

# A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE ON CATHOLIC BUSINESS EDUCATION

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*We are God's stake in human history.  
We are the dawn and the dusk;  
the challenge and the test.*

*How strange to be a (Chosen Child of God)  
and to go astray on God's perilous errands.*

*We have been offered as a pattern of worship  
and as prey for scorn,  
but there is still more in our destiny.*

*We carry the gold of God in our souls to  
forge the gates of heaven.*

Abraham Joshua Heschel

## **The Contemporary Milieu**

### **Introduction**

There are important and differentiated perspectives to bring to bear on an assessment of Business Education within Catholic Universities: theological, philosophical, educational, historical, etc. In this paper I will propose leadership actions that can contribute to strengthening Catholic identity.

The purpose is pragmatic and the focus on practical interventions. In doing so I necessarily reflect my personal history within the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University, a Jesuit institution. I have served as Dean, Faculty Senate President, Institute Director, and teacher/scholar within my University for more than a quarter century. I also served as President of the *Association of Jesuit Business School Deans*, have been active in the faculty organization *Colleagues in Jesuit Business Education*, and in *Western Conversations*, a dialog between faculty across Colleges within Jesuit Universities. Finally I am a management professor whose scholarship deals with organizational leadership. These experiences color my comments as well.

However, this paper remains a personal perspective with all the implicit limitations. My hope is to provoke the sharing of your experiences so our discussion includes a variety of useful interventions that can strengthen institutional identity.

## **Distributed Leadership**

I hold a fundamental premise regarding transformation of Catholic/Jesuit education - the importance of distributed leadership. Informed leadership that is empowered and decentralized is the “*sine qua non*” of contemporary organization vigor. This is a dimension of “subsidiarity” in the language of Catholic Social Thought. When I serve on accreditation committees whether for the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, the Western Association of School and Colleges, or as a consultant to other Catholic universities I always inquire of departments, program directors, research teams and faculty at large: “What do you see as the most important challenges associated with your mission as it relates to your particular department/program/teaching/research?” Then, “What is being done about these challenges?” If the answer is: “Well I wish the President, the Dean, the Curriculum Committee (or some other organizational role player or unit) would do this or that” I know this university is in trouble. Contemporary organizations rely on bottoms up as well as top down leadership. So in every action proposed faculty, not simply chairs or deans, play an important role.

## **My Personal Sense of Catholic Identity Within Jesuit Business Schools**

Before getting to the heart of the paper - actions to take- I will speak of how I experience culture regarding mission and identity. I find that within the Jesuit business school network and on my own campus that mission and values remain a constant and lively topic of institutional conversation. Granted the dialog tends to be more frequently focused at the university or program level, but still the Jesuit character is much referenced within business schools themselves. Attention to ethics has become a central lodestone not simply within an ethics course, but also in relation to challenges specific to business disciplines such as marketing, finance, etc. On the other hand, Corporate Social Responsibility is unevenly referenced, and even seen as simply one competing but not dominant concept pitted against classical economic thought or shareholder models. Only with exceptional rarity do I find any faculty member (even among those who teach ethics or the corporation in society courses) who can articulate the essentials of *Catholic Social Thought* as an integrated body of thinking. Still because the “Faith That Does Justice” theme is so much a part of Jesuit dialog, human dignity, the common good, economic justice, stewardship of resources, and solidarity with the poor are part of the campus conversation. Immersion experiences and service learning have become robust efforts within most Jesuit business schools and shape campus experience. There is pride in a liberal core curriculum, although little business faculty involvement in thinking about or teaching modules within the core. Attention to “calling”/“vocation” is increasingly a part of faculty consciousness; more so since the Lilly Grant programs. Spirituality remains at best a rare nascent blossom although pioneer efforts inspired by the Management, Spirituality and Religion interest group within the Academy of Management are present here and there.

All this tells me we do not reside in a desert absent of Catholic intellectual and cultural influence. But it is a mixed picture. The heritage is sifted more through a Jesuit lens than a Catholic lens. There is no common faculty clarity regarding a theology of man, let alone a theology of organizations that is understood as uniquely Catholic. Within the business school the number of educated or practicing Roman Catholics is a tiny minority who largely see their religious tradition as private and not to be shared institutionally. Loyalties to disciplinary powers are far

stronger influences on teaching and scholarship than institutional character. Business faculty attach a positive value to a what they interpret as a soft and general “Jesuit” ethos that they see as humanistic and ethical. They value a campus culture that is less harsh and self-serving than academic or business cultures generally. However, “Roman Catholic” remains a scary and negative symbol that is little referred to.

You can compare the culture or your own institution’s milieu to what I have described. How then can we proceed?

## **Interventions That Make A Difference**

### **Hiring Practices**

I can think of only four instances in a quarter century when a business faculty member at Santa Clara was hired specifically with primary attention to “Jesuit/Catholic” mission. Each of these were administrative appointments; two to lead mission centric centers and two appointments to major administrative posts. Resume qualifications that relate to Catholic/Jesuit identity are seen as a “bonus” but not a priority pre-condition for hiring. The primary rationale that dominates hiring remains disciplinary excellence in scholarship and teaching.

What can be done to assure that these is at least no alienation between a candidate and mission identity, and preferably even an attraction valence? How can we avoid bringing into our faculty community a candidate who harbors a distain for things Jesuit/Catholic but for reasons of geographic preference or lack of alternative choices interviews at our College?

For the most part I think our assumptions should be positive and not fearful. If a school seeks individuals with quality credentials candidates will have alternatives. Many faculty candidates actually interview with us precisely because they have an attraction to a mission centered institution. Still, there are important steps that need to be taken.

I recall when I first came to Santa Clara as Dean hearing some faculty say to candidates: “Don’t worry about the Jesuit thing. There is no religious fundamentalism here. After you are here you will be left alone.” This was not an optimal message to be sure.

I believe the following elements should be part of the hiring process:

- Clarity regarding overall university mission and identity in robust documents must be given to every candidate before arrival on campus.
- An interpretive statement of how mission and identity is expressed in the goals and outcomes of the sub-specialty department that is doing the hiring must also be prepared and shared.
- Discussion of the candidate’s reaction to as well as self-projected future creative contributions in their own teaching, research and service aspirations that would

relate to mission and identity must be part of the *departmental* dialog with candidates.

- Explicit statements regarding tradeoffs that occur when joining a department at *this* university compared with departments at other universities of comparable quality must be discussed. (e.g., a greater emphasis on teaching, justice, ethics, etc.).
- Illustrative examples and stories of career paths, research and teaching that exemplify differentiated contributions in keeping with mission and identity specific to the sub-discipline itself need to be told.
- Conversations with senior faculty members who exemplify the integration of mission and who can testify to its centrality and the way it has shaped their own work need to take place.

There is good empirical evidence that individuals make wiser choices when institutional tradeoffs are made explicit rather than minimized in hiring processes. This encourages candidates to say to themselves, “this university is for me” or “I don’t think I will fit well at this university.” It is impossible to test cultural fit if the truth of an organization’s culture is not made explicit. When there is clarity, new hires arrive with the understanding that they have freely chosen these tradeoffs affirming values that are institutionally important.

Let me provide a specific illustration. At one point when I was Dean Santa Clara was hiring a key new faculty member in finance. The finance department had developed its own mission statement reflecting the university mission with examples of how ethical and value elements were incorporated into teaching and research in their discipline. The department had recently lost a nationally prominent senior faculty member who was not comfortable with the teaching/scholar model at Santa Clara. This faculty member was a superior researcher but did not enjoy the teaching commitment. This story respectfully told indicated an important tradeoff of a career at Santa Clara: the need for teaching to be a central and cherished aspect of the faculty role. Several highly accomplished faculty members discussed joint research dealing with ethical and behavioral aspects of finance that they would not have been encouraged to undertake at another university where only “classical financial models” were legitimate. The fact that such research was valued at Santa Clara indicated a special dimension to scholarship in our culture. In short, the new faculty candidate quickly understood that there was a culture within the finance department at Santa Clara that was particular to its mission and values.

It is important to emphasize that the majority of hiring conversations typically unfold in discussions with department members. “Mission and identity” cannot simply be a conversation in the Provost’s office. This implies that Deans must mandate and monitor preparation for this aspect of hiring by departments, department chairs must exercise leadership and assure that roles are assigned, and faculty members must commit to these conversations as integral to a hiring sequence.

This is not evenly done these days at my own institution. I wonder how you would assess the hiring processes at your universities?

### **Post Hiring Socialization**

We have only one opportunity to make a first impression. New faculty orientation programs are an important aspect of this opportunity. At Santa Clara new faculty orientation consists of a full day program, followed by three off-site gatherings during the first year of appointment. These are important settings for mission and values dialog, and for faculty to share opportunities they are discovering within their own teaching and research that echo university mission and values. The program also creates a network of like-minded young faculty. If individual colleges were also to replicate gatherings for faculty within related disciplines the program would be even stronger. In the “total university” gathering, some of the discussion is dismissed by business faculty as “not applicable” (often a mistaken perspective).

Among Jesuit Universities two other gatherings contribute to important socialization. The *Western Conversations* program continues the dialog regarding mission, values and “faith that does justice” among the Western Jesuit University network. This is a weekend program for faculty across colleges beginning on Friday and running through Sunday noon. The program is dialogic in character, providing the opportunity for faculty conversations to build on speaker presentations. Prayer and inter-religious liturgy are built into the weekend experience.

For business faculty there is also the organization *Colleagues in Jesuit Business Education* that follows a similar pattern, but in this case faculty from across the nation focus on challenges unique to business education.

All of these programs provide rich socialization experiences. However, *Western Conversations* and *Colleagues in Jesuit Business Education* are voluntary. There are no established norms that participation in these programs is an expectation associated with holding a faculty post at our University. As a result, many of the faculty in my business school that would most benefit from such experiences excuse themselves from participation in “those Jesuit programs.”

Should we not mandate participation in this programs as a normative expectation for all faculty within their first four years of appointment?

### **Support for Faculty Teaching and Scholarship**

The most important support to assist faculty in exploring creative new arenas of scholarship associated with mission and values must be provided at the “front end” rather than the “back end” of scholarship. The “front end” concerns early ideation, feasibility exploration, pilot tests and embryonic experimentation. The “back end” is support for solidly documented research efforts (the classical research application sent to national scientific and foundation funding agencies, and internal research grant offices).

Santa Clara has learned to support “front end” efforts through:

- Dialog and Design Grants
- Pilot and Demonstration Grants
- Rewards for Joint Authorship and Interdisciplinary Efforts

The premise here is that faculty are well socialized in terms of the pedagogy and research currents within their discipline through their doctoral studies in public universities. By contrast, they often only begin to consider how they might apply their gifts to teaching and research particular to mission and values after arriving at the Jesuit/Catholic university.

Again I presume good will on the part of faculty who join our universities when we engage in intelligent hiring practices. I believe new faculty members are attracted to the possibility of research and teaching that has a mission and value connection. However, they are not grounded in any prior discernment regarding creative scholarship that may be “non-traditional” within their discipline.

We have found *Dialog and Design* grants very helpful in this regard. Faculty are encouraged to find colleagues interested in exploring a topic where their disciplines can intersect with mission/value issues. The grants fund lunch/dinner gatherings and modest travel in order to bring together both on-campus and visiting faculty from nearby universities who have an interest in exploring a research or teaching topic. (We find that colleagues in public universities often delight in sharing research that would not be seeded in their own institutions). At the end of an academic year pilot experiments often have been conceptualized and partnerships formed for creative new endeavors.

Since we are talking about a discovery process, the application for these grants available from several different sources (colleges, provost’s office, Center for Jesuit Studies, Faculty Development Center) is simple. The central requirement on a one page application form is to document that a group of faculty who wish to think creatively about a non-traditional topic related to mission/values commit themselves to regular dialog. Because some cosmopolitan sources of knowledge central to the dialog and design will not be able to come to campus, small additional funding for travel to consult with these key thinkers may also be part of such grants. Our experience is that some of the most powerful and fruitful teaching and research that creatively addresses mission/values flows from this early stage funding.

*Pilot and Demonstration Grants* are made available for follow-up efforts, with a positive presumption for support if the grant builds from a year of prior *Dialog and Design*.

There is an important caveat regarding faculty assessment of such scholarship within rank and tenure decisions. In the world of disciplinary “principalities and powers” single authored scholarship directed to traditional disciplinary focused research published in top tier journals is the sole legitimate currency. We have found that creative research directed to mission and values often builds on inter-disciplinary insight (especially early in a faculty member’s career) and that *Dialog and Design* protocols stimulate joint authorship. Further, many times the scholarly outlet for this research is not the typical “top tier” specialized disciplinary journal. While norms for quality scholarship must apply, faculty will quickly test the commitment of the

institution to non-traditional research by the manner in which such scholarship is assessed in rank and tenure decisions.

Nor do I believe that a faculty member should wait six years until after the tenure to be given permission to dip into these waters. If we want to invite faculty to consider a greater range of freedom in making teaching/scholar choices, this ability to consider mission/value focused teaching and scholarship must be built into our reward structure from the very beginning of a faculty member's association with our universities. This does not imply that demonstrated competence in a core discipline does not matter. It is not choosing between but demonstrating both that should be sought.

All of this involves both administrative leadership and faculty leadership. Administrative leadership must put in place the processes and resources. Faculty leadership is required in conceptualizing meaningful scholarly and teaching innovations.

Is "front end" support for designing teaching and scholarship that reinforces mission and values available at your universities?

### **The Ignatian Faculty Forum**

Empirical studies of both leadership and spiritual formation efforts share a common finding. However valuable conceptual orientations, workshops and retreats may be, continued growth and personal appropriation of both leadership and spiritual disciplines require on-going reflection in light of day to day experience in order for concepts and practices to become "habits of the heart". Leadership is not assured by attending a leadership - training program. Spiritual formation is not assured by attending a retreat. Both leadership and spiritual maturity must grow slowly formed through everyday struggles. Leadership skills develop primarily through reflection on such actions as engaging decisions, accepting setbacks and reorienting projects, starting endeavors from scratch, turning around failed programs, etc. Thus, shared reflection in regular gatherings of executives in organizations such as YPO (Young Presidents Organization) and TEC (The Executive Committee) have been shown to be more powerful in shaping leadership than courses, seminars or workshops. In these leadership development organizations a stable group of executives meet each month to pool wisdom regarding their challenges, share experiences, and be held accountable for feedback regarding actions taken and lessons learned. In like manner, a hallmark of Spirituality is discovering God in the busyness of everyday live. Ignatian Spirituality sees the *examen* as a pivotal spiritual practice; careful reflection on how God is acting in the events of each day. In this sense, a scholar/teacher's spiritual discernment regarding the unfolding of a vocation is not so much a concept or a technique learned at an orientation program or a retreat but rather a way of living. All the socialization techniques discussed above create readiness for change. But unless the lessons of a spiritual tradition are more deeply internalized through reflection, "urgencies" of the day-to-day and disciplinary pressures often still dominate.

In light of this evidence and our own experience regarding faculty formation Santa Clara has initiated what is called *The Ignatian Faculty Forum*. The forum combines elements of successful private sector leadership development protocols with a spiritual overlay into a

monthly meeting of teacher/scholars. Meeting October through May, the format for the afternoon-evening *Forum* is:

- 4:30 – 4:40 *Lectio* based on short inter-religious reflection
- 4:40 – 5:00 Spiritual and Professional Check-In
- 5:00 - 6:00 Dialog on Shared Spiritual Readings Dealing With Mission/Values/  
Jesuit /Catholic perspectives
- 6:00-6:06 Closing *Lectio* again echoing themes in short inter-religious  
reflections
- 6:00 - 6:30 Simple Soup and Bread Supper
- 6:30 –8:25 Shared Discernment Regarding Individual Challenges
- 8:25 –8:30 Closing *Lectio*

Each *Forum* begins with short meditative reflections taken from three traditions (e.g. Hindu, Christian, Muslim) honoring the religious diversity of the faculty gathered. Reflections relate to the content of background readings that are the focus for a particular evening. Following the tradition of “*lectio divina*” silent reflection, prayer and meditation follow the readings. Then each faculty member checks-in rating their current personal sense of professional and spiritual well being on a scale of 1 – 10. Over time members develop trust and share the ebb and flow of consolation and desolation in their life receiving group support and decreasing faculty isolation. Next an hour long discussion of pre-assigned spiritual, theological and professional articles relating to the vocation of the scholar teacher are engaged. Readings connect to the special mission/value lens of the Jesuit/Catholic tradition. Over the course of the academic year a comprehensive treatment of major elements in the Jesuit/Catholic education tradition are studied. However, each topic also includes readings from other religious traditions. This helps faculty to engage in an open exploration of both the riches and diversity of perspective encompassed by the religious backgrounds within the group. Faculty enjoy the readings and the discussion that clarifies how themes can be integrated into day –to- day struggles.

In the second half of the *Forum* after a simple supper each member charts a current challenge they are wrestling with. (Examples might be a choice regarding terminating or initiating a particular stream of research, pedagogical dilemmas, discernment regarding accepting or rejecting an administrative appointment, conflicts within departments, a family crisis and its implications for professional obligations, etc.). Members of the group share experience, knowledge and wisdom in a non-prescriptive manner offering ideas but carefully leaving the discernment to the faculty member who presents the issue. Spiritual insights from the both earlier and this night's readings that might aid a member in gaining perspective are also referenced.

After each personal challenge is discussed, the individual faculty member, those impacted by the decision under consideration, the broader academic community affected, and all teacher / scholars facing similar challenges are briefly held in heart and silent prayer. This inter-religious prayer has been foundational to the success of the program.

More complete reports of the Forum are available. Here I will present just one letter from one faculty participant evaluating her experience:

*I am quite grateful for the opportunity this year to again participate in the Ignatian Faculty Forum.*

*During the last two years IFF has significantly increased my sense of job satisfaction as well as my sense that I belong to a community engaged in important work. At no time am I more proud of our institution than on IFF nights, when I am reminded of Santa Clara's identity and traditions, as well as the caliber of people with whom I work. I have marveled at the range of people involved in the forum, combined with the common ground and high level of trust we have found. I would have no reason (nor opportunity) in many cases to meet with (let alone develop trusting, significant relationships with) other faculty members from disparate sectors of the university. IFF affirms and enriches my sense of the SCU community and mission.*

*I love my work here at Santa Clara, and feel both privileged and called to do it. But too often less pleasant institutional realities can overshadow the joy and meaning of the real work. I am always (or nearly always) mindful of the spiritual components of the work I do with students. This is pretty consistently soul-satisfying work. The work with colleagues is less so, because it is nearly always task-driven. And the meaning of the particular tasks is not always as obviously satisfying or significant as the work with students. So I meet with colleagues to write a report or make a recommendation. I meet with colleagues to hear and respond to (increasingly burdensome, it seems) administrative needs or concerns. We talk of budgets, assessment, programs, and outcomes, all of which are important. But the conversations are driven by a need to accomplish some external, tangible goal. And often the conversations are overshadowed by some problem within the process itself: a well-meaning colleague has not done what he or she agreed to do. Some policy has resulted in unforeseen and unfortunate outcomes. There are misunderstandings that must be resolved. And so on. I'm not complaining; these are the realities of life in an academic community. But limited time and energy too often mean that these contexts are the only ones I share with colleagues, allowing me to forget the fullness of what we are all called to do together here as educators in the Jesuit tradition.*

*The IFF consistently provides a radically different context: a spiritual space where we intentionally, self-consciously recognize that there is another reality within and around us that we all value and share. The IFF gives us a space where we can more fully be ourselves here at work, where we can grow and be challenged to reflect and mature in precisely the ways we hope our students will— by affirming and integrating our intellectual, professional, ethical, and spiritual concerns. IFF not only provides a space, it offers a mandate to do our work in richer, more reflective ways that honor the mission and identity of the campus as a Jesuit institution with a commitment to cura personalis for students and faculty. At IFF we educate and equip each other to be who we mean to be, as individuals and as a community. And this is accomplished by making a space and priority for reading, reflection and discussion. We are not called to accomplish externals; but rather to reflect on the internals that should drive and inform the externals.*

*I am deeply grateful to the IFF for the gifts it gives me and my colleagues, and I hope to continue to participate in what to me has been the most satisfying program I have experienced in my 15 years at SCU.*

Over the months through participation in the Forum the nobility of the scholar/teacher calling in a mission driven institution becomes more luminous, the duality between spiritual and professional lessens, and the rhythm of discernment becomes more familiar. Faculty members find new inner freedom to embrace challenges associated with the special character of Jesuit/Catholic education. Courageous decisions such as proposing new courses, including new content in courses, accepting major leadership assignments, , or revising research emphases occur.

Recruitment into the *Forum* is by invitation. Nominations are sought from wise and mature faculty regarding colleagues whom they believe will emerge as leaders who are pivotal to the future of departments and colleges. Only one member from any department is invited to an introductory *Forum* to assure confidentiality. The group is structured to be diverse across disciplines, gender, and race and also across career stages (advanced assistant professor to senior faculty). The question of religious affiliation is not raised. Forums simply reflect the religious diversity of the faculty within our University. As Santa Clara is located in Silicon Valley, virtually every religious tradition is represented from time to time with a high percentage of Eastern Religious traditions.

The Provost and Director of the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education share in a formal invitation. Participation in the *Forum* is deemed as a major university level service contribution and so recognized at both the university and department levels. The *Forum* is facilitated by two faculty members: one male and one female; one from a professional college and one from the College of Arts and Sciences. A Jesuit faculty member is invited as a member in each *Forum*. Membership in each *Forum* is limited to twelve faculty inclusive of the two facilitators.

Ninety percent of the participants in the first year *Forum* voluntarily choose to continue in the advanced *Forum*. Some faculty have continued for the five years the *Forum* has been in place. Others because of movement into new time - consuming obligations discontinue their participation after two or three years. In the advanced *Forum* facilitation of the first hour of the forum rotates among participants who also assume responsibility for selecting readings. The members of the advanced *Forum* nominate topics, and their choices have been to deepen readings in spiritual disciplines, meditation, mysticism, leadership and organization change.

Now beginning its sixth year, fifty emergent campus leaders are “alumni” of the *Ignatian Faculty Forum* experience. As these faculty assume important leadership roles on key committees as well as administrative posts, they report great comfort in finding a network of trust and common understanding among other influential faculty who have gone through this shared formation experience.

The *Ignatian Faculty Forum* is faculty led. Administrators are not invited as members. However, administrative support for the effort, Provost and Jesuit Center mandates, and university recognition of the centrality of the effort is foundational.

Are forms of intensive faculty support groups in year-long or multi-year formats where personal, professional and spiritual discernment can be shared available on your campus?

### **Catholic Health Care as a Comparative Benchmark**

Before closing I think it would be informative to report how Mission Identity Formation is thought of in Catholic healthcare. There are many parallels between Catholic higher education and Catholic healthcare: highly educated participants, scientific and technical training, disciplinary dominance, loose coupling of specialists to the organization (physicians and clinicians like faculty are oriented more strongly to a discipline than to the organization) and great religious diversity among both providers and patients.

I am going to illustrate utilizing the formation approach taken by Ascension Health, the largest Roman-Catholic system with facilities in 21 states. Ascension operates 66 acute care hospitals, four long term institutions, three adult residential facilities, and 63 community centers and clinics. It employs 88,000 associates, 1,500 employed physicians and has operating revenues in excess of 5.8 billion. It ranks in size and revenue behind only two health systems: Nashville based HCA and the federal Veterans Affairs Department. Were it included, Ascension would rank 13<sup>th</sup> on Forbes magazine's annual list of largest private companies.

In their vision statement Ascension asserts: "... we believe that leadership formation lies at the core (of vision) illuminating the meaning and motivations we share in our mission and supplying the spiritual energy required for the transformation of healthcare.

Every executive leader within Ascension must participate in an ongoing leadership formation program. Formation opportunities are provided through a blended approach of online and in-person development opportunities. Leaders are expected to develop skills to:

- Describe how healthcare is a ministry (not simply a service)
- Recognize their personal leadership style and opportunities to improve as a servant leader within a healing healthcare service
- Apply an integral model for workplace spirituality (their particular formulation of a spirituality congruent with their founding religious orders' values)
- Facilitate spiritual reflection and prayer as a regular dimension of organizational meetings
- Understand and actualize principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Use an Organizational Ethical Discernment Process as the modality for decision making when confronting significant issues

Thus within Ascension Health leaders are expected to engage in self-assessment relative to each of these skills, identify programs or course work that supports a personal formation effort, meet with their senior executive and agree on annual formation goals and timelines, and report on learning and achievement of annual goals as an aspect of their appointment to a leadership position. Every senior executive in turn reports on annual formation goals for all leaders in the strategic organizational unit they are responsible for.

I have participated in and observed a number of their formation programs. As would be expected these health care professionals come from a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as being diverse in disciplines and prior education. The “Catholic” tradition and the founding religious orders’ charisms are richly described. However, there is no proselytizing. The focus always begins with the needs of patients and providers and contemporary challenges and tensions in healthcare as a calling. Then how a Catholic perspective informs these issues is brought to bear along with a welcoming of insights from other perspectives and traditions.

Still there are some benchmark cultural norms and behaviors expected of leaders beyond clinical Ethical Directives associated with Catholic Healthcare. Healthcare as a calling to a healing ministry is expected to trump healthcare simply as a business. Reflections offered by means of short spiritual passages and silence is expected to precede and provide a tone to analytic problem solving in meetings that an executive leads. The sense of the organization as a fully human community, not just a medical team, is to be honored. Dedication to serving the poor and marginalized must be held front and center in decisions regarding organizational strategy. Catholic social teachings in terms of human dignity, the common good, economic justice, stewardship of resources, and solidarity with the poor must be referenced as guiding concerns included in discernment surrounding major decisions such as capital allocation, outsourcing, selection of potential new organizations for merger/acquisition/partnering etc.

This intentionality and the requirement to participate in a formation program as a condition for appointment to every leadership role, flexibility to select from a variety of learning modalities, preparation of leadership development materials and clarity regarding values that are foundational to Ascension as a “Catholic” healthcare organization suggest to me that Catholic Higher Education has lessons to learn. Here we see a parallel institutional sector whose participants and clients are no less diverse religiously or less scientifically embedded than Higher education carefully investing in leadership development that is mission/value centric. Ascension has over-performed as a world-class efficient and effective science-based service delivery system and the presence of a congruent and pervasive normative culture is stronger than I find in many Catholic higher education settings.

Are mandated forms of leadership development part of the appointment process at your university?

## **Conclusion**

My intention in this paper has been to set forth some actionable interventions that support the Catholic Character and founding religious charism ( i.e. Jesuit, Augustinian, Vincentian, Dominican, etc.) within our Catholic universities. These have included:

- Hiring protocols that clarify mission and values, make trade-offs associated with participation in such a mission centered institution explicit, and illustrate the culture through stories of faculty careers within a specific discipline that are differentiated in teaching and research from a public university.
- Post hiring socialization through new faculty orientation programs and intermittent year-long faculty dialog that reinforces mission and values.
- Multi-university gatherings that explore the founding religious charism and the Catholic character of a group of universities with implications for teaching and scholarship.
- Support for “front-end” faculty dialog out of which unique designs for teaching and scholarship responsive to mission and values emerge.
- Sustained involvement of faculty over a year or more of dialog in a small circle of trust and support in which shared discernment regarding the unfolding of the scholar/teacher calling is the focus.
- Greater intentionality in the formation of those who are appointed to leadership positions as exemplified in practices associated with Catholic Health Care.

### **A Closing Footnote Regarding Prayer**

If we look at the history of the religious orders that founded our universities we find profiles of great courage that people of faith understand are possible only through the support of the Holy Spirit. Could these institutions so central to the lives of future generations have been founded and sustained except through the power of prayer?

For those of us who see the unfolding of God’s work through this lens, the future of our institutions must continue to rest on a foundation of prayer. However, I would propose we are called to discover new expressions of prayer. We must embrace forms of prayer that can include all of our faculty and students who seek God’s spirit across ecumenical and inter-religious boundaries.

I am always conflicted that on our campus the central religious prayer with which the academic year begins is a “Mass of the Holy Spirit”. Why, because the majority of our faculty are not Roman Catholic. The relatively small number of faculty who participate attests to this truth. Wouldn’t it be more in keeping with present historical reality to begin the academic year with inter-religious prayer, and then to also move to gatherings particular to different traditions? If campus ministry within a Catholic university is primarily a “Newman Center” for Catholic students and faculty, then we are missing how God is speaking in our times. The demography of our campuses call us to discover a contemporary spirituality that can nourish and embrace religious pluralism. Of course those of us who are Roman Catholic need to deepen our own commitment to our worship and liturgy. It is not either / or but both that we must support. Still there can be no turning back to the atmosphere of a “Roman Catholic seminary college” ghetto.

Benedict XVI writes in his new book Jesus of Nazareth,

*Whenever God is considered a secondary concern,  
which can temporarily or permanently be set aside  
in the name of more important things, then it is  
precisely those things presumed to be more important that fail.*

He reinforces the need to take seriously the foundation of prayer on which our educational enterprise rests. This foundation needs the spiritual energy of all faculty and students drawn to prayer. Of course there are sensitive theological and practical problems to be resolved here, but isn't this an appropriate challenge for our universities to grapple with?

I have a dream that inter-religious prayer in the future will not be so much associated with a gathering at Assisi, Taize or inter-monastic dialog. Rather, individuals will remember that they learned how to engage shared spiritual prayer within Catholic Higher Education.

Full exploration of this topic requires another paper. However, I could not close my reflection on actionable steps and not include this concern. We live in an age when our neighborhoods, government agencies, corporations and most other organizations are religiously pluralistic. Catholic Higher Education will have another special catholic (universal) gift to share with both our Roman Catholic Church and contemporary institutions if we take a lead in this important spiritual task and learn new ways of praying congruent with a contemporary theology and societal norms. (I suspect deep silence will be a core element of new shared prayer forms, and in a world of hyper-stimulation this will be a gift with multiple blessings).

I close returning to the antiphon of Heschel,

*We (faculty, administrators, staff)  
are God's stake in human history.  
We are the dawn and the dusk;  
the challenge and the test  
(preparing the next generation).*

*How strange to be (Chosen Children of God)  
and to go astray on God's perilous(educational) errand.*

*We have been offered as a pattern of worship  
and as prey for scorn,  
but there is still more in our destiny.*

*We (faculty, administrators, staff must)  
carry the gold of God in our souls to  
forge the gates of heaven  
for our students)*

Paraphrasing Abraham Joshua Heschel