

GET REAL: MAKING THE MISSION STATEMENT OPERATIONAL¹

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Thank you very much for your invitation to reflect on the topic of how we breathe life into mission and weave it into the work and ethos of our community. It is a difficult topic to share with others. Mission engages reality in the little moments, routine interactions and daily decisions which are hard to unpack for others. These activities seem ordinary: I attempted profundity but got myself nowhere. Talks like this are grounded in contexts that have different degrees of relevance to the audience. The speaker comes off sounding like an expert when she probably has more questions than answers and misses than hits. Nevertheless I said yes to Monika Hellwig and will thus share my experiences. I am, however, mindful of the privilege of being with you, the gift of your time and attention, and the potential limitations of such presentations.

I am in my 8th year as dean of the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame. I came from Purdue University where I spent 23 of 25 years prior to Notre Dame. Before then, I was born and raised in Hong Kong and was educated by the Maryknoll Sisters from Grades 1 to 12. The Mendoza College consists of approximately 1800 undergraduate majors and 750 graduate students in our MBA, Executive MBA, MS in Accountancy and MS in Administration programs.

You should be aware that this talk, at the unit of analysis of a business school, is different than most discussions of Catholic mission and identity formulated at the level of the university. Some of the key elements such as campus ministry, mission office, worship, the role of liberal education and theology and philosophy in particular, residentiality, board composition and governance are exogenous to the business school. They form the context but not the decision variables within the business school. Business schools also do not face the same expectations as their arts and letters counterparts to carry the work on mission. After appropriate attention to business ethics and social service outreach, what is left? In addition, MBA and other graduate professional programs do not focus on Catholic students. Unlike the Notre Dame undergraduate program which carefully maintains a target of 85% Catholics, we do not even seek information on the religious affiliations of graduate applicants.

The mission journey of the College began in the 1930s with the founding dean, Fr. John O'Hara, CSC who later became president of Notre Dame and then Cardinal of Philadelphia. I think I have followed his footsteps as far as I can go. Despite multiple iterations of mission statements, we have not veered far from Cardinal O'Hara's intentions, *"The College should send men into business with a sound knowledge of business theory with lofty ideals of citizenship, with sound conceptions of morality, and with a character that will put those principles into practice under whatever temptations the world may offer"*

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Today, our mission statement reads, *"To build a premier business school that fosters academic excellence, professional effectiveness and personal accountability in a context that strives to be faithful to our Catholic teachings and values."*

The chapter we cover today began in September 1996. I was invited to Notre Dame with my explicit, clear statement that I was not a candidate for the deanship. I was happy to talk about the business school as an advisor, but I was not interested in leaving Purdue University. Three questions and my brief answers (lasting no more than five minutes) entangled me for the next 8 years:

Q1: What should we do to become a top business school?

A1: Be yourself; be a Catholic business school. (By this I did not mean that the business college shared a zip code as the University of Notre Dame.)

Q2: Would this gain us respect? credibility? Won't this sideline us as a niche player?

A2: No. Respect and credibility come from quality and excellence. Why would there be a trade-off ? (thinking to myself: what a strange question. 'Why would they even think this?').

Q3: Do you really believe this?

A3: Absolutely.

While I presume that the matter is over with, it was not. One day at daily mass in the Newman Center at Purdue, I walked out and came to an unshakable conclusion that I was staying at Purdue for the wrong reasons; that I needed to respond to Notre Dame's overtures. When I accepted the job, I spoke with my boss, Nathan Hatch (the Provost) and said that three parties would have to show up for the job: me, him (as a number of changes would have to be made) and God (as we would need a few breaks.) All three did report for duty.

For many reasons, it was a difficult emotional move to make. What saw me through was my conviction of what was needed at Notre Dame. I felt very strongly that excellence and reputation were critical to the mission of Notre Dame: not as decorative ribbons or bragging rights. They were the means that allow the message of faith in action to be heard, to command attention. If we do not have academic respect and recognition in the professional sector, we would be dismissed as "do-gooders" who could not be trusted with difficult decisions requiring strong analytics, the ability to prioritize and leadership.

It also never occurred to me that excellence and faith are trade-offs. This was contrary to my lifelong experiences at Maryknoll and even at Purdue University. I also knew that we would not be honoring our faith if we were not at our best. Organizations often failed to be their best not because they did not work hard but because they aimed modestly. Coming from Hong Kong, I witnessed first hand the impact of business: it is the most powerful sector and can set into motion much good and much exploitation. We could not be anti-business but we must be able to call for accountability and cultivate the proper exercise of stewardship. A leading business school imprinted with values from the Catholic faith will be the most effective vehicle for this tall agenda.

All the above leads me to my first point about getting real on mission: it starts off with being **up close and personal**. Mission statements are words: they don't jump off the page unless a person actively, explicitly, and with everything he's got, appropriates the vision and the purpose that call out to him. Someone must attach herself to it; breathe life into it; make decision by it, honor it.

I recently had the wonderful experiences of attending the presidential inaugurations of two good friends whom I admire. One is Fr. Bill Beauchamp who took on the leadership role at the University of Portland and the other is Dr. Carol Mooney of Saint Mary's College. Both have deep affiliations with the institutions: Fr. Bill as a member of the sponsoring order, the Congregation of Holy Cross, and Carol Mooney as a graduate of St. Mary's. Both articulated a deep sense of appreciation for and debt to the sacrifices, courage, trials, faithfulness and vocations of those who came before them. They journeyed through the events, challenges, successes, failings, and divine interventions in their institutional histories to accept the privilege and responsibility to see that this collective work continues to flourish and unfold. For them, mission was up close and personal

Up close and personal is only the beginning: it is about personal intentions. Mission takes on life through **collective action**. This takes us to **people and recruiting**. At the Mendoza College, we were fortunate to have a high percentage of Catholic faculty (over 70%) with many of them deeply committed and formed in the Notre Dame tradition. Our challenge was that we needed to believe that a Catholic business school can make it to the top.

To do so, we would need to enhance our research profile vis-a-vis publications in the three to four premier journals of the respective fields. In the last eight years, we have made approximately 42 tenure and tenure-track appointments out of a faculty that grew from the high eighties to about 105 in the same period. The criteria for assessing research would be at a different level. We faced the classical tension between recruiting for academic potential versus mission. But no, not really. From the very beginning, we would not accept such a trade-off. From empirical experience, we also did not automatically equate hiring Catholics as hiring for mission. Some of our strongest contributors to mission are not Catholics. Depending on the nature of the position and the mix of colleagues in the department, the weight on being Catholic would vary.

Our criteria always started with whether the individuals can meet the professional expectations we held. If this is not met, we would not make any appointment regardless of fit with mission and culture. The next screen is respect and support for the Notre Dame values. These include the commitment to students and to the welfare of the collective community. We held to the position that we would not hire "stars" who move in their own orbits but "leavening agents" who work with others to make the group better. We wanted people who had strong points of view and at the same time respect others. In hiring administrators, we steer completely away from people who have a "zero-sum" mentality. We explicitly state our Catholic identity and refer candidates to the strategic plans of the college and the university. Candidates cannot miss the centrality of our Catholic identity. We ask them how they would see themselves operating in such an environment. Competence and values: they are two pillars which are both necessary. We would wait and wait until we find the mix. I guess this practice stems from the confidence that such trade-offs are not necessary and are absolutely detrimental.

We are now at a point where the research potential of our recent hires pretty much aligns with our aspirations. Our percentage of Catholics is about 60+%. I would say that the percentage of faculty and administrators who embrace our values, understand their link to the Catholic faith, operates by these values and actively advocates them is very high. We see this in their teaching and research and in the ethos of our college. These are discussed below. It is relevant to note that my perspective on how Catholic mission comes to life in a religiously diverse community is influenced heavily by my formative years at the Maryknoll school. It was a faith-filled, caring and vibrant enterprise whose Catholic imprint on students was lifelong despite a student body of only 10% Catholic and 30% Catholic faculty operating in a population which was largely Buddhist.

The work of the College is **teaching and research**. It should not be surprising that we have our share of business ethics courses and that we started this initiative about thirty years ago and have four senior professors whose time are solely dedicated to this. What is probably more interesting is the breadth of "values-based" teaching and research that go beyond the ethics professors, our "usual suspects." As such the values that we stand for as a Catholic school are integrated across all disciplines and all faculty ranks. The following description builds on the excerpt of a report we just submitted to an Aspen Institute survey.

The aim of the business school draws on the University's mission statement, which reads, in part: "the University seeks to cultivate in its students not only an appreciation for the great achievements of human beings but also a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice."

Notre Dame's commitment to educating leaders with purpose is apparent from a student's first day on campus. The cornerstone event of orientation, the MBA Community Partners program in which business students meet with executives at local businesses and nonprofits. Teams prepare extensive database profiles in a portrait of local engagement between the sectors. Students learn from business leaders who integrate stewardship into professional life and initiate collaboration between nonprofits and businesses as vital to the success of both.

Of our required core courses in the MBA program, four integrate social impact and stewardship and one is wholly dedicated to ethics and the triple bottom line. Thirty-eight of the 83 total elective courses integrate social responsibility, sustainability and ethics into the curriculum. Courses include "Globalization and Multinational Corporate Responsibility" and "Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability," among many others. A spring 2005 course entitled "Ten Years Hence" includes a series of eight lectures featuring national experts on economic demography; oil and peace, natural resources, biotechnology, religious fundamentalism, futurism and work, and more.

Thirty Mendoza College of Business faculty members are pursuing research in social impact, ethics and environmental impact management. Faculty includes the winner of the Muskovitz Prize, Professor Glen Dowell, for his research indicating that corporate environmental standards create market value. Associate Professor Ann Tenbrunsel

researches self-deception and ethical fading. Associate Professor James Davis publishes on the role of trust in organizations, and his initial ground-breaking article on the topic was cited in more than 300 publications. Associate Professor Betsy Moore researches the effects of advertising on children.

In its commitment to human development, the Mendoza College is sponsoring a conference in April 2005 entitled "Access to Quality Healthcare in Developing Countries: Sustainability, The New Imperative, " featuring dialogue between pharmaceutical executives, international governmental and NGO leaders, faculty and students.

In addition to the above, the entrepreneurship center offers courses on social entrepreneurship and directs micro-business internships in the local neighborhood surrounding the University, South Africa, Jamaica, and Mexico. It sponsors business competition for social ventures to align promising start-ups with the network of IrishAngels, systematic mentoring and financing. The Executive Program's most successful and noted offering to senior executives is Integral Leadership. It examines six dimensions of a person: cognitive, emotional, physical, interpersonal, ethical and spiritual.

Work and spirituality is an elective we offer to the MBA students and to alumni. For the online course for alums, enrollment was capped at 30 and the course had to be offered twice. Outreach to the Catholic Church includes pro-bono programs in mission-based leadership development for the executive teams and boards of Catholic Charities USA, strategic planning for Catholic Relief Services, and marketing analysis for Tantur (an institute for ecumenical study in Jerusalem).

Further descriptions of the broad scope of research which advances the concept and practice of social capital in business are provided in Appendix A.

As Aristotle taught, we are what we repeatedly do. As such, it is important to us how we engage each in our daily interactions, negotiations, evaluations, allocations, etc. From our faith, there is a vision of leadership, stewardship of people and resources as well as the appropriate exercise of power. This vision should permeate our **systems, culture and ethos of the college**. It is important to put this vision to work for two reasons. First, we are trying to get a message across to our students, from undergraduates to executives, that there is a certain way to lead, a certain way to succeed. If we do not practice this approach ourselves, it would be pretty empty. Students do not listen very well; but they watch. A mentoring community does not just care for the young but lift up a vision of community worthy of its talents and goodness and sufficiently authentic to inspire and engage. Second, how engaged our faculty will be in energizing the mission of Notre Dame also depends on what they experience with us, not on what they hear us say or read in the mission statement. If they have been treated fairly, with respect, and cared for, that is what they will return to their students and colleagues. They come to be partners in our work because they have been beneficiaries of that mission in action.

As you can tell, we have high standards for research and performance. We never apologize for the expectations and the call for accountability. At the same time, we try to align our expectations with the support provided to faculty and staff. For assistant professors, we cannot promise tenure

but we promise that we will have given them the best support that the system can deliver. These would include efficient teaching schedules, minimum preparations, service activities that build their network, responsiveness on the part of senior faculty when their assistance is sought and guaranteed support for research. We also conduct clear and honest evaluation so that as much as we can help it, the person is never surprised when news is not favorable. The majority of candidates who have low chances of success tend to withdraw voluntarily from the tenure and promotion process. Our policy is to support the candidate with the same financial resources (discretionary spending accounts, summer support, etc) until they leave. Many of them return to teach for us in our executive programs and many have moved into non-academic institutions where they flourish.

In major decisions such as those relating to tenure and the allocation of summer support to faculty, we bring all the department chairs together to look at the cases and the chairs' recommendations. There is no requirement for this step, the idea is for transparency and fairness. We do not make the same financial allocations to every department as they have different needs and different resource positions. Some are net cash generators and some are cash users. The resources generated go into a college pool which is then re-allocated. As much as possible, we also delegate control of certain discretionary resources from the deans' office to the departments and programs so that they know of our trust and enjoy a greater degree of autonomy, flexibility and a little bit of buffer. We ask that all department chairs and associate deans put on three hats: as advocates for their respective units, leaders of the College, and citizens of the University. Hence it is important that our decisions and the logic are presented and debated by the team.

Avoiding unnecessary hierarchy and competition is something we try to achieve. Academic institutions are meritorious systems and can create a class of elites. To some degree, this is unavoidable. People's pay, raises, research support, teaching assignments differ by their productivity and successes. In this environment, we try to engage all faculty to contribute, in ways that match their strengths and interests. We use different ways to recognize their contributions. We try to honor those who are the "water carriers" for the College over the last few decades by naming student awards and special spaces after them or giving special administrative honors when appropriate.

There is deep commitment to teaching and respect for those who do this with heart. We are careful by the way we lift up particular individuals for teaching recognition as one of our best and frequent award-winning faculty reminded us, "teaching is not a competitive sport." No one has special parking spaces. There are three college social events, two of which are family driven and include emeriti faculty, their widows, former secretaries, our maintenance staff, etc.

Exits are difficult emotional points and we are in the phase where retirements are happening. We have a general retirement package but work with each faculty to respond to the different ways they seek to maintain affiliation with the College and participate in our work. All of our retired faculty are active with us and many stepped out to make room for new colleagues. We are not a perfect community and have our own share of human dramas. Yet, there is an undeniable grace in the way my colleagues seek to serve each other.

Perhaps most unique about us as a business school are our **spiritual practices**. Five years ago, we remodeled a store room and vending area into a chapel with 18 seats. This chapel is located in the heart of the building and is completely integrated with its design. We did not seek funding from the central administration nor the development office. It was our own community project: the faculty, deans' office and other people who heard about it provided support. Most touching was the support from the president of Purdue University, a devout Presbyterian, who made a generous donation and brought matching funds from Eli Lilly. We have daily mass in the chapel during the school year. Prayer intention boxes are located in the building. The MBA program sponsors a Sunday mass every week in the faculty commons. I work directly as faculty advisor with the Graduate Faith Development Committee which hosts an annual overnight retreat for all students regardless of faith affiliations. In response to most personal losses, we send mass cards or perpetual enrollments. My note to non-Catholics explains this practice. After every home football game and on holy days, we celebrate mass in the auditorium of our building. Prayer is a common practice at most of our events: college council meeting, meals, ceremonies. What is most gratifying for me is the number of colleagues who take on that duty with much ease and reverence. Staff members three to four levels down, faculty who may or may not be Catholic, some who don't think of themselves skilled in such activity, rise to the occasion when asked to pray.

On a related matter of symbols and icons, crosses are placed in every room including the spaces where recruiters interview our students. The sculpture of Jesus on the cross with Mary next to him hangs in a central location in the deans' office. The faculty social space features a series of ten beautifully done black and white photographs and writings of Fr Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Our creative learning commons is constructed to incorporate the spiritual dimension and greets visitors with two icons both imbued with spiritual meaning.

Finally, we are **explicit in our communications** about our Catholic identity. There is not one of my speeches, whether it is a 5 minute welcome, a 15 minute remark, a thirty minute commencement speech or a three hour lecture goes without reference to our Catholic identity and how it shapes what we do and how we do it. This is the question I take up when interviewing candidates. I sign my letters, "Yours in Notre Dame." Every time I do this, even in my eighth year, I never took for granted the privilege and responsibility that comes with this identification.

Our alumni magazine, *ND Business* and the Dean's bi-annual report reinforces this identity. Our last Dean's report is structured around the title, "*Worthy*." It explicitly asks whether our activities and accomplishments are worthy of the talents of our students, their desire for inspiration, the tangible and intangible resources of Notre Dame and the tremendous opportunities for impact. I was very gratified when a department chair said that he displayed "Worthy" on his coffee table because he wanted to show his friends the type of school we are. The college's annual reports, strategic plans and accreditation documents all state clearly our Catholic identity. It is also extremely helpful that the instructions from the provost for the preparation of the annual activity report specifically asks for how we have advanced Catholic mission. This question is taken up by every program, department, and center chair and reinforces the centrality of mission.

In closing, I would suggest that the way we, the Mendoza College of Business, advance our Catholic mission through witness. We do not teach theology; we have no oversight for campus

ministry or mission office; our graduate admission seeks no religious affiliation, we don't shape the governance of the university or the composition of her board. But we can be witness by stating clearly who we are. We witness by the fruits of our work through the quality, impact and success of our endeavors. We witness by our actions and how we treat each other. We witness by our message and example to our students regarding the acceptable approach to success, the responsibilities of power, the boundaries of conduct and the stewardship expected of them. We witness by our worship and our own commitments to faith. In our witness, we subject ourselves to the assessments that people both inside and outside of the organization have a right to make by the faith we proclaim. We fall short more often than we succeed, but it is the standard by which we want to be held accountable.

As I reach the end of this reflection, I am gratified that we have advanced in reputation and at the same time are regarded without hesitation as " a very Catholic business school." I still do not know how all of these happen. But I know my boss, Nathan, was very supportive and that my colleagues in the Mendoza College are my heroes. I must say that whatever seeds we sow, there is rain, nutrients, sun that come from above. In my home, there are two plaques, both gifts from my associate deans and their wives:

"With God, nothing is impossible." "Invoked or not, God is present."

Thank you very much for this privilege of being with you.

APPENDIX

Mendoza College Research on Social Capital in Market Economies

It has long been recognized that a market system cannot operate solely on the basis of narrow self-interest. The informational problems in market interactions offer many chances

for opportunistic behavior. Without some minimal amount of social trust and civil norms, social interaction would be reduced to a minimum of tentative and distrustful commodity trades.

Renowned economist, Joseph.E. Stiglitz, made this assertion as Senior Vice President and Chief Economist of the WorldBank in a keynote address titled "Whither Reform? Ten Years of Transition." In this treatise, he noted that "*Arrow, Hirschman (1992), Putnam (1993), Fukuyama (1995) and others have argued that the success of a market economy cannot be understood in terms of narrow economic incentives: norms, social institutions, social capital, and trust play critical roles. It is this implicit social contract,' necessary to a market society, that cannot be simply legislated, decreed, installed by a reform government. Some such "social glue" is necessary in any society.*"

Adam Smith, noted for his thesis of the "invisible hand" whereby market forces screen out firms which fail to adapt to or excel in competitive environments, also proposed the working of the invisible handshake. In his book, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith defined moral sentiments as the proper regard for others and stated its necessity to the functioning of a society.

Social cohesion, based on the quality of a society's institutions, norms, personal values and relationships, is critical to the economic development and prosperity of a society. This capability represents a form of capital, social capital that enables formal organizations and informal social networks to act together as a "bridge" that transcends personal self-interest and even social divides from religious cleavages, ethnic and economic differences. The stability and strength of social capital improve the productivity of a society by reducing the cost and improving the reliability of transactions.

Social capital, as defined in the above, weaves through all disciplines of the management literature under different nomenclature. It underlies the concepts of trust, ethical conduct, reputation, brand equity, relational interactions, mutuality, strategic alliances, self-managing work teams, culture and others. Within the Mendoza College, we find social capital and its variants implicitly or explicitly embedded in the research across all four departments: Accountancy, Finance, Management and Marketing. Examples of these research efforts are listed below.

The impact of proper disclosure on financial reporting and capital formation (Peter Easton)

The challenges of differences in accountability across nations and their consequences for international capital formation (Paquita Friday)

Ethical issues relating to retirement plans (Fred Mittelstaedt)

Financial institutions and trustworthy behavior in business transactions Tom Cosimano)

Distribution of Initial Public Offerings and fairness to constituents (Tim Loughran) Bilateral trade agreements and their effectiveness (Jeff Bergstrand) Compensation system characteristics and their implications for relationship and trust building (Matt Bloom)

The implications of information asymmetry between owners and managers for opportunistic self-serving behavior of managers (Ed Conlon)

Research on trust formation, stewardship theory, power and influence tactics, family business and social entrepreneurship (Jim Davis)

Effects of personality traits on the propensity to invest in social capital (Mike Crant)

Internet ethics and piracy and their impact on information sharing and trust (Rob I Easley)

The role of trust in online bargaining and in the attribution of blame in the context of human vs technological errors (Charles Naquin)

Research on the role of self-deception in unethical behavior and on the tension between self-interest and fairness, social contexts, preference reversals, and codes of conduct. (Ann Tenbrunsel)

The implications of leader characteristics and human emotion for trust (Bob Vecchio)

Research on the role of work values, person-organization fit, perceptions of equity and fairness, and intrinsic definitions of success (Bob Bretz) The impact of marketing practices and legislative policies on the well-being of consumers and society (Bill Wilkie, Pat Murphy, Betsy Moore)

The Effect of advertising on children (Betsy Moore)

The Ethics of advertising and marketing practices (Pat Murphy)

The use of internet marketing for development of long term trust and relationship between buyers and sellers.

Multinational Codes of Conduct (Ollie Williams, Lee Tavis) Professional ethics and decision making (Robert Audi)