gregory Chan - Provost & Chief Academic Officer

University of St. Francis [sf.edu] - Ft. Wayne, IN - Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

Matt Smith - Director, General Education

PROLOGUE

Genesis of this Project

A great deal of serious and influential work has occurred over the past thirty years in figuring out exactly what the general education component of the undergraduate curriculum ought to accomplish and, consequently, how it ought to be structured. When Catholic colleges and universities become involved in this kind of study, there is always a discussion of the link between institutional mission and general education. To them it seems clear-cut and perfectly logical that, if there is a special reason (mission) for the existence of the institution, that reason would have something to do with what it intends to accomplish with its students, *all* its students. And if the mission is to be achieved with all the students, general education becomes not only a critically important program on campus, but one that is more closely tied to mission than any other program.

This link between mission and general education has been hardly even noticed, much less celebrated, in national publications on general education. I was involved in seven major national projects on general education, and none of them even talked about mission, with the exception of AAC's (sic) 1994 *Strong Foundations*. More typical was the following. I was on an AAC&U panel with senior officers of two regional accreditors. I tried to set up the relationship between mission and general education, but these two gentlemen, whom I deeply respect, denied the need for or value of any such relationship.

This project is entitled *Project on General Education and Mission* (PGEM for short). We are convinced that this is an important issue for the vigor of Catholic higher education, all the more important because no one else is working on it. Monika Hellwig, as President of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), put this issue on the national agenda for Catholic institutions at the 2005 ACCU meeting. Her formulation was specific and concise: "How do we use general education to make the Mission Statement *Real*?"

I had made one of the presentations on that question at the 2005 meeting; the response of the audience was favorable, so Monika encouraged me to do more with it. I found that funding was available to pursue the question more systematically and in a group, and so PGEM was born. We were ten institutions at the beginning (early 2008), then nine, then twelve—but finally ten Catholic colleges and universities (end of 2009) were involved in producing the text that you now have.

Project Members

There are three traits that I think made this a creative group for dealing with this issue. We represent institutions that are explicitly and enthusiastically Catholic, and decidedly want to remain so. We are medium in size, which means that we can realistically talk about aiming to achieve something with *all* of our students, and so we take general education very seriously. The final trait deals with our sponsoring religious communities.

Each of the ten of us was founded by a religious order or congregation, five female and five male. These founding entities remain our present-day sponsors, and the Mission they gave us to carry out remains the reason for our existence still—to build the Kingdom of God in a certain place, with specific people, and in a particular mode.

The foregoing is clear enough and exerts strong intellectual and moral influences on our institutions. But another fact of 21st-century Catholic life sounds like an organ pedal tone all the way through our text: the reduction in the personal presence of members of the sponsoring communities in these colleges. This *tension* between desired continuity of sponsorship and looming discontinuity grips each of our sections, raises their emotional tone, and heightens the importance of religious-lay collaboration in general education and the co-curriculum.

Overview of Our Work

From January to May (2009), we shared documentation by e-mail and tried our best to get to know one another and to learn from one another the variety of ways that a Catholic institution might link general education with mission. We then gathered in June on the campus of Saint Joseph’s College in Indiana to draft our text. Another two months of rewriting and editing was then carried out by e-mail.

To keep project discussions focused, we organized our e-mail sharing of documentation and our writing assignments on the basis of a four-stage *process* model that had proved successful in a previous project that I directed for AAC&U. The four stages in the model are Mission, Outcomes, Programming, and Assessment. The connections among the four stages are first of all logical (even linear), then dynamic (interactive), and finally cyclic (in that the assessment fourth stage acts back on at least two of the preceding stages). Our discussions produced our own project-specific understandings of the links between the four stages.

Mission: Our missions are the very reasons why we exist. Our institutions, in fact, do not have to exist, but they have each been founded by some religious community precisely to fulfill a specific mission. The mission is “who we *are*.”

Outcomes: What the mission intends is expressed in certain traits desired to be manifest in the graduates from the institution: what they know, can do, and value. Our project does not, however, deal with all the “regular” outcomes that regional accreditors are concerned with, but only those “distinctively Catholic” outcomes that derive from the special features of our missions.

Programming: This is simply what we *do* to achieve the outcomes. What quickly became clear during the PGEM discussions is that our distinctive outcomes are of such a nature that academic efforts alone are not sufficient to attain them in their fullness. There needs to be collaboration between academics, campus ministry, and student affairs.

Assessment: Because we are indeed serious about these outcomes—they derive from our very reason for being—we assess how well we are achieving them and use the results of such assessments to improve our performance. Thus, the relationship among our four sections is not only dynamic, but also circular.

Our Product

The booklet in your hands is a product of *collegiality*, to use the term for a key Vatican 2 concept. The booklet is neither the work of a single author, nor is it a collection of unrelated essays. Its four sections are, of course, the four stages in the model that we used to focus and clarify the process of making institutional Mission real and influential in the undergraduate experience. Each section was written by a team of four or five project members, using the documentation shared by the ten institutions in the project, and also engaging in ongoing discussion with the teams writing the other three sections. Thus, each section is a well-rounded essay on one of the four stages in our process model, yet it also explains how that stage is linked to the others in the process.

The disadvantage of our approach, of course, is that there is some repetition of ideas and examples, and some unevenness in the style of writing. The advantages of the collegial approach are greater, although the reader is invited to test that judgment. In fact, this collegiality is the real worth of the whole project, in that we practiced in the doing of the project the very same sort of activities that are required on our campuses to design and then to put into operation a Mission-driven undergraduate experience.

Recapitulating, the *focus* of PGEM is on the *practice* of Catholic higher education at the *undergraduate* level within a group of *ten* institutions that happen to be serious about general education, because they are very serious about remaining true to the missions for which they were founded. We offer the reader these essays on the four stages in the process model we adopted—and on how the four are connected and act together—in an effort to share with our colleagues in Catholic higher education some “promising practices.”

John Nichols
 PGEM Project Director
 NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor
 Saint Joseph’s College

Sandy Estanek and Lezlie Oachs

Mary Hinton and Fr. Jeff Kirch





Spirit of St. Francis
When love for the world is
is embedded in you, the love of God
is not far. He will be
with you.
Lector: St. Francis

University of St. Francis

1. MISSION

Elizabeth Domholdt, William George, Sr. Diane Kennedy, John Nichols, Br. Rob Reuter, Walter Skiba

HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

In the past, Catholic colleges and universities consisted of a largely religious faculty—priests, brothers, and sisters—teaching largely Catholic students. In such an environment, the Catholic nature of the institution was pervasive and implicit; why would anyone need to discuss ways in which the general education should reflect the Catholic element of an institution’s mission when the parties involved were mostly Catholic and the Catholic culture was so pervasive?

Today, however, the environment within which our Catholic colleges operate is quite different. A largely lay faculty, many of whom are not Catholic, teach a diverse group of students who come from a wide range of religious traditions or who may have no ties to formal religion. Increasingly, Catholic colleges are also serving other new markets of students: transfer students, part-time adult students, and students enrolled in online programs. These faculty and students may come to Catholic institutions because of several characteristics that flow from its Catholic heritage—personal attention to student needs, desire for a values-based education, small class sizes, majors that promote the common good—but many do not come because of the Catholic heritage itself. In such an environment, an institution that wishes to preserve and promote its Catholic identity must make the Catholic nature of the institution explicit and accessible. It must do so in ways that are understandable to students and faculty with varied levels of religious knowledge and faith; that invite the engagement of students, faculty, and staff; and that recognize the special challenges associated with educating students in part-time or off-site educational models. This contemporary need to make the Catholic heritage explicit for all, and to invite the participation of non-Catholics, creates tensions in the curricular, co-curricular, and liturgical life of the institutions. Should general education curriculums require a religions of the world course or a course in Catholic theology, or both? Should Catholic colleges recognize gay and lesbian student groups? Should community religious celebrations be Eucharistic or ecumenical services?

This *tension* inherent in Catholic identity and mission in a diverse, pluralistic culture has generated this “Project on General Education and Mission” (PGEM for short). The title suggests explicitly that the institution’s general education program is the available and potent device for dealing with such tension. It will also be suggested, more implicitly but just as strongly, that campus ministry and student life need to be brought into collaboration with general education, in order to make institutional mission come alive on campus.

THE FOUNDING OF OUR INSTITUTIONS

There is a certain generic theological imperative that underlies the creation of institutions of higher learning “out of the heart of the Church” (*Ex corde ecclesiae*). The Mission of the Church is to continue the Mission of Jesus, that is, to continue the presence and the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth. Two of the key values of the Kingdom of God are truth and justice. Thus, an institution that seeks to discover and hand on truth, and to pursue higher levels of justice in human society, must be part of the Church’s work.

The term “Church,” however, as the Vatican 2 document *Lumen gentium* insisted, has many meanings, since it refers to a mystery of salvation that cannot be encapsulated in a single rational concept. The new Biblical term that *Lumen gentium* suggests should be added to the accustomed names for the Church and given some emphasis is “The People of God.” This is the most appropriate understanding of the term “Church” when speaking of the founding of our colleges. Our colleges were founded by a variety of religious communities, members of the People of God: Augustinians, Benedictines, Brothers of Holy Cross, Dominicans, Franciscans, Mercy Sisters, and Missionaries of the Precious Blood. They were created, to clear away any ambiguity, *ex corde Dei populi*, “out of the heart of the People of God.” They were created by particular *choice*, a specific intentionality, not out of a generic theological imperative. They were created to work at the building of the Kingdom of God in a particular place, with a selected group of people, and in a special modality.

The different emphases that we find in our Mission Statements still reflect that founding intention, to the extent that the relationship to the founding sponsors has been maintained. Missions have to change with the changing circumstances of history, but the commitment to build the Kingdom of God on earth (which means “to serve the world” as *Gaudium et spes* asserts) remains the core of our identities, no matter what particular form that service of the world may take. In fact, the more circumstances change, the more important that core commitment becomes; it is the whole reason for being of these institutions! That’s why our booklet starts with a chapter on Missions—who we are, why we exist, and how do we serve? Our Missions in reality are promises—to the People of God and to the world—that we strive to fulfill every year.

CATHOLIC HERITAGE FRAMEWORKS

Recognizing the need to make the Catholic heritage of our institutions explicit, we include here four frameworks for conceptualizing this heritage: Catholic Intellectual Traditions, Catholic Teaching on the Human Person, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Charisms of the Founding Religious Communities.

Catholic Intellectual Traditions

The Catholic colleges and universities in this project all see themselves as the inheritors and the developers of a rich, centuries-young tradition. *Ex corde ecclesiae*

speaks of this tradition as “A united endeavor of intelligence and faith”(#5). Some very important consequences for the intellectual life of these institutions follow from that formulation of what’s distinctively “Catholic” in higher education.

A distinctive trait of Catholic higher education is that it is catholic (small “c”), that is, open to all truth, whether accessed by reason or by revelation. Such catholicity means that collegiality among all the disciplines is one of our distinctive curricular traits, because it is a “united” endeavor. The meaning of the term “endeavor” is that the search for truth, both by reason and by faith, is unending. Faculty are learners as well as teachers, and they dedicate the best use of their intellectual gifts to an ever deeper understanding of faith and of creation, so as to contribute to the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, the mission of the Church.

The commitment to search into “all truth” demands extraordinary attention to general education at the Catholic university. No single major is adequate to the task, so there must be something that completes the search, something to open up inquiry in the direction of all that is knowable, something on the order of Newman’s “living among practitioners of all the disciplines.” Vatican 2 collegiality is a notion and a challenge that can be applied to faculty members and their disciplines at Catholic colleges; it is demanded in fact by the *united* inquiry into *all* truth.

The Vatican 2 document *Gaudium et spes* characterizes the collegiality between theology (the “science of faith”) and the other disciplines, not just negatively as a relationship of non-contradiction, but in very positive terms of mutual enrichment and cross-fertilization.

Let the faithful incorporate the findings of new sciences and teachings and the understanding of the most recent discoveries into Christian morality and thought, so that their practice of religion and their moral behavior may keep abreast of their acquaintance with science and of the relentless progress of technology... Those involved in theological studies... should be eager to cooperate with people versed in other disciplines. Theological research... should not lose contact with its own times, so that experts in various fields may be led to a deeper knowledge of the faith. (#62)

Up to this point, we have been celebrating the continuation of a rich tradition of harmony between faith and reason, an openness to all truth that is both humble and energetic. There is, however, a new dimension of such openness that has developed since Vatican 2, and it is wholeheartedly embraced by this group of Catholic institutions: openness to world religions and to the rich cultural diversity in the world. The historical record of the Roman Catholic Church in this regard was not a very positive one until after Vatican 2, as Pope John Paul II acknowledged many times and in many places. In that Council the Church distinguished evangelization from “Westernization” and committed itself to respect all “of what is true and holy” in world religions. It explicitly recognized that the Kingdom of God is present in the world outside the visible structures of the Church and that the Holy Spirit is at work in other cultures and in other religions. The 21st century will be far more “globalized” than the 20th, and the PGEM colleges are embracing this fact through their core values, their courses, their service learning opportunities, and study abroad activities.

Monika Hellwig’s distillation of the tradition’s approach to knowledge provides a helpful set of six characteristics with relevance to Catholic higher education. The source for these points can be consulted at www.sacredheart.edu/pages/2525_cit_in_the_catholic_university.cfm.

- First, the continuity of faith and reason is an essential element of the tradition, leading Catholic colleges and universities to embrace the disciplines of theology and philosophy as well as the sciences, and to be willing to engage in public dialogue where there are apparent conflicts between faith and reason.
- Second, respect for collective wisdom of the past is an element of the tradition, recognizing wisdom in sources well beyond Scriptures and Christian civilizations.
- Third, the tradition is characterized as anti-elitist, meaning that intellectual humility is required and that scholars make their work accessible to many, that efforts are made to include those who are underprivileged or excluded, and that other cultures and customs are treated respectfully.
- Fourth, the tradition requires attention to the community dimension of human action, implying that Catholic scholars and teachers need to consider the impact of their work on the world rather than simply pursuing or disseminating knowledge for knowledge’s sake alone.
- Fifth, in Hellwig’s words, “integration of learning in a coherent worldview or philosophy of life is a necessary basis for living a good, productive, well-directed life,” suggesting that Catholic colleges and universities should pay particular attention to opportunities to help students integrate the different facets of the college experience.
- Sixth, the sacramental principle is an essential element of the tradition. Referring not only to the formal sacraments of Catholic worship, this principle invites one to use memory and imagination to experience God in the ordinary.

Catholic Teaching on the Human Person

Drawing on the experience of more than two thousand years and many sources, the Church has become an “expert in humanity.” Since the Catholic university emerged *ex corde ecclesiae*—“from the heart of the Church”—and since, as is sometimes said, Catholic colleges and universities are “where the Church does its thinking,” an ongoing and multifaceted investigation of the human will animate Catholic campuses. Human beings, according to a Catholic “anthropology” or view of the human, are multidimensional, just as the Catholic college or university is multidisciplinary in its curricula. So, the natural sciences may illuminate the human as physical and biological. The behavioral sciences explore the depths of the psyche and human interaction. The social sciences investigate such things as social groupings, political movements, and economic systems and exchange. The fine arts honor especially the aesthetic dimension

of the human, which has found abundantly rich expression and affirmation in the Catholic tradition over the centuries. Literature plumbs the narrative depths of the human. Pre-professional and professional education explores and promotes authentic action in the world. Philosophy asks about such things as the good life and the reach of human knowing, and it poses the question of God. Theology and religious studies explore the profound religious dimensions of the human, personal and social, and, on a Catholic campus, will pay close attention to the Church's developed expertise based on the vision of human beings as created "to the image of God."

Each discipline or school, then, aided by other aspects of the student experience, adds incrementally to the Catholic university's pool of wisdom about the meaning of the human, and helps give direction to authentic human action. In a climate of intellectual hospitality and critical engagement, diverse traditions and perspectives, past and present, will be actively sought out and welcomed, further to refine the truth and nurture the dynamism of a Catholic anthropology.

In this most central task of the Catholic university, general education—precisely because it *is* general, precisely because it regards the whole—plays a crucial, indeed an indispensable role. Ever wary of reducing the human to something beneath its dignity, general education speaks forcefully and forthrightly to the education of the whole person, open to the widest possible horizons. A strong general education program may stand as a Catholic college's or university's promise to its students that it will not give partial or single disciplinary answers to the question of what it means to be human. To borrow a biblical image, when it works well and is well understood, general education can be a promise that when students come asking for bread fit for truly human consumption, they will not be handed an educational stone.

Catholic Social Teaching

As Catholic institutions, we recognize that each human is created in the image of God, and that that very same God became human in Jesus Christ. From these facts of Christian anthropology, we derive the most fundamental principle of moral behavior: each human has an *inherent* dignity that must be respected. William J. Byron summarized the social teaching of the Catholic Bishops of the United States over several decades into a number of "building blocks" or principles (see *America* for October 31, 1998). Here are some of the more important of those principles:

- Principle of *Respect for All Human Life*: Regardless of his/her stage of development, each human has a right to exist and to live a fully human life. Because of this right, all human life must be protected.
- Principle of *Preferential Protection for the Poor and Vulnerable*: All human life must be protected, but some peoples' lives (such as the poor and marginalized) are more vulnerable than others'. As a result of this vulnerability of the poor and marginalized, a special effort must be made to protect their lives.

- Principle of *Solidarity and Human Equality*: The fact that some peoples' lives are more vulnerable in society in no way implies an inequality between those who are vulnerable and those who are not. We are required to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable, seeing them not as "poor unfortunates" but as people equal to ourselves who, for whatever reason, are at risk of having basic human needs and rights not met.
- Principle of *Participation*: Since all people in society are equal, all people have an equal right to participate in the structures and development of society, including the arts, recreation, labor, and government—all that is necessary to live a fully human life.
- Principle of the *Common Good*: Since all people have a right to participate in society and to respect all peoples' dignity, all people have a duty to promote the common good by participating in society. Promoting the common good ensures that all individuals have the greatest opportunity to live fully human lives.
- Principle of *Stewardship*: The common good of humanity cannot be pursued, and consequently the dignity of all people cannot be respected, if the environment in which humans live is not also respected. Consequently, all aspects of creation must be treated humanely and with respect. Being responsible stewards of the environment recognizes the Scriptural revelation of the goodness of all creation and fulfills God's charge to have dominion over that creation.

This is not an exhaustive list of Catholic social justice principles, but all principles have this in common: their formal cause is the fact that humans are created in the image of an all loving God, an image made manifest in the humanity of Jesus Christ, and their final cause is making the world a more peaceful and just place. In short, Catholic social teaching is aimed at fulfilling the Church's mission of bringing about the Kingdom of God.

Charisms of the Founding Religious Communities

The fourth aspect of the Catholic heritage that needs to be made explicit, for those Catholic colleges and universities founded and sponsored by religious orders and congregations, is the unique charism of the founding communities. Catholic colleges today need to educate and empower their lay faculty and staff to become credible representatives of their traditions, in light of the declining numbers of priests, brothers, and sisters who work at the institution. Many of the communities are doing good work to define unique characteristics of education in that tradition; an Internet search of the name of the community, plus "higher education," will yield a number of resources about how the founding charism is expressed in the higher education environment.

CONNECTIONS TO INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS

The Mission Statements, as well as vision and core values statements, suggest some shared features of institutional make-up and operation that our group of Catholic colleges and universities has in common. Moreover, the Missions also generate some shared expectations of what graduates from these institutions will acquire (outcomes) from their undergraduate experience. To begin, let's inventory some common institutional descriptors:

- Commitment to the search for truth by means of rigorous academic inquiry is a *sine qua non* of membership in the ranks of institutions of higher learning, but the PGEM colleges make it clear that their commitment is grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition of openness to all truth. Dominican University is “known for its rigorous and engaging academic programs,” and Misericordia University makes a “commitment to provide a learning experience which cultivates higher-order thinking.” At Carlow University, faculty “challenge and expect all students to uncover, expand, and realize their potential.” Saint Joseph’s College defines its entire undergraduate curriculum as “a liberal education that is a united endeavor of intelligence and faith.”
- Respect for the universal and equal dignity of all human beings is another common feature of these institutions. St. Bonaventure University asserts that “at the core of our identity is a strong belief in the goodness of life and the God-given worth of every individual.” There is, at The College of St. Scholastica, a commitment to treat “persons with dignity and reverence without regard to age, gender, race, minority, sexual preference or economic status.” “The College acknowledges and respects the dignity and worth of each individual” is the simple but comprehensive statement of position at Calumet College of St. Joseph.
- More distinctive aspects of institutional character are generated by the charisms of the founding religious sponsors. At the University of St. Francis, the general education program has a clear role to play: “Permeated by Franciscan values, it involves the cultivation of knowledge, intellectual skills, and attitudes designed to integrate liberal arts into the personal and professional lives of students, culminating in a commitment to lifelong learning.” Misericordia University shapes its “educational programs and policies to express the founding Sisters’ values and attitudes of mercy, service, justice, and hospitality.” The Brothers of Holy Cross stand for a list of distinguishing characteristics that still exerts a strong influence at St. Edward’s University: “the courage to take risks, an international perspective, and the commitment to provide educational opportunities for students of varied cultural, religious, education and economic backgrounds.” Dominican University operates on the basis of the claim that “integral to Dominican’s success and distinction is the ongoing exploration, clear expression and shared experience of its Catholic Dominican identity.”

From these institutional descriptors emerge several common student outcomes, including:

- Students are to grow in their spiritual development during and after their formal education. Calumet College of St. Joseph “promotes the formation of spiritual, moral and ethical values in support of social justice and personal responsibility.” At St. Bonaventure University, “we steadfastly pursue intellectual, spiritual and personal growth in a way that reflects our belief in the wonder, excitement and discovery along life’s good journey.” St. Edward’s University “seeks to provide an environment in which freely chosen beliefs can be deepened and expressed,” and Saint Joseph’s College proposes “to form graduates who are competent professionals who will embody Gospel values in their personal lives and professional careers.”
- Students will engage in study of issues from a theological point of view, and graduates will exhibit a critical and reflective knowledge of Catholic faith. The curriculum at The College of St. Scholastica challenges students to “analyze critical questions of our time from the perspective of the College’s Benedictine heritage and the Catholic intellectual tradition.” Saint Joseph’s College conducts its “Core Curriculum and, through it, all College programs within the conceptual framework and value commitments of ‘Christian Humanism’.”
- Students and graduates will engage in works of service and work for peace and justice locally, nationally, and even globally. Students at St. Thomas University will be “compassionate in heart, responsive to civic and social obligations, and able to respond to an ever-changing world.” At Carlow University, “we engage in service to others with competence and compassion.” In keeping with its Benedictine Heritage, The College of St. Scholastica works with its students to enable them to “apply academic learning to public issues,” so that they can “recognize, analyze, and work to resolve ethical and social issues.”

With some knowledge of the historical context of our contemporary situation, reflections on the founding of our institutions, a grounding in several frameworks for conceptualizing our shared Catholic heritage, and an analysis of how Mission and other key documents define our institutions and suggest shared outcomes that flow from our common Catholic heritage, we now turn to a fuller explication of these outcomes.

Linda Schifino and Beth Domholdt

Sr. Pat Lapczynski







Sculpture of Student Development, "Emerging" - Misericordia University

2. OUTCOMES

Fr. Ed Blackwell, Gene Finnegan, Mary Hinton, Fr. Tim McFarland

CONTEXT

The new name for “quality” in 21st century academe is “student learning outcomes,” with the result that the playing field has been leveled to some extent between well-endowed and meagerly-endowed institutions. Judgments of excellence or quality, therefore, are now based not on traditional inputs, but on what graduates know, can do, and value.

Outcomes come in a variety of kinds, and they can be arranged in something of a stratigraphy, ranked according to the greater or lesser degree of freedom an institution has relative to each different kind. The public—including state and federal governments, plus our peers on the boards of regional accreditors—has clear expectations of what a college-educated person ought to know and be able to do. An institution has very little leeway with regard to these outcomes. A bit more voluntary, but still prescriptive once the decision is made to offer a program, would be what particular disciplinary or professional fields require through their specialized accreditors or national associations. Where an institution has the broadest freedom is in the outcomes that derive from its specific mission and reason for being: single purpose institutions, religiously affiliated institutions, single sex institutions, historically black institutions, and the like. It is, of course, this third, and most free, stratum of outcomes that is the entire focus of this project.

Another claim that is made for the 21st century shift from inputs to outcomes is that it makes American higher education student-centered, but Catholic higher education has always focused on the needs of its students. The foundation stories of many of these institutions include efforts to educate future religious, recently arrived immigrants, women, Native Americans or African Americans. This historical context needs to be remembered and honored. However, the contemporary context of Catholic higher education must address new needs and new realities. Some of these realities include the changing role and nature of *sponsorship*, the shifting religious *demographics* of lay faculty, staff, and students at Catholic institutions, and the changing role and nature of *general education*. Each of these realities will impact an institution’s mission, its expression of Catholic identity, and its understanding of student learning.

Sponsorship

Catholic higher education in the United States has been made possible because of the sponsorship by religious communities and their commitment of personnel and other resources to the establishment and maintenance of these institutions. These religious sponsors are facing new challenges as their resources dwindle, their members age, and the numbers of new members decline. Already these realities are impacting the relationship between many religious communities and the institutions they sponsor. The changing relationship between sponsoring entities and institutions thus constitutes perhaps the most serious factor in any discussion of the Mission and Catholic identity of these colleges and universities.

Most U.S. Catholic postsecondary institutions have two sources of their Catholic identity: a *common source* reflected in the tradition and practices of the Church and the *distinctive charism* of the sponsoring religious community. Each sponsor brings a unique perspective or special emphasis to the mission and to the intended outcomes for its graduates. As the number of a sponsor's members decreases on a campus, more explicit and deliberate efforts are required to assure that its charism continues to be part of the learning outcomes of the institution.

The institutions participating in this project have provided examples of current efforts to integrate a religious community's charism into an institution's learning outcomes. The College of St. Scholastica, a Benedictine foundation, promotes the Benedictine Heritage of "formative study, meaningful work, and daily prayer." The Religious Sisters of Mercy at Misericordia University and Carlow University share the charisms of mercy, service, justice and hospitality. Finally, in their sponsorship of two colleges (Saint Joseph's College and Calumet College of St. Joseph), there is a different emphasis from the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, given the different context of these colleges. Calumet College, a commuter college in an urban environment with an extremely racially diverse population, focuses on the teaching and the practice of social justice, whereas the highly residential and rural Saint Joseph's College focuses on developing its students as agents of reconciliation.

Demographics

The religious demographics of a Catholic institution's lay faculty, staff and students continue to shift even as the role and presence of the religious community declines. These religious demographics reflect both the religious diversity and religious confusion of contemporary U.S. culture. This diversity provides an important challenge and opportunity for Catholic institutions to preserve their Catholic identity and to serve populations with diverse religious viewpoints. Coping with diversity requires both ingenuity and creativity as an institution balances its Catholic identity with respect for the pluralism of religious belief within the institution, in our country, and in our increasingly interconnected world. This challenge will need to be addressed in the student learning outcomes an institution develops to demonstrate the implementation of its Catholic identity and to fulfill Christ's command to go and teach all nations.

General Education

In addition, higher education in the United States is undergoing a sea change for a variety of reasons and within all aspects of institutional life. The more important of these changes include questions about the nature and meaning of the curriculum and the accountability movement's insistence on the documentation of student learning outcomes. The traditional segment of the curriculum called general education and the faculty who teach courses in this area of the curriculum have been struggling with answers to these two questions. At Catholic institutions, the desire to include expressions of a school's Catholic identity in this common curriculum and its outcomes has been added to the broader conversation about general education and its student

learning outcomes. In the development of these outcomes two fundamental questions emerge: What does it mean to be Catholic? What does a graduate of a Catholic institution look like?

GENERAL EDUCATION AT CATHOLIC COLLEGES

Catholic Culture

A Catholic college or university should have unique qualities that express its Catholic identity. Each Catholic institution shares a common heritage as Catholic and participates in a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages with the establishment of universities in Paris and Bologna. From this tradition comes the belief in the compatibility of faith and reason and the recognition of the interdisciplinary and interpersonal nature of effective education. Recently, there has been recognition that all academic disciplines, including the study of other religions, have a place in Catholic higher education. There is a common understanding of the nature of the human person that we share. This Catholic culture expresses itself in the cardinal concepts of *social justice*, the *Catholic intellectual tradition*, and the *spiritual life*. These are elements that are found in all Catholic postsecondary institutions and can form a common basis for learning outcomes.

Social Justice

The first expression of Catholic culture that its institutions must address is a concern for others. This imperative is rooted in the command of Jesus (and Leviticus) to “Love your neighbor as yourself” and the Catholic tradition of service to others, especially the poor and marginalized. Service learning is a widespread academic expression of this commitment. This type of learning requires self-reflection. Why are these people poor, needy, or violated? What can be done to change the situation? This reflection invites the development of the Church’s understanding and teaching in the areas of justice and peace. This combination of action and reflection is more necessary as global problems of structural inequalities of gender, race, and social class need to be addressed at various levels by future leaders, namely our graduates. The Catholic tradition believes the preferential option for the poor is a constitutive element of the Gospel message. Social justice also lies at the heart of any solution to the problem of violence. There can be no peace without justice.

Catholic Intellectual Tradition

The second expression of Catholic culture that its institutions must address is a concern for the intellectual and moral life. A Catholic institution encourages students to engage with the great Catholic thinkers. For over two thousand years, Catholic followers of Jesus Christ have been thinking, judging, and writing about what it means to build the Kingdom of God. This rich Catholic tradition includes the biblical writings themselves as a starting point. The Fathers of the Church, the medieval scholastics, contemporary theologians, and most importantly the statements of the Church’s

Magisterium have all examined the great problems of their day in the light of gospel teachings. This rich variety of Catholic authors writing within the various academic disciplines, with a privileged role for philosophy and theology, continues to help students see the relevance of the Catholic intellectual heritage to their own lives and to today's pressing issues.

Spiritual Life

The third expression of Catholic culture that its institutions address is a concern for the spiritual life. A Catholic institution encourages the growth of a personal spiritual and sacramental life. Jesus is the sacramental incarnation of God, and the Church is the sacrament of Jesus. Catholicism develops an understanding of the sacramental nature of all creation out of its traditional sacramental system. Catholic postsecondary institutions have a unique opportunity to make the Church's rich traditions of personal and communal spiritual development come alive. These traditions are rooted in the conviction that prayer and reflection not only connect an individual to the saving mystery of Christ but also lead to action in his name. Catholics are encouraged to integrate personal spiritual development, within the traditional sacramental life of the church, with action in the world to build the Kingdom of God.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student learning outcomes need to be clear and assessable, developed by the faculty, shared across the institution, and openly discussed with students. Outcomes also need to be measured in clear ways. The student learning outcomes found in the general education curriculum, especially those that are a reflection of the unique mission of a Catholic institution, must possess all these traits of excellent outcomes even more so than the outcomes dealt with by the regional and specialized accreditors. Why? Because they express the intentionality behind our very existence.

While specific outcomes will be based on each institutional culture, there are key skills, knowledge, and values outcomes that must be emphasized in Catholic higher education. Examining the materials provided by the institutions participating in this project, there are several common themes that surface as learning outcomes for students. The following paragraphs present the rationale underlying these outcomes and offer examples of the outcomes at several institutions. While this section is not intended to be prescriptive of outcomes, it is clear that these three outcomes must be addressed in Catholic higher education.

Knowledge

Without question, students will acquire a vast array of knowledge throughout their college experience. Professional preparation, traditional liberal arts studies, personal maturation and development will each add to and benefit from the acquisition of knowledge. Within Catholic institutions, however, special attention must be paid that students acquire knowledge of the rich Catholic intellectual and moral tradition. In

fact, specific outcomes must be developed to ensure that the students' internalization of this knowledge is assessed and improved as needed.

Knowledge of the Catholic intellectual and moral tradition generates a variety of outcomes. From this common intellectual heritage, several learning outcomes are shared among Catholic colleges and universities. Students should be able to demonstrate the compatibility of faith and reason and be actively engaged with other persons, disciplines, religions, and cultures. The Catholic tradition values the sacredness of every human life, and knowledge and practice of the principles of Catholic social teaching has also been a common thread in learning outcomes for many institutions. Finally, in keeping with the integrity of Catholic identity, graduates must have accurate knowledge of the teachings of the Church's Magisterium and know how to sift through the various levels of authority of such teachings.

For example, knowledge of the tradition may be formulated in these outcomes:

- Students at The College of St. Scholastica will be able to “analyze critical questions of our time from the perspective of the College’s Benedictine Heritage and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.”
- Saint Joseph’s College’s graduates will “participate in the dialogue between gospel values and contemporary culture.”

Knowledge, of course, is acquired throughout the whole university experience. For example, at St. Thomas University, Catholic Identity courses are found across disciplines and throughout the curriculum. Therefore, while general education programs at Catholic institutions have a unique opportunity to help students acquire and apply knowledge related to the Catholic intellectual tradition, this endeavor is not limited to general education alone.

Values

It is not surprising that the development of values and attitudes is an important part of the student learning outcomes at Catholic institutions. Prior to identifying those outcomes, however, it is important to address a particular tension that may arise.

A liberal education is designed to provide students with an opportunity to learn to think freely and for themselves. This value is not compromised at Catholic higher education institutions. Catholic higher education institutions are not prescriptive with regard to what students are to think and recognize that many students, both Catholic and non-Catholic, have a diversity of opinions and habits of mind. The development of learning outcomes relative to values is not intended to thwart critical inquiry and personal freedom. The one thing that value theorists agree on is that a value is a value, if and only if it is freely chosen out of a range of alternatives.

Success in achievement of outcomes related to values and attitudes is intended to help students orient themselves in the world. The values considered should assist students in using their skills to engage the world in a thoughtful, responsible and ethical manner. The engagement with value and attitude outcomes provides an opportunity for students to use their knowledge of the Catholic intellectual tradition to

inform their thinking and decision-making with regard to real life issues. Therefore, outcomes related to values and attitudes do not always prescribe specific behaviors. Rather, they are outcomes that demonstrate the students' ability to acquire, reflect and act on information in responsible ways.

Examples of values outcomes abound:

- St. Edward's University claims its "graduates will understand themselves and have clarified their personal values."
- Dominican University encourages students to develop "a personal stance: An increasing capacity to develop and articulate a coherent, informed and ethically responsible personal stance, able to meet significant challenges likely to be encountered in one's studies, and in one's personal, career and civic life."
- Misericordia University states "students will be able to consider ethical issues and values and make reasoned judgments about them."

In each of these outcome statements the institutions are holding themselves accountable for helping students develop, apply, and make value commitments.

Development of values is a key component of the student's emerging spiritual life. Catholic institutions have a special role to play in facilitating the spiritual development of students. Once again, the goal is not to indoctrinate any student into Catholicism. Nevertheless, Catholic higher education institutions have a responsibility to help students explore their spiritual lives and to invite students to participate in a spiritual journey.

Outcome statements that address spiritual development include:

- St. Francis University: Students will "appreciate the spiritual dimension of life and be conscious of one's own religious perspective within a community context."
- Calumet College of Saint Joseph: "Spiritual growth and a commitment to a life in the spirit" are key objectives for all undergraduate degrees.

Once again, the general education program has a special place in the development of students' values. While majors certainly play a role in developing values, the general education curriculum provides the ideal opportunity to analyze, synthesize, and act on one's values in a broader and more realistic manner than the limited perspective of any major can offer.

Skills

When accreditors talk about skills, they are talking about skills of inquiry. What we are discussing here is what graduates from Catholic institutions will choose to do and have the knowledge to be able to do. The Catholic intellectual and moral tradition insists very clearly on the necessary connection between knowledge and action. Once knowledge is acquired, and values clarified, action must follow. Therefore, a key skill that must be developed is the ability to act and engage in the world. Students attend college to develop and enhance their

skills. Broadly defined, skills are those things that students are able to do upon completion of their degree. Today, critical thinking, analytic reasoning, information literacy, and writing proficiency are among the most important skills colleges and universities impart to students. These skills are vitally important in Catholic institutions. However, there is a special set of skills commonly found in Catholic higher education. These skills clearly focus on helping students develop the ability to engage the world.

The vocabulary of engagement includes participation, service, contribution, and experience. Regardless of the language used, Catholic higher education emphasizes the importance of social action. This outcome may be traced directly back to the Catholic mission and is a key component of Catholic culture. To achieve the student learning outcomes related to active engagement in the world, institutions develop appropriate and challenging activities within the general education curriculum and invent appropriate assessment techniques to provide information on how to keep improving the value of these activities.

Examples of engagement-based outcome statements include:

- Carlow University’s “Engage in service to others with competence and compassion.”
- Misericordia University’s “Contribute to their communities through service and leadership.”
- St. Bonaventure’s “We seek to enhance the quality of life in the world around us, particularly by reaching out to the poor, the less fortunate and the disadvantaged, we not only demonstrate this spirit of community on our campus; we manifest it wherever we go.”

While engagement may take place in many areas of a student’s study, both in general education and the major, the general education program has a special obligation to ensure that the outcome of student engagement is met. General education ideally provides numerous and varied opportunities for students not only to be active in the world but to reflect on their activity and to have that activity impact their learning and personal development.

CONCLUSION

Catholic colleges and universities have a special challenge and opportunity to adopt student learning outcomes that are directly reflective of their unique Catholic mission. While these outcomes may vary depending upon institutional context, all Catholic higher education institutions must address outcomes related to engagement in the world as required by Catholic social teaching, knowledge of the Catholic intellectual tradition, and the development of values and attitudes. Catholic general education programs provide fertile ground for planting, nourishing and monitoring growth of these outcomes. So now we turn to promising examples of what institutions can *do* to strive to accomplish the array of outcomes that we have suggested are of critical importance in and distinctive of Catholic higher education.



St. Edward's University

3. PROGRAMMING

Gregory Chan, Fr. Jeff Kirch, Lisa Kirkpatrick, Sr. Pat Lapczynski

The point has been implicit up to now, but it is important to make it explicit. Some outcomes, both those required by regional accreditors and those derived from the distinctive institutional Mission, are desired to be achieved by *all* graduates. The most potent and perhaps the only program that is apt to accomplish this is general education. We have previously mentioned the importance of general education in intellectual terms: it imparts knowledge of the Catholic intellectual tradition; it studies issues from the two points of view of faith and reason; and it equips students to deal with the complexities of 21st century professions. But general education has additional importance at Catholic colleges and universities. It is what these institutions can *do* (programming) to work to achieve those Mission-derived outcomes that are the very reason for the existence of the institution.

There is, however, an additional complication—and challenge. We have seen that the outcomes from Catholic higher education cannot, by their very nature, remain completely theoretical but demand to be embodied in action in the world. This has a decisive impact on what Catholic colleges *do* to achieve their outcomes. Though general education maintains a non-transferable primacy with regard to these distinctively Catholic outcomes, it alone is not enough to accomplish them. Campus Ministry and Student Affairs need to collaborate with the general education faculty in efforts to make the pursuit of these outcomes whole and entire.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st Century, students will be required to apply their values, skills and knowledge in an ever-changing world. One of the promises of Catholic higher education is the assurance that graduates will be able to negotiate change in a global context. In order for the mission of Catholic institutions to be relevant in this dynamic environment, general education programs and practices, as demonstrated below, will translate Catholic mission for the 21st Century.

We assume that general education and co-curricular programming in Catholic higher education work from these premises:

- Catholic identity and institutional heritage are essential to general education.
- Mission, outcomes, programming, and assessment are interrelated.
- Programming should be developed collaboratively by Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Campus Ministry to achieve shared outcomes.
- Programming should address the new challenges of the 21st century.
- Programming should enhance institutional values and charism.
- Programming actualizes the mission so that it is “lived” and “real” to students, faculty, and staff.

Challenges

Our experience of Catholic Higher education today is marked by certain clear challenges. These include:

- Preserving Mission while moving from religious leadership to lay leadership;
- Developing faculty recognition of the need for a more holistic model of general education courses, using input from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Campus Ministry;
- Addressing misunderstandings and false assumptions about Catholicism;
- Balancing preservation of Catholic identity with respectful engagement with world religions and cultures;
- Strengthening faculty and commitment to Catholic Mission; and
- Enhancing student receptivity to mission.

Our promising practices in programming within general education address all these challenges.

Infrastructure

In order to operationalize the intended mission of the institution, leadership must align resources with that mission so that programs that support the mission are initiated and implemented, including pre-eminently a robust general education program. Many Catholic colleges and universities have a designated leader on campus, often a religious order member, to monitor the issue of mission effectiveness. This leader often creates a cross-functional team, including faculty, staff and students, to help develop, maintain and evaluate how all facets of the institution are contributing to the Catholic mission.

Of particular importance is the alignment of strategic planning and budgeting with Catholic mission and general education. It is critical that the strategic plan and budget reflect that the Catholic mission and the general education program are central to the life of the institution.

To begin at the beginning, hiring faculty and staff and providing continued professional development is critical to the general education program, because faculty and staff need to have a common commitment, understanding, and language in which to articulate the mission and values of the institution. Hiring faculty and staff for mission is critical to the preservation of the unique Catholic identity of each institution. Most Catholic colleges and universities attract candidates from a variety of religious backgrounds and experiences, necessitating that the institution ensure that the new hires embrace and articulate that mission effectively. Hiring for mission and continued professional development must be supported by institutional leadership with necessary funding, released time as appropriate, and speakers with expertise in Catholic mission.

Example of Faculty Development

At St. Thomas University, budget and training are established for Catholic identity seminars for faculty and administrators. Faculty also complete a certification process that prepares them to teach Catholic identity and general education courses.

Example of Staff Development

At St. Edward's University, Student Affairs and Campus Ministry partnered in the development of a multi-year staff development program that emphasizes five domains: Catholic character and mission, Holy Cross tradition, social justice and Catholic social teaching, student spiritual development, and moral reasoning. Frequent staff development workshops are offered each semester, and these co-curricular staff members plan activities related to the five domains, conduct them, and then use summer time to reflect on how they can be improved.

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Four Critical PGEM Programs

A survey of the programming developed by the PGEM institutions to accomplish their “distinctively Catholic” outcomes quickly produces a set of four academic and broadly institutional programs that are critically important to Mission achievement. We will first describe how these programs are designed and operated at the project institutions, and then compare that practice with what national higher education groups judge to be “good” or “best” or at least “promising” practice in undergraduate education.

The first and “defining” academic program is the *capstone course*. As both Aristotle and Steve Covey have advised, it is best to “Begin with the end!” The outcomes that govern the senior capstone compose an image of the graduate: the college-educated person, prepared for leadership in some walk of life, and marked by the distinctive Mission of his or her Alma Mater. In the capstone, students engage in some culminating activity that integrates their undergraduate experience and provides them an opportunity to demonstrate what they know, value, and can do. This performance indicates what the students and the institution have achieved over the semesters, and the degree of congruence between expected and actual outcomes educates the institution on how to plan, revise, and improve the process that guides students from matriculation to graduation. In one of the popular metaphors in current higher education, the capstone course is the student's *compass* during the undergraduate experience.

One also has to “Begin at the beginning,” so *First-Year Experiences* (FYE) are a second critical program at PGEM schools. These programs of course help students make the transition from high school to college, but they also introduce students to undergraduate education at *this* particular institution. This is our distinctive Mission, the distinctive outcomes we expect you to demonstrate at graduation, and here's what's distinctive about the journey from freshman to senior years in our academic community. The next step after acquiring a compass and a bearing is to plan the journey, that is, to establish an *itinerary*. (Reflect for a moment how wonderfully blessed St.

Bonaventure University is, whose namesake wrote the medieval masterpiece *The Soul's Journey into God*, which all by itself provides a curriculum in the Catholic intellectual tradition.) The FYE informs the entering undergraduate how to profit the most from this institution, thus building confidence in reaching the goal (excellent performance in the capstone) and also providing good companions for the journey (by inducting students into the local academic and co-curricular community).

The third and the fourth critical programs are both intermediate to the FYE and the capstone. There need to be significant *common academic experiences* in the sophomore and junior years, to keep the compass bearing and to assess how well the student is mastering the skills and knowledge that will be needed for the capstone. Common courses, seminars, and learning communities are frequently used devices to accomplish the third category of programming.

Fourthly and finally, *Service Learning* experiences are a direct consequence of the intense concern for social justice at Catholic colleges, although the sponsoring religious communities often add their own particular emphasis to that general concern: mercy, compassion, human dignity, equality, respect, reconciliation, and so forth. Values are an absolutely essential facet of Catholic higher education, and equally essential in our tradition is the need for values to be expressed in action. That is precisely where Student Affairs and Campus Ministry need to step in to collaborate with and to complete what goes on in academic affairs relative to education to moral reasoning, social justice, and responsible action in society. Campus Ministry and Student Affairs often sponsor service learning placements, trips, and projects both on campus and in surrounding communities.

Campus activities obviously furnish many opportunities for students to develop their leadership talents, using on-campus activities to learn how to lead in after-campus situations. Mission awareness in Student Affairs and Campus Ministry makes it possible for the values embedded in the institutional Mission to influence not only special events (speakers, liturgies, celebrations) but also the daily work in residence halls, disciplinary proceedings, and in general the campus culture and lifestyle. All this collaboration between academics, Student Affairs, and Campus Ministry is designed to connect leadership training with values from the Mission, as students advance to the threshold of their culminating capstone performance.



AAC&U’s “High-Impact” Practices

In developing this section on programming, we found that the “high-impact practices” listed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (see aacu.org/LEAP/hip.cfm) furnishes an excellent checklist for our discussion. The claim by AAC&U reads: “Teaching and learning practices have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts.” These practices can be found in the programming at the PGEM institutions, but it is very instructive to see how our priorities and contexts shape the way these practices are designed and implemented to achieve our outcomes. Out of the complete AAC&U list of nine “high impact practices,” we find the following most relevant to our group of institutions:

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity and global learning
- Service learning, community based learning
- Capstone courses and projects

First-year seminars and experiences

AAC&U says that “Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.” A promising practice on Catholic campuses is emphasizing the history of the sponsoring religious community and its founding charism in these freshman year experiences..

For example, Carlow University’s first year experience requires students to read about and discuss the Mercy tradition which students will encounter in the themes running all through their Core Curriculum, namely expanding their worldview, valuing and respecting self and others, and reflecting on learning.

The first year experience in a Catholic university or college can easily and helpfully be supported by Student Affairs and Campus Ministry programs. St. Edward’s University introduces mission and the Holy Cross charism to students and families during new student orientation and follows that with Welcome Week programs that reinforce the institution’s Catholic values and induct students into the local academic community of scholars.

Common Intellectual Experiences

AAC&U states that “The older idea of a ‘core’ curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required

participation in a learning community. These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.”

One way the AAC&U common intellectual experience is lived out on Catholic campuses is in Dominican University’s liberal arts and sciences seminars. These Liberal Arts and Sciences seminars are the “core” of the Core Curriculum. Spread over four years, some of the seminars engage students in the Catholic and the Dominican traditions.

At St. Edward’s University, students explore broad interdisciplinary themes in the sophomore and junior years in the “Cultural Foundations” sequence: “The American Experience,” “American Dilemmas,” “History and Evolution of Global Processes,” and “Contemporary World Issues.” These courses emphasize the development of critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. The “Cultural Foundations” courses are supported with co-curricular programming, both required and supplementary, in the forms of speakers, workshops, and student conferences.

Learning Communities

“The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with ‘big questions’ that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link ‘liberal arts’ and ‘professional courses’; others feature service learning,” reports the AAC&U.

One of the most thoroughgoing efforts at building academic community is the Core Curriculum at Saint Joseph’s College. This Core is spread over eight semesters, and each student cohort takes a common Core class each semester. Learning communities also reach out to the residential experience through common service projects.

Another example is St. Edward’s University’s sponsorship of two living and learning communities for the first year cohort, involving a common course in fall and spring semesters in the general education program along with living in a common residential environment.

Undergraduate Research

AAC&U indicates that “Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines...The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.”

Undergraduate research at Catholic colleges and universities is based upon the Catholic intellectual tradition searching for truth by means of the united endeavor of faith and reason.

The typical situation is that undergraduate research occurs in general education only in the capstone course but is found in the major earlier than that. As an example, St. Thomas University sponsors and funds an office of undergraduate research which requires students and faculty to provide a public display of their work in general education symposiums and presentations based upon Catholic intellectual tradition. In the end, students and faculty are rewarded for outstanding research.

Diversity and Global Learning

As AAC&U observes, “Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore ‘difficult differences’ such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power.”

Catholic colleges and universities have found that diversity programming and global learning initiatives, are essential and effective to carry out the Catholic social justice principles, such as building community, cultivating the dignity of the human person, and discovering pathways to global solidarity. For example, the University of Saint Francis identifies eight goals within their general education program. One of the goals is to demonstrate leadership, service and social responsibility. A learning outcome connected to this goal states that the student will understand how to serve local, national and global communities in order to foster a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. This learning outcome is achieved through a social responsibility course and first year experience.

Service Learning, Community based Learning

“In these programs, field-based ‘experiential learning’ with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community,” according to AAC&U.

What makes service learning at a Catholic campus unique is that it is based upon Catholic social teaching and derived from principles that the Catholic intellectual tradition has honed and developed over centuries. Alternative spring breaks and immersion experiences, often a collaborative initiative between Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Campus Ministry, emphasize Catholic social justice and introduce a global perspective, promoting international justice and peace. Misericordia University sends students to Jamaica for a week, connecting the experience to a three-credit course which runs throughout the semester. In the course students learn about the history and culture of the people and participate in a theological reflection process. They are required to produce a final document that summarizes their experiences.

Capstone Courses

AAC&U reports, “Whether they’re called ‘senior capstones’ or something else, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of ‘best work,’ or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.”

The capstone course projects reflect and verify the total learning experience at a Catholic college or university, as encountered in the general education program, the major, and co-curricular experiences. The general education program emphasizes the integration of social justice, theological and ethical issues, and spiritual development.

At Saint Joseph’s College, the capstone course involves a semester long research project on an ethical issue typically related to the student’s major. It involves a written seminar paper and an oral presentation. In these two performances the learning outcomes of the entire general education program are to be demonstrated. External observers are present for about half of the oral presentations and evaluate students on a detailed rubric.

The capstone course at St. Edward’s University shares many of the qualities of the Saint Joseph’s College capstone. This required research class centers around a semester-long project on a controversial social issue and culminates in both a written paper and an oral presentation. In this project, students analyze the various moral arguments dealing with their issue and then develop and support a policy-based solution. In the course of completing their project, students conduct at least two interviews and complete their support of their final conclusion by acting on it: attending a city council meeting, participating in a demonstration or march, or writing a letter to an editor. As in the Saint Joseph’s capstone, a detailed rubric evaluates university-wide outcomes.

The co-curriculum collaborates with general education during the senior experience to help students make the transition to life after graduation. Campus Ministry and Student Affairs do this with programming that addresses life skills, encourages continued spiritual development, and internalizes the mission and charism of the institution. The total senior experience paves the way for the students to make the move from being a student in a Catholic learning environment to become responsible citizens in their local, regional and world communities.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CO-CURRICULUM

A number of programs managed by Student Affairs and Campus Ministry not only support our distinctive Catholic learning outcomes and reinforce what students are learning in their academic programs, but also complete the learning process by getting students actually engaged in responsible action and encouraging them to reflect in a serious way on these experiences. Professional Staff interaction with students and the programs, policies and procedures in their areas work together to support learning outcomes connected to the

institution's mission and Catholic character. It is important to underscore the significance of one-on-one and small-group staff interactions with students. The impact of relationships within the campus community is frequently cited by alumni and current students as life-changing and transforming in their own personal development.

The College of St. Scholastica offers several spiritual companionship groups called "Spirit Seekers" for women in their sophomore, junior and senior years of college. Each group is made up of students, faculty, staff, and one Benedictine Sister.

The Heritage Council at St. Bonaventure University seeks to make a distinctive contribution to the University through collaborative planning involving faculty, staff and students. The council coordinates major mission-related celebrations and activities and serves as a resource to the University community.

TRANSITION

The fundamental assumption underlying processes of Continuous Quality Improvement is that all institutions are imperfect and therefore can be improved. So, if we are serious about commitment to Mission, achieving Outcomes, and doing the right things with Programming, we invest time and energy in assessment—to provide information on how to do better in fulfilling institutional Mission.

Walter Skiba and Gene Finnegan • Gregory Chan and William George • John Nichols • Fr. Ed Blackwell





Carlow University, St. Joseph's Hall

4. ASSESSMENT

Andrea Beranek, Sandra Estanek, MaryAnn Janosik, Lezlie Oachs, Linda Schifino

INTRODUCTION

In its statement of principles of good practice, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (2003) stated, “In essence institutions are expected to be clear about their mission and educational purposes and to demonstrate, through their educational goals and results, how well these purposes are being accomplished” (p. 2). For Catholic colleges and universities, therefore, the call to demonstrate the results of their mission-specific goals is clear-cut and unavoidable..

The 1996 AAHE *Guidelines for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes* provide an essential foundation for any assessment practice. Recognizing that assessment is a collegial enterprise, these guidelines are:

- Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Assessment works best when it is ongoing and not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative.
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved in campus-wide responsibility for it.
- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

When applied to general education and campus experience in Catholic institutions, assessment must address multiple additional dimensions in student learning and institutional practice. At its core, assessment in Catholic institutions illuminates growth in student learning and strengthens institutional vitality in five areas: intellectual development, including theology and/or philosophy; social justice and social responsibility; religious and spiritual development; service, leadership, and responsible citizenship; and moral development (Estanek, James, & Norton, 2006). However, assessment of this sort poses some unique challenges:

- First, assessing growth requires capturing students’ learning at multiple points over time.

- Second, it implies learning growth not only in readily assessed areas, such as specific knowledge and skills, but also in areas less readily given to traditional and easily quantifiable assessment practice, such as moral and spiritual development. Assessing growth in these areas can be somewhat problematic, since growth most often is not displayed uniformly.
- Third, students' experiences within higher education are rarely linear but complex and dynamic. They include knowing, doing, and valuing.
- Fourth, student populations at Catholic colleges and universities are often widely varied. At some institutions fewer than half of the students are Catholic; many are transfers; and some are adults finishing degrees in evening or accelerated programs.
- Finally, no one approach, no assessment design, rubric, assignment, or timeline, readily transfers from one institution to another. Thus, each college or university has to plan and carry out assessment differently, in ways that most reflect its mission, curricular and co-curricular structures, strategic planning, priorities, resources, as well as faculty, staff, and student profiles.

FOUR PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE ASSESSMENT

With all of these challenges in mind, the Project on General Education and Mission offers four general principles for approaching assessment in Catholic higher education. Assessments of student learning and institutional effectiveness...

1. are grounded in the individual missions of individual Catholic colleges and universities;
2. involve all elements of the institution;
3. consider the whole student experience; and
4. employ a common language.

The processes and tools which institutions choose to use for assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness or institutional capacity should be developed with these four principles in mind.

Principle One: Tradition, Mission, and Charism Based

Catholic colleges and universities are marked by their “distinguishability” (Morey and Piderit, 2006, p. 308), which are those features that emerge from the unique combination of institutional mission, charism of the founding order, specific institutional heritage and history, and curriculum goals. It follows that assessing student learning outcomes is most effective when it is grounded in that distinguishability and examines the particular ways in which the university manifests the common elements of *knowing, doing, and valuing* within the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

- The Catholic Intellectual Tradition calls us to develop the intellect and to search for truth, both of which begin in knowledge. *Knowing* includes the development of those fundamental categories of inquiry, understanding and conceptualization, analysis, and integration.
- The Catholic Intellectual Tradition calls us to act based upon those fundamental categories. *Doing* includes drawing from curricular and co-curricular learning to inform daily actions and responses to real-life situations.
- The Catholic Intellectual Tradition calls us to transformation, a change or deepening, which is built upon essential values. *Valuing* is brought about by critical reflections upon learning and experience.

Thinking of assessment in terms of knowing, doing, and valuing may lead an institution and its students to ask questions such as these about their general education courses and campus experiences:

Knowing:

- Do students understand and use the terminology and language of the disciplines, particularly philosophy and theology, the institution's mission, and the founding sponsor's values?
- Do students use language specific to the stated outcomes?
- Do students apply the language appropriately?
- Do students demonstrate knowledge of appropriate facts?
- Do students demonstrate understanding of appropriate concepts and principles?
- Can students integrate these with knowledge from other courses or experiences?
- Can students apply these principles in different contexts or relate them to experiences?
- Can students conceptualize, hypothesize, and create based on their learning?

Doing:

- Do students engage in their learning experience with zeal, energy, and commitment?
- Do students' daily actions demonstrate growth in their knowledge of and engagement with the values proclaimed in the institution's mission and the charisms of the sponsoring order?
- Do students model for each other the knowing, doing, and valuing elements in accordance with the institution's mission and sponsor's charism?
- Do students act with the respect that springs from intellectual charity towards each other and the whole academic community?

Valuing:

- Do students reflect on this knowledge and their actions?
- Do students ask deepening questions?
- Do students pose responses which reflect principles embedded within the institution's Catholicity?
- Do students use language that is deeper, richer, and more complex and that reflects their knowledge, integrates their experiences, and explores their emerging values?
- Does their language reflect the sacramental, the Transcendent, and the search for truth?
- Do upperclass students demonstrate increased lifelong commitment to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and social teachings?
- Do alumni demonstrate life commitment to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and social teachings?

PGEM institutions provided the following example of Principle One:

The University of St. Francis provides an example of articulating clear outcomes which reflect both Catholic values and the charism of the institution, defining assessment tools at the time the curriculum is developed, and using multiple measures for assessing student learning. The general education curriculum Learning Goal VIII speaks specifically to their Franciscan and Catholic identity.

This *goal* is: Appreciate the spiritual dimension of life and be conscious of one's own religious perspective within a community context.

The university defines the *outcomes* for this goal as:

- Demonstrate literacy in Franciscan values and tradition.
- Examine personal, professional and communal choices and actions from a moral perspective.
- Explore personal spiritual development.
- Demonstrate an ability to explore theologically a faith tradition.
- Exhibit an informed understanding of different religions.

In order to *assess* student learning, the university has collected both direct and indirect data since the inception of their curriculum in 2007. For direct measures they review assignments embedded within identified courses; for indirect measures, they gather student responses to specific questions in course evaluations of student learning.

Principle Two: Comprehensive

The extent to which students demonstrate the ability to know, to do, and to value relies on the active, informed engagement of all institutional constituencies. Thus, the second

principle for assessment applies to the institution itself. Assessment here considers the vitality and capacity of all aspects of the institution to both carry out the mission and sustain a culture which examines and renews itself. Such assessment considers the distribution of resources in support of the mission and goals, opportunities and funding for faculty and staff development, and opportunities and support for the integration of curricular and co-curricular experiences. In addition, it examines the extent to which the institution values and supports the work of assessment committees or councils.

Assessing institutional capacity includes looking at the extent to which institutional resources are allocated in order to support mission-driven initiatives. For example, since faculty competency in Catholic social teaching and Catholic intellectual thought is indispensable to incorporating Catholic teachings into classroom discussion, institutional assessment should examine opportunities for faculty development in these areas. Furthermore, support to assist student affairs professionals and campus ministers in developing the competencies needed to incorporate Catholic identity into their work is also necessary.

Assessment of institutional effectiveness in Catholic higher education might also consider the extent to which faculty, staff, and administration know, act upon, and value the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the charism of the sponsoring religious community.

Institutions must assess themselves and ask:

- How well do we fulfill our mission and charism-specific culture?
- How well do we support faculty and staff development, programs, and initiatives which strengthen the university mission and culture?
- What priority is given to resource allocations which support mission and culture?
- Do all members of the university community act with the respect that springs from intellectual charity?

It is a truism in higher education that the seeds of learning planted during a student's college experience may not come to fruition until later in that student's life. In addition, many Catholic colleges and universities embrace a philosophy of life-long learning in their mission statements. Such learning can and should be assessed through alumni surveys, longitudinal studies, and other measures. In doing so, the institution will gain a better picture of the lasting impact it has had on its graduates and how well it has realized its mission and educational purposes.

PGEM institutions provided the following example of Principle Two:

Carlow University grounds assessment of both classroom and co-curricular experiences in institutional core values. One such value is, "Valuing and respecting self and others." During the First Year Experience course, students participate along with faculty and staff in community service during the annual Mercy Community Service Day. They write a reflection paper on the experience, which becomes part of their portfolios. This experience combines in-class and out-of-class learning. The Carlow alumni survey, conducted five years after graduation, follows up on this by including questions related to spirituality and service.

Principle Three: Holistic

Promising practices in the assessment of the mission and educational purposes at Catholic colleges and universities consider the whole student experience through both academic and co-curricular assessments. Catholic colleges and universities describe themselves as engaged in the educational development of the whole person and lifelong learning. While institutions have been conducting traditional academic assessment for quite some time, only recently have some begun learning outcomes assessment in campus ministry and student life. These assessments have created opportunities for a fuller picture of student learning and achievement consistent with the call to educate the whole person.

PGEM institutions provided the following example of Principle Three:

In April 2008, the faculty of The College of St. Scholastica voted to approve four learning outcomes that would be the basis for assessment at the college. These outcomes were closely tied to learning outcomes suggested by the AAC&U. At the meeting where the four outcomes were approved, a fifth was proposed and adopted, a “Heritage” outcome that would coordinate the other four with the college’s Benedictine heritage. A committee was formed to create a document outlining the Heritage outcome. This document was approved by the faculty in February 2009. This outcome is now being operationalized in general education, student affairs, and campus ministry.

Principle Four: Shared

In the activity of assessment, there are two important considerations about language, the formal language of the practice of assessment and the institution’s language that it uses to define itself, its mission and culture. Oftentimes the jargon and terminology associated with assessment distract from its primary goal: to illuminate growth in student learning and the vitality of the campus environment. The language can overfocus on counting check marks on a rubric or imply a separation between assessment and teaching, experiencing, and learning. Its emphasis on measuring suggests that there are clear, clean cut answers that readily come out of a one time assessment. However, because the practice of assessment involves the whole campus—students, faculty, staff, administrators—and continues over time, each institution needs to be certain that its language and processes are not threatening but well-defined, straightforward, and readily accessible. Some common space on the institution’s Web site might be given to basic definitions of terms. In addition, as processes become more refined or shift focus, maintaining clear language in record keeping and reporting becomes essential.

The language that an institution uses to describe itself, its mission, outcomes, and programs, also should be broadly understood and used. Faculty, staff, administrators, and board members should all have some shared language for talking about what is meant by the Catholic mission and outcomes at their institution, the charisms of their sponsoring community, and each of the dimensions of Mission achievement. In this way students can more effectively learn because the language is lived and permeates the culture and all parts of campus life. If students are learning the language of Christian love and charity in a theology class, how much better might they understand it if it is used and lived in campus experiences.

PGEM institutions provided the following example of Principle Four:

In 2004-05, Misericordia University established the Mercy Integration Council, which is comprised of faculty, staff, and administrators. The council developed the Mercy Matrix in 2006. The Mercy Matrix is an extensive rubric against which the university can measure success in four mission-related areas: regard for the dignity of the human person, academic excellence for lifelong learning, education of the whole person, and mercy and justice. This Matrix is used by all elements of the university.

TOOLS AND PROCESSES

The Design of Assessment

The actual doing of assessment requires tools and processes that are consistent with all of the elements in the preceding framework: the distinctive additional dimensions of learning in Catholic institutions; the common elements of knowing, doing and valuing; the four principles just elucidated; and the institution's own curriculum, educational purposes, and articulated learning outcomes. However, each institution's specific approach will likely look different from another's because each has a specific identity, culture, pool of resources, and student body. Simply adopting another college's assessment practice, approach, or outcomes will not provide meaningful assessment results.

To begin with, each institution should consider whether it will set standards for assessing student learning or whether it will assess student growth over time. Standards that are set against internal or external benchmarks ask:

- How well have our students performed this year against a desired internally set goal or in comparison with prior students or some other control group of students?
- Within this group of peer or comparison institutions, where do our students stand?

Growth based assessment asks:

- How has this group of students developed over time, from the beginning to the end of this semester or from freshman to senior year or some future time post graduation?

Examining student growth over time, via pre- and post-tests, surveys, or reflections, is an effective approach to assessment which recognizes the reality of shifting student profiles and experiences. Comparing cohorts within an institution, when carefully allowing for shifts in student profiles, might offer some insight into changes in an institution's, program's, or curriculum's effectiveness. However, assessment of students' doing and valuing which are based on externally set standards or benchmarking is problematic for at least two reasons: the wide variations in outcomes, curricula, co-curricular experiences, and missions across institutions and the competitive impulse generated by external standards-based assessment practice.

Effective assessment practice should include multiple measures, approaches, or tools. These are best developed at the same time the curriculum is structured and thus reflect

that structure. Ideally, co-curricular experiences in which students apply their learning are also planned at the same time. The tools may include formative and summative analyses; qualitative and quantitative instruments; direct measures such as embedded coursework assignments, pre- and post-experience assignments, reflection essays, portfolios, interviews and indirect measures such as attendance and participation tracking, surveys, focus groups, and general and institution-specific questions in national surveys such as CIRP, CSS, and NSSE. What characterizes the best assessment measures is the extent to which they clearly and explicitly connect to the institution's mission and learning outcomes.

PGEM institutions provided the following example:

St. Joseph's College provides an example of course-embedded assignments across all four years of coursework for one of their three specific Catholic learning outcomes: students will become "agents of reconciliation." For this outcome, students in the first two years submit "compare and contrast" essays which are preparatory exercises in empathy; in the junior year intercultural core courses students do a multi-stage role playing assignment; and in the senior level comparative theology course they submit essays in which they are challenged to find common ground with Islam. These assignments are assessed against detailed rubrics. In addition, in their senior capstone courses, St. Joseph's seniors do two crucial assignments: a personal "Manifesto" the first semester and a lengthy seminar study of some contemporary moral issue in the second semester. Both studies are assessed against a senior-level rubric, and the seminar presentations are observed and rated by outsiders. In support of this learning outcome, campus staff and RA's model empathy using a problem solving approach, in which they help students understand the other person's point of view.

A Rubric for Assessment

Each institution must develop an approach to assessment appropriate for itself. However, to assist institutions in developing strategies for assessing the suggested five dimensions of student learning at Catholic colleges and universities—intellectual development; social justice and social responsibility; service, leadership, and responsible citizenship; religious and spiritual development; and moral development—we offer the following three-step matrix and example created from a compilation of our own experiences. This matrix is available for uploading at www.saintjoe.edu/pgem.

Br. Rob Reuter and Gregory Chan

Lisa Kirkpatrick and Andrea Beranek





St. Thomas University

Assessment Planning

1. Based on Mission, Charism, and Heritage *Identify*:

Five Dimensions	General Education	Student Affairs	Campus Ministry
Intellectual Development Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...			
Social Justice and Social Responsibility Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...			
Service, Leadership, and Responsible Citizenship Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...			
Religious and Spiritual Development Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...			
Moral Development Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...			

2. Then *Ask*:

- What are the specific learning outcomes?
- Where does this learning occur?
- How do students show what they have learned?
- What tool/s will we use to assess these outcomes?
- Who will assess?
- How will the assessment results be shared?
- What actions will we take in response to these results?

Assessment Mapping Worksheet

3. Finally, *Focus* on One Outcome:

[Specific Outcome] Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...	General Education or Core Curriculum	Student Affairs	Campus Ministry
What is the specific learning outcome?			
Where does this learning occur? (Course/Experience)			
How do students show what they have learned? (Assignment/Task)			
What tool/s will we use to assess this outcome? (Aggregate/Longitudinal)			
Who will assess?			
With whom will the assessment results be shared?			
What actions will we take in response to these results? (To impact what we do and/or how we do it: curriculum, campus experience, processes, policies, personnel, documents, etc.)			

Example: Assessment Mapping Worksheet

Service, Leadership, and Responsible Citizenship

This worksheet is a composite of all the methods used by PGEM institutions.

Service, Leadership, and Responsible Citizenship Students will <i>know</i> ... Students will <i>do</i> ... Students will <i>value</i> ...	General Education	Student Affairs	Campus Ministry
What is the specific learning outcome?	Students will understand the concept of service as connected to Catholic social teaching.	Students will be engaged in service activity in order to experience and understand the concept of service as reflected in Catholic social teaching.	Students will be engaged in outreach services in order to experience service to others and value service as reflected in Catholic social teaching.
Where does this learning occur?	Service Learning courses as Core requirement and within majors	Orientation activities that include preparation for service Student organizations engaged with service Immersion experiences	Trips tied to Service Learning courses Activities that teach the heritage of service within institutional charism Alternative Spring Break
How do students show what they have learned?	Reflection essays Journaling	Surveys (NSSE, CIRP, CSS, alumni surveys, etc.) Repeated service	Focus Groups, Presentations to campus community
What tool will we use to assess this outcome?	Rubrics Content analysis	Selected survey data Results (Quantitative, Longitudinal, Aggregate)	Content analysis (Qualitative)
Who will assess?	Assessment Coordinator Course instructor Service Learning Director Gen Ed Director	Assessment Coordinator Student Affairs Staff	Assessment Coordinator Campus Ministry Director
With whom will the assessment results be shared? <i>note: Some accrediting agencies may require transparency to the general public.</i>	Assessment Coordinator Curriculum Committee Deans/Provost Gen Ed Director Faculty Internal and external constituencies such as trustees, advisory councils, and accrediting bodies	Assessment Coordinator Student Affairs Staff Internal and external constituencies such as trustees, advisory councils, and accrediting bodies	Assessment Coordinator Campus Ministry Director Internal and external constituencies such as trustees, advisory councils, and accrediting bodies
What actions will we take in response to these results?	New and revised courses Initiatives to connect course work with Student Affairs and Campus Ministry	Increased opportunities for service within student life activities Efforts to connect student experiences to course work	Enhanced ASB opportunities Increased/improved opportunities for reflection on service

EPILOGUE

No single one of the institutions in this project, on the one hand, would claim to be the perfect model for all of the “promising practices” discussed in the preceding pages. That, of course, is the great advantage of gathering a group of institutions that together can create a richer and more comprehensive picture of such practices. On the other hand, much more is going on at each of the institutions in PGEM than is or could be described in this booklet. The Web sites for these institutions can supply additional information.

For example, modifying a bit the subtitle of this booklet, here are references to some “very promising practices.”

- Synthesizing capstone courses: St. Edward’s University and Saint Joseph’s College
- Mission-inspired FYE: Carlow University and the University of St. Francis
- Incorporation of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition: The College of St. Scholastica and Dominican University
- Service Learning: Calumet College of St. Joseph and St. Thomas University
- Campus groups designed to generate collaboration: Misericordia University and St. Bonaventure University.

There are two categories of participants in PGEM that need to be acknowledged for exceptional work in getting this booklet readied for publication. For editing and revision services, the project owes debts of gratitude to Andrea Beranek, Elizabeth Domholdt, Gene Finnegan, Mary Hinton, Sr. Diane Kennedy, Lisa Kirkpatrick, and Br. Rob Reuter. The “unposed” photographs of project participants during the writing sessions this past June were the work of Fr. Tim McFarland. He steadfastly refused to get in front of the camera, so these words of thanks constitute his portrait.

The final words will be about the first words—the title. The characterization of Catholic higher education as “a united endeavor of intelligence and faith” comes, of course, from *Ex corde ecclesiae*. Our booklet explored three levels of “united endeavor.” The *academic* level involves the multi-disciplinary nature of the general education enterprise in the Catholic college, requiring not only the collaborative endeavor of faith and reason but also the participation of the many disciplines that human reason now deploys. There is likewise an *institutional* dimension to the “united endeavor,” in that the booklet shows how the outcomes envisioned for general education at Catholic colleges require collaboration between academics, campus ministry, and student affairs.

The third level of “united endeavor” is *personal* or, perhaps better, *collegial*. We are habituated to use the term “colleague” in higher education, and this project tried to conduct itself in a spirit of collegueship or collegiality (to use the Vatican 2 term). The four teams that produced the four sections of this booklet engaged in both intra-team and inter-team collaboration. We do not claim to have practiced what we’re *preaching*, but rather what we’re *sharing* with the reader. And that may be a fourth kind of “united endeavor.”

J.N.
August, 2009

REFERENCES

American Association for Higher Education. 1996. *Guidelines for assessing student learning outcomes*.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2008. High impact educational practices. [Retrieved from www.aacu.org/LEAP/hip.cfm]

Association for General and Liberal Studies. 2006. *Improving learning in general education: An AGLS guide to assessment & program review*. [www.agls.org]

Byron, William J. Ten building blocks of Catholic social teaching. *America*, October 31, 1998, 9-12.

Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions. 2003. *Regional accreditation and student learning: Principles for good practice*. [Retrieved from www.ncaahlc.org/download/0412AssmentAccredLearningPrinciples.pdf]

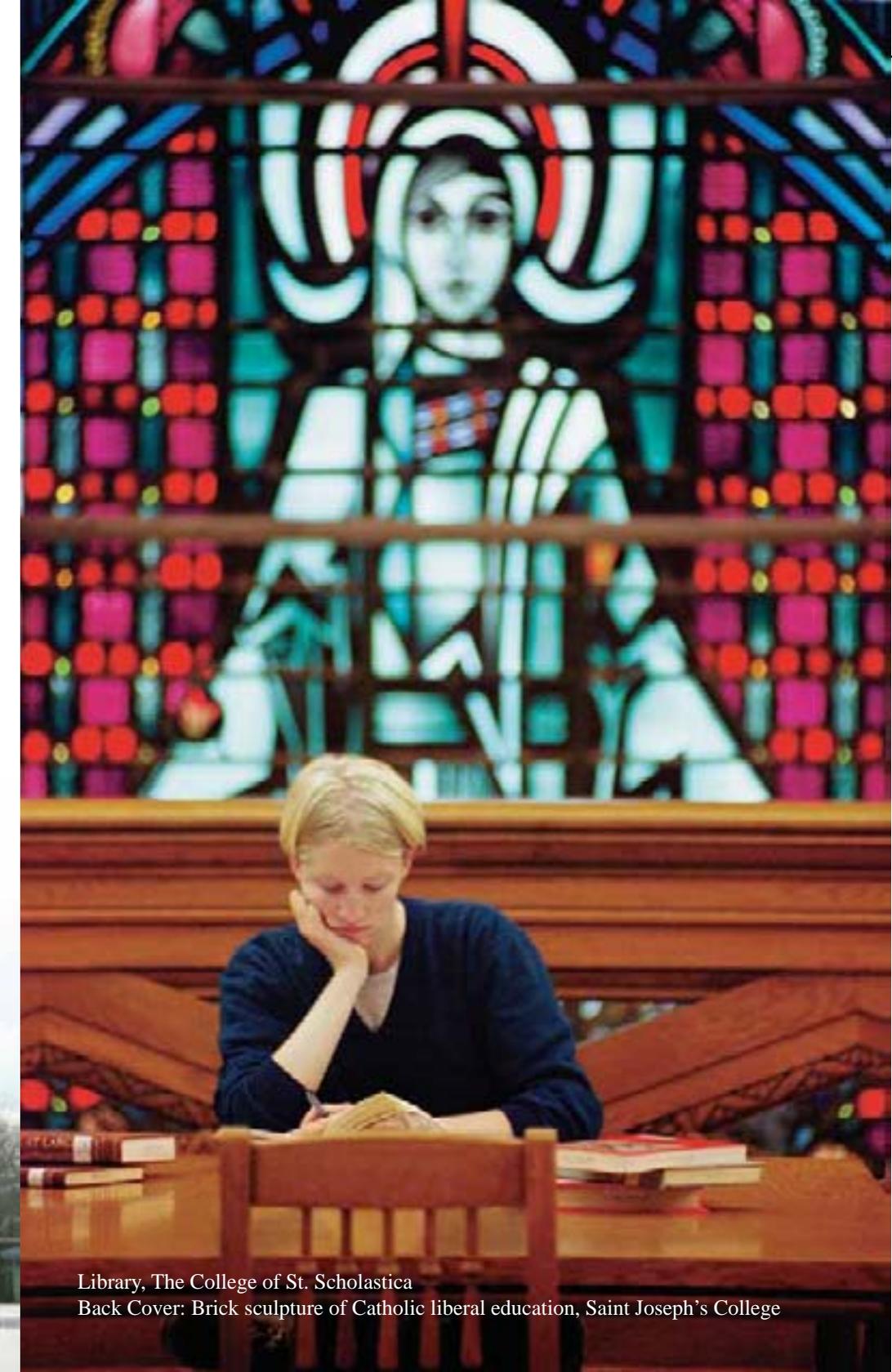
Estanek, S.M., James, M.J., & Norton, D.A. 2006. Assessing Catholic identity: A study of mission statements of Catholic colleges and universities. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 10(2), 199-217.

Flannery, A. (gen. ed.). 1996. *Vatican Council II*. New York: Costello Publishing Co. [Reference the documents *Lumen gentium*, 1-95 and *Gaudium et spes*, 163-282.]

Hellwig, M. 2000. The Catholic intellectual tradition in the Catholic university. [Retrieved from www.sacredheart.edu/pages/2525_cit_in_the_catholic_university.cfm]

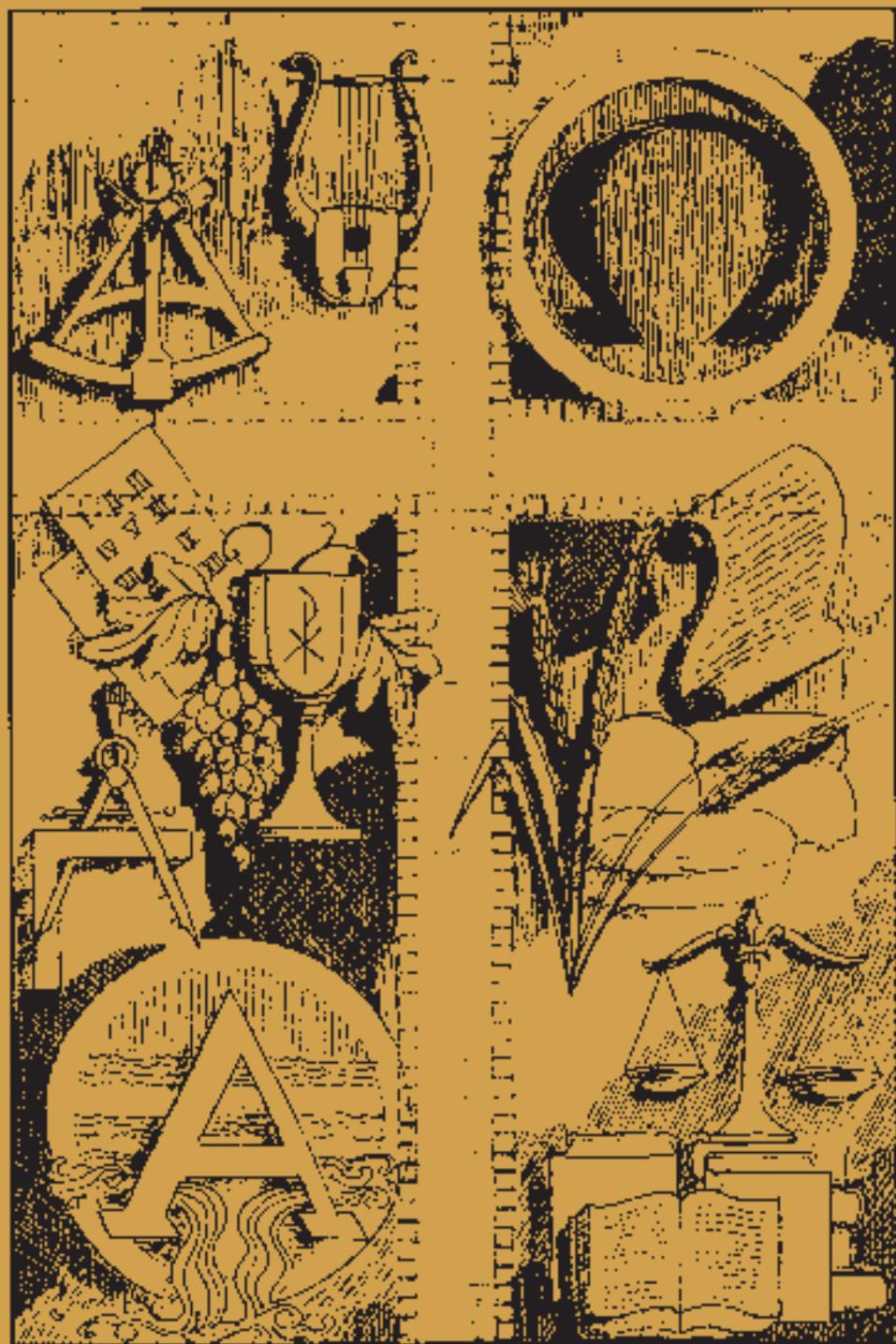
Morey, M. and Pideret. 2006 *Catholic higher education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pope John Paul II. 1990. *Ex corde ecclesiae*. *Origins*, October 4, 1990.



Library, The College of St. Scholastica

Back Cover: Brick sculpture of Catholic liberal education, Saint Joseph's College



TRANSFORMATIONS