CARLOW ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS

CARLOW ROUNDTABLE 2017 PROCEEDINGS

Mercy: The Story Continues

THE SEVENTH CARLOW ROUNDTABLE

The Seventh Carlow Roundtable bore the marks of all those that preceded it: shared scholarship, comradery, mutual discovery, enrichment. We came together as scholars from diverse disciplines and research backgrounds with a common interest in the mission of Mercy education and an exchange of ideas, information, and methodologies. We gathered in the first Mercy classroom in Mercy International Centre and at Glendalough—a fifth century monastic settlement renowned for wisdom and learning. With these shared interests and in these settings laden with meaning, we did the work of the Roundtable. The following papers offer a glimpse of the richness that flows from such common purpose and common inspiration.

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Sustainability in Higher Education: A Marriage of Necessity and Mercy Mission

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ABSTRACT

At Mount Mercy University, we believe that a commitment to sustainability ties seamlessly with the values of the Sisters of Mercy. The goals of serving the common good and promoting purposeful living, as well as the culture and characteristics of a Mercy Higher education, highlight the responsibility we carry to prepare our students for professional, societal, and personal success.

Higher education plays a unique and often overlooked role in making healthy, just, and sustainable societies. Higher education provides students with knowledge that can result in a thriving and civil society.

> It [higher education] prepares most of the professionals who develop, lead, manage, teach, work in, and influence society's institutions… Today's and tomorrow's businesses, governments and professionals—architects, engineers, attorneys, business leaders, scientists, urban planners, policy analysts, cultural and spiritual leaders, teachers, journalists, advocates, activists, voting citizens, and politicians—will need new knowledge and skills that only higher education can provide on a broad scale. (Presidents' Climate Commitment, 2009, p.5)

We have utilized the United Nations' definition of sustainability which includes socio–cultural, environmental, and economic perspectives, with an emphasis on poverty reduction, corporate social responsibility, human rights, and gender equality to guide our strategic plan on sustainability. We have developed and conducted research and surveys on student and faculty knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding sustainability to better understand current perspectives and to develop future goals and opportunities.

This paper will highlight what we believe sustainability means in the context of higher education and Mercy values, and the educational and operational progress we have made toward making sustainability and corporate social responsibility a part of our strategic planning.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY, AND WHAT IS IT NOT?

A few related quotes:

"Sustainability is equity over time… As a value, it refers to giving equal weight in your decisions to the future as well as the present. You might think of it as extending the Golden Rule through time, so that you do unto future generations as you would have them do unto you."

Robert Gilman, Director, Context Institute

"Leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life or the environment, make amends if you do."

Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce*

Actions are sustainable if:
—there is a balance between resources used and resources generated
—the viability, integrity and diversity of natural systems are restored and maintained
—they lead to local and regional self-reliance
—they help create and maintain community and a culture of place.
—each generation preserves the legacies of future generations.

David McCloskey, Professor of Sociology, Seattle University (as cited in Fogel, 2016)

Sustainability issues affect the places where we live, work, and play; at the local, national, and global level. There is unequal distribution of environmental and societal resources, and there are specific global risks across race, nationality, and socio-economic classes. Problems of global sustainability and vulnerability have many interconnected components. Sustainability is not, and cannot be, a list of "do's and don'ts". Sustainability is a way of living in our complicated natural and human-made environment (Farrell, 2010). What is sustainable in one place may not be sustainable in another. The practice of sustainability is primarily concerned with informed decision-making and communicating with business and governmental systems.

HOW DOES SUSTAINABILITY FIT A MERCY EDUCATION?

- **Serving the common good**

  "The common good is at the heart of Catholic social teaching. Because persons are social by nature, every individual's good relates necessarily to the common good, the sum of social conditions that allows all people to reach their human potential more fully. It includes respect for and ethical interaction with every person and the natural environment and, in the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy, service for the wellbeing of all humanity and action in the cause of justice in the world."

- **Promoting purposeful living**

  "A liberal education enables persons to achieve a greater degree of freedom upon which to act purposefully. Since development of purpose entails planning for life based on a set of priorities, Mount Mercy University provides opportunities for spiritual growth, intellectual engagement, vocational clarity, social development, physical well-being, emotional maturity and responsible community leadership. (About Mount Mercy, 2017, para. 6-7)

An interdisciplinary educational experience, including environmental, economic, social, human health, and well-being issues, allows students to see and understand the whole through the lens of different disciplines. It also fits with the hallmarks of a Mercy education which include regard for the dignity of the person, academic excellence and lifelong learning, education of the whole person,

and promotion of compassion and justice towards those with less (Sullivan, 2006). It helps students communicate more effectively across interdisciplinary boundaries and to become better citizens. Students can learn to apply problem solving and systems thinking skills through interdisciplinary, experiential learning projects within a business, institution, or community organization.

SUSTAINABILITY AND MOUNT MERCY UNIVERSITY

Although many of the values of the Sisters of Mercy connect seamlessly with the idea of sustainability, we have taken some deliberate steps to understand, define, support, and communicate the role of sustainability in education and operations. Examples include Sustainability Fellowships, revisions and additions to core curriculum requirements, capstones focusing on the five Critical Concerns, new minors and tracks within majors, sustainability mini– and full grant programs, strategic operational planning, and opportunities for both faculty and student/faculty research.

Sustainability Fellows have focused on how we can integrate sustainability into the curriculum, as well as research to better understand knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sustainability in higher education. From a curricular perspective, portal classes were added, such as "Water, A Shared Responsibility" and Capstones to focus on The Five Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. A new Sustainability/Corporate Social Responsibility track was added to our Management degree program and a new minor in Environmental Justice was created. Several courses were added within majors and honors programs concerning the economy and ecology of food production and distribution related to sustainability. A writing competency course is offered to focus on writing and the environment. To gain a better understanding of where students and the campus community stood related to knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sustainability, Sustainability Fellows created a survey based on the definition of sustainability created by the United Nations which includes the following 15 strategic perspectives:

> "socio–cultural perspectives," including human rights, peace and human security, gender equality, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, health, HIV/AIDS, governance; "environmental perspectives," including natural resources (water, energy, agriculture, biodiversity), climate change, rural development, sustainable urbanization, disaster prevention and mitigation; and "economic perspectives" including poverty reduction, corporate responsibility and accountability and market economy. (United Nations, 2005-2014)

We believe the survey created to measure the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors based on the broad definition of sustainability to be the only one of its kind in higher education. It has uncovered concerns about how students view issues related to sustainability. For example, one identified concern is student's view of recycling. Most students see recycling as a universally responsible option, and they rank it ahead of options that include 'not using' and 'reusing.' Overall, students do not consider that there may be problems with recycling specific to location (remote locations may be so far from a recycling center that transportation would create a negative environmental impact), resource utilization (like recycling systems that require extensive water use), pollutants and contaminants that are created in recycling (like toxic inks from newspaper recycling), etc. In addition to helping us identify knowledge gaps, we hope that ongoing use of the survey will help us to tackle the common issue where students may gain knowledge, but that does not transfer into behavior changes.

Other co-curricular initiatives include the Ideas into Action Sustainability Mini-grant program, Mission and Ministry programs including the Earth Day Retreat, as well as entrepreneurial initiatives by clubs and organizations such as the ENACTUS sandbags to handbags program. Operational components include an employee wellness committee, tray-less dining service and recyclable serving materials, water bottle projects and fountains for refillable bottles, and a new athletic complex incorporating sustainability-oriented materials and practices.

We were additionally approached in 2016 to apply for an invitation-only grant on sustainability through the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation (MAC) Environmental Program on college sustainability. The desired impacts of the MAC Foundation grant are to promote the positive development and environmental literacy of students and to reduce the environmental footprint of colleges, and to support colleges to fully embed sustainability in the curriculum, co-curriculum, and operations of their institutions. The problem and goals we were seeking to address through the grant included the following:

> The purpose of this project is to prioritize sustainability literacy and stewardship practices in Mount Mercy's organizational culture, student experience, and regional outreach to expand our Mercy commitment to economic and social justice and serving the common good. As a Mercy institution, Mount Mercy University is committed to the five Critical Concerns identified by the Sisters of Mercy as the most urgent of our times: Earth, immigration, non-violence, racism, and women… The specific problem we seek to remedy is that we have not previously had an integrated, university-wide plan as it is expressed in the attitudes, policies, and educational outcomes for faculty, staff, and students. To be effective, changes made during the grant period will need to be sustainable in the long term. Therefore, part of the problem we must address is how to make new programs attractive, accessible, and successful, and to engage students across academic disciplines and extra-curricular interests.

Outcomes by 2025 will include the following:

1. By 2025, survey and course outcomes will confirm that Mount Mercy University's faculty, staff, students, and alumni understand and embrace the need to care for the Earth and those affected by environmental injustice and are working actively to address environmental issues in our region and beyond.

2. By 2025, all undergraduate students will engage with the Mercy Critical Concern of care of the Earth through at least two substantive experiences in a reconfigured curriculum that systematically infuses sustainability into co-curricular programs, core requirements, departmental learning outcomes, and interdisciplinary sustainability studies programs.

3. By 2025, Mount Mercy University will have established fifteen long-term collaborative initiatives in sustainability and stewardship with regional partners in order to continuously improve and expand sustainability literacy and stewardship practices in ways that mutually benefit Mount Mercy students and the partner organizations.

The process of applying for the grant afforded an opportunity to involve a broad range of participants from across campus to discuss all of our strategic goals related to sustainability both in operations and in education. Plans include the creation of an Office of Sustainability and Stewardship to develop and lead initiatives across campus, including further curriculum development, operation and energy audits, programming, faculty and staff development, and related scholarship programs.

CONCLUSION

The question presented for the Carlow Roundtable was, "How do the values of the Sisters of Mercy Inform the Work of Teaching and Administration?" The answer for me is in the title of this paper, Sustainability in Higher education: A Marriage of Necessity and Mercy Mission. My experience in attending Sustainability in Higher Education conferences is that participants from other institutions typically experience silos within their organizations, and a subsequent lack of commitment and ability to drive initiatives forward. Commonly, participants will state they themselves believe in the principles of sustainability and the related responsibilities in higher education; however, they have trouble getting others at their institutions to care about the bigger sustainability picture or to tie the principles to their courses. I have felt fortunate to have never experienced those obstacles. Mount Mercy has consistently been a very mission-driven institution, and the mission and critical concerns fit seamlessly with the principles of sustainability. The values of the Sisters of Mercy create an easy foundation for everyone to understand the importance and impact of sustainability in all of our University functions.

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Service Learning with Community Engagement that Benefits Volunteer Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Designing learning experiences that address both educational and mission-related goals represents a rich approach to ensuring students realize that all aspects of the life they will lead after leaving college are interwoven. Their career goals will inevitably overlap with the community and service activities they will choose to pursue, especially in leadership roles that a Mercy Education has prepared and encouraged them to assume. This approach was in the forefront of the academic design of a project that has been conducted, and is continuing to be conducted, by selected Accounting and Business students at Misericordia University located in Northeastern Pennsylvania. An unfortunately prevalent community problem with financial mismanagement in volunteer organizations that have no employees, referred to as all-volunteer organizations (AVOs), was recognized. The only available support resources, excellent as they were, focused on larger not-for-profit entities assuming the presence of employed staff. These resources did not specifically address the unique needs of these AVOs. A faculty member mobilized students in his classes to address the matter. The outcomes to date accomplished through service learning courses include: the creation of The Misericordia University Internal Controls and Federal Tax Exemption Basics for All Volunteer Organizations Resource Manual made freely available to AVOs; evening educational seminars open to the public; international recognition of the work of the students with individuals from the U.S. and Canada contacting Misericordia for help; increased student realization of the importance of the work of AVOs; and opportunities for students to become part of AVO activity.

A COMMUNITY NEED OF VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS IS RECOGNIZED

The problem of financial mismanagement and misuse of funds in volunteer organizations is unfortunately prevalent and significant. Just in an eight-county area of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the reports in the news media of money missing from volunteer fire companies, emergency management associations, youth athletic leagues, parent teacher organizations, employee benefit associations, churches, and other not-for-profit organizations occur very frequently, sometimes more than one being disclosed in a single week. Examples of these unfortunate incidences reported in the local newspapers of the region (the *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, the *Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice*, the *Scranton Times Tribune*, the *Hazleton Standard Speaker*) include:

- $70,000 embezzled from a nonprofit employee benefit association: 1 person convicted
- $700,000 unaccounted for in a volunteer fire company (VFC): 2 people convicted
- $50,000 embezzled from a nonprofit hunting camp: 1 person convicted
- $32,000 embezzled from a volunteer fire company: 1 person convicted
- $16,000 taken from an ambulance association: 1 person confessed

- $43,000 embezzled from a two-church charge: treasurer made restoration and sentenced to probation
- $45,000 taken from youth soccer league: 2 people convicted
- $175,000 embezzled from a Lutheran church by a husband (president of church board) and wife (church secretary): both entered guilty plea, awaiting sentencing
- Undetermined amount of money missing from a cemetery association: 1 person plea-bargained to have these charges dropped when she confessed and was sentenced for embezzling from another local government entity
- A VFC decertified by the township and now defunct due to treasurer taking out an unauthorized mortgage on property of the company using the money for her personal expenses: 1 person convicted
- $45,000 taken from volunteer fire company: 1 person convicted
- $40,000 embezzled from a VFC: 1 person convicted
- $30,000 embezzled from a club: 1 person convicted

Each incident represents resources that volunteers had worked hard to accumulate, and that money donors sacrificed from their own pockets, that will never benefit the people in the community who the funds were intended to serve. As two examples depict, the magnitude of a loss can be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Several local communities have lost volunteer emergency services and now need to rely on surrounding communities with increased response times for those vital needs. In addition, those who have been accused of committing these acts of mismanagement, often along with innocent members of their families, have been negatively impacted for the rest of their lives. It is reasonable to imagine that instances of improper handling of volunteer organization funds have occurred that do not come to light, or even if found, are not reported.

This problem does not have to exist to the extent that it does. Simple internal accounting controls can be put into place that significantly reduce the potential for issues to arise and keep those in volunteer organizations, who are only human, from being tempted to take advantage of a weak financial management system. There are established, sound, internal accounting controls available for business environments and nonprofit organizations that have been in existence for a very long time and are very reliable. Almost all of these controls, though, rely on there being multiple employees of the businesses and nonprofits and physical facilities that include a location where mail is received. Volunteer organizations typically have no paid staff, or at the most have one part-time employee. Also, very often, small volunteer organizations, such as youth athletic leagues, do not have an office or similar physical facility. Many standard internal accounting controls cannot be applied in volunteer organizations, and there are virtually no professionally-designed resources available that have been tailored to be effective in these volunteer entities. In addition, those dedicating their time and efforts to volunteer activities often have little or no background in business or accounting, and unlike businesses and larger nonprofits, it is not a requirement for these all-volunteer organizations to have someone with this type of training or experience. Partially because of this lack of basic business acumen, officers and board members of these nonprofit organizations that do not have trained staff do not fully appreciate the need for internal controls and the potential for serious consequences without relevant financial management techniques. They often do not want to spend time implementing the time-consuming financial oversight activities that larger entities employ.

Because volunteer organizations often are not required to register with federal or state agencies, there is really no reliable data on the level of financial activity and financial resources that are potentially at risk because of the lack of internal accounting controls. In spite of the frequency of the numerous incidences of financial mismanagement in these types of entities, the extent of the problem related to inadequate controls is not really known. There is very little literature available regarding financial mismanagement in volunteer organizations; the only related resources that can be located deal with fraud in not-for-profits that have employees and are registered with the Internal Revenue Service. These published articles and reports do provide some insights, though, that are useful in addressing the problems in volunteer entities.

Archambealt, Webber, and Greenlee (2015) studied 115 cases of detected fraud in nonprofit organizations that took place in the United States from 2008 to 2011, inclusive, and argued that the reduction of the problem will come only with those who run the entities, those who regulate the entities, and those who contribute to the entities gaining a more thorough understanding of fraud in the nonprofit sector of the economy. Yet, Holtfreter (2008) found little empirical research on fraud in nonprofits, citing only newspaper reports in support of her statement. Archambealt et al. agreed, finding very little comprehensive data, the research available most often taking the form of case-by-case descriptions. In the research conducted on charitable entity fraud by Archambealt et al., Holtfreter, and many others (Fremont-Smith & Kosaras, 2003; Greenlee, Fischer, Gordon & Keating, 2007; Krishman, Yetman & Yetman, 2006; Petrovits, Shakespeare & Shih, 2011; Spillan & Ziemnowicz, 2011), the focus was on larger nonprofits, and in every case (n = 441) investigated by these researchers, financial mismanagement was perpetrated by employees. While not very useful in studying issues in volunteer organizations, Buckhoff and Parham in 2009 referenced a 2008 fraud survey conducted by the international group of accountants, BDO Kendalls, that found in Australia and New Zealand 8% of fraud discovered in larger not-for-profit entities was committed by volunteers. In spite of the lack of published literature on theft in volunteer organizations, observations and conclusions reached in these studies of problems in larger nonprofits caused by employees do provide some insight that may be useful in investigating misdeeds of volunteers.

Archambealt, Webber, and Greenlee (2015) along with Buckhoff and Parham (2009) and Petrovits, Shakespeare, and Shih (2009) all cited inadequate internal accounting controls as the primary contribution to the problem of thefts from volunteer organizations. Interestingly, both Archambealt et al. and Holtfreter (2008) found in their studies of a combined 243 nonprofit fraud cases that females were more likely to embezzle than their male counterparts. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (2008) reported that nonprofits with employees suffer a loss to fraud of revenues equal to 5% of those revenues. In the auditing world it is the fraud triangle put forth in 1953 by Cressey, adopted universally by the profession, which provides the overarching framework for the indications that fraud is likely. Those three factors motivating people to become criminals include: 1) a pressing need or desire for cash with access to the assets of an entity; 2) the opportunity to commit fraud, typically caused by the lack of external oversight and/or internal accounting controls; and 3) a situation where the perpetrator is convinced that for some reason the entity owes the money to him or her. It has not yet been determined that these same factors are in play when misdeeds are perpetrated in volunteer organizations.

INITIAL EFFORT TO BRING THE NEED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMUNITY

In my role as dean of a college at that time, I attempted to raise visibility of and increase sensitivity to the need to address financial mismanagement in volunteer organizations by writing numerous op-eds, published in newspapers throughout Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania. The consistent theme was that there needed to be internal accounting controls implemented by these volunteer organizations that were tailored to be effective in entities without employees. Typically, I would list some basic controls and, when possible, illustrate how a specific control would have stopped, or at least reduced the impact of, a recent local case of volunteer organization financial mismanagement that had been adjudicated in the courts. During the time period I wrote these editorials, I started to design the next step I planned to take in helping to address the need of volunteer organizations that were the subject of what I penned. Engaging students in the campaign came to mind immediately, and I contemplated how students could help. Developing service learning experiences evolved out of this reflective process, so I made the request to be able to instruct several accounting courses where service learning could be incorporated into the learning activities related to the content.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE NEED TO MERCY SERVICE LEARNING

Eisenhauer (2014), based upon many of the ways in which she accomplished so much in her lifetime, described Sr. Catherine McAuley as a "Woman of Business" (p. 100). He also found in his research that business programs at Mercy institutions of higher education in the United States very often sponsored learning experiences that addressed the needs of society along with being designed to foster the creation of servant leaders who would carry forward the mission of their Mercy Education in their business careers. With regard to one specific approach to accomplishing this goal, Stevens (2004) argued that the level of commitment to service learning reflects a measure of the integration of the essential characteristics of a Mercy Education. Eisenhauer also supported this role of service learning as a means to the desired end, declaring that service learning itself actually represents spiritual works of Mercy. Certainly, as Anderson (2011) professed, service learning offers a multitude of benefits to both students and the communities where they experience authentic application of the material covered in classes. She also listed as additional advantages for the students the opportunity to hone their skills with regard to teamwork and communication.

In designing a service learning experience for students that will prepare them to embrace the use of their unique talents for service in their post-college careers, Molyneaux (2011) discovered that care must be taken to ensure that students truly appreciate the significant value of what they contribute to the organization and the community. In addition, she found that the learners must commit themselves fully to their service activities for the experiences to have a lifelong impact. The community need with regard to volunteer organizations recognized in Northeastern Pennsylvania lined up nicely with an aspect of service learning advocated by Eisenhauer (2014); he argued that one thing a Mercy Business Education should prepare students to do is use their business knowledge to make not-for-profit organizations successful.

RALLYING STUDENTS TO ADDRESS THE NEED

The first opportunity to use service learning to address the need of volunteer organizations and provide the educational benefits of the experience to students presented itself when I taught Auditing to accounting majors during the summer of 2014. However, this was an online offering, and for practical reasons, it was not feasible to send students out to work in volunteer organizations. Instead, the activity that was integrated into the course was in line with what Mingyar (2011) described as a first level of service learning involvement where students do not actually perform service firsthand in an organization, but collect or create resources for the benefit of the organization. In this case, it would be what the accounting students would ultimately create that would actually benefit numerous volunteer organizations. The students were given the names and contact information for all the practicing Certified Public Accountants in an eight-county area of Northeastern Pennsylvania and were asked to contact the ones on their list to obtain suggestions for what internal controls should be in place at volunteer organizations. The students were also asked to gather contact information for volunteer organizations. We used the input they received as the basis for some of the discussion forums in the course, and at the end they each submitted what they believed should be included in a guide on internal accounting controls for volunteer organizations. In their course evaluations, students indicated that they did indeed learn a lot about how to take standard internal controls and tailor them for entities that had no employees and gained an enhanced appreciation for what volunteer organizations contribute to their communities.

In the fall of 2014, I taught another online course for accounting majors: Taxes. In this course, also designated as a service learning course, they had to research federal and Pennsylvania taxation and reporting requirements applicable to volunteer organizations. They were required, as the final assignment in the course, to write a guide on applying for tax exempt status, maintaining that status, filing annual returns with the IRS, and registering, along with filing reports as a charitable organization in Pennsylvania. In the winter of 2014-2015, I took the work submitted by the students in the Auditing and Taxes courses, and with significant editing and the addition of related material, compiled *The Misericordia University Internal Controls and Federal Tax Exemption Basics for All Volunteer Organizations Resource Manual* (Croop et al., 2015a) giving the students involved their proper attribution as co-authors based upon the level of contribution made by each person. The *Resource Manual* is made freely available in the Community Area of the Misericordia University website, and copies have been printed for dozens of interested volunteer organizations. The resource was reported in the news media, resulting in inquiries from all over the United States and Canada. It is known that dozens of organizations have benefitted from the work of the students, but the true number may be much higher.

The next course I taught was a face-to-face section of Intermediate Accounting to accounting majors in the fall of 2015. This course also included a service learning component. This time the students facilitated an evening workshop open to the public but directed toward the officers and governing board members of volunteer organizations. I introduced basic internal controls that should be in place and reviewed what the *Resource Manual* covered. The students made presentations on how to implement and perform some of the most important controls. We also

had representatives from the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Nonprofit and Community Assistance Center (Croop et al., 2015b). Over 70 people attended the workshop and benefitted from the service learning work of the students.

While in the year and one-half since the Intermediate Accounting course ended there have been no courses officially designated as service learning involved with addressing the needs of volunteer organizations, there has a lot of activity focused on dealing with the issue of financial mismanagement in volunteer organizations, and I have involved students in those initiatives whenever possible. Some of these subsequent activities that were made possible due to the foundation laid by the service learning of the Misericordia accounting students include:

- A Webinar on internal controls for the 700+ chapters of the Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance headquartered in Chicago (Croop, 2016b).
- District Attorney Workshops on Internal Controls for All-Volunteer Organizations in several of eight Northeastern Pennsylvania counties (Nonnemacher, Croop & Salavantis, 2017; Croop & Mitchell, 2017).
- The *Financial Management and Internal Controls Guide for Volunteer Emergency Services Organizations* created at the request of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Affairs (Croop, in press).
- A presentation at an international business education conference about using service in volunteer organizations as authentic learning for accounting students (Croop, 2016a).
- A presentation at a national behavioral science conference about what makes those entrusted with handling funds steal from volunteer organizations (Croop, 2017).
- A request by a state legislator to help get passed a pilot program where CPAs will obtain continuing professional education credit for doing reviews of volunteer fire companies.
- Funding secured for a Pennsylvania study to interview district attorneys and white collar crime detectives in the 67 counties of the Commonwealth to document their experience with the causes of and additional ways to prevent financial mismanagement in volunteer organizations.
- Numerous invitations to speak to the boards of volunteer organizations about the need for internal accounting controls.
- Several appearances on local ABC, CBS, and NBC affiliate television news broadcasts about the issue of financial mismanagement in volunteer organizations.
- Organizations interested in contracting with our students to do related work for them, for example, monthly bank reconciliations.

To date, certainly the service learning work of the Misericordia accounting students has not only served volunteer organizations, it has ensured funds reach those in need, often women and children, who were the intended beneficiaries of the hard work of these organizations. In addition, the students have been synergistically educated in mind, body, and spirit with authentic learning along with the involvement in volunteer organizations, helping to instill a life-long commitment to community service and a balanced sense of justice and mercy with regard to those, subject to human frailty, who commit financial mismanagement.

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Collaborative Learning:
Engaging and Empowering Nursing Students for Academic Success and Professional Growth

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ABSTRACT

Nurse educators are challenged to prepare nursing students for an evolving and demanding healthcare system. The educational experiences of nursing students can enhance development of skills required of a professional nurse. One way this can be achieved is by preparing nursing students to work collaboratively as members of an interdisciplinary health care team. Collaborative learning strategies in the classroom can foster knowledge development, critical thinking in decision-making, and group processing skills, thus enhancing the collaborative role of the professional nurse (Sandahl, 2010).

The Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2010) visualized a future of healthcare leadership where nurses and other health professionals collaborate within an interdisciplinary team for the benefit of improving patient outcomes. Collaborative testing is one instructional approach focused on the opportunity for students to work together as a team. Students working and learning together build teamwork and active listening skills while respecting individual contributions in an atmosphere which allows for open discourse. Skills learned in this supportive environment translate into professional nursing behaviors. College of Saint Mary nursing faculty have supported and adopted collaborative testing through the various levels of the curriculum. Through this teaching strategy, the qualities of Mercy education—respect for the dignity of the person, academic excellence and lifelong learning—call forth the potential of each student.

FRAMEWORK

Collaborative testing is an active learning strategy framed in the cognitive development theory where students develop and construct knowledge and understanding through experiences and reflection. The cognitive theory applied to collaborative testing is that nursing students are able to come together in groups, each with a different knowledge level, but are able to communicate and work together to understand nursing concepts. The goals of collaborative testing include that the academically weak students will learn and acquire understanding from stronger students, and the stronger students will achieve satisfaction by mentoring and clarifying concepts for their peers. Professional behaviors of active listening, teamwork, and respect for individual sharing of ideas are practiced in the collaborative groups.

Benefits for nursing students from collaborative testing as witnessed by faculty and documented in research includes increased critical thinking, retention of course material and increased social skills (Duane & Satre, 2014) and the ability to participate in group collaboration (Sandahl, 2010).

Collaboration testing is a learning strategy that can increase student success and retention of students (Eastridge, 2014).

NURSING CURRICULUM AT COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY

College of Saint Mary (CSM), located in Omaha, NE, was founded in 1923 by the Sisters of Mercy and is the only Catholic college for women in a five-state region. The mission of the college is dedicated to the education of women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership. The CSM mission inspires students toward academic excellence, scholarship, and life-long learning; regard for the dignity of each person; attention to the development of the mind, body, and spirit; and compassionate service to others.

A Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) curriculum was introduced in the fall of 2014 at College of Saint Mary after having previously been an Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) program which has been phased out. Approximately 88 students are accepted into each yearly nursing cohort. The conceptual framework of the BSN program includes five major concepts which are patient-centered care, communication, leadership, safety, and professional role. These integrative strands are appropriately leveled and woven through the nursing courses to ensure the development of the nursing student's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The nursing students at College of Saint Mary benefit from a values-centered nursing education that combines liberal arts studies with professional career preparation.

Nursing faculty understand the diverse educational and unique needs of CSM students. These students include first generation college students, single parents, and transfer students all from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Effective teaching strategies are used in the classroom and clinical settings to assist the students to comprehend, integrate, and retain nursing concepts. Nursing exams with questions which are written to align with the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) style exam can be a challenging and anxiety-provoking experience for students. Faculty realize this situation and have used classroom exercises to assist the nursing student to critically think through an NCLEX style question. One strategy that has gained faculty support at College of Saint Mary is collaborative testing. Students work together to take an exam, sharing knowledge and critically thinking through the exam questions.

PROCESS

In the Fundamentals of Nursing course, four exams of 50 questions and a final exam of 100 questions are given during the semester. Collaborative testing is used for the first four exams. Exam questions are in a multiple—choice and alternative format style, such as select all that apply questions, matching, and ordering questions. Students are given 60 minutes to take the exams individually in a computer lab, and then the exam is repeated as a collaborative exam. Students meet in the classroom to take the paper and pencil exam in randomly assigned groups of four to five students. The instructor selects the groups taking note to put stronger and weaker students together. At this time, the students are not aware of their individual score on their computer exam. Collaborative testing occurs immediately after the individual exam, so content of the exam is fresh in the minds of the students. The students have 40 minutes to take the collaborative exam

and cannot use any resource material or notes. The paper exams are immediately corrected by the instructor, and questions regarding test content and concepts can be clarified with the students in their collaborative groups. Students have commented that this method of feedback is a benefit.

The score earned by the group on the collaborative exam earns the students in that group extra points to be added to their individual exam score. If the collaborative exam score is 100%, five points is added to each student's exam score in that group. A score of 92-99% on the collaborative exam gives each student two points added to their original exam score. If a student did not achieve the passing mark of 79% on the computer exam, no collaborative points will be added to their original exam score. By offering extra points for taking and achieving a high score on the collaborative exam, faculty believe students will be motivated to participate in the exercise.

DISCUSSION

College of Saint Mary faculty have witnessed the benefits of collaborative testing. Students look forward to taking the collaborative exam and are actively engaged in the process. Initially, faculty needed to outline the process of working in a collaborative group and provide instructions on how to communicate actively with peers and the appropriate way for students to provide rationales for their chosen test answers: A leader is picked in each collaborative group to read the test question, and the group members decide together on the appropriate answer. Arguing and verbal altercations are not allowed. The collaborative groups can be changed for each exam, giving students the opportunity to socialize and interact with their peers.

Student perceptions of their learning with collaborative testing were positive as evidenced by student comments:

> *"I was better able to understand the test questions when I talked through them with my classmates. The students in my group helped me understand the content."*

> *"When we discussed the questions as a group, I was able to understand the content better and what the question was asking."*

Educators strive to use teaching strategies to promote nursing students' use of critical reasoning skills to prepare for the professional world. Collaborative testing is one approach that can be used to promote confidence and student success in a nursing curriculum. This teaching learning strategy is important to nursing education as students continue to apply acquired knowledge and reasoning skills to the clinical environment for safe and effective client care.

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The Promotion of Compassion and Justice: Encouraging Inner-Focused Reflection in an Outer-Focused World

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ABSTRACT

Counselors-in-training, like most students who seek reassurance through academic achievement, are labeled as outcome-, or results-focused (Harlow & Cantor, 1994). Although learning objectives and exams are necessary components of counselor preparation programs, the art of counseling is comprised of more than just knowledge acquisition. Skovholt (2001) identifies reflection on professional and personal experiences as reflectivity. Reflectivity contributes to self-understanding, which has been shown to positively contribute to forming effective counseling relationships (Sweitzer & King, 1999) and has been deemed essential for the growth and development of counselors (Skovholt, 2001). Providing opportunities for counselors in training to develop a reflective orientation is an important part of counselor preparation programs.

We do not learn from experience…we learn from reflecting on experience. —John Dewey

Students are attracted to Mercy Institutions for some of the same reasons they are drawn to the counseling profession; they are interested in making a meaningful impact on the people in their community. "To do good and do well" is a motto that students strive to embody both in the classroom and in the community at large. The counseling preparation program at Carlow University, like others of its kind, has identified reflective exercises and assignments to facilitate students' examination of their thoughts, feelings, and effects of critical life events on personal and professional development (Tobin, Willow, Bastow, & Ratkowski, 2009). Proficiency in 'reflection' is critical to the development of counselors in training as students use this skill to link theory with clinical practice (Schon, 1987) in addition to train for uncertainty (Griffith & Frieden, 2000).

Boud, Keogh, & Walker (1985) define reflection as "a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations" (p. 19). In other words, self-reflection is a metacognitive skill. When using this skill, the self observes, interprets, and evaluates one's own thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and reactions. Reflectivity contributes to self-understanding, which has been shown to positively contribute to forming effective counseling relationships and has been deemed essential for the growth and development of counselors (Sweitzer & King, 1999; Griffith & Frieden, 2000).

There is another aspect of reflection counselor educators need to consider when working with students. A counseling trainee's ability to reflect on and use feedback is a crucial skill to cultivate. Counselors in training can increase their self-awareness by their analytical use and incorporation of feedback. Additionally, studies suggest that this metacognitive skill determines whether or not counselors develop *expertise* (Bennett-Levy, 2006). Many students, however, have difficulty with

constructive feedback due to the perception that it is criticism (Hulse–Killacky & Page, 1994; Swank & McCarthy, 2015). Due to the importance of fostering reflection as a skill in developing counselors, counselor preparation programs need to find ways to promote reflection in their students.

As in all academic programs, students enter with varied skills and abilities—reflection, as a skill, is no different (Bennett–Levy, 2006). In counselor training programs, student growth is evaluated in many ways. Through evaluation, students are provided with feedback in a variety of areas. Bennett–Levy (2006) asserts three evaluative areas including the declarative system, which includes the acquisition of knowledge (i.e. counseling theory); procedural knowledge, which includes skill intervention acquisition and application (i.e. conceptualization skills); and the reflective system, whose function is to perceive differences by comparing present experiences with past experiences (i.e. persistent self–questioning). In each of these systems—declarative, procedural, and reflective—both feedback and reflective practice are identified as learning strategies.

Feedback "conveys information about a behavior that has occurred and influences the likelihood and nature of its reoccurrence" (Claiborn & Goodyear, 2005, p.210). In counseling preparation programs, feedback both follows reflection and includes reflection. Students are asked to reflect on their own performance as well as reflecting on feedback by a transmitter (The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, 2015). Throughout their academic program, students receive feedback in multiple skill areas from their instructors, supervisors, peers, and clients (Swank & McCarthy, 2015).

Swank & McCarthy (2015) identify the following feedback themes, which are common in providing feedback to counselors: descriptive, evaluative, emotional, and interpretive. Descriptive feedback is a depiction of the behavior being exhibited by the student. Evaluative feedback critiques a student's behavior. Emotional feedback is associated with the feedback sender's feelings about the behavior demonstrated by the student. Interpretive feedback helps the student develop awareness and insight by providing an interpretation of behavior. Each feedback theme can be supportive and/or constructive.

When presenting feedback to a counseling trainee, there needs to be a balance of both positive and constructive feedback. If a feedback provider issues either positive or constructive feedback without the other, the receiver obtains a skewed view of his or her performance. Emphasis on only positive feedback fails to address concerns and is unlikely to lead to self-awareness and reflection on areas for improvement (Toth & Erwin, 1998). A focus on only constructive feedback may create resistance to change (Claiborn & Goodyear, 2005; Toth & Erwin, 1998). Further, constructive feedback may reduce some unwanted behaviors; however, it also creates anxiety and may inhibit a student's ability to be open to feedback in the future (King, 1999). Stone and Heen (2014) purport the necessity of educating students on feedback processes. One way to do this is to assist students in identifying what makes accepting constructive feedback difficult for them.

There is a tension for developing counselors in the acceptance and incorporation of constructive feedback. They want to learn and grow; however, they also want to be accepted as they are, which is why receiving feedback can prove difficult. Stone & Heen (2014) identify that most feedback training is ineffectually focused on the providers of feedback, when it is the receivers of feedback who need to be targeted. These authors identify that feedback receivers are in control of what feedback they do

and do not let in, how they make sense of what they are hearing, and ultimately whether they choose to change. Consequently, the focus of teaching feedback skills should be on the receiver- in order to support them in becoming skillful feedback learners.

Stone and Heen (2014) identify several triggers that may get in the way of people being open to constructive feedback; these include truth, relationship, and identity triggers. When receiving constructive feedback, an individual's truth trigger is tweaked; they will identify the feedback as incorrect and will likely not see value in it. If a relationship trigger is tweaked, the individual does not perceive the feedback giver to have credibility and will not see value in the information. If an identity trigger is tweaked, something about the feedback has caused the person to feel overwhelmed, threatened, ashamed, or off-balance and again, the information will fall on deaf ears. Swank & McCarthy (2015) identify additional barriers that can contribute to a lack of openness to feedback, including childhood memories related to receiving feedback, preferred method of receiving feedback, and feeling uncomfortable with conflict. If students are educated about what makes receiving critical feedback hard for them, they can then apply this information to feedback they receive to help them gain something constructive from the process. Stone & Heen (2014) refer to this process as helping students to *create pull*.

Stone and Heen (2014) assert that if students are able to master skills which allow them to drive their own learning, they will be able to recognize and manage resistance to feedback, engage in feedback conversations with confidence and curiosity, and find insight to help them grow, even when the feedback they are receiving seems incorrect. For most counseling trainees, what makes the difference in gaining these skills is practice—which in turn makes the key growth variable the students themselves (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2001; Stone & Heen, 2014).

More than just helping students gain skills in receiving feedback, promoting inner reflection in students allows them to show compassion for themselves. In our current outcome- or results-focused world, many students seem to view mistakes as a larger indictment on their personhood. This promotes a more superficial change in behavior when this change is requested through feedback. A more just way for this process to occur is for the feedback transmitter and receiver to engage in meaningful dialogue about the feedback. Educating students on those triggers and barriers that prevent them from actively participating in this dialogue is paramount to facilitating the growth and development of our future counselors.

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From "Discovering the Self in the Big Universe" to "Visioning a Future": Designing the Bridge General Education Program at Georgian Court University

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"We know too some slight newness in the world
created by our wings as they unfurled—
Unfurled a little. Feathered soon with grace,
we rise a little higher, making space—
space to be sure
that we can soar."

"As Fledglings Dare" (Richey, 2014)

ABSTRACT

Over the past five years, faculty, staff, and administrators at Georgian Court University (G.C.U.) have revised the General Education program to enhance student learning and better clarify how the program relates to our Mercy mission. This overview chronicles our revisionary efforts and introduces new goals, a new vision, and new program requirements. It also highlights the development of two new courses rooted in G.C.U.'s Mercy Core Values that function as the cornerstone and capstone of the program. With the program revision and development of these new courses, we hope to be "making space," as Sister Maria's poem suggests, for our students to "rise a little higher" through their pursuit of a Mercy education.

ESTABLISHING PROGRAM GOALS:

In the Fall 2011 semester, a task force was established to review Georgian Court University's General Education Program and consider its overall effectiveness. The task force consisted of faculty members from all three of the university's schools. During its first year, task force members read several books about the value and purpose of general education. They also reviewed our current program and noted a lack of clearly defined goals and learning objectives. As part of this information-gathering period, two faculty attended an AAC&U conference in New Orleans on *General Education and Assessment: New Contexts, New Cultures*. This conference introduced us to the LEAP Four Essential Learning Outcomes, which eventually formed the basis for the central goals and learning outcomes of our revised program.

After presentation and discussion, G.C.U. adopted the following Goals and Learning Outcomes:

GOAL 1: Foundational Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

Learning Outcome:

   a. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply foundational knowledge in the arts, humanities, languages, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences.

GOAL 2: Intellectual and Practical Skills

Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate competence in

   a. Critical and creative thinking, grounded in inquiry, analysis, and synthesis of information
   b. Written and oral communication
   c. Quantitative literacy
   d. Information literacy
   e. Teamwork and problem solving

GOAL 3: Personal and Social Responsibility

Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate

   a. Ethical reasoning
   b. Global awareness and respect for diverse cultural perspectives
   c. Knowledge of the University's mission and Mercy charism
   d. Civic knowledge–local/global

GOAL 4: Integrative Learning

Learning Outcome:

   a. Students will demonstrate the ability to make connections among courses in multiple disciplines, as well as between their experiences inside and outside the classroom.

(Georgian Court University, 2016, p. 18)

In regard to our Mercy mission, it's important to note the inclusion of Goal 3c., which can now be directly linked to several courses in our new curriculum.

DESIGNING PROGRAM MODELS: ARCH, ESSENTIAL, BRIDGE

In the second year, task force members divided into two groups and developed program models. One group developed the "Arch" model that was built on a series of five integrated courses rooted in G.C.U.'s Mercy Core Values; the other group developed the "Essential Education" model that broadened course offerings in current program categories and included a capstone course for the program. These two plans were designed and developed with consultation and input from faculty

beyond the original task force members. Both groups agreed that the revised program should have a Writing Intensive (WI) requirement rather than a second designated composition course. They also both agreed upon the need for a Director of General Education and a Director of the Writing Center. Both models were then presented at a Faculty Assembly meeting late in the Spring 2013 semester.

At the start of the Fall 2013 semester, task force members received requests to design a model that included features of the two proposed models. Based upon the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, task force members then developed the Bridge program. One of its notable features was the inclusion of two new courses inspired from the "Arch" model to frame the program, as well as connect to the core values of this Mercy sponsored university. This model requires students to take a cornerstone course ("Discovering the Self in the Big Universe") and a capstone course ("Visioning the Future: Justice, Compassion, & Service"). It also maintains key categories found in the "Essential" Education model. Like the two proposed models, it also included a WI component, as well as the need for a General Education Director and a Writing Center Director. The Bridge model eventually gained faculty approval.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE BRIDGE

Once the Bridge model was approved, the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) crafted specific criteria and learning objectives for each category of the program. The GECC consulted with various departments and invited faculty to attend meetings to discuss their submissions. With input from faculty and administrators, the GECC discussed and approved criteria and learning outcomes for each category of the program.

In June 2014, a small group of faculty and administrators attended an AAC&U Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment. The AAC&U team returned to campus with an action plan informed by consultation with seminar leaders and colleagues from other institutions attending the institute. The plan highlighted the need for a program vision statement, as well as the need to develop a comprehensive assessment plan.

The following Vision Statement was drafted for the program:

> The BRIDGE General Education Program at Georgian Court University offers students a coherent and integrated learning experience in the Catholic intellectual tradition. This program aims to cultivate passion for intellectual growth and to foster informed, responsible, and creative citizenship for a complex 21st century world. Students who complete the BRIDGE will sharpen the intellectual and practical skills essential to their chosen field of study and necessary to their pursuit of personal, professional, civic, and social goals. In addition, completion of the BRIDGE program enables students to discover pathways to life-long learning and to envision a future shaped by their engagement with the University's mission and Mercy charism.

> The BRIDGE program encourages students to develop self-knowledge within a broader understanding of others and the world. It emphasizes the importance of critical inquiry that leads to knowledge across fields of study and provides a means for students to think critically

and creatively, connecting and building upon what they learn in their general education courses. Students examine conditions necessary for peace, justice, and sustainability, as well as the ways mercy and justice are integral for [sic] how we confront the present and vision the future. (Georgian Court University, 2016, p.18)

Due to some personnel changes in our assessment office, an assessment plan for the program was not officially adopted until 2016. The GECC approved a plan developed with our new Director of Assessment, Sr. Janet Thiel. It includes a three-year schedule for assessing each general education goal and learning outcome.

Besides the drafting of the vision statement and assessment, development also began on the Bridge cornerstone and capstone courses. With the support of NetVUE grant money, faculty from across different schools of the university participated in workshops throughout 2014-2015 to design GEN199 "Discovering the Self in the Big Universe" and GEN400 "Visioning a Future: Justice, Compassion, & Service." These courses were eventually submitted to the GECC and reworked in accordance with its feedback. This grant also supported WI workshops for faculty. These workshops provided guidance in designing and assessing WI courses. The Director of the Writing Program certified successful completers of the workshops as being qualified to offer Writing Intensive courses. Since WI courses will be a new feature of the Bridge program, the committee also spent time developing a WI policy that requires students to complete four WI courses (two of these courses are the required GEN199 and GEN400); transfer students are held to different WI requirements depending upon the number of credits transferred into G.C.U.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, faculty members continued to submit proposals for courses to be listed in the Bridge program. The GECC developed a system to evaluate "current" GE courses and an approval process to review "new" GE courses. All approved courses included approved category learning objectives on the course syllabi / outlines.

The final stage of the revision involved the GECC's review of "graduation requirements," which was a category of requirements that were not part of a student's major and also not part of the pre-BRIDGE general education program. These included the following: 1) physical education; 2) experiential learning (one service learning experience, and a second experience that could be either service learning, an internship, or study abroad/travel abroad); 3) first year experience (FYS) course (3 credit course for freshmen, 1 credit course for transfers). Since there are no learning goals for these categories, it was determined either to include these requirements in the Bridge program or eliminate them. Physical education did not align with the Bridge program's learning goals, so the GECC recommended the elimination of the requirement (not the courses). The GECC did maintain the experiential learning requirement because it aligns with the Bridge program's "Integrative Learning" goal, most notably with GEN400's service learning project. In regard to the FYS / transfer seminar, a subcommittee of faculty, staff, and administrators recommended the elimination of Transfer Seminar (1 credit), but the inclusion of the FYS course. The GECC then aligned the FYS with the goals / learning objectives of the Bridge program and renamed it GEN101: "Pathway to the Bridge". All of these requirement changes were presented for full faculty consideration. With the completion of these final alignments, the Bridge program was ready for implementation.

Here is a broad overview of the program:

THE BRIDGE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS (48-49 credits)

1. First Year Seminar: "Pathway to the Bridge" (GEN101★, 2 credits)
2. Academic Writing (3 credits) –EN111, its equivalent, or another approved course
3. Quantitative Analysis (3–4 credits)
4. Cornerstone Course: "Discovering the Self in the Big Universe" (GEN199★★, 3 credits)
5. 11 Courses in the following Content Knowledge Areas (34 credits):
   - History (3 credits)
   - Literature (3 credits)
   - Philosophy (3 credits)
   - Social Sciences (6 credits): 2 courses from different Social Science disciplines
   - Modern Language; Culture; Global Studies (3 credits)
   - Natural Sciences (4 credits)
   - Visual and Performing Arts (3 credits)
   - Religious Studies (3 credits)
   - Women's and Gender Studies (3 credits)
   - Ethics (3 credits)
6. Capstone Course: "Visioning the Future: Justice, Compassion, & Service" (GEN400—3 credits)
7. Experiential Learning: 1) GEN400, which includes a service learning project, and 2) a service learning project completed in a course other than GEN101 or GEN400, an internship/ practicum/ field placement, or an approved education abroad experience.

(Georgian Court University, 2016, p. 18-19)

A key part of this final stage of implementation was constant contact with the Registrar's Office to determine policies and procedures for newly admitted first year and transfer students.

KEYS TO THE BRIDGE: MERCY CORE VALUES

While the Mercy Core Values can be integrated into a variety of courses throughout the Bridge program, they are directly integrated into three courses. The new GEN101: "Pathway to the Bridge" introduces first semester students to the university's mission, heritage and charism, as well as practices conducive to a successful college experience. The cornerstone of the BRIDGE program is GEN199: "The Self in the Big Universe," a writing intensive course that invites freshman-level students "to examine their sense of self and place within their local situations, as well as within the broader scope of the universe. This course provides students with a framework for learning by demonstrating the inter-connectedness of all life, fostering respect for creation and the integrity of life systems" (Georgian Court University, 17). The program culminates with GEN400: "Visioning a Future: Justice, Compassion, & Service," a writing intensive capstone course that asks senior-level students to "synthesize their learning experiences and envision their roles in shaping a just, compassionate world." Besides participating in a service learning group project, students select course readings and develop a final research project that asks them to apply the Mercy Core Values to a critical concern of their choosing.

CONCLUSION

With the start of the 2016–17 academic year, the new Bridge program is underway. GEN101 was offered to all incoming freshmen. During the spring semester, we offered twelve sections of GEN199 and two sections of GEN400. The faculty teaching these courses crossed disciplines and met periodically to discuss the readings, assignments, and assessments. We also have started our overall cycle of assessment of our program goals and learning outcomes. While this start has been positive, there are some clear challenges ahead. We will need to continue our effort to support faculty with the best methods for collecting and reporting assessment data. While our Director of Writing has certified a significant number of faculty as being qualified to offer Writing Intensive courses, we also will need to schedule a consistent number of such courses for students. Our most significant challenge, though, will involve staffing GEN101, GEN199, and GEN400. The staffing of these courses will be critical to realizing our lofty vision statement and sustaining "some slight newness" that is the Bridge General Education program.

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Integrating Catholic Social Teaching and the Critical Concerns of Mercy into the Undergraduate Business Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Many faith-based institutions of higher education are attempting to develop innovative ways of maintaining the mission and heritage of the founding religious order sponsoring the institutions at a time when the number of religious continues to decline. The School of Business and Education at Gwynedd Mercy University has developed and implemented a curricular model that provides students an online learning resource that allows them to explore business-related topics through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching and the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. The model utilizes an online learning resource designed to be utilized by faculty and students while exploring various topics within the business curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Patricia Wittberg (2000) brought attention to the situation that Catholic religious orders, due to declining membership, were largely withdrawing their active presence in the daily operations of their sponsored institutions. As the number of religious sponsors at the institution continues to decrease, the university community realized that the future of mission integration depended on having faculty and staff who are formed in a Catholic and Mercy identity, and who are deeply committed to the institution's mission. The challenge for the institution was not only to share the Mercy heritage but to inspire faculty and staff to create tangible ways in which the mission and heritage can be shared with others on campus.

Gwynedd Mercy University's response to this challenge was the creation of a program that invites members of the community to deepen their understanding of the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy and the University's mission and core values. The ultimate goal of the program is to encourage participants to create specific initiatives that will integrate these topics into the university's curricular and co-curricular undertakings.

BACKGROUND

The idea of more formally addressing mission integration at Gwynedd Mercy University started over fifteen years ago when the desire of having a person overseeing mission integration became part of the institution's long-range strategic plan. When the first lay person was appointed as president, it was decided that such a position was imperative. The job title for this position evolved into what is now called the Vice President for Mission and Ministry. The job description was modeled after a similar position at Salve Regina University, located in Newport, R.I., and also founded by the Sisters of Mercy.

Established in 2011, through the Office of the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, the Mission Leadership Academy (MLA) is designed to serve as a systematic approach to mission formation and integration for faculty and staff. The MLA consists of three levels: Members, Scholars, and Stewards; each level requiring a different level of commitment on the part of the participants. Members commit to intentional mission integration in work and life; to be able to articulate the story of Catherine McAuley, and to be able to further articulate the connection between her story and the mission of the University.

Scholars commit to an 18-month program of study, gathering in cohorts, to learn about specific aspects of Catholic spirituality, Mercy history and charism, Catholic Social Teaching (CST), the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, and other topics. It is the goal of the program that Scholars emerge with a deeper understanding of the theological foundations of our Catholic and Mercy identity. Each Scholar is called upon to develop an integration project that will further the advancement of mission integration on campus. Stewards are asked to apply the learnings of the first two levels to their work within the MLA and commit to implementing the specific mission-related program. They are asked to renew their commitment annually.

To date, 120 faculty and staff have become members of the MLA. Nearly 50 of them subsequently went through one of our four Scholars' cohorts, and our initial Stewards program launched in 2016 with a group of seven. The challenge for the participant is to creatively construct a project that will address the objective of the MLA.

As part of the MLA program, participants engage in a discussion concerning the Critical Concerns and the broader topic of CST. Two thoughts were derived from this discussion. The first was the question as to how these two topics could be such well-kept secrets within a Catholic and Mercy-sponsored institution. The second thought was a realization of the potential possibilities of using these topics in a business curriculum already dedicated to the inclusion of ethics within most courses. The first thought was easily addressed by doing a little research on the topics. To little surprise, Magliano (2012) reiterated the belief that CST was indeed a secret to many. Reading the abundant resources on both topics led quickly to a methodology of how to address the way in which these topics could be infused into a curriculum.

SOLUTION

The inclusion of the topics of CST and the Critical Concerns within the MLA programs provided a starting point from which to develop a sustainable mission integration project with the business curriculum. Business ethics has long been a hallmark of the undergraduate programs at the university, and it was evident that there could be a stronger curricular tie connecting ethics, CST, and the Critical Concerns. In fact, Catholic institutions of higher education have been called upon to ensure that business students are grounded in ethics. Garvey (2004) challenged institutions to this task when he asserted that management and business schools within Catholic universities must prepare future business leaders to be efficient and profitable without losing their moral and social balance.

After much research, it was decided that one of the most effective ways to integrate mission into the business majors was to embed it directly into the curriculum. Research reveals an abundance of books, articles, and online research and websites are available—some of it repetitive, and some of it profound. In fact, it may not take a great amount of time to become overwhelmed at the amount of literature that is available.

The question became how to make the resources less overwhelming and more easily accessible to students. One idea that came to mind early on in the process was that all registered students at the institution had access to an online learning platform called Blackboard. Blackboard serves as a centralized location of online classroom resources that are easily accessible through built-in links. Blackboard, it was believed, would serve as an excellent choice as there was no learning curve for the students—they were already using it in their classes. The process seemed easy—start creating links in Blackboard.

However, as resource links became more and more numerous, it quickly became apparent that they needed to be organized in a manner that would make it easy for students first to be introduced to the ideas of CST and the Critical Concerns, and secondly, to make it easy to find personal topics of interest. It was decided that the topics of CST and the Critical Concerns would be introduced in a first-year survey business course to reach all incoming students in their first or second semester of study. However, when piloted, it was discovered that many students were not even very familiar with the mission of the institution. Yes, they could identify the word "mercy," and most could recall having heard about Catherine McAuley, but most could not relate the mission and the Mercy heritage to their lives and work. If this research tool was going to be an instrument of fostering mission integration, the research had to introduce students to the mission statement and core values of the institution before having them attempt to explore ways of living the mission in their personal and professional lives.

The result of the aforementioned discovery regarding mission gave rise to creating a much more elaborate research tool than first envisioned. A section related to the mission statement was created. Understanding the multi-media mindset of college students, it was also decided early on in the process to include videos and other online resources as appropriate.

To resolve the issue of assisting students in finding specific topics of interests, a subject index was created. The subject index provides an alphabetical listing of business and business-related topics that are addressed in the research on CST and the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. Next to each subject a specific Blackboard location (link) of resources that addresses that topic is provided. These locations appear to the left of the subject list which makes it easy for students to point-and-click to the specific resource.

The Blackboard research tool has been incorporated into a first-year business course taken by business and non-business majors alike. Resources range from introductory videos, articles, and websites that provide simple introductory material to Papal Encyclicals housed within the Vatican library. Since the course is populated by both business and non-business majors, care has been taken to ensure that a variety of subjects related to various majors are included. To fully incorporate the learning resource, students are first introduced to CST and the Critical Concerns through class discussion.

Attention is also placed on the relevancy of the topics and the idea that the topics apply to people of all faiths. Students, once familiar with the five Critical Concerns of Mercy and the seven themes of CST, are asked in class to discuss, simply by topic alone, how these issues might be relevant to their chosen career paths. Students are then asked to explore the introductory material available and to review the subject index. Students are asked throughout the semester to refer to the research tool to learn more about how CST and the Critical Concerns relate to the topics of the course. During the

semester, students journal their reflections on the topics, again paying particular attention to what they learned and how this might influence their thinking and decision-making processes primarily in their professional careers. Both the Critical Concerns and CST themes are brought into class discussions as appropriate throughout the semester.

CONCLUSION

At the date of this paper, the project has been in implementation for one academic year, and several conclusions have been drawn. There has been a very positive response from the students, faculty, and administrative regarding this project- so much so that a new general education course is being created specifically around the topics of CST and the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. This course will be one of many that students can opt to take to fulfill their general education credit requirements. It is envisioned that the course will be interdisciplinary and team taught.

From a practical viewpoint, Blackboard no longer serves as a viable technological platform. It is the hope that the Blackboard resource will transition to a web page that has a link on the university's main website. Transitioning to an active website would allow all faculty and students outside the School of Business to have access to the resource.

From early indicators, it appears that this project has positively fostered the integration of the mission of the university within the curriculum. This project was presented at the 2014 IACBE Conference. IACBE, the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education is a leading outcomes-based accrediting organization for business, management, and accounting programs in education institutions throughout the world. The presentation was primarily attended by faculty and administration from various faith-based institutions, and the feedback was very positive. One recommendation made was to consider including resources from other faiths that complement CST and the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. It is a goal to begin researching other faith-based literature for possible inclusion.

Faith-based institutes must continue to find creative ways to carry forth the mission of their founders and sponsors. It is the hope that this project enlightens and inspires individuals to explore ways that this is accomplished.

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Griffin Student Leadership Institute: Committed to Serve, Learning to Lead

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ABSTRACT

The Griffin Student Leadership Institute (GSLI), is a multidimensional, multi-tiered student leadership program, was developed in the fall of 2012, and is founded upon the Social Change Model of Leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996). GSLI is closely aligned with the Gwynedd Mercy University Mission Statement and Core Values as well as the institution's University Learning Outcomes. The purpose of the Institute is to educate, train, and form "Distinctive Mercy Leaders." The Emerging Leaders certification program reflects the first tier of the Institute, and focuses upon the training and development of individual leadership knowledge and skills. The Evolving Leaders certification program represents the second tier of the Institute and focuses upon the development of leadership knowledge and skills necessary for leading healthy organizations. The Exceptional Leaders certification program is the third tier of the Institute where experienced student leaders are nominated by either a faculty or staff member. Students are matched with a professional and Mercy-connected mentor within the student's chosen academic field. Students and mentors in this program explore issues around leadership, service, and social responsibility both personally and professionally.

INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Mercy University is a Catholic and Mercy-affiliated liberal arts university located just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The university is dedicated to developing individuals who are lifelong learners and "Distinctive Mercy Graduates," prepared to take active roles in service, equipped to create transformational change in society, and empowered to lead lives of deep meaning.

One of sixteen colleges and universities sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Gwynedd Mercy University, espouses its mission statement as:

> Gwynedd Mercy is a Catholic university rooted in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. Our learning community prepares students for successful careers and meaningful lives in a global society. (Gwynedd Mercy University, 2017)

In addition, Gwynedd Mercy has adopted the following core values:

> "As a Mercy University committed to academic excellence, we value:
> **Integrity** in Word and Deed;
> **Respect** for the Dignity of Each Person;
> **Service** to Society;
> **Social Justice** in a Diverse World★"

* *With a special focus on the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy:*
Earth, Immigration, Racism, Non-Violence, Women (Gwynedd Mercy University, 2017).

Students attending Gwynedd Mercy University experience an academic and co-curricular environment that, from the moment they step foot on campus, both supports and challenges them to develop both personally and professionally. The University has as its responsibility the charge to carry on the message of its founder, Sr. Catherine McAuley, who said, "God, give us the courage to begin tasks that are longer than our lives."

UNDERGRADUATE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL

In the fall of 2012, the Dean of Students convened a Student Leadership Program Committee and charged it with reviewing a previously completed task force report and developing a prototype of what a formal undergraduate student leadership model and program might look like. This committee began its work with the following factors in mind:
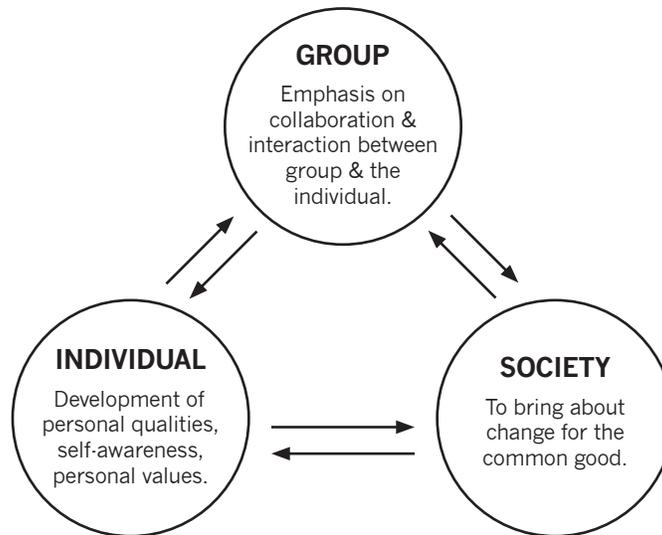
1. The program must flow from our Mercy Mission and Values;
2. The program should have a sound theoretical foundation;
3. The program should align with the University Student Learning Outcomes;
4. The program should have several progressive tiers, allowing students to continuously challenge themselves to deeper levels of meaning, learning, and leadership experiences.

What transpired was the development of the three-tiered Griffin Student Leadership Institute. The Institute uses as its philosophical foundation the Social Change Model of Leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996). The Social Change Model uses the following leadership assumptions:

1. Leadership is concerned with effecting **change** on behalf of others and society;
2. Leadership is **collaborative**;
3. Leadership is a **process** rather than a position;
4. Leadership should be value-based;
5. **All** students (not just those in formal leadership positions) are potential leaders;
6. **Service** is a powerful vehicle for developing students' leadership skills.

The Social Change Model consists of three connected constructs of leadership development. The **Individual Component** concerns itself with the development of personal leadership values, knowledge, and skills. The **Group Component** concerns itself with developing the skills necessary to lead others effectively. The **Society Component** concerns itself with the primary purpose of leadership development, which is to create positive change in one's circle of influence, one's community, and the larger society.

THE SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GROUP

Emphasis on collaboration & interaction between group & the individual.

INDIVIDUAL

Development of personal qualities, self-awareness, personal values.

SOCIETY

To bring about change for the common good.

(Higher Education Research Institute, 1996)

The model includes seven critical values called "The 7C's" which taken together all contribute to the ultimate goal: Change.

THE SEVEN C's

INDIVIDUAL VALUES

Consciousness of Self
Congruence
Commitment

GROUP VALUES

Collaboration
Common Purpose
Controversy with Civility

COMMUNITY VALUES

Citizenship

POSITIVE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Astin (1996) provides us with specific definitions for each of the 7C's as listed below:

- **Individual Values**

  - **Consciousness of Self**: Awareness of one's beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions as they motivate the individual to action.
  - **Congruence**: Thinking, feeling, behaving with consistency, authenticity, and honesty towards others. One's actions are consistent with one's beliefs.
  - **Commitment**: A steadfast dedication that motivates one to action. Commitment implies passion, intensity, and duration.

- **Group Values**

  - **Collaboration**: This is about the ability to work with others toward a common effort. It empowers oneself and others through trust. Collaboration empowers all members of the group.
  - **Common Purpose**: Is about the ability to work with shared goals and values. It means having a shared vision, articulating it, and working toward it.
  - **Controversy with Civility**: This value recognizes that whenever people work together there will undoubtedly be differences, but that these differences can and should be recognized and discussed with respect for others and a willingness to hear others' viewpoints.

- **Community Values**

  - **Citizenship**: Citizenship brings it all together as individuals and groups work together to work for positive change in their community and in society. As mentioned earlier the concept of **Positive Social Change** is the linchpin of the model.

INSTITUTE CURRICULUM

GSLI is composed of three tiers or levels. The Emerging Leaders certification aligns with the Individual Component of the Social Change Model. The Evolving Leaders certification aligns with the Group Component, and the Exceptional Leaders certification aligns with the Societal Component of the Social Change model.

The Emerging Leaders certification was first introduced in the spring of 2013 and consists of an introductory day-long Kickoff Saturday, followed by bi-weekly 90 minute workshops every other Tuesday evening. This voluntary program is marketed for second semester freshmen as well as other continuing students who have not been involved in other tiers of the Institute. Emerging Leaders is devoted to the development of individual leadership knowledge and skills, including the story of Catherine McAuley, a primer on the Social Change Model, Herrmann Brain Dominance Theory (1991), Purpose, Values and Leadership, the Art of Communication, Valuing Diversity, Building Teamwork Skills, Conflict Management, and Personal Presentation Skills. Students are divided into Service Project groups and are required to select, plan, implement, and evaluate a service project of

the group's choice. Students then present their projects and discuss both the challenges and successes of their projects as related to their own and their group's leadership during a breakout session at the annual Griffin Student Leadership Conference, held in April each year.

The Evolving Leaders certification program began in the fall of 2013 and is a voluntary program directed toward student leaders who want to be effective leaders within their organizations, teams, and clubs. The program is marketed toward sophomore and junior students and emphasizes the following: Group Processes and Dynamics, Event Planning and Evaluating, Officer Training, Recruiting for and Branding One's Organization, and Succession Planning. Because these students tend to be extremely involved in usually more than one student organization on campus, the institute has formatted this tier into a Fall Leadership Weekend in late September and a Spring Leadership Saturday in late January. The fall weekend begins with a Friday dinner with a Gwynedd Mercy panel of Alumni, who discuss how their Gwynedd Mercy University experience has helped them as leaders in their professions and lives. This is followed by a full day of Saturday workshops on a number of leadership topics. Students are then asked to choose a Fall Leadership Challenge that is related to one of the workshop topics and is something they want to bring back to their club, team, or organization to assist the organization in running more efficiently and/or effectively. Students come back in January for a Leadership Saturday, where they share the results of their Fall Leadership Challenge, experience another series of workshops, and choose a related Spring Leadership Challenge. Students share the results of this challenge in a breakout session at the annual Griffin Student Leadership Conference in April.

The final tier of GSLI, the Exceptional Leaders certification program, began in the fall of 2014. This program is a personalized mentoring program for a selected group of experienced student leaders who have been nominated by a faculty, staff, or administrative member of the campus community. The program can accommodate 8–12 student leaders each year. These junior and senior leaders are paired with an External Mentor in their professional field who also has a Mercy connection. They are also paired with an Internal Mentor who is a faculty or staff member. Students and mentors are provided a set of stimulus readings, TED Talks, and other short presentations that are divided into three topical areas: Individual Leadership, Group Leadership, and Societal Leadership. During the course of the academic year, between October and the end of February, students and their mentors meet at least three times to have discussions about personal and professional leadership, service, and social responsibility. Students keep a written record of their thoughts pertaining to the stimulus readings and presentations as well as what they learn from their conversations with their mentors. The culminating activity for these Exceptional Leaders is their preparation of a journal article about their year–long leadership journey that then becomes published in the *Griffin Student Leadership Journal*. These student leaders also have an opportunity to discuss their leadership mentoring experiences during a breakout session at the annual Griffin Student Leadership Conference.

INSTITUTE STATISTICS AND ASSESSMENT

Since the spring of 2013, there have been 147 students who have completed one or more tiers of the Griffin Student Leadership Institute. As a completely voluntary program, students self–select or are nominated and actively choose to develop their leadership skills as they make this a priority in their busy lives.

Assessing the effectiveness of GSLI has been important in order to determine both what students are learning about leadership as well as how important and satisfied they are with the programs and workshops. The Emerging Leaders certification program uses the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale, R2, as developed by T.M. Tyree (1998), in conjunction with the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs at the University of Maryland. This survey is specifically designed to measure student perceptions of their knowledge and skills as related to the 7C's of the Social Change model. Emerging Leaders are given this self-assessment leadership skills survey prior to the start of their institute in early January. They are given the post-program survey following completion of the institute and conference in late April. Results over the past five years show that without exception, GMercyU students in the Emerging Leaders program score higher than the national average on all eight constructs. The largest positive changes from pre-program to post-program measurements are in the areas of Consciousness of Self, Congruence, Common Purpose, Collaboration, and Citizenship. Students show the least amount of positive change with the concepts of Controversy with Civility and Change.

SRLS RESULTS WITH COMPARISONS
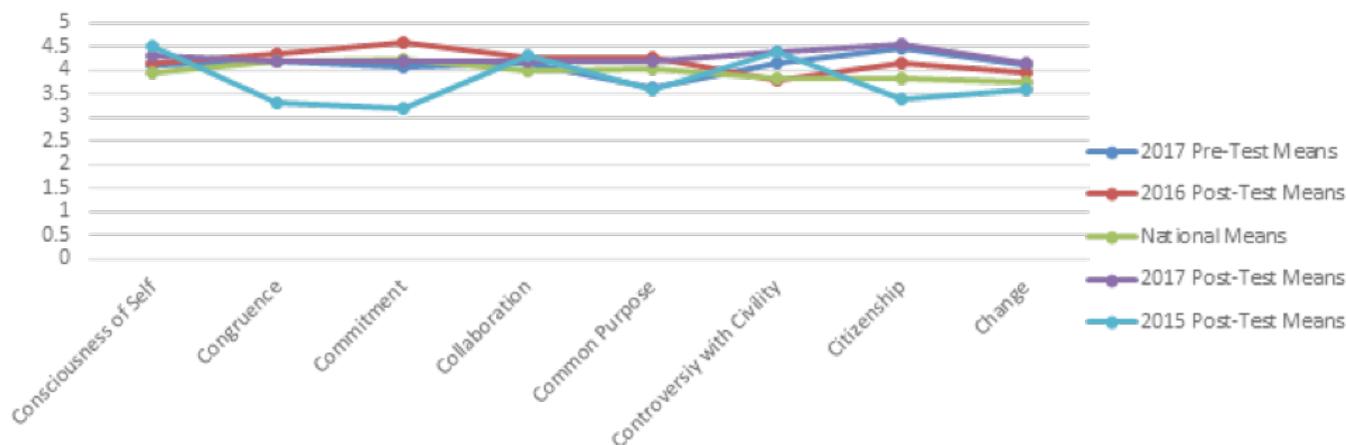
The Evolving Leaders certification program uses the National Association for Campus Activities' College Student Leaders Competency Evaluation (2009) as a pre- and post-program measure. This survey is designed to measure student perceptions of learning in eleven competency areas related to student leader development: Leadership Development, Event Management, Assessment and Evaluation, Interdependence, Meaningful Interpersonal Relationships, Intellectual Growth, Social Responsibility, Collaboration, Effective Communication, Clarified Values, and Spiritual Awareness. Students in the Evolving Leaders program during the 2016–17 academic year improved their scores on all eleven constructs when measured from pre- to post-program. Students showed the greatest improvement in Assessing and Evaluating, Social Responsibility, and Collaboration. Students showed the smallest improvement in Interpersonal Relationships and Interdependence.

NACA CORE COMPETENCIES FOR LEADERS

2016-17 Pre-Post Data
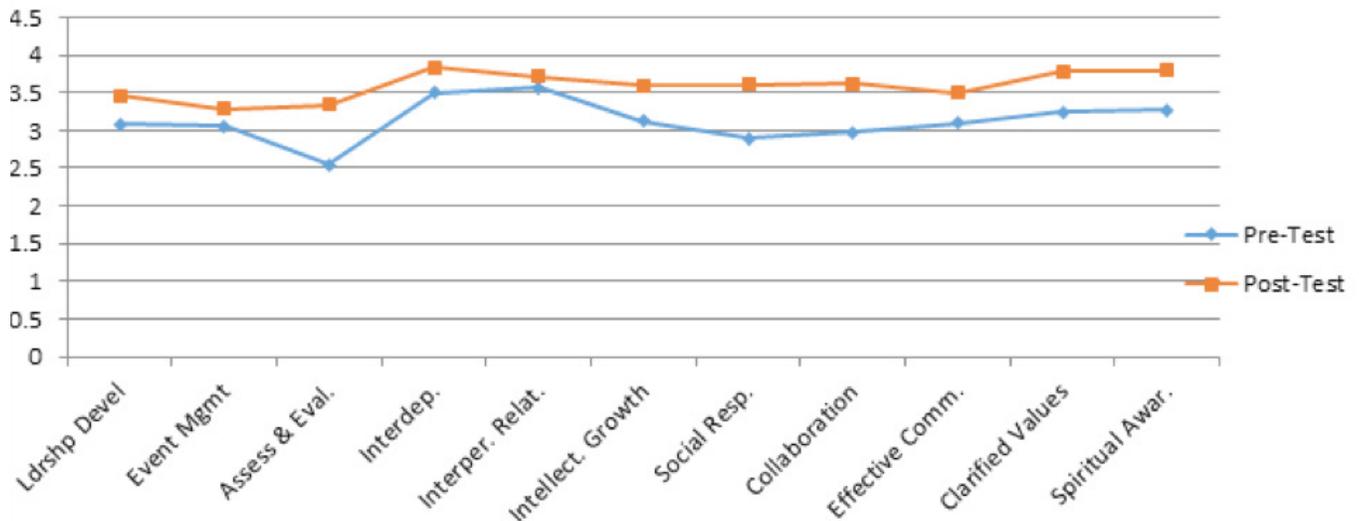
Evaluation of the Exceptional Leaders certification program was completed through examination of each student leader's journal article. Students were given maximum flexibility to write about their leadership mentoring journey and were provided suggested guidelines for the actual paper itself. Anecdotal information from students in this program as well as the students' own writing during the past three years has been consistently positive. Many students have indicated that their experience in the Exceptional Leaders program really clarified for them their values, goals, and Mercy leadership capacities.

GRIFFIN STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

In April of 2017, Gwynedd Mercy University held its fifth annual Griffin Student Leadership Conference, which serves as the culminating event for all three programs of the institute. The conference includes an annual keynote speaker, several concurrent invited sessions by faculty, staff and students, and a celebration dinner with certification awards for those completing each tier of the program. Keynote speakers during the past five years have included:

- Dr. Tom Segar, Vice President for Student Affairs, Shepherd University
- Dr. Karen Schneider, RSM, Johns Hopkins University
- Pamela Rainey Lawler, Innovator, Entrepreneur, founder of Philabundance
- Hilary Corna, Former Executive Officer with Toyota, Asia, Author of *One White Face*
- Ryan Hreljac, Founder, Ryan's Well Foundation

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

During these past five years, the Griffin Student Leadership Institute has grown from an idea on paper into a multi-dimensional and multi-tiered student leadership program that students see as a valuable component to their overall education at Gwynedd Mercy University. The most important challenge going forward is to ensure the sustainability of the program with ongoing University funding that will allow the program to be better marketed and supported. Currently the Office of Student Activities and Leadership Programs contributes a small amount of funding to GSLI. The program relies heavily upon the continued passion and support of faculty and professional staff who volunteer their valuable time to the program; Additional funding will also provide funds to begin a GMercyU Circle of the National Leadership Honor Society, Omicron Delta Kappa.

May God bless and protect you and make you the instrument of His glory.

Catherine McAuley

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The Carlow Compass Curriculum: Educating Leaders to Create a Just and Merciful World

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ABSTRACT

Carlow University's General Education curriculum, the Carlow Compass, completed its 2nd year of implementation in 2016–2017. It has two overarching objectives: a) to connect with and animate Carlow's Mission and Values and b) to encourage divergent thinking and inspire creativity. The Compass is a navigational curriculum that begins with foundational, distinctive courses involving critical exploration, contemplation on Mercy values and themes as applied to a particular topic, and social action in a small act of service. The curriculum then builds to culminating experiences in an Anchor course and an ethics and social responsibility or service-learning course, as part of the Compass's Just and Merciful World Curriculum (JMWC) that resides within the Compass curriculum. This paper gives an overview of the Compass curriculum, with particular focus on the JMWC, which exemplifies how general education curriculum can be mission-focused. Specific curricular examples are presented, as well as reflection on the factors that contributed to success in the JMWC.

OVERVIEW

Carlow University in Pittsburgh, PA, began a new general education curriculum in Fall 2016. Its two overarching goals are: 1) to connect with and animate Carlow's Mission and Values; and 2) to encourage divergent thinking and inspire creativity. Carlow faculty named their curriculum the "Carlow Compass" in order to emphasize the *navigational* nature of the curriculum, emphasizing student choice and creativity as well as the curriculum's utility as guidance for students' future trajectories as just and merciful leaders. Within the Compass curriculum resides the Just and Merciful World Curriculum (JMWC), which will be the primary focus of this white paper. The JMWC is a scaffolded curriculum within Compass that begins with a Contemplation and Action course that involves contemplation of Mercy values and themes, as applied to a particular topic. This course pairs this contemplation with social action in a small act of service. The curriculum then builds to culminating experiences in an Ethics and Social Responsibility (ESR) course or a Service-Learning (SL) course. While implementation and even revision to the Compass curriculum continues, the JMWC is already showing itself to be an effective and embraced aspect of the curriculum. This white paper will review the larger context of the Compass curriculum, and then focus specifically on the JMWC, which may be of particular interest to other Mercy Institutions seeking to find ways to successfully integrate mission within the curriculum.

BACKGROUND ON THE COMPASS CURRICULUM

The first-year Compass curriculum includes four types of curricular experiences: 1) Connecting to Carlow, which is a first-year experience course; 2) Skills courses, covering Writing,

Communication, and Quantitative Reasoning; 3) Critical Exploration (CE) courses—discipline-specific and cohort-based, emphasizing critical thinking skills through projects, writing, and experiential learning; and 4) Contemplation and Action (C&A) courses, which were described previously. C&A courses represent students' first foray into the JMWC.

In the mid-level curriculum, students take Breadth courses in the Liberal Arts—two courses from each of the four designated Liberal Arts breadth areas: Natural World, Expression, Social Justice, and Wisdom. Students then must take an additional course in one of these four areas to gain greater depth of knowledge.

The upper-level curriculum includes an Anchor course, which is a culminating skills experience within a disciplinary perspective taken in the junior or senior year, and the choice of either taking an SL or ESR course (Delbert et al., 2017). These last two courses are the culminating curriculum experiences in the JMWC. In our SL courses, "students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection," while our ESR courses use "experiential education activities to explore ethical reasoning and social responsibility" (Friedrichs & Zellers, 2016, p. 13).

THE JMWC

The intent of the JMWC is to bring the Mercy tradition alive within the curriculum and to help fulfill Carlow's mission by helping students to develop a personal ethic and sense of responsibility in order to become "compassionate, responsible leaders in the creation of a just and merciful world" (Mission of Carlow University). To do this, the curriculum was intentionally devised to be scaffolded. That is, the curriculum begins with a gateway C&A course that introduces reflective thinking and ethical reasoning skills. Common readings on mercy, service, and contemplation are included in all C&A classes. Finally, students complete a small act of service that is not a large service project but rather a way to integrate mercy in everyday life. These experiences help to prepare students for their upper-level courses in the JMWC. All the JMWC courses are experiential, involving hands-on learning, from small acts of service, to large semester-long service projects, to applying principles and theories by analyzing a course of action in a particular real-world scenario.

Assessment has been a key aspect of the JMWC curriculum from the onset. Formative and summative assessments are taken on a regular basis; an advisory group, the Social Responsibility Advisory Committee, comprised of faculty from diverse disciplines, helped to develop the JMWC outcomes. These outcomes are grounded in Carlow's identity as well as scholarly literature. This group continues to meet regularly to offer feedback on the outcomes and other topics pertaining to the JMWC.

EXAMPLE COURSES IN THE JMWC

The model course for the C&A curriculum is a theology course entitled, "A Small Matter of Mercy," created and taught by theology professor Maureen Crossen. The title and concept of the course is based on a comment attributed to Catherine McAuley, that "small acts of service and virtue are daily within reach." In this course, students choose a small act of service to be performed daily,

such as being more mindful about how one shows consideration to others, such as by holding the door for someone. Reflection and contemplation on mercy is an integral part of the course. Other recent C&A courses include the following:

- "Having It All," a women's and gender studies course which focuses on students balancing work, family, social, civic, romantic, spiritual, and academic aspects and reflecting on how to live more deliberately.

- "Mercy Presidents: Leadership Styles," a business/political science course that reviews the leadership styles of Sisters of Mercy who served as college presidents between the years 1929-1990, inviting students to reflect on their own leadership styles in light of the studied examples.

- "Joan of Arc, Virgin of Orleans," a history course that has students find and interview a modern-day Joan of Arc and join her in her activities, reflecting on how her faith is represented as well as how others react to it.

While service-learning is not new at Carlow University, the new Compass curriculum involved updating the requirements of SL courses so that more explicit connections between service projects and broad social justice issues are present. Recent examples of SL courses in the new curriculum include:

- "Girls in American Society," a women's and gender studies course that examines the social experience of girls in America. Students in the course volunteer as mentors with pre-adolescent girls at an organization in the Pittsburgh area.

- "Community Health Nursing," a nursing course that focuses on community health. Students work with various organizations to help educate and promote healthful practices.

The Ethics and Social Responsibility courses are the newest aspects of the JMWC. The first iteration of these courses will take place Fall 2017, and will include the following examples:

- "Social Welfare Policy," a social work course that involves analyzing social policies in-depth in terms of historical, economic, social, and political facets.

- "Leadership and Social Change Capstone," which is the capstone course in the Leadership and Social Change minor. Students will engage in a community-based project and will reflect on and analyze issues related to ethics and leadership.

These upper-level JMWC courses will continue to be overseen by the Compass Steering Committee, with input from the Social Responsibility Advisory Committee.

REFLECTION ON THE JMWC

Students and faculty reacted with significant buy-in to the JMWC. Since Carlow faculty on the Social Responsibility Advisory Committee as well as the Compass Steering Committee regularly

reflect on successes and challenges in the curriculum, we have identified three reasons why the JMWC has shown itself to be a successful model within the curriculum.

SHARED VALUES AND VISION

The JMWC directly implements elements from Carlow's Mission in the classroom and is the clearest way that the curriculum develops "compassionate, responsible leaders." Faculty and students tend to choose Carlow because they buy into this mission. The JMWC gives a concrete way to implement this mission in a way that is engaging and hands-on. Assessment efforts have guided every step of this process, as the Social Responsibility Advisory Committee assisted Compass leadership in intentionally embedding specific ethics and social responsibility outcomes within the curriculum: personal values, understanding diverse perspectives, social justice, and social responsibility.

COMMUNITY OF FACULTY

An engaged team of faculty in this area predates our Compass curriculum. Our Service-Learning Coordinator assembled faculty each year to act in an advisory capacity on Service-Learning. Thus, changing to an advisory board for the broader social responsibility issues was a natural transition. Currently, the advisory board meets at least once per year to weigh in on assessment and other issues in the JMWC. Subsets of faculty, such as the C&A instructors (past and present) meet each semester to share best practices and offer trainings. These meetings are characterized by food, fellowship, and open discussion, with the Compass leaders guiding the particular agenda for the meeting. Faculty enjoy coming to these meetings and view it as an extension of their own faculty development as well as an opportunity to belong to an engaged faculty group.

LEADERSHIP

Having the right people in the right roles is key, and Carlow has had excellent leadership overseeing Service-Learning, Ethical Reasoning, and the Contemplation and Action courses. These leaders have strong organization, the ability to stay on-topic, collegiality, the ability to make connections across faculty and staff, and overall interpersonal skills for running pleasant meetings! They are comfortable making requests of faculty when needed, such as asking a particular faculty member to teach a course, and they also listen well to particular faculty concerns and requests.

CONCLUSION

Having a subset of the curriculum overseen by a dedicated group of leaders and faculty has proven to be very effective at Carlow University. Integrating faculty development, trainings, and positive faculty interactions in scheduled meetings throughout each year helps to maintain buy-in and also makes this aspect of the curriculum distinctive. Moving forward, Carlow hopes to consider how other aspects of the curriculum can follow the successful model of the JMWC. We would strongly recommend that other institutions seeking to integrate Mercy values within the curriculum begin by developing faculty-led discussion groups and trainings, followed by clear focus on integral outcomes. By doing so, we fulfill our institutional missions.

REFERENCES

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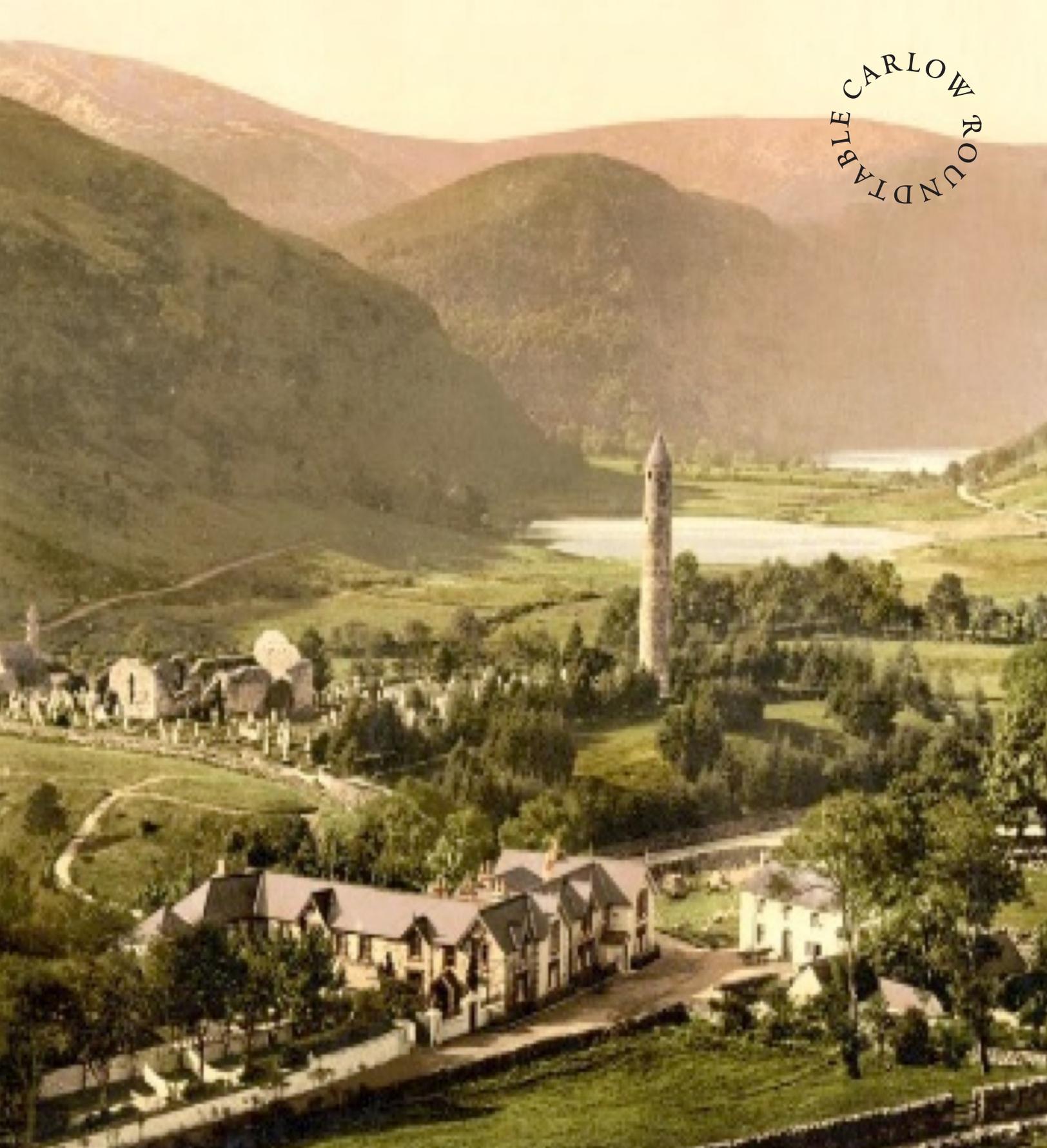
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MISSION STATEMENT

Carlow University, rooted in its Catholic identity and embodying the heritage and values of the Sisters of Mercy, offers transformational educational opportunities for a diverse community of learners and empowers them to excel in their chosen work as compassionate, responsible leaders in the creation of a just and merciful world.

CARLOW ROUNDTABLE