

Introduction

In service of Catholic higher education, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities provides a number of outlets to assist institutional leaders as well as faculty and staff in their work and ministry in Catholic higher education. As a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal, the *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* is a primary source for scholarly information related to nearly every facet of life and activity on Catholic campuses. In this issue, we are pleased to offer four articles on a range of topics focused on curricular, institutional, academic and faculty concerns.

The first article represents an institutional-wide effort, engaging all areas of the campus in a synodal process of dialogue to reflect deeply on the mission and identity of the institution in order to better engage present and future realities and challenges facing all institutions of higher education, but especially those entrusted with a Catholic mission. Inspired by Pope Francis's approach to synodality, the University of San Diego developed an analogous process that enlisted as many stakeholders as possible to explore together the values and distinctive character of the institution. One obvious purpose was to fashion a contemporary mission statement, but as importantly, like Pope Francis, they wanted to "plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, [and] awaken a dawn of hope."¹ The ten-month process was led by President James T. Harris, III and Dr. Michael Lovette-Coyler, Vice President Mission, who created a multi-step approach that (1) invited all stakeholders to reflect on and consider the existing mission statement; (2) assigned a faculty/staff leadership team to carefully review and summarize the responses; (3) convened a small writing group to draft new documents related to mission and identity; (4) shared the results with all stakeholders who offered feedback; and (5) developed a final document based on the collaborative, non-hierarchical nature of the process. The synodal process produced distinctive and vibrant mission and vision statements for USD that are reflective of the institution's Catholic character and its specific location close to the

¹ Pope Francis, *Address at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People* (October 3, 2018), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/october/documents/papa-francesco_20181003_apertura-sinodo.html.

US-Mexican border. As well, there is now a stronger sense of investment by all constituents, and the new documents have already informed the current strategic planning process, and a revised orientation process for trustees, employees, and students. This is a process that other institutions might utilize when reflecting on and updating their own mission and vision statements.

Since the 1960's, businesses, government, educational institutions, and other established organizations have invested time, energy, and resources to address questions of diversity, fair and equal treatment, with a view towards appropriating and imbedding these values into every aspect of the workplace. Since 2016, these efforts have focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a framework to advance a welcoming, culturally sensitive, just and diverse environment. These efforts have not been without controversy, especially within academic institutions. Currently, most institutions of higher education, including Catholic colleges and universities, have made varying commitments to DEI by establishing programs, creating specific offices, and hiring staff and providing training for students, administrators, staff, and faculty. Rev. Kevin Nadolski, OSFS regards DEI work as a ministry of the Church and one that is central to the mission of Catholic higher education. Using the teachings and example of Pope Francis, Nadolski explores four DEI related areas that Francis has addressed throughout his pontificate, asserting that a Catholic sensibility reflecting Pope Francis's example ought to advance DEI work. The author argues that rather than using a socio-political framework to develop DEI initiatives, Catholic institutions ought to take a Creator-centered approach grounded in the intellectual and social traditions of the Church. The article then focuses on four concerns: dialogue, race, LGBTQ+ issues, and inclusion. As he addresses each of the areas, Nadolski explores a wide-ranging corpus of Francis's encyclicals, addresses, apostolic letters, and other documents to support his contention. He acknowledges that Francis has not made any specific endorsements of DEI itself, yet one can glean from the pontiff's words and actions a scriptural, theological, and social justice foundation for DEI work on Catholic campuses. Finally, the author suggests that Pope Francis's dispositions of openness, fearlessness, eagerness, and holiness offer a model for all stakeholders in Catholic higher education to emulate.

Academic institutions have traditionally established a threefold set of responsibilities for faculty, namely teaching, research and service, and focus on these three areas when considering promotion, tenure, or other rewards. Each institution establishes its own parameters for these

faculty duties, with clearly defined norms, especially for teaching and research. Service to the institution and larger community is often not as well defined, and in some instances, faculty may eschew service in order to engage in research activities more fully. Sarah Kilmer and Stephanie Sowl undertook a qualitative study “to explore how gender stereotypes, social expectations, and institutional context influence campus service decisions by male and female faculty at a small, Catholic, liberal arts institution.” The article examines the intersection of gender stereotypes with the service expectations already present in mission-driven Catholic institutions. Past research indicates that female faculty engage in service activities more than their male counterparts, and this exists for a variety of reasons including bias which plays a significant role in how female faculty members choose to give more time to service in their institutions. Utilizing a Stereotype Content Model as well as Social Role Theory, the authors conducted a small case study to determine the extent that a Catholic institution’s focus on a culture of service and care for others impacts decisions regarding service engagement among female and male faculty. They argue that an institution’s context and mission have clear implications when interacting with gender stereotypes and social roles. The authors conclude by offering several approaches to address and ensure equity and balance between female and male faculty and their engagement in service work.

The final article offers a model for what the author terms as a “whole campus” approach for justice education and formation in the curriculum, student life and administrative affairs across the institution. David Kwon situates his thesis within the larger social context of the dangers of commodifying higher education where economic and pragmatic values are increasingly emphasized in secular and Catholic institutions alike. As faculty, administrators and staff adapt a more market focused approach in enrollment, an emphasis on career in the choice of majors, and the importance of individual success, there is the potential for loss of attention to the full human development of students which includes character development, a deepening sense of ethics, an appreciation for the spiritual dimensions of life, and the interconnectedness/interdependence of persons with others and their social and environmental realities. The author suggests that Catholic institutions are best equipped to emphasize collaborative, intentional and just learning environments, and that this type of learning is key to developing a more virtuous society. Kwon acknowledges the challenges facing Catholic institutions that need to balance current social and economic realities with a deep commitment to mission. But he argues it is possible to develop an integrated learning environment focused on justice that emphasizes

care for others and character development, and that does not follow the now ubiquitous approach to social justice education prevalent on secular and Catholic campuses alike. The author suggests that Saint Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Mater et Magistra* offers a conceptual framework for a more wholistic justice learning environment, emphasizing character development. He then lays out a number of pedagogical approaches for a more inclusive learning model whereby academic learning as well as extracurricular opportunities are woven together with character and moral education and development. The ultimate goal is a community of justice that embodies the virtue of justice, promotes ethical reasoning, and fosters the overall character development of all members of the institution.

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