

Integrating Social Justice across the Curriculum: The Catholic Mission and Counselor Education

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Abstract

Counselor education and the Catholic faith share an important core value: social justice. As a counselor education program within a Jesuit and Sisters of Mercy institution, the construct of social justice is a unifying value that is rooted in academic preparation and practice. To promote a lifestyle of social justice, the counselor education program interweaves the concept throughout the counseling curriculum as well as through extracurricular activities, and the counseling clinic serves as an active expression of social justice. This article illustrates the various methods by which social justice is integrated across the counseling program, providing specific examples of pedagogical and practice methods.

Introduction

From its founding in 1540, the Society of Jesus has been dedicated to engaging in work that is most needed in our world.¹ Throughout its almost five centuries of existence, many exemplary individuals have done pioneering work in social service and justice. Its schools have had

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¹ Ignatius Loyola, trans., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 274-275.

a rich tradition of concern for the poor and social justice in addition to a commitment to academic excellence and personal formation. In the 1970s a dramatic shift took place that deepened and strengthened this concern and made justice the focus and organizing principle of Jesuit education. In 1973, then superior general Pedro Arrupe, S.J., addressing a meeting of Jesuit alumni in Valencia, Spain, challenged Jesuit schools to educate persons for others to humanize our world and its structures in the pursuit of justice.² In 1978, the Thirty-Second Jesuit General Congregation committed Jesuits to “the service of faith and the promotion of justice” as their primary mission.³ Since then, Jesuits have rethought all their ministries in the light of justice and the social needs of our world and have used justice as an integrating factor in all their works.⁴

Social Justice in the Counseling Profession

Although the Jesuits’ commitment to address existing needs in the world preceded that of counselors by almost four centuries, the place that social justice holds for counselors is of similar prominence. In fact, engagement in social justice advocacy continues to be a mandate for counselors, evidenced most recently by the numerous calls for counselors to renew their commitment to social justice activities.⁵ Additionally, the broad support provided for social justice activities by multiple

² Pedro Arrupe, S.J., *Men for Others: Education for Social Justice and Social Action Today* (Valencia, Spain, 1973).

³ General Congregation 32, Decree 2 “Jesuits Today,” in *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st–35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, ed. John Padberg, S.J. (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009), 291-297.

⁴ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education” (paper presented at the Commitment to Justice in Higher Education Conference, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, October 6, 2000).

⁵ Deryl Bailey, et al, “Achievement Advocacy for all Students through Transformative School Counseling Programs,” in *Transforming the School Counseling Profession*, ed. Bradley T. Erford (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 98-120; Alison A. Cox and Courtland C. Lee, “Challenging Educational Inequities: School Counselors as Agents of Social Justice” in *Counseling for Social Justice* 2nd ed., ed. Courtland C. Lee (Alexandria, VA: The American Counseling Association, 2007), 3-14; James T. Brown, “Advocacy Competencies for School Counselors,” *The Professional School Counselor*, 8 (2005): 259-268; Courtland C. Lee, *Counseling for Social Justice*, 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association, 2007), 15-20.

organizations⁶ testifies to this commitment. Finally, the development of the American Counseling Association Advocacy Competencies⁷ and the accreditation requirements pertaining specifically to the inclusion of social justice issues in the counseling curriculum⁸ further emphasize the significance of social justice in counseling today.

Counselors' renewed commitment to social justice activism has been spurred on by a two-fold desire: to address more effectively issues of oppression, which can negatively affect individual development, and to reconnect counselors to their professional roots.⁹ Because the welfare of individuals is the primary concern of counselors, the roles that injustice and inequity play in welfare cannot be ignored. Further, if counselors fail to take an active part in addressing issues of justice where they occur, including neighborhoods, political systems, schools, and religious and social institutions, then they may only be partially effective in their ability to treat individuals.¹⁰

The current emphasis on addressing justice issues on a much broader scale illustrates a significant change in the counseling literature that had historically emphasized individual and small-group level interventions.¹¹ In contrast to decades past, over the last twenty years, counselors have worked to address social injustices through legislative advocacy and through work with religious and community institutions.¹² Although advocacy work is not unique to the counseling profession—it

⁶ American Counseling Association Governing Council, "Endorsement of the Advocacy Competencies" (approved at the annual meeting of the American Counseling Association Governing Council, Anaheim, CA, March 2-4, 2003); American School Counselor Association, *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*, 2nd Edition (Alexandria, VA: American School Counselor Association, 2006).

⁷ Judith A. Lewis, et al, "Advocacy Competencies," American Counseling Association, <http://www.counseling.org/Publications/>.

⁸ Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, *CA-CREP Accreditation Manual: 2009 Standards* (Alexandria, VA: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2009).

⁹ Lee, *Counseling for Social Justice*, 15.

¹⁰ Diane Goodman, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 189.

¹¹ Madonna G. Constantine, et al, "Social Justice and Multicultural Issues: Implications for the Practice and Training of Counselors and Counseling Psychologists," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 85 (2007): 24-29.

¹² Sally M. Hage, "Reaffirming the Unique Identity of Counseling Psychology: Opting for The Road Less Traveled By," *The Counseling Psychologist* 31 (2003): 555-563; Mark Kiselica and Michelle Robinson, "Bringing Advocacy Counseling to Life: The History, Issues, and Human Drama of Social Justice Work in Counseling," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 79 (2001): 387-397; Chalmer E. Thompson, et al, "Healing Inside

also has some relevance to other mental health professions—counseling is the only mental health discipline to have taken the formal step of promulgating advocacy competencies. The promulgation of the Advocacy Competencies¹³ has attempted to make social justice work more tangible by providing concrete guidance to advocacy at the levels of client/student, school/community, and the public arena. This has continued to reinforce the role of the counselor as a social justice activist. The very role of counselor implies change agent, one who is prepared to address issues directly and to empower the powerless. Most significantly, counselors appreciate that a framework in social justice is necessary for empowering individuals, groups, and communities¹⁴—a prerequisite upon which the success of counseling is predicated. As a result, social justice has been emphasized as a critical formational aspect of counselor education.

Social Justice and Advocacy in Counselor Education

Along with the prominence of social justice within the counseling profession, there has been an increased call for inclusion of social justice in the training of counselors.¹⁵ Counselor educators have proposed specific guidelines regarding the type and scope of social justice content that should be taught within counselor education programs¹⁶ and they have proposed program-level efforts to address enhanced training in social justice.¹⁷ Such efforts have included class discussions about social justice¹⁸ and service-learning experiences in which students work with community

and Out: Promoting Social Justice and Peace in a Racially Divided U.S. Community,” in *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling* 25 (2003): 215-223.

¹³ Lewis, *Advocacy Competencies*, 1-3.

¹⁴ Manivong J. Ratts and A. Michael Hutchins, “ACA Advocacy Competencies: Social Justice Advocacy at the Client/Student Level,” *Journal of Counseling & Development* 87 (2009): 269-275.

¹⁵ Constantine, “Social Justice and Multicultural Issues,” 24-29; Goodman, “*Promoting Diversity and Social Justice*,” 190; Kiselica and Robinson, “Bringing Advocacy Counseling to Life,” 387-397.

¹⁶ Lee, “*Counseling for Social Justice*,” 29.

¹⁷ Laura K. Palmer, “The Call to Social Justice: A Multidiscipline Agenda,” *The Counseling Psychologist* 32 (2004): 879-885.

¹⁸ Alex Pieterse, et al, “Multicultural Competence and Social Justice Training in Counseling Psychology and Counselor Education: A Review and Analysis of a Sample of Multicultural Counseling Course Syllabi,” *The Counseling Psychologist* 37 (2009): 93-115.

action organizations and participate in legislative advocacy.¹⁹ On a broader level, integrating an emphasis on social justice across all aspects of counselor training programs has been suggested.²⁰ Unfortunately, despite the renewed commitment to principles of social justice by counselors and the calls to demonstrate this commitment through the infusion of social justice within counselor education programs, there has not yet been evidence that this has occurred. In fact, a recent study of counselor education programs found that social justice had not been fully accepted as a central tenet, and as such, was not adequately articulated within the curricula.²¹ This article, therefore, attempts to show a counseling education program that bridges this gap.

Our university, the University of Detroit Mercy is cosponsored by the Jesuits and Sisters of Mercy. The University is located in the city of Detroit, and has an annual enrollment of approximately 6,000 students. As a result of the university's identity as a Jesuit and Mercy institution, social justice has even greater significance to our counselor education program. It has been a unifying construct that has shaped our faculty composition and informed curricular practice, service, and related activities over recent years. In this article, we describe the process we have practiced to fully infuse the value of social justice within our counseling program. We begin by defining social justice from the perspective of the counseling discipline, and then describe the developmental process that has occurred among our program faculty as we have shifted to engage in a more comprehensive commitment to social justice. We conclude by articulating the concrete steps we have taken to infuse social justice across the counseling curriculum, including an introduction to social justice, advocacy and service, social justice-inspired pedagogical activities, the use of physical place as a social justice issue, advocacy education, promoting a lifestyle of service, and the use of the counseling clinic as a social justice initiative.

Defining Social Justice

The Jesuit commitment to social justice stems from the much broader objective of addressing large-scale issues in the world and doing what is

¹⁹ Constantine, "Social Justice and Multicultural Issues," 24-29.

²⁰ Regine M. Talleyrand, "Incorporating Social Justice in Counselor Training Programs: A Case Study Example" in *Handbook for Social Justice in Counseling Psychology: Leadership, Vision, Action*, eds. Rebecca L. Toporek, et al (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing), 37-43.

²¹ Pieterse, "Multicultural Competence and Social Justice Training," 93-115.

most needed.²² Within the counseling profession, there seems to be consensus that social justice includes both an awareness of oppression and action to redress existing inequities.²³ More precisely, social justice efforts must be aimed at redressing such forms of oppression as classism, sexism, and racism.²⁴ Further, social justice implies equity among all individuals regardless of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, gender, physical and/or mental ability, and other related aspects.²⁵ In addition, social justice activism addresses both historical and current forms of oppression by seeking correction and restoration of equity to individuals and groups that have suffered some form of societal marginalization.²⁶ These definitions of social justice have come to form today's thinking of precisely what social justice means to counselors.

Garnering Full Faculty Support and Commitment

After recognizing the shared significance that social justice had for both the Catholic faith and counselor education, we took specific steps within our counseling program to promote social justice as a core value to our students. This process began around 2003, following a complete turnover in faculty in the counseling program. Initially, the new and only faculty member, who had participated in several forums and conferences on Catholic higher education, made a decision to infuse social justice, advocacy, and service into the counseling curriculum. This change in course also dovetailed with several conversations with University administrators regarding the shared values of the counseling profession and Catholic institutions, and encouragement from upper administration to overtly embrace social justice within the counseling curriculum.

Once this ideological shift occurred, new faculty hiring decisions were made in part based upon an individual's commitment to the tenets of social justice. University administrators were very supportive of this

²² George E. Gans, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 13.

²³ Goodman, "Promoting Diversity and Social Justice," 146; Leann Smith, "Applying a Social Justice Framework to College Counseling Center Practice," *Journal of College Counseling* 6 (2003): 3-14.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ R. M. Fondacaro and D. Weinberg, "Concepts of Social Justice in Community Psychology: Toward a Social Ecological Epistemology," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 30 (2002): 473-490.

²⁶ Darryl Lum, *Culturally Competent Practice: A Framework for Understanding Diverse Groups and Justice Issues* 3rd Edition (Belmont, CA: Thomson, 2007), 12.

practice, which, in fact, reinforced the significance of mission-related hiring already in place at the University. Several methods were used to find and hire individuals who shared a commitment to social justice: faculty job postings overtly required a commitment to social justice; lengthy conversations with applicants about social justice and the program vision occurred throughout the interview process; and applicants' past actions and experiences that reflected a commitment to social justice were evaluated. During this time, three new faculty members were hired; currently, all four faculty members—who comprise the entire faculty of the counseling program (and who are the authors of this article)—share a commitment to social justice. Together, the faculty continues to develop the emphasis on social justice within the curriculum, making changes continually. The process is recognized as fluid, one still being shaped and developed. Because of this, no formal evaluation of the program has been conducted. However, this article serves as a first step in fully articulating what has been done and will serve as a precursor to a formal evaluation.

Laying the Foundation: Introducing Social Justice, Service, and Advocacy

To integrate social justice into the counselor education program, we needed to begin by designing an appropriate foundation. To accomplish this, we introduced the concepts of social justice, advocacy, and service to our students using both direct and indirect methods. This has meant beginning this dialogue during the admission process, to familiarize prospective students with the broader values that support our counseling program and our institution. We believe that by engaging in open and direct discussions with potential students about the meaning of social justice, its relationship to our academic program, and our faculty, as well as ways in which we translate the concept into concrete activities throughout the curriculum, serves as an initial introduction to the value-based framework from which the counseling program operates.

In addition, during the strategic planning process in 2003, social justice, advocacy, and service were identified as three of the five ideological foundations of our counseling program, and as such, each is discussed in detail in the student handbook. By briefly discussing each of the concepts in the handbook, we intend to introduce and/or acquaint students with these concepts while also communicating the significance that each has to the counseling program. Broad definitions are provided, as well as specific examples of how the faculty attempts to implement each throughout the counseling program, which includes charging

students with engaging in social justice activities (as well as advocacy and service), thus reinforcing this value-based framework.

Another method by which we attempt to provide a framework for social justice across the curriculum is through specific pedagogical activities; for example, several books were selected specifically because of their relevance to social justice and advocacy issues.²⁷ The majority of these books are autobiographical or biographical, providing first- or second-hand accounts of particular challenges and inequities. The books deal with such issues as underground economies, the homeless, the juvenile justice system, and religiously-, racially-, and sexually-based forms of oppressions (to name but a few) and were chosen as another means by which students can encounter justice issues. More significantly, though, specific justice-focused reflection questions are used to promote a deeper level of engagement with the issues covered in the texts. For example, to facilitate dialogue following the readings, questions such as the following are used: In what ways do mental health professionals engage in further oppressing Daphne in the book, *The Last Time I Wore a Dress*? What does the underground economy illustrated in *Off the Books* teach us about capitalism, survival, and the urban dynamics of oppression and equity? To what degree has the juvenile justice system contributed to the creation of greater inequities among class, ethnic, and racial minorities?

In exposing students to these readings and promoting deeper interaction with this type of material, we attempt to nurture whole and wise persons who are able effectively to understand and critique their world. These pedagogical activities respond to both the Jesuit and the Sisters of Mercy thoughts regarding the formation of education. In his address at the conference on the Commitment to Justice in Higher Education, Superior General Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. stated that:

For four hundred and fifty years, Jesuit education has sought to educate “the whole person” intellectually and professionally, psychologically, morally and spiritually. But in the emerging global reality, with its great possibilities and deep contradictions, the whole person is different from the whole person of

²⁷ Viktor Frankel, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston, MA: Washington Square Press, 1984); Sapphire, *Push* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 1996); Sudhir Ventkatesh, *Off the Books* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006); Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London, England: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000); Jennifer Toth, *Orphans of the Living: Stories of America's Children in Foster Care* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997); Edward Humes, *No Matter How Loud I Shout* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Daphne Scholinski and J. A. Adams, *The Last Time I Wore a Dress* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1997).

the Counter-Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, or the 20th Century. Tomorrow's "whole person" cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world. Tomorrow's whole person must have, in brief, a well-educated solidarity. We must therefore raise our Jesuit educational standard to "educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world."²⁸

Margaret Farley, R.S.M. articulated a similar understanding from the point of view of a Sister of Mercy, emphasizing that the goal of education is to grow in wisdom and that in today's world, that commitment to wisdom has a number of implications:

(1) Wisdom involves many things, but central to it is a recognition of the dignity of human persons and the value of all creation; (2) genuine recognition of the dignity of all persons, along with insight into the treasures of the rest of creation, yields imperatives of justice; (3) justice both calls for and makes possible relationships of compassion or mercy.²⁹

Responding to these calls, we believe that one method of promoting a deeper level of compassion and understanding among people is to foster a value system among students that is shaped by the formational aspects of education.³⁰ Therefore, by incorporating readings with social justice themes across the curriculum, we attempt to infuse justice-related dialogue throughout coursework, thus ensuring justice remains a focal point of the counseling curriculum. More specifically, these types of readings are integrated into required coursework across several required classes, including such diverse coursework as counseling theories, multicultural counseling, program development and evaluation, diagnosis in mental health, and the counseling internship.

Prominence of Physical Place: The Role of Geography in Social Justice

In addition to integrating social justice into the curriculum, the significant role that geography plays in social justice is emphasized within the academic program and the university through a variety of

²⁸ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education" (paper presented at the Commitment to Justice in Higher Education Conference, Santa Clara, CA, October 6, 2000).

²⁹ Margaret A. Farley, R.S.M., "Wisdom, Dignity, and Justice: Higher Education as a Work of Mercy" (paper presented at the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, Gwynedd-Mercy College, PA, June 15, 2006).

³⁰ Robert N. Bellah, "Education for Justice" (paper presented at the Jesuit Higher Education Apostolate *Transitions 2002* Workshop, San Francisco, CA, May 31, 2002).

mechanisms. Because of the tremendous implications for justice that physical place so often has, we believe social justice activism requires strategically addressing the role of place in equity- and inclusion-related issues.

Considering the sociopolitical culture of the past in which the Jesuit (and many other) institutions of higher education developed, it is not surprising that many of these institutions have had to struggle with the challenge of recruiting and retaining such populations as the poor, people of color, and women. The population of many predominantly White colleges and universities located in urban communities does not reflect the demographic composition of ethnic groups in the general population.³¹ Such situations, where easy camaraderie and mentorship are difficult to establish, often fail to attract and retain students and faculty whose gender, race, and other socially constructed identities set them apart from the majority. The social justice principle of inclusion calls for concerted efforts at recruitment and retention that include such activities as investing in the transfer of students from community colleges, which are usually more ethnically diverse than four-year universities,³² providing financial aid packages and academic support systems, and creating academic programs that focus on ethnic studies.

Perhaps because of the historical chasm between the literati and the masses, universities, as well as the activities occurring within their walls, are still largely perceived as remote or irrelevant to the everyday needs of the communities in which they are located.³³ The irony is that universities are highly relevant today on account of having (a) the knowledge for understanding and explaining community events and needs, (b) the experts in a variety of practice professions, and (c) the facilitative support in the form of faculty and trainees. With these resources, universities with a social justice orientation can assume the role of community servants who willingly provide necessary services to the community. Furthermore, inasmuch as servants can unwittingly control the amount, quality, and frequency of the services they provide, universities

³¹ Stephanie A. Flores-Koulish, "Overcoming the "Standards" Barriers: The Putting Justice in Education Series," [http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/SIGs/Leadership_for_Social_Justice_\(165\)/Annual_Meeting/PJIEFlores-Koulish.doc](http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/SIGs/Leadership_for_Social_Justice_(165)/Annual_Meeting/PJIEFlores-Koulish.doc).

³² Natalia Kolesnikova, "Community Colleges: A Route of Upward Economic Mobility," Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, http://stlouisfed.org/community_development/assets/pdf/CommunityColleges.pdf.

³³ Thomas M. Lucas, "Location, Location, Location," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* 17 (Spring, 2000): 19-28, <http://office.ajcunet.edu/connections/display.asp?issue=29&article=12&backissue=open>.

can move beyond the servant's role of providing service to a place of servant leadership.

As *de facto* stewards of advanced knowledge, skills, and resources related to such community concerns as community development, literacy, family nutrition, vocational choices, and physical and mental health services, universities with a well-inculcated mission of social justice and service are in a position to create an environment in which some of the fundamental principles of social justice can be practiced. Beyond advertising services, we believe that universities must create environments that promote community access to university resources. More importantly, we must develop full partnerships between our universities and communities that result in community members determining precisely the types of resources that they need from us and the university. Only when such an environment exists can community and university establish an equal partnership and move toward social justice activism that addresses the unintentional and intentional injustices occurring at the institutional and structural levels of society and perpetuating the worst of community ills.³⁴

Our university, like most Jesuit institutions, has remained in a large, urban area that is now characterized by significant poverty. An array of services is provided directly to community members at no cost, including legal, dental, medical, architecture (e.g., beautification projects), and mental health clinics; these services exist for the sole purpose of addressing specific needs of the community. In response to the changing needs of the community (e.g., poverty, increasingly high crime rate), services have been developed and added over the past two decades. Each of the faculty of the counseling program shares an appreciation for the role that we play as stewards of the community, and as such, we have adopted the social justice framework discussed above to work as partners with community members.

Most recently, our program faculty, students, and alumni were involved in specific community development activities targeting a region of our community that is particularly impoverished. This resulted from a relationship that our college dean had initially formed with local officials to determine how our University could better serve the region. Developing such a relationship with the local officials specifically because of the

³⁴ Goodman, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice*, 48; Ira Harkavy, "The Role of Universities in Advancing Citizenship and Social Justice in the 21st Century," *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 1 (2006): 5-37.

region's impoverished status directly reflects the notion of social justice, as it involves identifying when and where needs exist and taking action to address such needs.

Through broad-based planning with community members and a group of University faculty and administrators, we developed a comprehensive array of services for the community, ranging from cancer screening to literacy support. More specifically, the counseling program faculty developed services that included career assessment and planning, child and parent school consultation, addiction prevention workshops, coordination of Medicaid benefits, and community resource coordination. Counseling program faculty, students, and alumni worked collaboratively in developing and delivering these services at a common community locale. We responded to the needs expressed by community members by providing services directly in the community, thus demonstrating our understanding of the relationship between justice and physical place. This particular citywide service initiative provides an example of our attempt to inculcate not only the value of social justice but also the significance of social justice within the communities in which we live and work. Similarly, the no-cost counseling clinic that is hosted by our counseling program to serve those in our immediate community (discussed in detail below) as well as the service and advocacy agenda that informs the work of our Graduate Student Counseling Association provide other examples of our attempts to link social justice activities directly to the immediate physical space that we inhabit. By attending to the prominence of place, we hope to prepare students to work in the contemporary world and to assist them to more clearly understand the realities of the people they serve, the people they will counsel. Because they need to understand the social and urban dynamics of their city³⁵ and because they need to be able to analyze, evaluate, and reflect on them,³⁶ this type of active involvement during their academic program may very well help them to gain the necessary knowledge and insight to work effectively as counselors.

Our faculty and university administrators work toward inclusion through faculty hiring, and student admission and retention practices that focus on ethnic minorities, the poor, and other under-served populations. In fact, specifically to ensure that first-generation, financially

³⁵ Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice."

³⁶ John Padberg, S.J., ed. *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st–35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009), 291-297.

impoverished students have equal access to the university, the university is one of the leading providers of financial aid support in our state.

It is through these various measures, which include organizational decision-making and sharing our resources for the express purpose of significantly improving the community in which our university resides, that we are able to demonstrate the prominence of physical place in social justice advocacy. As a steward to our larger community, our university is able to engage actively and on multiple levels to address existing inequities directly while working to eliminate potential future inequities.

Advocacy Education

Advocacy education provides another mechanism by which we attempt to infuse social justice into the curriculum. The ACA Advocacy Competencies³⁷ address advocacy at three levels: individual, community, and profession. Individual advocacy requires counselors to use direct counseling skills to empower clients and to provide a voice on behalf of the client; community advocacy emphasizes collaborations with various communities, schools, and agencies; and profession advocacy focuses on breaking down systemic barriers that continue to marginalize populations, as well as educating the public about the counseling profession. Advocacy-based education provides a framework for teaching counselor trainees to become social justice critical thinkers and to function as an individual, community, and profession advocate.³⁸ The goal of the curriculum is to move the trainee beyond the idea of being a helper who fixes others to a paradigm of being a proactive leader who addresses and gets involved in sociopolitical issues.³⁹ The levels of learning that include self-awareness, knowledge, and skills can be used effectively to develop an advocacy-based curriculum to promote counselors that are social justice critical thinkers.⁴⁰

Self-awareness

Counselor education programs are designed to engage students in the development of interpersonal skills through self-exploration and

³⁷ Lewis, *Advocacy Competencies*, 1-3.

³⁸ Ratts and Hutchins, "ACA Advocacy Competencies," 269-275.

³⁹ Reese House and Susan Sears, "Preparing School counselors to be leaders and advocates: A critical need in the new millennium," *Theory into Practice* 41 (2002): 154-163.

⁴⁰ Ratts and Hutchins, "ACA Advocacy Competencies," 269-275.

introspection—this is critical for advocacy-based education curricula as well. Self-exploration must include discussions regarding power, privilege, and inequity, which are topics counselor education programs do not extensively explore due to their unfamiliar and discomforting natures.⁴¹ In addition, students must explore their level of social justice commitment, humanitarianism, and multicultural encapsulation.⁴² not only must counselors possess the skills to advocate for others, but they must also possess the skills necessary to engage in sociopolitical advocacy as a professional.⁴³ Therefore, counselor identity understanding is critical to becoming an effective professional advocate.

Knowledge

Students must be knowledgeable about the counseling profession's history and sociopolitical involvement. The profession is founded on the principles of applying communication skills to helping those with serious social problems.⁴⁴ In addition, students must recognize that throughout counseling history these skills have been used to effect change in communities, schools, and society as a whole. Exploring counseling theories and ethics from a social justice perspective can give trainees insight into advocacy's critical role in the profession.⁴⁵ The work of Parsons, Krumboltz, Rogers, and others must be acknowledged not just as theories and interventions for client processing, but also as work giving voice to those who are marginalized, and as work initiating reform. In addition, students must acquire knowledge about the intrapsychic, family, socioeconomic, educational, and cultural systems of suffering.⁴⁶ Knowledge about these multisystems of suffering can then be applied to the student's skill development and practicum experience. Lastly, it must be acknowledged that counseling is political—a profession that has influenced changes in mental health policies, school curriculum design, and legislation enforcing quality care.⁴⁷ Therefore, the curriculum must

⁴¹ Gargi Royiscar, "The Big Picture of Advocacy: Counselor, Heal Society and Thyself," in *Journal of Counseling and Development* 87 (2009): 288-294.

⁴² Kiselica and Robinson, "Bringing Advocacy Counseling to Life," 387-397.

⁴³ Ratts and Hutchins, "ACA Advocacy Competencies," 1-3; Goodman, et al, "Training Counseling Psychologists as Social Justice Agents," 67.

⁴⁴ Kiselica and Robinson, "Bringing Advocacy Counseling to Life," 387-397.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Sandra I. Lopez-Baez and Matthew J. Paylo, "Social Justice Advocacy: Community Collaboration and Systems Advocacy," in *Journal of Counseling & Development* 87 (2009): 276-283.

include lessons that help trainees critically analyze sociopolitical systems and the social influences on marginalized populations.⁴⁸

Skills

Counselors must be prepared to function as both consultant and leader within the communities in which they practice. Counselor education programs must provide opportunities for trainees to apply their communication skills and historical knowledge as advocates for clients through placements at various marginalized school districts, communities, and agencies. Practica and internships can provide opportunities for trainees to volunteer their skills and resources to effect change through functioning as the voice of the client and the community, as well as to establish relationships with various organizations focused on effecting change. In addition, students must be engaged in the practical research, statistical analysis, and evidenced-based interventions that are necessary effectively to demonstrate the need for systemic change.⁴⁹ Research assignments requiring the development and presentation of action plans to legislators and communities can be used to encourage student involvement in sociopolitical issues. In order for students effectively to develop their advocacy skills, faculty must model social justice advocacy and involve the students in their efforts and activities to effect client and systemic change. This will demonstrate to students that the counselor works to break down societal barriers through his or her work outside of the traditional clinical and school settings.⁵⁰ In addition, faculty must create opportunities for political activism by hosting legislative days that invite politicians to discuss issues, promoting letter writing campaigns to legislators and community leaders, and attending community and school board meetings.

We attempt to implement advocacy-based education through the use of a number of the methods identified above. For instance, to increase awareness of inequity and unearned privilege, a variety of in-class and outside-of-class experiential exercises are used in which students can confront their place in the world in comparison to others; their biases; and the ways in which they may currently contribute, or may have contributed in the past, to the marginalization of others. Facilitated discussions,

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Janee M. Steele, "Preparing Counselors to Advocate for Social Justice: A Liberation Model," in *Counselor Education and Supervision* 48 (2008): 74-85.

both in-class and on-line, as well as formal debates are used as platforms to engage in critical analysis of current justice-related topics. This type of pedagogy is used to promote deep knowledge of justice-related issues while teaching students about the often visceral reactions that such topics may inspire. Students are taught how to manage such responses effectively without losing the influential power of their words—an essential ingredient in advocacy.

Our faculty attempts to model the significance of advocacy at each of the three levels—client, community, and profession—through direct engagement with each. These efforts include direct work on behalf of clients, advocacy work with various systems (e.g., courts, schools, government) to address inequities and forms of marginalization, and profession-based advocacy work at the local, state, and national level. Student and faculty involvement in letter-writing campaigns is promoted by faculty members, and the entire faculty works together to co-ordinate student-faculty participation in an annual formal legislative advocacy outing with the state legislature. Each of these activities is part of a larger advocacy-based education curriculum that provides another foundational aspect of integrating social justice throughout the counselor education program.

Promoting a Lifestyle of Service

Promoting a lifestyle of service for counselors in training not only requires a counselor education program to integrate service and social justice into the curriculum, but also requires the program to create a culture that views a lifestyle of service and social justice as an expectation of professional counseling practice. We attempt to create a service culture through the intentional development of faculty and student involvement in four specific ways: (1) Establishing and nurturing ongoing community partnerships; (2) creating opportunities for faculty and student collaboration in service; (3) empowering students to develop their own community partnerships and service activities; and (4) actively engaging alumni in service activities.

Although we currently have several community partnerships, one of our longest-lasting partnerships is with a local outreach center for homeless individuals and impoverished seniors. The outreach center is sponsored by the oldest Catholic church in the region and serves the most marginalized population in the area. We initially developed this partnership by seeking feedback from center staff regarding their needs, which spanned from basic support, such as meal prep, to much more

sophisticated services that included individual and group counseling. We have engaged our alumni to facilitate group counseling sessions at the center, and most recently, counseling program alumni provided crisis counseling following a tragic death in the senior center. It should be noted that this type of service is reflective of similar types of service conducted through our University's other clinics. Our law clinics provide legal assistance and support to marginalized individuals for issues such as immigration and criminal involvement; our dental clinic provides dental work to marginalized individuals; and our architecture clinic works to enhance the physical community by transforming abandoned homes into art.

Students and faculty work collaboratively in specific service activities throughout the year, typically in direct response to the needs of the community. As discussed previously, local community service activities allow us (faculty and students) the opportunity to demonstrate our servant-status to our community by directly working to address existing community needs. Moreover, through collaboration with students, faculty members are able to model a lifestyle of service.

In partial fulfillment of their mission, our Graduate Student Counseling Association (GCSA) is charged with developing their own agenda of service initiatives throughout the year. By doing so, student leaders take ownership in investigating community needs and co-ordinating specific service activities on behalf of the counseling program student body.

Counseling Clinic as a Social Justice Initiative

In addition to the methods listed above, promoting a lifestyle of service also requires intentional academic experiences throughout the curriculum. Just as we promote intentionality in counseling, our academic curriculum was developed with the intent to create a culture that promotes a lifestyle of service. Through the development of the counseling clinic (practicum site), all of our students engage in a culminating academic experience that purposely models the tenets of service and social justice. The counseling clinic is a no-cost mental health clinic that provides counseling services to residents of the local community. We developed the clinic to address gaps in mental health services by meeting the needs of local individuals who lack the ability to pay for such services. We specifically marketed our services to residents, to local district courts that assist misdemeanor offenders who are court-ordered for counseling but do not have the ability to pay (thus promoting further marginalization), and to local schools and community centers. In addition,

we provide counseling services at a local no-cost medical facility run by our university colleagues in the health professions.

The clinic serves two primary academic purposes. The first, as with all practicum experiences, is to train competent counselors who are prepared to enter an internship with effective skills in case-conceptualization and treatment planning. The second goal is to demonstrate to students the unequal access to mental health services that exists within their community (an inequity that is echoed throughout the country and larger world) and to provide them with a forum to actively address such inequity. Students participate in fund-raising for client transportation (i.e., bus tickets) and demonstrate advocacy for their clients by developing flexible schedules and/or conducting longer sessions if needed. For example, many of our court-ordered clients are mandated to attend a specific number of sessions; these are arbitrarily assigned by the court, but noncompliance can result in continued legal interaction. Students work to address this mandate and, at the same time, prohibit additional disruption to the client's lifestyle (i.e., work, family, other obligations) that could result in additional negative consequences by negotiating the most effective and flexible counseling schedules.

Through the implementation of the counseling practicum as a social justice initiative, students learn to act directly as change agents, addressing the existing needs among community members. In addition, through the various activities that comprise the practicum experience, students engage in all three levels of advocacy: client, community, and profession, thus further illuminating the significance of their role as advocates. When students identify what they learned from their clients at the end of the semester, they often marvel at the strength, tenacity, and courage of the clients they encountered. These reflections illustrate the transformative nature of service, and we hope, provide further motivation to students to engage in a lifestyle of service.

Student Engagement Postgraduation

Evidence of successful implementation of the culture of service that we attempt to create is found in the number of alumni that have adopted a lifestyle of service. Counseling program faculty conduct ongoing program evaluation surveys of our alumni up to one year after graduation to obtain information regarding employment, garner feedback about academic preparation, and gather input about alumni level of advocacy and social justice engagement. Currently, more than 60% of our alumni regularly provide pro bono mental health counseling at the

counseling clinic, serve as mentors to current counseling students, continue to participate in collaborative service activities with students and faculty, and/or remain involved with the program in some capacity. For example, every year approximately fifteen alumni participate in mentoring new students both informally and formally through offering ongoing dialogue and support; providing networking, internship, and employment opportunities; and sharing their perspectives through a facilitated panel discussion. In addition, each year at least three alumni provide free counseling on campus for members of the local community on an ongoing basis. Counseling program alumni, moreover, initiate and engage in a variety of service activities within the community, often simultaneously working to increase awareness among others as they uncover new areas of need. Although empirical comparison data regarding similar types of alumni engagement is sparse, in a study highlighting the relationship between service and alumni engagement, researchers found that alumni that engaged in volunteer work in the community were two times more likely to volunteer at their alma mater.⁵¹ Another study focusing specifically on the relationship between service-learning and postgraduation service participation showed that students who engaged in a service-learning project during their academic program were 60% more likely to engage in one service activity during the first year following graduation.⁵²

We hope to embark upon a much more formal and comprehensive evaluation of the impact of our pedagogical efforts to infuse social justice across the counseling program in the very near future. However, at this point, we are inspired by the outcomes we have witnessed thus far among our alumni, and by the stature that social justice currently has achieved in dialogue with both prospective students and current students.

Summary

The concept of social justice has tremendous and specific meaning within both the Catholic faith and the counseling profession. As a counselor education program within a Jesuit and Sisters of Mercy-sponsored university, we feel a particular responsibility to ensure that the value of

⁵¹ David J. Weerts and, Justin M. Ronca, "Characteristics of Alumni Donors who Volunteer at their Alma Mater." *Research in Higher Education* 49 (2008): 274-292.

⁵² L. Mickey Fenzel and Mark Peyrot, "Relationship of College Service-Learning and Community Service Participation with Subsequent Service-Related Attitudes and Behavior of Alumni." *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 12 (2005): 23-31.

social justice is appropriately inculcated in our students. Through regular engagement in reflection and dialogue about social justice, we have attempted intentionally to integrate social justice across the curriculum. Accomplishing this has involved developing an appropriate foundation by which to introduce social justice to students, emphasizing the prominence of physical place in justice, developing advocacy-focused educational experiences, promoting a lifestyle of service, and utilizing the counseling clinic as a social justice initiative. Through this comprehensive approach to integrating social justice into counselor education, we hope to indoctrinate and to inspire students to be social justice activists and to appreciate the responsibility that all counselors have in achieving this. At the same time, we hope to impress upon our students that their participation in Catholic higher education requires them to be good and whole citizens of the world and that a commitment to social justice is a prerequisite to their ability to attain this status. In this manner, we hope the value of social justice forms the character of our students, not simply because of its significance to either the Catholic faith or the discipline of counseling, but rather because of the heightened meaning that social justice has when understood as a shared value of both.

The degree to which we have achieved this outcome is yet to be seen, particularly because we have not yet fully evaluated the program. However, articulating the model here brings us closer to evaluating the outcomes of these changes and learning if the changes that we have made have resulted in any positive impact on our students. We hope to be able to report these findings in the near future, and in the meantime, offer the framework that we presented as a suggestion for how academic programs in Catholic institutions might more fully infuse social justice throughout their curricula.