INFUSING THE CORE CURRICULUM: THE SPIRITAN COLLECTION AS INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCE

Introduction
One of the challenges facing Catholic institutions of higher education is the need to attend to multiple goods simultaneously (Fritz & Sawicki, 2006). These goods rest within the concerns of varied constituencies to which such institutions must attend: current and prospective students and their parents, the communities within which they are situated, and accrediting bodies, to name a few. One of the most important goods is the mission, which reflects both a Catholic institutional identity and, in the case of institutions founded by a particular congregation, the distinctive charism of the founding order.

Mission Initiatives: Structure Centers and Institutes
Many Catholic colleges and universities host Catholic institutes and centers to provide scholarly and service opportunities for faculty and students. These institutes and symbols serve as visible symbols of institutional identity. For example, Villanova, hailing from the Augustinian order, supports an Augustinian institute and a journal of Augustinian studies. St. Anselm’s College, an institution in the Benedictine tradition, hosts an institute for Saint Anselm studies and the St. Anselm journal. Duquesne University’s Center for Spiritan Studies reflects the Spiritan charism and is home to Spiritan Horizons, now in its seventh year of publication.

One of the initiatives undertaken by the Center for Spiritan Studies, in collaboration with the Gumberg library, was to digitize the vast collection of Spiritan materials, making them available to a wide scholarly and lay audience, a project that began in 2005 (Saunders & Behary, 2010). This collection is now available and searchable (http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/spiritan-studies/spiritan-collection-information) opening opportunities for research, study, and devotion for anyone with access to the internet. The collection includes letters and writings of founders Claude-François Poullart des Places and François-Marie-Paul Libermann, Spiritan chapter documents, books, and many other works.

Core Curriculum
Perhaps the key way in which a Catholic educational institution’s distinctive mission emerges is through its pedagogy.
Some Catholic institutions of higher education offer sequences of courses distinctive to their identity as either Catholic or as part of a specific order. Programs in Catholic studies, for instance, now grace many Catholic institutions of higher education (Fisher, 2007; Graham, 2007). Central to Catholic education, regardless of any particular sequence focused explicitly on Catholic studies, is its core curriculum (e.g., Houser, 2008).

A Catholic institution’s core curriculum, the set of required courses that all students engage as part of their educational experience, reflects a broadly Catholic identity. The core provides a set of common ideas and experiences that instill coordinates important to institutional mission. The core is usually offered in the context of the liberal arts and sciences to fulfill requirements such as theology, philosophy, math, science, and other discipline-specific courses. In the case of Duquesne University, a set of theme-area specific courses is that part of the core representing Spiritan identity (see http://www.duq.edu/academics/degrees-and-programs/core-curriculum for a link to the original founding document for the new core).

Mission Instantiation: Challenges

A Catholic educational institution’s identity emerges in the daily practices and lived experience of its participants, including faculty, administrators, staff, students, and other personnel associated with its activities. Faculty members, in particular, hold a significant responsibility for protecting and promoting institutional identity. Ideally, faculty members educate students in content areas of their expertise in ways that reflect and respect institutional identity; professors are the link between the curriculum’s institutional distinctiveness and the “products” of Catholic education: graduates who embody both the content areas of liberal and professional education and a sensibility steeped in the Catholic educational tradition.

This mediating role of faculty members presents its own set of challenges. In any organizational setting hosting the work of professionals today (Noordegraaf, 2007), challenges emerge stemming from members’ socialization to a professional identity that transcends any particular location within which a given member of an occupation practices (Fritz, 2013). This institutional/professional tension could emerge in the context of teaching classes in the core curriculum, in which academic freedom as an element of professional identity confronts the requirement for institutional distinctiveness (e.g., Fritz, 2013). A somewhat different issue may emerge, in which faculty members
One way Catholic institutions of higher education may deal with these tensions is to offer opportunities for faculty to engage creatively, but within a set of general guidelines, in course offerings that form the core. Duquesne University’s core curriculum includes a set of discipline specific courses falling within the horizon of core requirements for Catholic educational institutions, as a review of such requirements reveals. The Theme Area offerings in Duquesne University’s core curriculum, however, reflect the genius of both creativity and distinctiveness.

The Theme Areas reflect elements of the charism of Duquesne University’s founding order, the Spiritan Congregation. Any faculty member, with the support of a departmental chair and/or dean, can propose a course to fit a given Theme Area, which is reviewed by a committee composed of representatives from all schools in the university. Courses meet requirements of a Theme Area by fulfilling learning outcomes specific to that Theme Area. For example, the Faith and Reason Theme Area must fulfill one of six outcomes related to “how the interactions of religious faith and reason have been expressed and their relationship understood” in varied disciplines. Other Theme Areas include Creative Arts, Global Diversity, and Social Justice. These learning outcomes are specified in the course syllabus and are tied to assignments that provide opportunity to assess whether the learning outcomes are fulfilled (see http://www.duq.edu/academics/degrees-and-programs/core-curriculum/course-proposals for links to each of the Theme Area course requirements).

Mission Infusion: The Spiritan Collection

With the advent of the digitization of the Spiritan collection, an undertaking that began in the same historical moment as the revision of the university core curriculum, new opportunities emerge for more explicit connection of the Spiritan charism with the university core. The Center for Spiritan Studies, in partnership with the Center for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the Office of Mission and Identity, has begun to explore ways of inviting faculty members teaching in the core, particularly those teaching courses in the Theme Areas, to make use of the Spiritan collection. This fall, a course in the Faith and Reason Theme Area is experimenting with materials available in the Spiritan collection. Given the commitments of the Spiritan...
congregation to Africa, to the poor and disenfranchised, and to respect for human elements of indigenous cultures, materials relevant to Global Diversity, Social Justice, and even Creative Arts may be found throughout the collection, and connections to discipline-specific courses, certainly theology and philosophy, abound.

Materials in the digitized Spiritan collection are available at no cost to students, and sets of readings from the collection can be tailored to fit any course, given the range of topics addressed in the collection. The challenge may rest with the sheer number of choices available. To make best use of the collection, one needs to be able to navigate the site to find specific materials. One way is to browse through the collection to see what is available. Another is to type in key words or search terms to identify documents containing that term. Still a third is to contact or email the director of the Center, Fr. James Chukwuma Okoye, who will be only too glad to oblige with suggestions (okoyej@duq.edu).

In upcoming semesters, the Center for Spiritan Studies will partner with the Center for Teaching Excellence to host workshops for faculty members teaching discipline-specific or Theme Area courses in the core who are interested in including materials from the Spiritan collection. Workshops will provide an introduction to the digitized collection, lead participants through the various available areas of the collection, and offer examples of courses that have led the way in integrating materials from the collection with their specific content.

The Appendix below samples four theme area courses and the requirements.

Appendix: Theme Area Courses

The Theme Area courses provide students with a choice of courses that address specific themes important to the identity of Duquesne University: Creative Arts, Faith and Reason, Global Diversity, and Social Justice. To fulfill the Theme Area requirements, students take one course designated as appropriate for each of the four theme areas. Of the four theme courses, a minimum of two must be taken in the McAnulty College – one offered by the History Department and one offered by the Social Science departments (Economics, Political Science, Psychology or Sociology). The remaining two courses may be taken in the College or in the other Duquesne University schools.
Core Theme Area courses must be open to undergraduate students in all of the schools of the University. Courses offered at the 300 and 400 levels may require prerequisites and/or the permission of the instructor. The Theme Area courses may be counted for a major or minor as well as for the Core.

Theme Area courses have a double listing in the Schedule of Classes booklet: a department number and a University Core Curriculum number, with the latter appearing under an appropriate heading, e.g., “Creative Arts.”

3 credits in Faith and Reason

Throughout history the relationship of faith and reason has often informed the ways in which individuals search for truth and understand the world and their own humanness. In courses concerned with the arts, cultural history, literature, the natural world, social and political thought, philosophy, and theology, students study how the interactions of religious faith and reason have been expressed and their relationship understood.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the Faith and Reason requirement, students are able to do at least one of the following:

1. Demonstrate recognition of how the relationship of religious faith and reason in a particular society affects its cultural life, such as its arts and its social, economic, and political systems;

2. Identify themes addressed by religious faith and philosophy or the sciences and apply relevant methods for considering those shared themes;

3. Explain major historical developments in the relationship of Christian theology and the sciences, with attention to how the conceptions of their relationship affect personal and societal life;

4. Describe the complex relationship between rationality and religious faith, through a focused exploration of a particular historical or philosophical period, a significant thinker, or a selection of literary works;

5. Articulate how religious faith can play a role in the critical analysis of social problems and in the choice of actions for their resolution;

6. Explain how intellect, affect, moral development, and religious faith work together in learning and find expression in works of literature, of literature and film, and in the other arts.

3 credits in Global Diversity

Knowledge of the world’s peoples contributes to students’ development as global citizens. The focus of this theme area is
on concepts of cultural and social identity. The purpose is to investigate diversity within global, national, and local contexts, thereby enabling students to engage issues from different points of view. Diversity may be explored in a variety of ways, for example, through the study of historical developments; of linguistic, literary and artistic expressions; of geographical, social, political, and economic systems; and of religious, spiritual, and ethical themes.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students who fulfill the “Global Diversity” requirement are able to do at least one of the following:

1. Identify the historical forces that have contributed to the current global systems and these systems’ consequences for humanity and/or the environment;
2. Explain how the theoretical approaches of the social sciences analyze and evaluate the impact of social class, race and/or gender on self and group identity and people’s responses to diversity;
3. Communicate effectively about major social and cultural trends of people living in non-Western regions, such as their religious, economic, and political patterns;
4. Articulate reasons for the presence of minority and/or historically marginalized groups in the United States and/or other Western countries;
5. Demonstrate knowledge of linguistic diversity within and outside U.S. borders through the study of a modern non-English language beyond the 200 level, with attention to the culture of at least one population that speaks that language.

3 credits in Social Justice

Courses in this theme area emphasize social justice values because these values play an integral role in the formation and education of students as agents for ethical change. Through this requirement students are assisted in learning how to be informed global citizens and to take responsibility for being informed and productive participants in the life of society.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students fulfilling the Social Justice requirement are able to do #1 and at least one of the remaining five:

1. Articulate the importance of being informed, active, critical, questioning citizens in a complex globalizing society;
2. Demonstrate comprehension of the varied meanings of justice, both in theoretical terms and in practical application, at home and abroad;
3. Explain the basis for defending the dignity of all persons regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, or national origin, and identify theoretical challenges and practical implications in making such a defense today;

4. Demonstrate the application of reasoning and other reflective skills to make judgments about what ought to be done in a situation in the light of what is morally/ethically at stake in the situation;

5. Analyze social justice issues by applying social science theories and research methods;

6. Examine how social, political and economic institutions can support or undermine a justly ordered society through the study of one or more of the following: political repression, economic inequality, environmental degradation, or social discrimination on the basis of race, gender and/or class.

**3 credits in Creative Arts**

The study of the Creative Arts is essential to a liberal-arts education. It provides students with the opportunity to develop integrative skills and to have creative experiences that enhance overall intelligence. Through formal study of creative processes, students engage in non-linear modes of thinking, problem solving, collaborative achievement, and artistic expression in the fine arts, performing arts, or literary arts.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon the completion of the Creative Arts requirement students are able to do #1 and at least one of the remaining four:

1. Demonstrate knowledge acquired by the study and analysis of the formal elements of the arts in a variety of media, and know how these elements are used to create compositions;

2. Identify representative musical works through perceptive listening with attention to various musical forms and periods, and composers and performers;

3. Explain the various facets of theater as an art form, including effective communication; creative expression; critical imagination; principles of form, style and function; and the interdisciplinary nature of dramatic performance, which includes writing, acting, directing, lighting, designing, and costuming;

4. Describe the visual arts (painting, architecture, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, and design) in various societies, with a focus on major artists, artistic styles and movements, employing both formal analysis and contextual methodologies;
5. Apply elements, skills, techniques, media, and processes that are appropriate for the fine arts, performing arts, and/or literary arts.

Abstract
Both the digitization of the Spiritan collection and revision of the university core curriculum were projects initiated in 2005. With the core now firmly in place and the Spiritan collection in accessible digital form on the Gumberg library site, opportunities for curricular infusion of Spiritan materials into the core are possible as never before. Infusing the curriculum with Spiritan readings can offer additional distinctiveness to a Duquesne University education.

References
Appendix A [see PDF of University Core Curriculum Founding Document]