

Examination of Current Practices used in Business Schools at Franciscan based Catholic Colleges to Integrate Franciscan Values in the Curriculum

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Abstract

This paper is designed to examine the unique ways in which the Franciscan tradition is reflected in business programs at Franciscan colleges and universities. Faculty members were sent a survey instrument that requested faculty members to rate the extent to which Franciscan values reflected their teaching, advisement, service and scholarship. In addition, each faculty member was asked for specific examples of Franciscan values that were reflected in teaching, advisement, scholarship and service. Specifically, each person was requested to (1) describe the extent to which these activities are influenced by Franciscan values and (2) identify any specific examples used that reflect these values. Fifty-one faculty members responded to the survey for a response rate of approximately 33 percent.

I. Background

Many business programs are housed in Catholic colleges and universities associated with a variety of traditions. These traditions include the Benedictine, Jesuit, Franciscan and many others. This paper is designed to examine whether business programs in colleges and universities associated with the Franciscan tradition reflect that tradition in ways that are unique.

In the spring semester, 2008, a survey was sent to faculty members who taught business classes in Franciscan colleges and universities. The list of schools was obtained from an article by Kevin Godfrey that appeared in the AFCU Journal in January, 2005. In the article, Godfrey identified the following Franciscan colleges and universities in the United States:

- Silver Lake College of the Holy Family
- University of St. Francis
- Viterbo University,
- Cardinal Stritch University
- Lourdes College
- Madonna College
- Marian College
- Quincy University,
- St. Francis College,
- Hilbert College
- Neumann College

- Siena College
- Alvernia College
- Felician College
- St. Bonaventure University

An examination was made of the web site for each school to compile a list of faculty who could be identified as teaching business classes. The result yielded a compiled list of 150 faculty members from the various institutions.

Each faculty member was then sent a survey instrument that requested faculty members to rate the extent to which Franciscan values reflected their teaching, advisement, service and scholarship. In addition, each faculty member was asked for specific examples of Franciscan values that were reflected in teaching, advisement, scholarship and service. A copy of the survey instrument is included as appendix A. The survey was structured using the categories with which faculty are normally evaluated. That is, the survey was broken in to the categories of teaching, advisement, research and service. Specifically, each person was requested to (1) describe the extent to which these activities are influenced by Franciscan values and (2) identify any specific examples used that reflect these values. As an inducement to increase participation, each faculty was offered to see the results of the study. Fifty-one faculty members responded to the survey for a response rate of approximately 33 percent.

II. Results

The first area examined was the category of teaching. The responses to the first question are presented in Table 1. The actual count for each response is presented below.

Table 1

Teaching

The extent to which Franciscan values influence my activities as a teacher...

Very Much

Not at all

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
(2)	(15)	(11)	(9)	(6)	(4)	(1)	(1)		(2) n = 51

It appears that the majority of faculty members responding to the survey felt that Franciscan values influence their teaching. When asked to provide specific examples of how Franciscan values are reflected in their role as a teacher, a wide range of examples were provided. These ranged from leading students in prayer to begin and end lectures to an open admission that they did not know what “Franciscan values” were. The actual responses are presented in Appendix 2.

The second area examined was the category of scholarship. The responses to the second question in the survey are presented in Table 2. The actual count for each response provided is presented below.

Table 2**Research**

The extent to which Franciscan values influence my activities as a scholar...

Very Much					Not at all				
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
(1)	(5)	(11)	(7)	(7)	(6)	(3)	(2)	(4)	(5) n = 51

Compared to teaching, it appears there is less emphasis placed on Franciscan values when applied to research. However, the results suggest that many teachers do reflect Franciscan values when pursuing research. When asked to provide specific examples of how Franciscan values are reflected in their role as a researcher, again, a wide range of examples were provided. The responses ranged from choice of readings and how to frame issues to studies that explored the effect of Franciscan values in modern society.

The actual responses are presented in Appendix 3.

The third area examined was advisement. The responses to the third question in the survey are presented in Table 3. The actual count for each response provided is presented below.

Table 3**Advisement**

The extent to which Franciscan values influence my activities as an advisor...

Very Much					Not at all				
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
(7)	(10)	(11)	(10)	(4)	(2)	(1)	(3)	(1)	(1) n = 51

Similar to the responses for teaching, it appears significant emphasis is placed on Franciscan values when applied to advisement. However, the results suggest that many teachers do reflect Franciscan values when advising students. When asked to provide specific examples of how Franciscan values are reflected in their role as an advisor, many respondents had specific examples. The responses had a central theme of “caring for students.” The actual responses are presented in Appendix 4.

The fourth area examined was service. The responses to the fourth question in the survey are presented in Table 4. The actual count for each response provided is presented below.

Table 4

Service

The extent to which Franciscan values influence my service (community, school and profession) activities...

Very Much

Not at all

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
(10)	(11)	(9)	(4)	(6)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(2)	(1)	n = 51

Franciscan values appear to influence many faculty members when providing service to their community, school or profession. Many faculty who answered this question pointed to service trips, participation in community organizations, volunteerism in a variety of organizations and providing examples for students. The actual responses to the open ended question is presented in Appendix 5.

III. Summary

Although no definition was provided to the respondents for “Franciscan Values,” many faculty perceive they are reflecting those values in their roles as teachers, researchers, advisors and members of the communities they serve. It is interesting to note that the responses were relatively consistent among respondents when classified by length of service and rank. The specific results for these are provided in Appendix 6.

The results from this initial survey are not intended to define Franciscan values or suggest the activities that fit within the meaning of Franciscan values. Instead, this study is intended to begin a discussion of how we can distinguish our programs from other schools, public and private, which operate under different guiding philosophies. This study is limited in that it only examined colleges and universities associated with the Franciscan tradition. In the future, it would be interesting to expand the study to compare how other traditions guide and inform faculty at various institutions.

Appendix 1

Survey of the Integration of Franciscan Values in Faculty Performance

Teaching

The extent to which Franciscan values influence my activities as a teacher...

Very Much

Not at all

Please return this survey to Dr. Michael Russell, St. Bonaventure University, in the envelope provided.

Appendix 2

Examples of Franciscan Values Reflected in Teaching

- I try to convey Franciscan values to my students in discussion of subject matter
- I try to represent Francis to my students
- I try to see the face of Jesus in my students, as Francis saw in the lepers
- I manage a program for low-income workers (tax assistance)
- I use these in teaching ethics and qualitative values in decision making
- I relate my own life experiences and thread them throughout decision making
- I teach ethics in most of my courses (but not a list of specific Franciscan values)
- I start and end each class with a prayer of St. Francis-Students often join me
- I give extra credit for work at a soup kitchen
- I try to know their names and show I care about them
- Review core values (discovery, community, individual worth) at beginning of each course and explain how they are relevant
- Try to keep individual worth at the forefront in all interactions with students
- I think my Christian values influence by behavior in all things
- Attendance at a Franciscan parochial elementary school and Franciscan university reflect in my role as a teacher
- I begin each class by drawing a flower on the board with a meaningful saying such as “Education is the not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”
- I give examples of how ethics affect the decisions of business leaders
- Relating views of the importance of the individual, and the role of nature to Franciscan values
- The “business: models associated with St. Francis’ life are utilized in class
- I include values education and ethics in decision making exercises and cases
- I treat my students with respect, and care about them beyond my role as teacher
- Discuss ethical dilemmas in accounting
- After teaching at a Franciscan college for 37 year, I still do not know what “Franciscan values” are
- I incorporate CST into my discussions on ethics, primary HR functions and corporate social responsibility
- I believe talking about the gospel message of compassion is important to include in the classroom
- Use of service learning in Taxes 1 and 2-Students work at IRS VITA center for low income individuals
- We attempt to insert an element of Franciscan values in every syllabus
- Mission moment at the beginning of every class
- Classroom climate of approval-culture is open, caring and democratic
- Always begin class with a prayer/and or reflection

- Attempt to respect, recognize and nurture each and every student in my class
- I try to bring Franciscan values into the discussion when possible
- We have activities sponsored by our sisters and in service program dedicated to the Franciscan values
- Availability to students
- Stress the need to “give back” by using knowledge to serve on various boards (church, NFP)
- I strive to “meet students where they are”-a Franciscan tenet-Compassion and patience sometimes escape me
- Specific case studies and examples are introduced in curriculum
- Respect for human dignity; stewardship
- Keep students aware that numbers and statistics reflect people

Appendix 3

Examples of Franciscan Values Reflected in Scholarship

- Franciscan values have definitely influenced my interest in the earned income tax credit and other tax benefits for low-income workers, as well as in financial literacy for low-income workers
- No significant effect on my scholarship except maybe papers that relate to the unethical use of the internet by students-some ethics related papers
- 3-day seminar at Siena College as well as a 2 year class on the Life of Francis
- Have done some research on integration of Franciscan values in the curriculum
- Conferences 3-Published article on Franciscan values and service learning-another article under review
- Marginal impact
- Helps me choose how frame issues
- Research for me is based on the integration of Franciscan values in the world of business and education
- Much of my research is related to ethics
- My area of research interest is organizational justice
- Choice of readings
- Currently collaborating on an article which examines how the school’s unique culture affected program development
- Explore the sociology of social justice issues
- Areas of research are always focused on ethical business practices and moral and ethical leadership
- Seek to make connections between Francis (writings and teachings) and the business world
- We assess how students grow in their belief and understanding of Franciscanism
- More ideas of research related to vision come up the longer I am in this setting
- Have participated in one Franciscan “infusion” process to deliberately included Franciscan values into a course design and curriculum

- Wrote an article on Luca Pacioli-a Franciscan and the known “father of accounting.” Presented at a conference at University of St. Francis colloquium

Appendix 4

Examples of Franciscan Values Reflected in Advisement

- Convey Franciscan values in discussion with students regarding careers and life after college
- I try to bring those values into the discussion of courses to take and career choices. Also, emphasize service opportunities around campus
- Encourage “discovery” and recognize individual worth of each student with personal attention and targeted advice
- I truly care about my advisees
- I advise students to get the most out of their collegiate experience
- My advising is largely professional; this question makes me think
- Encourage students to take courses that enhance students understanding of the importance of helping others
- I try to make myself available to my students beyond the normal office hours and assist them in areas beyond just selecting classes
- Respect each students diverse issues with the college
- I try to reach out to students who might not otherwise be noticed
- We hold “students first” philosophy
- Encourage self-exploration and finding an area for which they show passion
- Personal interest in students; discussion and counsel of non-academic topics
- How will students apply the values in their occupational choice? How does it affect their lives?
- Help build relationships with students
- I guess that is why I have 37 students-If they ask me to help, I do
- This is a great “relational” opportunity
- Treat students with Franciscan values; Expect students to treat me and others in the same manner
- Generosity and respect for human dignity-Welcoming to students and those in need
- The belief that every student can excel

Appendix 5

Examples of Franciscan Values Reflected in Service to Community, Profession and School

- Teaching financial literacy to low-income workers
- Run a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for low-income workers
- I am extremely active in community service groups such as the Special Olympics that help the needy. I encourage and participate in club activities such as an annual trip to a homeless shelter in Harlem.

- I am service oriented and believe people should give back to the community. I currently serve in 9 community or campus organizations.
- Active in church and various boards. I am also a Boy Scout merit badge counselor teaching ethical practices.
- As assistant advisor for a student organization we go to the Bahamas for a week each year to do service work, help the poor, fix schools and teach grade school and high school students.
- Work at a warming house soup kitchen and attend service trips to the Gulf Coast
- Select service that enables me to contribute to the community and that helps the marginalized
- On-campus service includes strengthening connections between Franciscan values and student engagement
- I believe I am able to support various community organizations because of my religious values rooted in the Franciscan tradition
- Helped to create campus organizations that help the poor and integrate materials in the classroom
- Share time in service to the community, profession and school. I would attribute what I do to the person I am rather than claiming I exhibit Franciscan values
- Arrange to take students to other countries to experience different cultures
- Volunteer work in many areas
- Work on connecting the community to nature and creation
- The ability to help community groups continue to service the underserved
- I am a volunteer chaplain for one of the athletic teams and devote some time to working with that team, their attitudes, values, and Franciscan values
- Provide an environment that is different from other schools-I serve as an EM at mass on campus and in my church
- Not much other than to give back to the community
- I am involved with activities, both through my parish and the school, that try to reach out to the underserved
- Volunteerism on committees, at church, at local high schools, teaching religious ed at church
- Servant leadership
- I am active on several community organizations as well as serve in many roles on campus and for our university community. Need to focus more on this within/as part of course activities
- As a Franciscan, I attempt to serve the greater good
- We ask all students to be involved in service activities-Some maybe required-all are encouraged to participate.
- I think about the values more
- Encourage students to give back to others and I attempt to follow that same advice
- Francis reached out to others. Service is an opportunity to make the world better...it is an essential element of Franciscanism
- Participate in numerous University committees and ad hoc groups, all of which promote Franciscan values. Personally advocate Franciscan values in my external consulting and contact with community leaders

- Volunteer at my local parish

Appendix 6

Demographic Information

Academic Rank: Professor **14**
 Associate Professor **16**
 Assistant Professor **15**
 Lecturer **5**
 Adjunct
 Other: 1_____

Years of Service:
0- 5 Years
6- 10
11-15
More than 15