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A critical reflection on how spirituality animates
Service-Learning in the North American catholic
higher education context

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9. A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON HOW SPIRITUALITY ANIMATES SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE NORTH AMERICAN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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Abstract

Service-learning has emerged as a powerful pedagogy in the last three decades, especially as a specific form of experiential teaching and learning, which engages students with community priorities and immerses them in the community. As students encounter different communities and engage with complex social issues, they learn about the topic of study (their course and academic content), but they also develop in other areas, such as personal development, civic development, socio-emotional development, and spiritual development. The faith formation that emerges from service-learning experiences varies across the context of North American Higher Education institutions. The context matters, as the charisms of the institution and its approach to service-learning animate the spiritual development approach.

Through a dialogue with scholar-practitioners at four different Catholic Higher Education institutions across North America, this reflective essay will interrogate our practice through the lens of three reflective questions: (1) How does the context of your Catholic institution (mission, identity, approach to, and practice of community engagement) animate service-learning? (2) What distinguishes this approach from other Catholic institutions? (3) How does this practice connect to faith formation and/or spiritual development?

Through the lens of critical reflection, this essay provides an overview of practitioner's approaches to service-learning considering a variety of contexts across Catholic Higher Education institutions. This critical inquiry approach to practice provides an opportunity for scholar-practitioners to reflect on their practice and articulate their approach to service-learning at the intersection of faith and community engagement. In essence, this exploratory approach deepens the understanding of service-learning practice, while raising new questions around the relationship between faith, service-learning practice, and the faith-based institutional context of service-learning.

Introduction

Service-learning, often referred to as community-based learning, has emerged as a powerful pedagogy in the last three decades, especially as a specific form of experiential teaching and learning which engages students with complex, real world issues related to community priorities and immerses them in the community. As students encounter different communities and engage with social issues as wicked problems, they learn about the topic of study (their course and academic content), but they also develop in other areas, such as personal development, civic development, socio-emotional development, and spiritual development (Eyler et al., 2001). The benefits of service-learning have been recorded through the literature on student outcomes for the past two decades, but recent studies have indicated that spiritual development is a significant potential learning outcome (Sterk Barrett, 2015). With about 1,000 religiously-affiliated, or faith-based institutions, spiritual development and faith formation have been explicitly connected to service-learning and community engagement (Green et al., 2020; Mann, 2021). The relationship between them has often been positioned as spiritual development (learning outcome) emerges from service-learning (learning activity). Yet, if we re-frame this relationship, can the reverse be stated? In other words, how is service-learning animated by faith and spirituality?

The faith formation that emerges from service-learning experiences undoubtedly varies across the context of North American Higher Education faith-based institutions. In “Mission animation: Christian higher education, the common good, and community engagement”, Mann (2021) positioned Christian Higher Education through the lens of evangelical Christian and Roman Catholic faith-based institutions, and explains the philosophical foundations of each impact community engagement:

Similar to evangelical Christian higher education, Catholic higher education has its own unique identity and mission, while still providing space for each individual institution to have its own culture. (...) Catholic institutions are dedicated to a set of values. (...) These values serve to connect programming and curriculum to the Catholic faith and the Catholic intellectual tradition on Catholic university and college campuses. (Mann, 2021, pp. 11-12)

The context of the Catholic institution, then, matters, as the charisms of the institution and its approach to faith/spiritual development animate service-learning programming and delivery. How does this actually work, though, in practice?

Practitioner-Scholar Inquiry Approach

As practitioners of service-learning and community engagement and drawing from a practitioner-scholar framework, our inquiry here is rooted in our practice at Catholic universities across North America. How does faith and spirituality animate service-learning and community engagement? What elements of our practice are enhanced by faith, and what aspects need enhancement? For example, the relationship between faith and service-learning and community engagement is often connected to outcomes of equity,

The relationship between faith and service-learning and community engagement is often connected to outcomes of equity, justice, and access. Recent studies suggest that community engagement in Christian higher education connects to institutional mission and identity, often leading to community partnerships addressing local problems to address justice-related outcomes.

ty, justice, and access. Rine and Quiñones (2021) suggest that community engagement in Christian higher education connects to institutional mission and identity, often leading to community partnerships addressing local problems to address justice-related outcomes. Do the outcomes of service-learning relate to faith? Are they animated by the context of faith or spirituality? Mann (2021, p.

7) further suggests that faith and spirituality is a “driving motivator for service and engagement and that religiously affiliated institutions of higher learning often mobilize their institutional missions and visions through the pursuit of social justice, philanthropy, and service”. The concept of justice, or a derivative, thereof, plays a central role in this inquiry as well.

At the June 2021 Justice Conference sponsored by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), Fr. Tom Smolich, S.J., International Director of Jesuit Refugee Services, in his presentation on “Spirituality and Justice in Jesuit Higher Education”, challenged us to consider two essential questions: “what a justice rooted in faith could mean for us today?” as well as “what does the service of faith mean in 2021?”. Fr. Smolich intentionally and critically frames service as deeply connected with faith:

The Catholic intellectual tradition, the foundation of our higher education project, and of much progress in the world, is at risk of secularism and fundamentalism if we do not wrestle with the questions around faith. And as well, if our justice efforts are untethered to faith, they will fall in the endless circle of whose justice are we talking about? (Smolich, 2021)

He indicated that “*Wrestling with the faith question is critical (...). The service of faith is the driver of our promotion of justice*” (Smolich, 2021). This begs the questions: is faith / spirituality the driver of service-learning and community engagement, and if so, in what ways?

To wrestle with such questions, we draw from professional practices of community engagement through an inquiry stance (Ravitch, 2014). In addition, community engagement and service-learning require continuous reflection to foster learning, and we seek to model this as reflective-practitioners (Dostilio, 2017). Exploring community engagement practice related through the lens of professionals, we draw upon the reflections of practitioner-scholars who facilitate community engagement programs at four Catholic higher education institutions. Each of the institutions varies in the Catholic lens (Jesuit³², Marianist³³, Vincentian³⁴, and Catholic³⁵). This critical inquiry approach to practice provides an opportunity for scholar-practitioners to reflect on their practice and articulate their approach to service-learning at the intersection of faith and community engagement. Through a dialogue with these scholar-practitioners working at four different Catholic Higher Education institutions across North America, this reflective essay interrogates our practice through the lens of three reflective questions:

- ▶ How does the context of your Catholic institution (mission, identity, approach to, and practice of community engagement) animate service-learning?
- ▶ What distinguishes this approach from other Catholic institutions?
- ▶ How does this practice connect to faith formation and/or spiritual development?

Through this lens of critical reflection, this essay will explore the practitioner’s approaches to service-learning considering a variety of contexts across Catholic Higher Education institutions. This exploratory approach seeks to deepen the understanding of service-learning practice, while uncovering opportunities to strengthen the relationship between faith, service-learning practice, and the faith-based institutional context of service-learning.

Context Matters

Upon reflection of the context of their institution, each of the professionals indicated the importance of the University’s mission to inform service-learning. In other words, the

32 Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, USA.

33 University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, USA.

34 DePaul University, Chicago, IL, USA.

35 University of San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA (this academic institution was born from an agreement between the Diocese of San Diego and the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).

The context of the University's unique faith-based mission and identity informed how they facilitated service-learning. For example, some practitioner-scholars emphasized that many public schools have service-learning programs, but the Catholic identity and mission informs the delivery of service-learning through the lens of their faith-based tradition.

context of the University's unique faith-based mission and identity informed how they facilitated service-learning. For example, some practitioner-scholars emphasized that many public schools have service-learning programs, but the Catholic identity and mission informs the delivery of service-learning through the lens of their faith-based

tradition. They specified the emphases of their programs, stemming from the distinct context of their faith-based program:

Our Catholic identity and mission is really what kind of stands behind service learning and reinforces it and gives it wings to fly. . . . That identity calls us to give preference to the poor, to be responsive to our neighbors especially the stranger, to be involved in the fight for justice, to develop relationships in kinship with our community members especially those who are marginalized, to live our faith in service to and with others, and to live in the reflection of Christ. So, when you join together the mission related goals of our Jesuit Catholic institution, with a highly impactful and effective pedagogy, it results in transformation for our students, faculty, and our community. (Kim Jensen Bohat, Director of Service-Learning, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA)

*

DePaul identifies as Catholic, Vincentian, and urban and strives to model curricular and co-curricular programs and university policies after the work of the seventeenth-century priest Vincent de Paul. In particular, faculty and staff support the promotion of service-learning as an effort to integrate Vincentian values of service directly into the curriculum throughout all disciplines, departments, schools, and colleges. Service learning is therefore seen as a direct reflection of the Vincentian mission. Service-learning at DePaul was developed during the 1990s. As a faith-based, mission-driven university, DePaul was naturally drawn to support structures that aligned with the university's longstanding teacher-scholar model. In 1998 the university established the Office for Community-based Service Learning to primarily support new curriculum for delivering experiential learning opportunities to all undergraduates. The Experiential Learning Requirement was established as part of the DePaul's undergraduate Liberal Studies Program. Course that integrates service-learning pedagogy and 25 hours of service during the term were one option for completing this requirement. This approach was seen as infusing the Vincentian,

Catholic and Urban identity of the university into the core curriculum as the primary way that students fulfill a graduation requirement. (Howard Rosing, Executive Director, Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and Community Services Studies, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA)

*

The University of San Diego (USD) has historically been dedicated to public service and the development of civically engaged individuals. Since its founding in 1949, USD has embraced socially responsible action that improves the human condition, promotes deep reflection and empathy, and cultivates an ecosystem that generates knowledge for the good of society, all of which reflect the institution's focus on the liberal arts education, its commitment to social justice, and its faith-based identity in relation to the Catholic intellectual tradition. Its mission statement identifies USD as "a Roman Catholic institution committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service". Having a mission and core values that align with Catholic social teaching has been important at the university, historically for laying the foundation upon which to build programming in conjunction with community partnerships and to foster civic engagement opportunities. Parting from this initial faith-based foundation, USD has integrated several developments through the years that reflect the institution's commitment to the public good and also align with broader, national tendencies; these include the expansion of community engagement, the incorporation of social innovation, and the articulation of an anchor institution discourse. The evolution of these developments has doubtlessly contributed to the overall work of social justice in the San Diego community and beyond. (Chris Nayve, Associate Vice President of Community Engagement, Karen & Tom Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness and Social Action, University of San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA)

*

University of Dayton was founded by the Society of Mary and is a Marianist institution; our Marian library is the largest collection on Mary in the world. UD attracts people who want to do good in the world, who want to make a positive impact, and who genuinely believe in the power of community and the Common Good (University for the Common Good is our university 'motto'/identity). Many of our students work with community partners who serve the poor and marginalized; many students across a variety of majors, from business to engineering and human rights studies have a role in designing ideas and applied projects that have direct impacts in the community. (Karen Lovett, Director of Experiential Learning, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, USA)

Each of the professionals noted that the emphasis of their faith-based mission and institutional identity influenced the priorities of the service-learning program and delivery. This

Each of the professionals noted that the emphasis of their faith-based mission and institutional identity influenced the priorities of the service-learning program and delivery.

is clearly apparent in the community partnerships they develop, the program outcomes they articulate, and the emphases (e.g., social justice) connected to the mission.

Distinct Approaches

The service-learning practices were unique at each of these four institutions, shaped by the emphases and priorities associated with the faith mission. Upon reflection on what distinguished their approach, each of the professionals were able to identify aspects of the mission related to that Catholic heritage and resources related to that Catholic tradition.

I would say that the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm is what really distinguishes how we approach service learning compared to other Catholic Schools. Service Learning is an active model of this paradigm. The critical reflection models we use are modeled after the Examen, and to other forms of Jesuit reflection such as the Spiritual Exercises. (K. Bohat)

*

In 2001, DePaul received an endowment to create the Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and Community Service Studies to further expand service learning into curriculum across all of its 10 college and schools and into both undergraduate and graduate programs. In its day-to-day work, the Center's maintains a critique of elite institutional structures that have led to many of the problems faced by those communities that the Center seeks to support. As Vincentian priest, Anthony Dosen, C.M., notes, "Vincentian administrators must challenge their collaborators not merely to be good at their respective task. He argues, "the task of Vincentian administrators is not merely to provide professional development to their colleagues, but the possibility for personal transformation". Therefore, the Center seeks to manage its affairs, including both staff development and its approach to interactions with various constituents (students, faculty, community) in a manner that is aligned with such values. This approach is aligned closely with Asset-based Community Development which as an approach centers on the gifts and talents of individuals as the primary assets in communities. This framework aligns well with the value of Vincentian personalism at the core of the Vincentian approach to serve those who are most in need, while still valuing that those being served have important assets to be recognized and uplifted. (H. Rosing)

*

The Marianist characteristic that I think most closely resonates with service learning (community engaged learning is the term we use at UD) is "educate for service, justice, and peace" particularly where it speaks about attending to the poor and marginalized.

We have a Human Rights Center (the first of its kind) that also embodies this Marianist spirit of educating for service, justice, and peace. (K. Lovett)

*

Integration of social innovation, civic/community engagement, place-based community engagement, with an anchor mission best describes our approach. The introduction of the “changemaker” discourse at USD reflects broader tendencies. The creation of the Changemaker Hub at USD was an important development that followed the initial Ashoka designation more immediately. Instead of founding a new center or institute, the hub was conceptualized to act as an umbrella entity where individuals, the curriculum, and different organizations would converge in the diverse and multifaceted work of changemaking. Rather than seeking organizational autonomy, the focus has been on the shared “ownership” of the hub across campus. Many years after its creation, the hub continues to strive to encourage collaboration among academic units on campus, helping to expand the reach and capacity of the university to engage the community and promote social entrepreneurial and innovative projects. In terms of faculty engagement, the hub revised its previous Changemaker Faculty Champions program and created a Changemaker Faculty Fellows Development Program in 2017–2018. While the former requested deans to nominate faculty as “changemaker champions”, the Faculty Fellows initiative allows individuals to self-nominate through an application process. The result has been that the hub is able to collaborate with faculty who have a genuine interest in changemaking and social innovation. Moreover, the focus is shifted to a developmental approach and continuing the work into the future. The fellows meet routinely for a series of workshops on how to implement changemaking and social innovation into their teaching, research, and service commitments. This transformation of the program has proved worthwhile; the current cohort of faculty has demonstrated not only a deeper understanding of USD’s changemaking initiative but also enthusiasm to continue collaborating with the hub during the next academic year. Through collaborations with other units on campus such as the Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness and Social Action; the Center for Inclusion and Diversity; the Center for Educational Excellence; and University Ministry, the hub has created a number of initiatives to support the practice of changemaking. For example, the Social Change Corps (SCC) is a co-curricular program that provides students, working in groups of two to five, with the opportunity to learn about social issues that matter to them and to suggest ways to address these issues. The SCC encourages students to think creatively about issues that exist both on and off campus and to engage with community in ways that are meaningful, sustainable, and reciprocal.

Finally, the tensions produced around the ambiguous notion of changemaking also led a group of faculty and staff at USD, sponsored by the Center for Educational Excellence, to design a “model of change” in an effort to develop a more inclusive and holistic framework for positive social change (Guerrieri & Sgoutas-Emch, 2016). This model has se-

veral guiding principles, including the imperative to work in ethical solidarity with others in an attempt to build more equitable, reciprocal, and democratic partnerships, which also means focusing on community assets while simultaneously deepening one's understanding of the complexity of issues through the exploration of historical, political, social, cultural, and other key aspects. Rising above the parameters and limitations of any single approach to working for the common good, ultimately, this group of faculty and staff attempted to disentangle broader questions of change and sought a more open and malleable framework that could help examine, enrich, and interconnect multiple modalities of engagement. Development, discussion, and implementation of the model became one of the ways that the university continues to work toward the integration of different entities and initiatives on campus. (C. Nayve).

The distinctive elements of each faith-based institution (i.e., Jesuit, Marianist, Vincentian, or Catholic) impact the delivery of service-learning and community engagement programs. From how reflection is facilitated to the content discussed and outcomes emphasized in the community engagement experience (e.g., human rights), each professional identified distinct elements related to their Catholic tradition and institutional mission.

Service-Learning Practice and Faith Formation

When each of the professionals reflected upon how their practice relates to faith formation and spiritual development, responses varied as to the degree to which this was an explicit outcome. Many North American institutions have other departments, such as Campus Ministry, which emphasize and explicitly promote faith formation programs and spiritual development outcomes. The reflections indicated outcomes that serve, or lead to, faith and spiritual development while also separating from these explicit outcomes. Reflecting on community engagement practices also demonstrated that the method of service-learning (partnering and related to community, anchor institution work) may serve, or lead to, faith and spiritual development as well.

One of our primary learning objectives in our service learning program is vocational formation, and while that is somewhat different from faith or spiritual formation, they are also very connected. During and after the service learning experience we ask our students, who do they feel called to be? How did what they learn from this experience shape the way they see the world, their faith, and their understanding of their place in this universe? How did the experience affirm or negate their values around religion and spirituality? Every three semesters we also host a reflection session that specifically deals with service and faith. I think through our reflection series and this pedagogy we are teaching

students techniques, strategies, and pathways to think more deeply about tough questions, and this includes thinking about their faith and spirituality. (K. Bohat)

*

The Steans Center does not directly engage in faith formation and/or spiritual development, though the Center collaborates with the Office of Mission and Ministry which is directly charged with this goal. The Center sees the importance of relationship building both internally and externally as centrally important to contributing the larger mission of the university. In other words, how Center staff relate to one another, and the outside world can directly impact how individuals develop their own sense of faith or spirituality. Successful service learning engaged with community organizations in a way that honestly recognizes the damaging effect of past academic approaches can, for example, go a long way toward building authentic partnerships, making people feel connected in a deeper spiritual sense. Acknowledging organizations as practical and intellectual assets in their communities and that the university is not there to appropriate knowledge is not only highly compatible with the university's mission but helps model for students a way to apply their faith or spiritual in action. (H. Rosing)

*

I would have to say that after interviewing dozens of students at UD about their experiential learning experiences, I have never been in a place where students are more concerned about doing good and "giving back", and using their UD education to make a real impact. The students are passionate and driven about community engaged learning. Many come from religious backgrounds and the Marianist/Catholic demographic is definitely a majority. I also think our faculty and staff tend to identify with our Marianist charism, and it definitely bonds employees at the university. It inspires the way we relate to each other and to our students. It influences advising and mentoring at the university. Students have overwhelmingly remarked that they felt supported at the university and I do think that much of that is due to our history and identity as a Marianist institution. (K. Lovett)

*

With regard to the type of community collaboration realized through the years, USD's community engagement framework has operated in parallel with or been integrated into a wide range of community-centered activities that could be understood as anchor practices, such as providing landlord/tenant dispute resolution services, offering health screenings, staffing community health clinics, providing childhood development classes for parents, as well as economic development and marketing training to small business owners. (...) Furthermore, the sustainability and adaptability of these partnerships is questionable. When a project is completed, what happens to the partnership? What resources or structures are in place to ensure the maintenance and growth of a particular program? One approach to address these gaps, introduced by USD's new administration,

consists of understanding the university as an anchor institution within the community. (...) Anchor institutions are universities, schools, nonprofits, hospitals, and other organizations that are considered to be permanently located in a city or region. Being rooted in their local communities and oftentimes controlling or overseeing considerable resources, they have the potential to bring crucial and measurable benefits to their neighbors. Ultimately, USD seeks to continue building long-term, interdependent, and sustainable partnerships with the surrounding community, and the partner organizations are seen as co-creators guiding the direction of social change. In this sense, the creation of the Linda Vista Anchor Institution Advisory Board—comprising leaders, residents, and practitioners committed to increasing the economic, cultural, and social health of the community—exemplifies the fact that the university is only one of many anchors in the community, and the critical points of collaboration are constituted by community-identified issues such as public health, education, food security, and economic development. The goal is for deep integration. (C. Nayve)

Each of the practitioner-scholars identified ways in which the practice of service-learning and community engagement serves larger outcomes of faith formation, or may lead to spiritual development, but they also differentiated their programmatic work from these goals explicitly. Their responses indicated that, in practice, faith was not necessarily the driver of service-learning and community engagement activities, but it was a key contributor and influence on such activities. In other words, faith development was not identified

Each of the practitioner-scholars' responses indicated that, in practice, faith was not necessarily the driver of service-learning and community engagement activities, but it was a key contributor and influence on such activities.

explicitly as a goal of service-learning at these Catholic institutions, although it was recognized that service-learning may lead to growth in this area. It is significant to note, however, that faith shapes and influences service-learning across institutions.

Implications

Reflecting on community engagement practice is a powerful tool to help organize themes, or concepts, that emerge across the context of Catholic higher education institutions. From the perspective of this thematic analysis, the reflections of our four practitioner-scholars at different institutions reveal that institutional, faith-based context and the distinct elements of that Catholic faith tradition impact service-learning program de-

livery. In addition, service-learning programs may offer a gateway to faith formation and spiritual development, although these outcomes may not be explicitly articulated or promoted in the delivery of such programs. As a fellow practitioner-scholar in the community engagement field, this corresponds and deeply resonates with my own professional practice, as well as program and practice at Loyola University Chicago. My own reflections on my professional practice mirror these themes emerging from these practitioner-scholar dialogues.

If the context and distinct faith-based elements of our service-learning programs at each of our institutions shapes and informs our delivery and creates a gateway potentially leading to faith formation and spiritual development, is there an opportunity to more intentionally design service-learning to connect to these outcomes? Emerging from these reflections are some key concepts that formulate a framework for service-learning practice in the Catholic faith-based setting.

Through deliberation and dialogue with community engagement professionals at four different Catholic higher education institutions, a conceptual framework emerges that may inform a deeper connection to the faith-based context with an intentional design of service-learning. A conceptual framework historically is defined as a structure for organizing ideas and an iteration of a researcher's inquiry that may evolve as the inquiry evolves (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). Punch (2000) suggests that conceptual frameworks represent the conceptual status of the topics at hand and their relationship to each other.



FIGURE 1. Intentional Design of Service-learning at Faith-Based Institutions

As indicated from our reflection on practice, the faith-based context and the distinct elements of that Catholic faith tradition shape the service-learning and community engagement program, which then develop a gateway through a variety of integrated outcomes that potentially lead to faith formation and spiritual development. Through intentional design of service-learning experiences that recognized and articulates the context, distinct faith-based tradition, outcomes, and pathways connecting to faith formation (Figure

1), practitioners have the opportunity to deepen the connection between service-learning and the Catholic mission of our institutions.

There is also an opportunity for further study, exploring specifically *how* the values associated with the different Catholic traditions influence, or shape and define, service-learning outcomes, experiences, and partnerships. In addition, what learning design approaches elevate the values and institutional mission as a significant aspect of the course? Is learning shaped differently because of this impact on service-learning and community engagement, and if so, how? Further research on the connection between service-learning and faith is essential. This reflective inquiry on practice indicates distinct connections that require more exploration in regard to how Catholic values and approaches influence, shape, and define service-learning

Further research on the connection between service-learning and faith is essential. This reflective inquiry on practice indicates distinct connections that require more exploration in regard to how Catholic values and approaches influence, shape, and define service-learning and lead to faith development.

ing and lead to faith development. These new lines of inquiry also reflect a call to action for practitioners at faith-based institutions to be more explicit with the connections between Catholic values and service-learning, leveraging specific values emerging from Catholic Social Teaching, as well as various forms of justice.

Reflections on Practice: A Call to Celebrate Faith-based Approaches in Service-Learning as Instrumental in Social Change

Reviewing Figure 1, there is an opportunity for practitioners of service-learning and community engagement at Catholic institutions to pause and reflect on their practice. Such reflection may allow practitioners to work toward intentional design of service-learning through the lens of their Catholic context, values, explicit outcomes related to service-learning, and faith/spiritual development. Sample reflection questions include:

Context

1. What is the Catholic context of your institution?
2. How does the mission articulate this identity?

Values

1. What values are expressed and emphasized to represent your Catholic identity and mission?
2. Where do you see these values articulated and demonstrated?

Service-Learning Outcomes

1. What outcomes related to justice best connect with your service-learning program?
2. What outcomes associated with Social Catholic Teaching are best represented through your service-learning program?
3. How are community partnerships represented and developed with these outcomes in mind?

Faith / Spiritual Development

1. How does service-learning serve as a pathway for faith/spiritual development at your institution?
2. What pathways are made available to students who seek to grow in this area?
3. How can you design the service-learning program (e.g., course, activity, resources) to articulate opportunities to grow in this area?

Emerging from this reflective inquiry, there is a clear call for action: it is time to celebrate our faith-based context within Catholic higher education institutions. The North American context, historically shaped by a separation of Church and state, has long approached the work of community engagement under the domain of this policy. Yet, it is clear that our faith-based context at Catholic institutions, along with our faith traditions,

Emerging from this reflective inquiry, there is a clear call for action: it is time to celebrate our faith-based context within Catholic higher education institutions. (...) Yet, it is clear that our faith-based context at Catholic institutions, along with our faith traditions, elevate the work of service-learning by shaping program delivery and outcomes.

elevate the work of service-learning by shaping program delivery and outcomes. If we design community engagement programs intentionally and unapologetically to connect with our faith-based context, traditions, and goals, we educate with faith formation at the forefront, rather than at the margins.

As Mitchell (2008) encouraged practitioners to apply critical service-learning principles to address power and privilege, foster authentic relationships within our communities, and promote a social change (justice) orientation, it is time for all Catholic institutions of higher education to explicitly connect justice outcomes (social, economic, racial, and environmental justice) to their service-learning programs and activities. The faith-based values associated with justice clearly animate and shape service-learning in practice, program delivery, and partnership approaches. It is essential to mirror this practice with articulated priorities within our faith-based, Catholic context, given the potential for engaging students in justice-related work has potential pathways to faith formation and spiritual development. Drawing from the Catholic social teaching tradition, let Catholic universities and colleges be leaders in social change and advocates of social justice through service-learning, providing models for other institutions of higher education on how values-based education leads in *practice* and in *faith*.

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“We will not change the world, if we do not change education”

Pope Francis

3 Spirituality and Higher Education: Perspectives from Service-Learning

A research topic that is increasingly attracting the attention of the academic world is the link between teaching and spirituality, understood in its broadest sense. This will be the focus of the volume that we present to our readers today. The aim is to provide, both for Catholic Institutions of Higher Education and universities at large, a space for reflection in their itinerary of discernment about their identity and specific mission.

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