

Engaging Faculty Around the Catholic Social Tradition: An Analysis of Practices and Outcomes for Catholic Higher Education

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Abstract

In their efforts to engage faculty members in institutional mission and identity, a number of Catholic colleges and universities have given particular attention to the Catholic Social Tradition (CST). This paper examines a handful of exemplary programs on faculty engagement around CST, identifying specific outcomes facilitated by these initiatives, as well as the challenges that have been encountered. The programs analyzed represent four approaches to faculty engagement as distinguished by their starting points: the charism of the founding order, teaching and pedagogy, the content of CST, and concrete social issues. Despite important differences among the approaches, the analysis uncovered significant overlap of limitations and key benefits, demonstrating why and how Catholic higher education might further invest in opportunities for faculty to understand, integrate, and develop the Catholic Social Tradition.

As an integral dimension of Catholic identity, the Catholic Social Tradition (CST)¹ offers a point of entry into conversations on mission and identity that bridges the Church and the world, diverse religious identities, varying political perspectives, and multiple academic disciplines. To discern best practices for integrating and institutionalizing

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¹ Unless otherwise specified, CST in this paper refers to the Catholic Social Tradition. The authors regard this as inclusive of magisterial teaching as well as the contributions of scholars and practitioners to the Church's social tradition.

mission, however, more research is needed on how to introduce, develop, and engage Catholic Social Thought in Catholic colleges and universities.

This paper focuses on faculty engagement around CST. Although it will not offer a comprehensive assessment of programs for faculty engagement around CST, it will highlight some ways universities respond to this task. Why should Catholic colleges and universities (and their partners) invest in opportunities for faculty to understand, integrate, and develop Catholic Social Thought? The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities' 2012 publication, "Catholic Higher Education and Catholic Social Teaching: A Vision Statement" assumes that CST is integral to the mission of Catholic higher education and claims that Catholic Social Teaching should be observed in the way institutions educate and form students, promote faculty research, and express their corporate and institutional identity.² But beyond generally supporting the Catholic mission of a college or university, what specific outcomes can be facilitated by connecting faculty to CST? And what challenges and limitations are present in the effort to engage faculty in this manner?

We began exploring various approaches to faculty engagement employed by centers and institutes related to Catholic Social Thought using the ACCU database of centers at U.S. Catholic colleges and universities.³ We then researched these centers and other institutional practices presented on public webpages. We accessed information related to Jesuit universities through the self-studies on mission and identity developed through the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU).⁴ At the same time, we issued an e-mail survey to

² Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), "Catholic Higher Education and Catholic Social Teaching: A Vision Statement," (Washington, DC: ACCU, 2012).

³ See <http://www.accunet.org/Resources/Centers-Institutes>.

⁴ In 2013 the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) published "Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument" as a tool to help its 28 member schools promote reflection, dialogue, and assessment of the ways they promote their Jesuit Catholic mission and identity. Piloted in 2015 and launched in 2016, AJCU developed a five-year initiative in which all Jesuit universities would be asked to undertake a process of reaffirming their Jesuit Catholic identity. The process involves a self-study (*examen*) initiated by the university, a visit from a "reaffirmation team" made up of colleagues from other Jesuit institutions, and assessment of the reports by the appropriate Jesuit Provincial and General Superior in Rome. At the time this article was written, the following universities had made public the report from their self-study: University of San Francisco, John Carroll University, Xavier University, Fairfield University, and Seattle University.

directors of centers related to Catholic Social Thought, inviting them to identify the following information:

1. What are the most promising models of faculty development across the curriculum regarding the Catholic social tradition?
2. What are some of the obstacles or challenges in engaging faculty around the Catholic social tradition?
3. Is CST integration promoted through community engaged learning/service learning? If so, how is the connection made — explicitly or implicitly?
4. For universities whose history and mission is informed by a particular religious order (Jesuits, for example), what are some ways you observe the charism of the order informing their expression and integration of CST?
5. How is CST engagement rewarded across institutions? Do you know of institutions that explicitly hire/promote/reward faculty based on some measurement of CST engagement and integration into their research, teaching, and service?

In our analysis of the information gathered from the survey, we identified five exemplary programs that together represent four recurring approaches to faculty engagement in CST. We then interviewed directors of these selected programs, inviting them to elaborate on the questions posed in the e-mail survey. The four approaches we observed are distinguished by their different starting points: the charism of the founding order, teaching, the content of CST, and concrete social issues. Though not exhaustive of the possibilities, the approaches illustrate promising practices that could yield insights about outcomes and limitations of faculty engagement.

Four Approaches

1. Starting with the Charism of the College or University's Founding Order

The Catholic Social Tradition is embodied in universities in diverse ways. One way to observe this diversity is through the particular charism of a college or university's founding order. The communities of men and women religious who established the majority of Catholic colleges and universities imparted a particular way of relating faith and social justice, along with defining commitments and priorities. For example, Franciscan institutions often feature a commitment to simplicity

and sustainability, while an institution founded by the Sisters of Mercy typically highlights the language of mercy and justice in its mission.

The Society of Jesus sponsors 28 colleges and universities across the United States, with each institution manifesting the charism of the Jesuit tradition in diverse ways. AJCU offers resources on Ignatian spirituality, pedagogy, and the Jesuit commitment to justice to its member schools as a way to facilitate collaboration and engagement with Jesuit mission and identity. Among the AJCU-sponsored opportunities to engage Jesuit mission is the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP). This program, which involves instructional workshops, an immersion trip, a retreat, and a capstone project, integrates CST as part of the overall goal of forming leaders in the Jesuit Catholic tradition.⁵ Originally designed for administrators, the program now forms yearlong cohorts of 30-50 faculty and staff.

ICP draws upon the historical trajectory and language of the Jesuit tradition, which in recent decades has been explicit about the promotion of justice in higher education. This has been articulated in the words of Jesuit leaders: from Pedro Arrupe's insistence that students become "men and women for others,"⁶ to Peter Hans Kolvenbach's observation that solidarity is learned through "contact rather than concepts."⁷

The ICP model stands out among other programs on social justice in a Jesuit context, according to Stephanie Russell, the Vice President for Mission Integration at AJCU, because it makes an explicit connection to CST. CST is integrated at multiple stages of the program.⁸ The online workshops include short instructional videos on the major principles of CST. ICP's Executive Director Joseph DeFeo is intentional about connecting the dots between the Jesuit commitment to social justice and CST. For instance, workshop reading material on the Jesuit commitment to a faith that does justice sets the context for the immersion experience. While on immersion, participants are asked to reflect

⁵ The Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP) website offers more information on the program with interviews of past participants: <https://www.ignatiancolleagues.org/>.

⁶ Pedro Arrupe, "Men for Others" address to the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in Valencia, Spain, July 31, 1973; available at <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/men-for-others.html>.

⁷ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education," keynote address at Santa Clara University's Justice Conference, October 6, 2000; available at <http://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/Addresses-and-Keynotes.cfm>.

⁸ Stephanie Russell, Vice President for Mission and Identity at the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, interview with Erin Brigham, April 5, 2017.

on their experiences in light of this notion of a faith that does justice. As participants continue processing the meaning of their immersion after their return, they are then engaged in the content of Catholic Social Thought in an online workshop later in the program. By starting with the participants' lived experience, then encouraging reflection upon its significance, the program seeks to prepare participants to more fully engage Catholic Social Thought.⁹

Another benefit of starting with the Jesuit commitment to social justice, according to DeFeo is that it allows people who might have reservations about Catholicism to connect to the Catholic mission and identity of the college or university. Such reticence to engage Catholicism might be due to negative experiences with the Catholic Church,¹⁰ or related to tensions between academic freedom and magisterial oversight, or to misgivings about specific Church teaching, particularly in the areas of gender, sexuality, and women's leadership.¹¹ Alternatively, as DeFeo observes, faculty reticence may stem from a general lack of knowledge of the Catholic tradition. The program introduces the Catholic social tradition as part of the larger Catholic intellectual tradition — a collection of scholarship as well as creative and artistic expression informed or animated by Catholicism.¹² He has found that CST provides a more accessible entry point into learning about Catholicism than does the Catholic intellectual tradition because many faculty are already engaged in the work of social justice. Starting with the Jesuit

⁹ Joseph DeFeo, Executive Director of the Ignatian Colleagues Program, interview with Erin Brigham, May 16, 2017.

¹⁰ Writing on the relationship between Jesuit identity and Catholic identity, historian David O'Brien notes that the same faculty who have reservations about the Catholic Church might connect to the Jesuit mission of the university because they perceive the Jesuits as having greater academic freedom in the face of magisterial oversight. See David J. O'Brien, "Jesuit Si, Catholic...Not So Sure," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* 6 (1994): 1-10.

¹¹ This perception was articulated in some AJCU institutional self-studies. For example, the report from the University of San Francisco identified a perceived tension between "serving the Catholic Church" and protecting academic freedom. Seattle University's report articulated among some members of the university a "fear that the Catholic identity — more than the Jesuit identity — contradicts their notion of social justice because of the Church's opposition to key elements of the progressive social justice agenda."

¹² For a helpful summary of the Catholic intellectual tradition and the role it plays at a Catholic university, see Monika Hellwig, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University" in George Traub, *A Jesuit Education Reader* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 242-259.

commitment to justice also allows ICP to connect to a religiously diverse cohort of participants.

Building upon knowledge of the founding order can be a strong motivation for upholding the college or university's institutional culture. Participants of ICP are expected to integrate their experience of the program into their home institutions through a mission project. Examples of mission projects by faculty participants in ICP include designing student and faculty reading groups related to the Ignatian tradition or particular social justice topics; creating an immersion trip for students or faculty; creating a website on Ignatian pedagogy for the college or university community; and promoting collaboration across Jesuit institutions within a particular discipline. Some of the mission projects integrate the commitment to justice, such as a faculty immersion to the U.S.-Mexico border or a study group on human trafficking. However, it should be noted that the language of CST is not made explicit in the small sample of proposals reviewed.¹³

ICP integrates CST and the Catholic intellectual tradition in an explicit way, while other programs do not. For example, a number of Jesuit colleges and universities self-identify service-learning and immersion programs as a primary way the institution integrates the social justice aspect of its mission on campus. But while social justice is often evoked in these programs, there is not always a clear indication of what social justice means and the connection between service and the mission of the college or university is not made explicit.¹⁴

Another concern is that the particular framework of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy, along with the trajectory of the Jesuit social justice tradition, requires translation in order to be relevant to other institutions not informed by this framework. This could lead to missed opportunities for collaboration among Catholic colleges and universities even within the same geographic vicinity. The critique has been made that the overemphasis on charism can fail to acknowledge the

¹³ For examples of faculty ICP mission projects, see https://www.icpdirectory.org/participants?title=&field_num_cohort_value=&field_university_nid=All&field_division_value=All&field_role_value=Faculty&field_current_title_value=.

¹⁴ For example, Seattle University reported that “[m]any faculty are committed to the teaching and scholarship of justice issues, but some have difficulty in knowing how to link that with faith or spirituality.” And Fairfield University observed that “service can become detached from the narrative of faith that grounds the institutional mission.”

Catholic identity of the institution and the shared heritage of Catholic higher education.¹⁵

Of course, Catholic identity and a founding order's charism are not mutually exclusive. For example, exploring the theological and biblical foundations of CST's preferential option for the poor provides a deeper understanding of the commitment to service and solidarity in Jesuit higher education. The necessary changes being made, the ICP approach is a promising framework for other institutions, indicating how study of CST can develop understanding of both the Catholic tradition writ large and an institution's particular charism.

2. *Starting with Teaching*

Many faculty connect to the social justice aspect of an institution's mission by integrating justice education into their teaching. Community-engaged learning/service learning and immersion experiences allow faculty to connect the learning outcomes of their courses to concrete social issues. The ACCU "Vision Statement" cited above speaks to this potential: "Community-based learning that integrates the intellectual framework of CST can help students understand the commitment of the Church to issues of social and economic justice, bring students into deeper solidarity with their communities, incorporate the mission of the institution and its Catholic identity, and, through evaluation and reflection, provide a foundation for lifelong reflection and service."¹⁶

While there is indeed potential to connect faculty to CST through community-engaged teaching, it should be noted that not all community-engaged learning programs include a strong commitment to justice. In fact, critics point out ways in which service learning has the potential to counter efforts for social change. When charity rather than justice is emphasized, service is viewed as an altruistic response to a community in need. This perception not only fails to account for structural dimensions of social problems, but it also can serve to reinforce

¹⁵ Expressing this view in response to a December 2014 article in *The Atlantic*, "The New Brand of Jesuit Universities," Jim Infantine criticized the decision of the Gonzaga University marketing team to emphasize its Jesuit identity as a way to attract students. See Jim Infantine, "We Hide the Word 'Catholic' from Prospective Students," *First Things*, February 2, 2015, available at <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/we-hide-the-word-catholic-from-prospective-students>.

¹⁶ ACCU "Vision Statement."

inequality by emphasizing the capabilities of the person serving rather than the community being served.¹⁷

Offering an example of community-engagement informed by CST, the Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame integrates CST into everything it does, as articulated in the Center’s mission “[t]o advance the common good through community-engaged teaching and research grounded in the Catholic social tradition.”¹⁸ The Center’s work with faculty includes a new faculty orientation, an intensive Community Based Learning (CBL) Institute, and continuing education designed around a theme relevant to CST. Each activity serves to promote community engagement within a framework of social justice informed by CST principles.

The CBL Institute offered annually over four or five days introduces faculty to CBL pedagogy and assists an interdisciplinary group of faculty in designing their courses. The Institute also introduces faculty to CST, inviting experts to speak on the topic. Promoting interdisciplinary engagement with contemporary social issues, the Center identifies a theme related to CST each year and invites faculty to integrate the theme into their courses. For example, one year the Center selected the theme of *Laudato Si’*, inviting faculty from across the disciplines to integrate reading and discussion around the theme and to connect their syllabi to the Center’s relevant programming. The Center also offers continuing education opportunities for faculty around the theme throughout the year, in particular by organizing a series of discussions framed by readings that engage different dimensions of the theme.

Integrating CST into faculty teaching has a number of advantages. It meets faculty where their research and teaching interests are, offering an opportunity to develop their pedagogy and engage the learning outcomes specific to their courses. It highlights the interdisciplinary nature of CST by inviting faculty from throughout the university to integrate it into the curriculum. Finally, connecting CST to community-based learning makes the relevance of CST immediately clear, presenting it as a tool for social analysis of concrete social issues.

The Center’s Associate Director, William Purcell, sees CST is a “bridge language” that allows the Center to reach a diverse audience of

¹⁷ See Randy Stoecker, *Liberating Service Learning and the Rest of Higher Education* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016).

¹⁸ Information on programs is available on the Center for Social Concerns website at <https://socialconcerns.nd.edu/>.

faculty, including those who have reservations about Catholicism.¹⁹ Thematic engagement with CST becomes “a hook” for faculty interested in integrating social justice into their courses. Purcell sees the interdisciplinary nature of CST as an opportunity and a challenge. It is a challenge to develop the interdisciplinary potential because some faculty perceive their work to be too specialized to contribute to interdisciplinary conversation around CST. The Center works to make clear the relevance of diverse fields to CST through the designated themes, such as peace or the environment.

Just as some programs that connect to CST through the charism of their institution’s founding order fail to clarify what social justice means and how it is connected to the institution’s mission, there are also service-learning programs that embrace a social justice orientation but do not make explicit what they mean by “social justice.”²⁰ One can observe in this context an opportunity to promote a deeper conversation within the entire institution on approaches to justice, including CST. In the absence of an institutional commitment, the potential to promote social change is limited to the resources of individual faculty and students.²¹

Unfortunately, a number of colleges and universities lack the institutional structure to prepare faculty to integrate community-engaged pedagogy into their courses. Advocates of service learning argue for institutions to take an active role developing strong community partnerships and offering opportunities and resources for faculty to develop the skills to teach service learning.²² Here one can look to the Center for Social Concerns for strategies.

3. Starting with the Content of CST

The content of CST is an unbounded corpus comprising official Church teachings, scholarship from theologians and other academics, and the wisdom and experience of countless practitioners. Despite its

¹⁹ William Purcell, Associate Director, Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame, interview with Erin Brigham, June 30, 2017.

²⁰ The self-studies of Seattle University and Fairfield University name this as a challenge. See notes 11 and 14.

²¹ Sondra Cuban and Jeffrey Anderson, “Where is the Justice in Service-Learning? Institutionalizing Service-Learning from a Social Justice Perspective at a Jesuit University,” *Equity and Excellence* 40 (2007): 144-155.

²² Andrew Furco, “Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education,” *Service Learning, General* (1999) University of Nebraska Omaha: DigitalCommons, <http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/127>.

breadth, there are significant core concepts and historical contexts that can anchor a faculty member's competence in the tradition. Direct engagement with the content of CST, particularly through its central ideas and documents, grants access to the intellectual genealogy of an institution's mission while at the same time supplying an academic resource that can inform teaching, research, and even personal moral development.

At the inception of Villanova University's Office for Mission Effectiveness (later, the Office for Mission and Ministry), CST was identified as the preferred means to connect a religiously diverse faculty to the university's Catholic mission.²³ The emphasis on CST and justice was intended to open up the possibility for subsequent engagement with other dimensions of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Since 2001, Villanova's Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Barbara Wall, has coordinated an annual weeklong faculty workshop on Catholic social teaching.²⁴ Prospective faculty participants submit an application that includes a syllabus to be informed by the workshop as well as a recommendation from their chair, thereby suggesting to departmental administration the curricular relevance of CST. Each year's cohort is made up of twelve faculty members from across Villanova's colleges.

Workshop participants receive stipends and are expected to do significant reading of CST documents and relevant secondary literature in preparation for the week's discussions. Individual sessions include such titles as "CST and the Common Good," "CST and Human Work," "Scriptural Conceptions of Justice," "CST and Economic Justice," and "CST and Ecology." In addition, there are sessions devoted to working on syllabus revisions as well as overviews of service-learning opportunities and the university's partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Finally, the workshop includes a panel with former faculty participants who speak to the ways they have since incorporated CST into their teaching and scholarship.

Cabrini University has also devised a faculty formation program anchored in CST.²⁵ Begun in 2011, Cabrini's Faculty Mission Academy

²³ Barbara Wall, Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Villanova University, interview with Kathryn Getek Soltis, June 5, 2017.

²⁴ All faculty participants in the workshop are from Villanova. However, for five years, a separate weeklong workshop was hosted for faculty members sent from other colleges and universities around the country.

²⁵ Jerry Zurek, Professor and Chair, Communication Department, Cabrini University, interview with Kathryn Getek Soltis, July 10, 2017; and Beverly Bryde, Dean of the

gathers a cohort of interdisciplinary faculty for three separate three-day retreats over the course of a year. The program is “designed to prepare instructors to understand the College’s mission and to introduce CST as a resource for their courses.”²⁶ In particular, the Faculty Mission Academy helps support Cabrini’s unique core curriculum, “Justice Matters,” which includes three required, developmentally linked core courses called “Engagements with the Common Good.” The first phase of the Faculty Mission Academy, taking place in May, focuses on explicit learning around CST, including various secondary resources that introduce the tradition and topics of faith and justice. The second phase occurs over Christmas break and involves an immersive experience with community partners engaged in social justice work. For example, faculty cohorts have participated in local programs that serve immigrant populations and those who lack reliable housing. The final phase, taking place the following May, fosters the application of learning to the faculty member’s teaching, advising, and research.

Both faculty development programs report success in connecting religiously diverse faculty members to CST. Barbara Wall noted that many non-Catholic faculty members leave the Villanova workshop with a stronger sense of participation in the university’s mission after exploring CST and finding that it has considerable resonance with their own beliefs. This exposure to the tradition also builds greater trust with the institutional Catholic Church. Cabrini’s Faculty Mission Academy has witnessed similar outcomes, especially as the first phase of the program is explicit about the way CST can function in a religiously diverse environment. In this initial phase, Cabrini faculty visit the CRS world headquarters in Baltimore to hear how the CRS Guiding Principles, based on CST, act as a unifying “Justice Lens” among its religiously diverse international staff.

Both programs are intentional about gathering faculty from across the disciplines. Villanova has had participants from every undergraduate college and the law school; Cabrini has had participants from every department. At Villanova, the opportunity to learn about CST among diverse colleagues has at times resulted in the development of interdisciplinary teaching initiatives. However, the greatest impact of both programs is on the way individual faculty members design and implement

School of Education, Cabrini University, interview with Kathryn Getek Soltis, July 11, 2017.

²⁶ Jerome Zurek, “‘Justice Matters’: A Multifaceted Implementation of Catholic Social Teaching across the Curriculum,” *Expositions* 10/1 (2016): 17-31, at 21.

their courses. For example, after learning more about poverty and food stamps, a Cabrini faculty member in Exercise Science and Health Promotion was inspired to restructure the way she approached teaching in her discipline and to present the new framework at conferences for her field. There are other examples of the effects on faculty research, but the overwhelming outcome of these content-based CST development programs is on the teaching of faculty participants.²⁷

These programs may have the greatest effect on institutional culture. Faculty from across the institutions are able to develop a common language and an appreciation of the rich intellectual tradition that produced such language. In this way, engagement with CST delivers critical knowledge for its own sake and also gives credibility and entrée to the larger Catholic intellectual tradition. The Villanova CST Workshop has reached around 175 faculty members. Cabrini's Faculty Mission Academy has been completed by 45 individuals, which is approximately half of Cabrini's full-time faculty members. While CST is approached explicitly in the Villanova workshop, Cabrini has chosen to gather faculty around mission while invoking concepts arising from CST (e.g., standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, respecting the rights and dignity of the human person, etc.). Beverly Bryde, Dean of the School of Education at Cabrini, notes that the common language is crucial for the institution's ability to communicate and make decisions informed by the university's commitment to social justice.²⁸ In addition to Cabrini's Faculty Mission Academy, there is also an integrated faculty and staff mission development opportunity grounded in basic CST concepts. This common formation shared by faculty and staff has been particularly important for sustaining the institutional culture at Cabrini.

A limitation of both programs is the lack of follow-up opportunities for participants. The Villanova Workshop and Cabrini Mission Academy are intentional about forming relationships among the cohorts during the program itself but opportunities to sustain those networks are sporadic after the program concludes. At Villanova, faculty members are invited to participate in CST-related programming and new resources are continually made available on the Office for Mission and Ministry

²⁷ Another example of a faculty development program based on the content of CST with primarily curricular outcomes is detailed in Denise Doyle and Robert Connelly, "Building an Intentional Culture of Social Justice: Increasing Understanding and Competence in the Curriculum," *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 30, no. 1 (2011): 95-111.

²⁸ Beverly Bryde, Dean of the School of Education, Cabrini University, interview with Kathryn Getek Soltis, July 11, 2017.

website.²⁹ Cabrini has offered evening dinner reflections for former Mission Academy participants and there is an annual day of service for faculty and staff who have participated in the mission development program. Even so, the question of how to sustain formation and interaction among the faculty members appears to be a key area of future development for both institutions. As noted above, this question is significant not only for the development of faculty but also for establishing and maintaining the integration of CST into the institution's policies and culture.

An additional challenge inherent to any approach focused on the content of CST is the potential for insufficient, and thus misleading, engagement with the tradition. A partial introduction of the material might fail to convey the full theoretical complexity of CST. Moreover, the choice to feature a certain subset of topics from within the Catholic social tradition might lead to the false impression that CST seamlessly aligns with one or another partisan political framework. Any institutions seeking to engage faculty in the content of CST should take care to introduce materials from the tradition that speak to its full range and richness.

4. Starting with Social Issues

Faculty engagement with one or more concrete social issues provides another means of entry into CST. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official international relief and development agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has developed an impressive record of partnerships with colleges and universities.³⁰ The primary work of CRS takes place overseas, supporting projects in more than 100 countries, with efforts tailored to each community in which CRS operates. Engaging in collaborations across civil society and the public and private sectors, CRS programs address major emergencies, HIV, health, agriculture, water, education, microfinance, and peacebuilding. CRS also works in

²⁹ In particular, faculty are given access to articles from the *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* for their use in the classroom. The *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* is published by the Office for Mission and Ministry at Villanova University.

³⁰ Kim Lamberty, Director of University and Mission Engagement at CRS, interview with Jennifer Reed-Bouley, April 3, 2017; Lou Charest, Manager of University Engagement at CRS, interviews with Kathryn Getek Soltis, June 19, 2017 and July 13, 2017; Sue Toton, Founding Director of the CRS-Villanova Partnership, interview with Kathryn Getek Soltis, May 18, 2017; and Dan Griffin, Director of the CRS-Villanova Partnership, interview with Kathryn Getek Soltis, May 18, 2017.

regional offices within the United States to support the Catholic community in living out solidarity with poor brothers and sisters around the globe. Relationships with colleges and universities arise out of this latter aspect of CRS's mission. Through opportunities offered by CRS, faculty members are able to engage issues such as migration, peace-building, and climate change. This engagement allows faculty members to come to understand the work of CRS, which at its core is the practical application of CST to global contexts. The agency's eight guiding principles are all concepts located at the center of CST: common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, option for the poor, etc.³¹ In keeping with CST, CRS is clear that its vision of justice and peace can be shared across religious and cultural boundaries. The broad accessibility of CRS's values reflects the agency's commitment to providing assistance on the basis of need, regardless of creed.

The primary CRS platform for engaging faculty is the Faculty Learning Commons (FLC).³² This online learning community and curricular resource provides materials that can be incorporated into existing courses. Each year there are a number of distinct modules, all centered on a topic drawn from the global relief and development work of CRS. The materials themselves are developed and curated by CRS experts along with faculty advisers. For example, the 2017-2018 topic is migration, with individual module titles including "Forced Migration and Catholic Social Teaching," "Why Forced Migration? Conflict, Economics, and Climate Change," and "The Facts and Current Debate about Unauthorized Immigration to the U.S."³³ Faculty are invited to select the modules and materials that best serve their course's learning goals, and resources include case studies, videos, journal articles, book chapters, and webinars. In 2017, CRS began offering a new book on global migration that explicitly integrates CST and was authored by faculty colleagues.³⁴ Participants in the FLC come from about 100 different institutions, the vast majority of which are Catholic colleges and universities. While a large number of the participants teach courses in theology or international affairs, faculty members from various disciplines can

³¹ The guiding principles for CRS are fully enumerated at <https://www.crs.org/about/guiding-principles>.

³² For more information, see <http://university.crs.org/faculty>. The online platform that served as a predecessor to the FLC was known as the Global Solidarity Network (GSN).

³³ For further information on current and past sessions, see <http://university.crs.org/faculty/course-materials>.

³⁴ For more information on the book, *Global Migration: What's Happening, Why, and a Just Response*, see <http://university.crs.org/session/global-migration-book-and-e-book>.

be drawn to participate in the FLC based on the specific issue being addressed in a given year.

Additional faculty opportunities arise when there is a deeper institutional relationship between CRS and a college or university.³⁵ These opportunities may include overseas trips for faculty delegations to directly witness the work of CRS, university conferences planned collaboratively with faculty and CRS practitioners (e.g., on the global water crisis), and institution-wide faculty workshops engaging the expertise of CRS (e.g., on peacebuilding). Ongoing partnership projects in a specific locale can draw on faculty research and technical assistance. For example, a Villanova initiative with CRS Madagascar is engaging faculty from Engineering, Geography, Nursing, and French. These opportunities extend to the students of these faculty members through on-campus student projects (e.g., French translation work and engineering of sanitation projects), as well as internships at CRS headquarters and overseas (e.g., in maternal/child health monitoring). While the nature of the CRS relationship varies by institution, one common and critical feature is an interdisciplinary CRS advisory group that promotes broad engagement throughout the institution.³⁶ Faculty participating in the institutional relationship with CRS often remark that they begin to see their academic work in a larger context and have a deeper appreciation of concepts like human dignity and the common good.

A significant strength of beginning CST faculty engagement with social issues is the immediate connection made between theory and practice. For example, CRS concretizes the social tradition by showing how the poor and marginalized, especially women, are building their capacities through education, the creation of women's small businesses, and the promotion of women's and girls' health care and nutrition. This example points to another strength: When engagement begins with social issues, it is almost always interdisciplinary in nature. A wide range of disciplines and courses can integrate these topics while maintaining academic rigor.

³⁵ There are currently 11 institutions that maintain a formal MOU with CRS and are designated as CRS Global Campuses. These are Assumption College, Cabrini University, Carroll College, the Catholic University of America, DePaul University, Manhattan College, Marquette University, St. John's University, St. Vincent's College, University of Notre Dame, and Villanova University.

³⁶ A university can become a "CRS Global Campus" when it participates in the FLC, supports a CRS student ambassador program, and maintains a CRS advisory group. See <http://university.crs.org/institutions>.

Social issues are also relevant across lines of religious diversity. CRS demonstrates how CST can both anchor the Catholic identity of the agency and, at the same time, provide the foundation for work that crosses cultural and religious boundaries (both in terms of the communities served by CRS programming and the diversity of individuals who work for the organization). Indeed, this approach mirrors that of Catholic colleges and universities that seek to maintain their Catholic identity while also being fully inclusive of religiously diverse students, faculty, and staff.

The limitation of beginning with social issues is that the engagement with CST can be indirect. While CST is woven into all of CRS programming, a faculty member may need to be deliberate about calling attention to CST in the material. For those without the interest, it may be possible to give minimal attention to the CST framework and focus more time on technical issues.³⁷ In theory, a focus on social issues should connect CST with an extraordinarily wide range of disciplines. However, this potential has not been fully realized. FLC modules have a strong presence in courses taught by faculty in humanities and social sciences, primarily theology, philosophy, political science, international affairs, global development, and sustainability. Courses in the hard sciences and business are rare for the FLC, although the latter has significant potential given finance components of CRS programming. Finally, the technical nature of the social issues — and in the case of CRS, the international context of these projects — means that there will be more resources for faculty to incorporate in their teaching than in their research. While possibilities for research do exist, they require a significant partnership infrastructure that is not always feasible or mutually advantageous.

Some Key Outcomes

Each approach to faculty engagement reveals effective practices as well as challenges and tensions when it comes to integrating CST into teaching and research, the central activities of a college or university. Some recurring practices in particularly effective programs harness the potential of CST to achieve the following outcomes.

1. *Gives context to sometimes-vague notions of “social justice.”* References to “social justice” often lack clear context. Widespread faculty

³⁷ CRS is planning to develop modules that will focus explicitly on CST and integral human development, highlighting the connections of theory and praxis.

understanding of CST provides a strong foundation for understanding social justice with clearly defined concepts and expectations. Knowledge of CST does not offer a blueprint for social justice that would eliminate the need for social analysis and ethical discernment. Neither does it preclude the possibility of disagreement on how the principles of CST should inform concrete social issues. However, it does provide parameters for discernment and a common language for dialogue.

2. *Encourages concrete applications in the curriculum and places community-engaged learning in context of solidarity and structural dimensions of justice.* Following the methodology of see, judge, act, CST promotes the integration of theory and practice in the curriculum and provides a strong rationale for experiential, contextualized, and community-engaged learning. With its emphasis on participation and empowerment, CST provides a framework for community engagement that addresses some of the potential limitations of service-learning pedagogy by moving beyond charity.

3. *Offers religiously diverse faculty a path to connect and contribute to the institution's Catholic mission and pursue mission-driven research.* CST is fundamentally inclusive, both in its vision (concerned with human dignity and the common good) and in its appeal (with modern CST being addressed to all men and women of good will). As a result, it is a path for faculty members from different faith traditions (or no tradition) to recognize their legitimate place in the Catholic college or university. Moreover, religiously diverse faculty members can identify how their own work contributes to the furthering of the mission.³⁸ In its "Vision Statement" on CST in higher education, ACCU makes much the same point with respect to faculty research: "Faculty of any faith disposition or none are encouraged to frame research questions and conduct research using the principles of CST (for example, concern for the common good, solidarity, preferential option for the poor) for the good of society."³⁹

4. *Provides faculty with a positive association with Catholic identity.* In almost every interview conducted for this paper, it was noted that some faculty members have misgivings about the institutional Catholic Church and/or the "Catholic" aspect of their college or university's mission (usually distinguished from the charism of the founding order). The approach to justice found in CST is often a welcome

³⁸ On the topic of engaging a religiously diverse faculty in Catholic mission, see Joseph Ferrari and Patrick Janulis, "Embracing the Mission: Catholic and Non-Catholic Faculty and Staff Perceptions of Institutional Mission and School Sense of Community," *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 28, no. 2 (2009): 115.

³⁹ ACCU, "Vision Statement."

discovery for Catholic and non-Catholic faculty members who have largely negative associations with the Church and its teachings.

5. *Enhances identification across Catholic campuses and promotes collaboration with other Catholic institutions.* CST can be developed in tandem with deepening appreciation of a college or university's charism. Thus, CST engagement can further understanding of the particularity of one's institution while also connecting one to the larger network of Catholic colleges and universities. Moreover, engaging CST offers the opportunity for faculty to plug into Catholic organizations animated by the commitment to justice. The partnership of some universities to Catholic Relief Services demonstrates this potential.

6. *Promotes an interdisciplinary connection to the mission.* Faculty engagement with CST has the potential to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations and dialogue. More often, however, the involvement of faculty across departments serves to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of CST, thereby reinforcing the common, justice-oriented purpose of teaching and learning in the context of Catholic higher education.

7. *Supplies a common language for mission integration and promotes justice within the institution.* The foundational concepts of CST supply a common language that faculty can use in their teaching and in conversations about mission and identity. When integrated into coursework, this common language can enhance students' ability to make connections across diverse fields of study. When applied to the institution's policies and practices, this common language can help keep the institution accountable to its commitments. Indeed, the ACCU "Vision Statement" insists that CST should inform a college or university's institutional culture: "Catholic higher education offers a living context that calls the educational community into a deeper understanding and practice of CST. For that reason, schools continue to strive to incorporate CST into all aspects of their institutional life." Members of Catholic institutions have drawn upon the social justice dimension of their mission to argue for just employment practices, greater diversity and inclusion among leadership, and environmental sustainability.

Challenges and Questions

Maintaining Engagement

Following up with faculty and sustaining CST engagement is a challenge we observed in each approach. Especially given the workload of faculty and the limitations of time within the academic calendar, it is unclear how best to promote ongoing, long-term, and in-depth

engagement with CST. Superficial or short-term engagement with CST could result in misunderstandings of CST or even the instrumentalization of CST to reinforce one's political interests. More thought is needed as to how to sustain faculty interest and commitment given the constraints of their profession. Institutions might consider how they incentivize engagement around CST and recognize faculty contributions to its development. Do institutions offer resources and financial support for faculty who want to engage CST in their teaching and research? Are there formal ways to acknowledge faculty engagement with CST in promotion and tenure?

Limitations to Interdisciplinarity

Our interviews unearthed the perception among some faculty that CST belongs with humanities and social sciences and that some fields are too narrow or technical to be able to relate. A number of faculty perceive their work to be too specialized to contribute to the interdisciplinary conversation around CST. Some fields have begun to navigate around this misunderstanding by making concrete connections to CST in research and teaching. For example, some business schools have been successfully promoting the integration of CST into the curriculum.⁴⁰ The question remains as to how to promote teaching and critical scholarship around CST from various disciplines outside social ethics.

Teaching More than Research

Most of the programs we observed engaged faculty in their role as teachers or located programs for faculty within the broader objective of mission engagement. Further development is needed in the area of faculty research. How do colleges and universities promote faculty engagement with CST in their research in such a way that elevates the value of academic freedom and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake? These questions point to a larger question about the Catholic college or university's role in social analysis and social action. Interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of CST can serve to develop CST as a more adequate response to contemporary social issues by offering technical expertise at the stage of social analysis.

⁴⁰ See Andrew Gustafson and Matthew McCarville, "Catholic Social Thought in Catholic Business Schools Today: A Survey and Conclusions," *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* 4 (2015). Available at <http://via.library.depaul.edu/jrbe/vol4/iss1/2>.

Conclusion

Observing the diverse ways universities engage faculty around CST suggests the appropriateness and effectiveness of multiple approaches. In our analysis of programs and outcomes, we discovered considerable overlap in terms of common concerns, challenges, and articulated benefits of engaging faculty around CST. For example, focusing on teaching and on social issues both gave substance to language around social justice and attracted religiously diverse faculty from across the disciplines. At the same time, Notre Dame's program on community engagement and CRS's university relationships both face the challenge of reaching faculty outside the humanities.

The purpose of this study, however, is not to offer an assessment of approaches but rather to clarify the outcomes and challenges around engaging faculty in CST. Considered in light of the overarching aim of integrating CST more concretely into teaching, research, and institutional mission and identity, the importance of faculty engagement is clear. Encountering CST provides an opportunity for interdisciplinary and community-engaged teaching and research. Learning about CST as an aspect of mission and identity allows faculty to connect the commitment to social justice with the charisma of their institution and ultimately the larger Catholic tradition, creating opportunities for dialogue where they had previously been absent. Interestingly, engaging faculty around CST, in particular, challenges the notion that Catholic faculty would have an advantage over non-Catholics in contributing to an institution's mission, reframing the conversation about "hiring for mission" in terms of interest and commitment over the identity and experience of particular faculty.

Faculty engagement with CST is only one aspect of the overall project of institutionalizing CST at Catholic colleges and universities. If CST is not incorporated into the formation of staff, administration, and board members, its potential to provide a common language and framework for institutionalizing mission is weakened. Even if a college or university's faculty are knowledgeable and committed to CST in their teaching and research, it does not guarantee that CST will permeate the institutional culture. Tensions remain around how institutions translate the principles of CST into concrete practices around workers' rights, financial decisions, practices around inclusivity, and environmental sustainability.

Programs for faculty likewise do not resolve a number of tensions within CST itself, particularly the relationship between magisterial teaching and the broader tradition of Catholic Social Thought and

practice. Also, while CST provides a positive association with Catholicism for many faculty, it does not resolve the tensions and issues a number of faculty experience with respect to some magisterial teaching, including significant aspects of CST (for example, concerning abortion and same-sex marriage). Furthermore, in cases when the Catholic Church fails to manifest the justice it proclaims within its own structures and priorities, the credibility of its social message suffers. A challenge remains for Catholic colleges and universities to foster critical dialogue around these tensions as they seek to embody CST more concretely. In any event, programs that engage faculty around CST, whether through teaching, research, professional development, or mission formation, have the potential to achieve important outcomes in Catholic higher education.

This article has its origins in the authors' participation in the CST Learning and Research Initiative, a collaboration of faculty and administrators at eleven Catholic colleges and universities across the United States. Through national meetings over the last five years, the Initiative has facilitated campus focus groups and collected oral histories of student understanding of CST, developed a rubric for curricular and research purposes, and conducted conversations leading to the peer-reviewed articles in this issue of the Journal of Catholic Higher Education. For more information, see both the introduction to this issue and <http://sites.nd.edu/cstresearch>.

