

TEACHING BUSINESS ETHICS AT A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY RESPONSE

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- I. As an ethos for framing my remarks, I would like to recall the distinction made by Helen Alford and Michael Naughton in *Managing as if Faith Mattered* between *secularizers* and *spiritualizers*. Both are attempts to separate work from faith. The secularizers contend that to incorporate faith into work is to manage unprofessionally. The spiritualizers restrict faith to personal devotion and do not come to grips with structural sin. Both of these papers are substantive endeavors that move beyond this secularizer-spiritualizer dichotomy.
- II. At the same time, as I read both papers, I could not but help wonder where was Catholic social teaching in terms of the articulation of faith-based ethics programs at Catholic business schools. In the section on “Rights and Responsibilities” of Prof. Lynch’s paper there is acknowledgement of the Catholic natural law tradition. But other than that the reference to Catholic social teaching or the Catholic social tradition seems implicit, not explicit.
- III. The paper on ethics and sustainability by Profs. Weber & Gerde is a very cogent presentation to how these issues have been woven into the Duquesne Business School curriculum. Yet, again I see no explicit reflection on how the Catholic heritage is manifested in your curriculum beyond the mission statements you cite at the outset of the essay. I also took the liberty, James of also looking at your recent paper, “Implementing an Organizational Ethics Program in an Academic Environment” in the *Journal of Business Ethics* and I observed the same tendency: a thorough deliberation on how a focus on ethics has transformed the content and structure of the Duquesne business program, but no clear indication how the Catholic heritage *specifically* informs the important accent on ethics. Similarly, I looked at the website for you Business School, and observed that the website is quite dynamic, but has little about it to indicate that this program has a Catholic *persona*.
- IV. My basic concern here is that if Catholic business schools do not explicitly acknowledge and incorporate Catholic social teaching in the way they do things, what hope is there for economic institutions, be they in the private or non-profit sector to do so *as if faith mattered?*
- V. In a sense, the strength of the one of the papers is the weakness of the other. Prof. Lynch’s deliberation is strong on articulating theoretical paradigms, but is weak on practical institutional implementation. Profs. Weber and Gerde provides an incisive discussion of the institutional devices by which ethics and sustainability is infused into their business programs, but does not dwell the normative paradigm, especially within the Catholic frame of reference that informs their efforts. Each paper, thus, would benefit from incorporating the other’s strengths a bit more.
- VI. Since Prof. Weber’s and Gerde’s paper is stronger on institutional design, my final concerns are directed primarily to them.

- A. To what degree are the other schools at Duquesne stakeholders in your business programs? You do a great job of reviewing how you deal with community partners, but it is not clear what type of partnerships you have with the other academic spheres at Duquesne.
 - B. To what extent are North-South development issues and the transformation of US culture by the growing Latino presence? I realize there are only 1000 Mexicans in Pittsburgh, but even you acknowledge in your papers how you have been able to bring Latino business leaders onto your boards and in conversation with the programs at Duquesne. In what ways are you preparing your students for the growing Latinoization of the United States and the growing integration of the North American and Latin American business worlds? Since the growing Latino presence in the U.S. has also spurred a spiritual revival, both within the Pentecostal and Catholic traditions, this provides another opportunity for you to show how your accent on ethics and sustainability has a Catholic component. Obviously, my concern with North-South issues also has implications for the natural resources paradigm put forth by Prof. Lynch.
- VII. In conclusion, my overall critique of these fine papers is that they need to acknowledge a lot more how Catholic social teaching and the Catholic social teaching informs their noteworthy endeavors. We have a vital tradition of social teaching at our disposal, but if any of our academic schools – business or otherwise – keep it under a bushel, we diminish our capacity of foster an integral humanism focused on the interrelationship between human virtue and the common good and thereby concede too easily to both the secularizers and spiritualizers both at our institutions and in the community-at-large.