Catholic higher ed works to reverse food insecurity

**Nourishing Body and Soul**

*By Michael Hahn*

Robertolino is a graduate student at a Catholic university in the Midwest. In addition to his classes and on-campus job, Robertolino is also attentive to his access to food. His scholarship includes a meal plan for the academic year, but during summers and holiday breaks, Robertolino must find other sources.

“This is not always easy,” Robertolino said, describing the expense of buying healthy food and the difficulty of finding transportation to a grocery store. As a result, he also uses his university’s food pantry, which offers nonperishable items, leftovers from the cafeteria, and occasionally fresh fruit and sandwiches.

Robertolino’s experience is not uncommon for college students in the United States. Earlier this year, the Hope Center released *College and University Basic Needs Insecurity*, a report documenting student needs in food and housing. It found that, among the 86,000 students from 123 two- and four-year U.S. institutions that participated, 45% of students experienced food insecurity during the prior 30 days. At four-year institutions, 41% of students experienced food insecurity, with approximately 18% assessed at the low level and 24% assessed at the very low level.

The report defines food insecurity as “the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food in a

Continued on page 2
Catholic Colleges Tackle Hunger among Students

Continued from page 1

socially acceptable manner. The most extreme form is often accompanied by physiological sensations of hunger.”

At Rockhurst University in Kansas, a 2018 climate study revealed that 32% of students self-identified as food insecure. “While reflective of national trends,” explained Cindy Schmersal, vice president for mission and ministry, “it underscored an alarming and urgent need within our campus community.” In response, Rockhurst University formed a committee to address food justice. The committee quickly opened Grandma’s Pantry, an on-campus food pantry that allows students to both donate and receive food. “Grandma’s Pantry is one concrete expression of our mission-fueled commitment to love and care for the whole person,” according to Schmersal.

For several years, many Catholic colleges and universities have organized food pantries and soup kitchens to support their neighboring communities. DePaul University, in cooperation with St. Vincent de Paul Parish, has served approximately 30,000 meals annually in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago.

Today, Catholic colleges and universities are more aware of the growing needs among their students. Fr. Dan Borlik, CM, chaplain at DePaul University, pointed to the recently launched Dax Program, which provides housing to 50 DePaul students each academic quarter, as well as case management, counseling referrals, transportation, food and book stipends, and educational reimbursements. “Our ministry departments are also experimenting with encouraging students to donate a portion of their food allotment to other students who cannot afford food service regularly,” Borlik said.

Food insecurity is often accompanied by housing insecurity. According to the Hope Center report, 48% of student at four-year institutions experienced housing insecurity in the previous year; 2% self-identified as homeless.

Food insecurity also undermines academic success. The report shows a statistically significant relationship with college completion rates, persistence, and credit attainment.

As one academic advisor at a Catholic college said, “Our kids can’t learn if they are hungry.”

Students have told Lisa Cathelyn, director of campus ministry at Alverno College in Wisconsin, that Alverno’s on-campus food pantry “is what has allowed them to stay in

Michael Hahn received a Ph.D. in theology and education from Boston College in 2019. His research focus includes the future of American Catholic higher education.
school.” Between 120 and 240 bags of groceries move in and out of the food pantry each month, Cathelyn said.

Some students are more at risk for food insecurity than others. The report reveals demographic disparities, with 58% of African American/Black students, 50% of Hispanic/Latinx students, and 39% of White/Caucasian students reporting food insecurity.

At Villanova University, the food pantry for students, the Nova Nook, offers an array of toiletry and personal items, as well as non-perishable foods. But Kathy Byrnes, associate vice president for student life, explains that Villanova is also “gathering data from students on food insecurity so we can better understand the needs and explore how financial aid may be helpful in solving the concern for individual students on a more permanent basis.” A committee with representatives from financial aid, residential life, dining services, and institutional research was formed to study comprehensive solutions to food insecurity and related problems.

The Hope Center report recommends that colleges and universities adopt proactive solutions, such as appointing a director of Student Wellness and Basic Needs, establishing a “culture of caring” on campus, engaging community organizations and the private sector, developing or expanding an emergency aid program, and advocating for public assistance to be expanded for college students.

For Catholic colleges and universities, addressing basic needs insecurity on campus is connected to their religious identity and mission. According to Schmersal, “We recognize that community members can face myriad barriers to success, including food insecurity. In turn, we strive to embody the words of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus: ‘Love is shown more in deeds than in words.’"

Nick Reese, a senior at Xavier University of Louisiana and student leader at Vincent’s Vault, the campus food pantry, said, “Once I was fully aware of the gravity of the problem at hand, I knew that a profound and ever-growing change could be made through our team at Xavier with Christ-like love and selfless service.”

The Carlow Closet at Carlow University provides both non-perishable food and gently used clothing to those in need.

**About Update**

*Update* is the free quarterly newsletter of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, with an international distribution to more than 6,000 electronic subscribers. Issues are published in the winter, spring, summer, and fall. Individuals may receive an automatic electronic notification of each new issue by visiting the [ACCU website](http://www.accunet.org), signing in with their personal account, and selecting “Email Subscriptions” from under the “My Account” menu.

**Submissions**

If you have a news item pertaining to Catholic higher education mission that you would like considered for *Update*, submit it to pmoore@accunet.org. Please observe the following deadlines for article submission:

- Spring 2020 issue: February 21, 2020
- Summer: May 22
- Fall: August 21
2020 ACCU ANNUAL MEETING
NOW MORE THAN EVER:
Catholic Higher Education Adaptively Serving Students, Church, and World

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31 – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2020 | WASHINGTON, DC

NEW SESSIONS ADDED:
• How Catholic Higher Education Must Adapt to Continue Its Mission
• Top Federal Grant Opportunities in 2020 for Small Catholic Colleges and Universities
• Town Hall with new ACCU President, Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, CM

PLUS, HEAR FROM THESE RENOWNED SPEAKERS:
• Rev. James Martin, SJ, Editor at Large, America magazine
• Kathleen Mahoney, co-author of The Resilience of Religion in American Higher Education
• John McPhee, Executive Director of the JED Foundation
• Mary Haddad, RSM, President of the Catholic Health Association of the USA

Join the largest annual meeting of Catholic college and university senior leaders!
www.accunet.org/2020-Annual-Meeting
2019 Annual Report Coming Soon

The latest annual report of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities will be published later this month, featuring a review of the events and achievements of the most recent fiscal year.

The report reviews ACCU’s responses to the Church abuse crisis and concerns about free speech on campuses. It also details success in bringing leaders of Catholic colleges and universities together to find solutions to common challenges.

Once published, the report will be available for download from the association’s website. It will also be printed and distributed at the 2020 ACCU Annual Meeting.

Study USA Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Study USA, a program that offers undergraduate Catholic and Protestant students from Northern Ireland scholarships to spend a year studying in the United States, celebrated its 25th anniversary recently.

Formerly known as the Business Education Initiative (BEI), the program was initially set up in 1994 to aid the Northern Ireland peace process. Today, the program is managed by British Council Northern Ireland, on behalf of the Department for the Economy, and sends more than 50 students each year from Northern Ireland to the United States, where they complete a year studying business or STEM subjects at one of 140 institutions.

Catholic higher education has always been supportive of the program. Originally, BEI was part of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU). Eventually, it migrated to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, where it remained until 2006, when the BEI program returned to ACCU under the new title, Study USA. (Due to recent staffing changes, ACCU will no longer provide administrative oversight for Study USA. The Center for Irish Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Texas will now house the program.)

To celebrate over two decades of the program, the anniversary celebrations brought together the program’s most recent graduates, U.S. partners the Association of Presbyterian Colleges, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (of the United Methodist Church), and ACCU, and guests from the Northern Ireland government.

Speaking at the event, Jonathan Stewart, director of British Council Northern Ireland, said: "We are delighted to be celebrating 25 years of success with the Study USA program. Over 2,000 undergraduate students in Northern Ireland have benefitted from this incredible scholarship program since it began in 1994. Through the study of business in a U.S. college or university, students boost their core employability skills and gain invaluable experience and intercultural skills working in an international setting. This enhanced global awareness is vitally important in developing Northern Ireland’s export-driven economy.”

More information is available through British Council Northern Ireland.
Rhona Free: Creating Opportunity at the University of Saint Joseph

Rhona Free became the ninth president of the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) in July 2015. She spoke with writer Kenya McCullum recently and is featured in the current edition of @ the Helm, the ACCU leadership blog. Read the full interview online.

Q: You were a professor for over two decades before becoming an administrator. What went into your decision to make the move from teaching to administration?

A: I suppose it was the realization that what I enjoyed about teaching, which was really being able to support students’ learning and growth, and their transition from being a high school student to career person, all of that I could do on an even larger scale as an administrator. So it was really the idea that as a faculty member, you create opportunities for students to learn and to grow and you can do that even more when you are an administrator. You have more direct and indirect ways to make that happen.

The University of Saint Joseph recently became coeducational after being a women’s-only institution for many years. How did that decision come about and what have been the effects of it?

We saw data that showed almost 98% of students graduating from high school planned to attend a coeducational institution. If we admitted men, there would be higher enrollment of both women and men, and that’s come to pass. With that increased enrollment, we could offer more opportunities to the women students, as well as to the men, including curricular, co-curricular, and athletics. We’ve been able to add academic majors, sports teams, facilities, and more on-campus activities for all students, but we could not have done that with the enrollment level that was attainable with only women on campus.

How do you feel that being co-educational has changed the overall atmosphere on campus?

We were co-educational at the graduate level before. We are part of an 11-campus consortium of colleges and universities in the Hartford area, and students can take courses on [any of the] other campuses, regardless of gender. We had part-time male undergraduate students, so it wasn’t unusual to have male students in classes, but I think having males on campus has enlivened the campus because students are more likely to stay here over the weekends. We can have more co-curricular activities, so it’s a livelier campus, there’s no question about it.

You’re the first non-Catholic president at the University of Saint Joseph. Does being a non-Catholic running a Catholic university give you a unique perspective that previous presidents may not have had?

I can’t really say for sure. I had spent five years at the University of Notre Dame and so I think I understood well the values of the Sisters of Mercy. The University of Notre Dame had a very strong emphasis on social justice, and that’s a major issue of concern with the Sisters of Mercy. So I was very comfortable with that focus.

During your presidency, how have you been able to uphold the Catholic tradition the school was founded on?

There are a lot of policies and procedures that have been in place here for decades to ensure that any new academic program, for example, incorporates elements of the Mercy areas of critical concern so that there’s a focus on the program meeting the needs of society. In the general education requirements in the core curriculum, there’s a lot of emphasis on Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic identity — not in a way that would be uncomfortable for students who are not Catholic — but reflected in questions about equity, diversity, and understanding the relationship.

Interview by Kenya McCullum, a freelance writer who often writes about higher education.
between faith and reason, regardless of the particular faith. The policies and procedures that have been in place ensure in terms of the curriculum that Catholic identity and the Mercy tradition and values continue to be integrated. And I think the same thing would be true in terms of the value of community engagement and service. Since those programs were in place, it’s been my job to make sure that they continue to be areas of priority, they continue to be well-funded, and that we continue to ask how well we’re doing with mission integration. We also have six Sisters of Mercy on our board and they ask questions, as do other board members, about ensuring that we maintain a focus on our mission and are consistent with our mission.

Because you were an administrator at Eastern Connecticut State University, have you observed any differences in leading a Catholic university versus a secular university?

There is a difference. As an administrator at a public university, there were some questions that were not as easily answered because there wasn’t a sense that we all agreed to the shared values. Here, we have a commitment to a set of values that guide our decision making, and so in a lot of cases, it is easier because there’s a clear value that we are using to gauge whether or not a decision is the right one. I find that a little bit easier.

You have accomplished a lot during your presidency. What have you done that you’re most proud of?

It’s really what made me go from being a faculty member to an administrator in the first place, that I have always been very proud of the accomplishments of my students and then when I became an administrator, it was the accomplishments of students and the faculty because my job is to get them the resources and create opportunities for them to succeed. Although I probably shouldn’t take much credit for it, but what gives me the greatest satisfaction is observing the success of students — the fellowships that they get, the great jobs they get, the great internships that they get, and then for faculty, their scholarly activity, their teaching awards. Again, I don’t know how much credit I should get for it, but it’s what gives me the most satisfaction.

Fun Fact: In recognition of Dr. Free’s Scottish heritage, her inauguration included a “Highland Games.” She did not excel at tossing the caber.
Mercyhurst Keeps Legacy Alive with Mercy Emissary Program

Since Sister Lisa Mary McCartney first came to Mercyhurst University as a cadet student more than 50 years ago, the institution has experienced a number of milestones.

The first lay college president. The move to coeducation and the first class of men. The first graduate program.

McCartney’s retirement a year ago May marked another important first for Mercyhurst: For the first time in its 92-year history, the university does not have a Sister of Mercy employed full time on campus.

“When I came to Mercyhurst, the president was a Sister, the dean was a Sister, Sisters worked in food service, every residence hall had at least one Sister. It was a different world,” McCartney said.

With the numbers of priests and women religious declining on college campuses, faith-based institutions increasingly turn to the relatively newly established role of mission officer to safeguard their founding ideals. In 2008, Mercyhurst joined the ranks, naming McCartney as the first vice president for mission integration and charging her to assimilate the university’s educational mission, Catholic identity, and legacy of the Sisters of Mercy.

“I determined that the role of the vice president of mission would be to tend to employees,” she said. “If the employees get the mission, it is they who will pass it on through teaching and daily interactions with students.”

In her first years on the job, a campus-wide survey found that most people did not think Mercyhurst’s mission could continue without the Sisters of Mercy.

“Immediately, I thought that’s a perception we’ve got to change,” she said.

Following a series of discussions with a key group of administrators and faculty — “people who couldn’t say no to me,” she said — the decision was made to establish a voluntary employee Mercy Mission training program, which would become known as the Mercy Emissary Program.

Loosely modeled on the Mercy Associate program of the Sisters of Mercy, the program — which is open to employees of all faith backgrounds — consists of a series of monthly gatherings throughout the academic year. The first semester addresses the Mercy charism while the second focuses on Catholic higher education. The training concludes with a daylong retreat.

“We wanted to make it as available as possible,” McCartney said. “It’s important to understand the Mercy Emissary Program as a work of community, and not another committee.”

Employees responded with enthusiasm. Since it debuted in 2015-16, about 120 individuals have completed the program. The 2019-20 year welcomed its first cohort of Mercyhurst students.

Sister Lisa Mary McCartney, RSM, describes the Mercy Emissary Program as “a work of community, and not another committee.”
With fewer Sisters at Mercyhurst than there once were, the Mercy Emissaries have seized the opportunity to preserve the Mercy mission. They do so by volunteering at community events, planning retreats and prayer meetings, establishing ongoing programs to promote understanding of the Mercy charism, and organizing welcome receptions for new U.S. citizens following naturalization ceremonies in the surrounding Erie community, to name a few recent activities.

Looking ahead to Mercyhurst’s future, change is inevitable. But McCartney is optimistic that thanks to buy-in from university leadership, the Mercy mission will continue to make Mercyhurst special.

As McCartney is often fond of saying, “The Sisters of Mercy don’t have a ‘lock’ on mercy. There is certainly a crying call worldwide for people to be merciful.”

Thanks to her pioneering efforts, Mercyhurst employees, students, and the growing ranks of Mercy Emissaries are rallying to answer that call.

Now Hiring?

Is your campus hiring faculty or administrators for the fall?

If so, now is the time to visit the ACCU Job Center. Human Resources staff can post available positions and reach job seekers around the country and the world. Find qualified people who are committed to Catholic higher education. Member institutions receive 5 FREE postings.*

Visit www.accunet.org/Jobs for more information.

*Registration with the ACCU website is required.
Negotiating Identity Revisited: A Symposium on Catholic Higher Education

By Michele Sampson-Nelson and Carl Procario-Foley

Through the support of a Collegium mini-grant, Iona College recently gathered 80 faculty, administrators, and students from the New York area for “Negotiating Identity Revisited: A Symposium on Catholic Higher Education at a Turbulent Time.” The daylong discussion held last October addressed the particular challenges Catholic colleges and universities face in these times of entrenched secularism, intense competition, declining religious life vocations, and a Church reeling from the pain of the sex abuse crisis.

This event was dedicated to the memory of Sr. Alice Gallin, OSU, the former executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. Her seminal work on Catholic higher education, Negotiating Identity, is cited in the symposium’s title and her stalwart leadership in American Catholic higher education is legend.

Paul Lakeland, the Rev. Aloysius P. Kelley, SJ, Professor of Catholic Studies and Chair of the Center for Catholic Studies at Fairfield University, delivered the keynote address, “In Search of a Future with Meaning: Catholic Education in a Neoliberal World.” Three faculty members offered responses to the keynote.

The symposium also included a panel of faculty from Manhattan College, Iona College, and St. John’s University, who discussed issues of Catholic identity as they relate to diverse religious traditions on campus, as well as the promotion of institutional charisms. Some of the faculty noted the challenge of educating about the charisms of Catholic institutions to mixed audiences, some indifferent to the tradition and others who sought to relate the spirit of the charism to their own faith traditions. The symposium’s discussions culminated in a student panel, which provided an arena for students to highlight the Catholic dimensions of their institutions, to explore motivations for their peers choosing a Catholic college, and to articulate how the unique charisms of their respective institutions were taught and celebrated.

Sharing the Good News

Lakeland set the tone of the symposium by lauding Gallin’s work for its clearly naming the issues of Catholic identity of a generation ago, especially regarding the relationship of Catholic colleges to the Church at large, including issues such as supporting academic freedom and rigorous standards of hiring and promotion of private, non-sectarian institutions; recognizing independent boards, no longer governed by religious communities; promoting Catholic identity, while also receiving government funding. But, as Lakeland said, “The battle with the institutional Church is won, I will argue, but the embrace of the secular world has come to be fraught with more peril than we might have imagined.”

Citing Pope Francis’s challenge for Catholics to adopt a “missionary” stance of moving to the margins of society, Lakeland pushed Catholic institutions to embrace the health of the world as their foremost priority. A neoliberal paradigm, Lakeland argued, threatens to replace institutions of meaning with ones that pander to global market capitalism. Such pandering, according to Lakeland, risks the “sin of self-referentiality,” an antidote to Francis’s injunction to be missionary or evangelical by nature, an orientation at the service of genuine human fulfillment, not financial prosperity.

Michele Sampson-Nelson is assistant vice provost for student services and Carl Procario-Foley is director of the Office of Mission and Ministry at Iona College.
Drawing from a broad array of sources, including Victor Frankl, Elizabeth Johnson, and St. Ignatius, Lakeland suggested that the *paideia* of Catholic education must be “good news” that embraces a critical awareness of all that is human and calls for a common vision of a just world. To advance such a *paideia*, institutions need to ask themselves key questions, including: Are they committed to dialogue and consensus in decision making? Does the institution have more of a corporate or a communitarian feel? Is the institution committed to racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion? Are there just labor practices? Do food services and residences promote sustainability and healthy living? Are trustees chosen for their capacity for moral leadership? Are the principles of subsidiarity and self-government advocated? Now is the time, Lakeland concluded, for Catholic colleges and universities, “in solidarity with those of other faiths and none,” to show their distinctive perspective of service to humanity.

In response to Lakeland, Meryl Nadel, a professor of social work at Iona, remarked on how, as a Jew and a social worker, she never expected that the Christian Brother and Catholic identity of Iona College would have so much of an impact on her. She was particularly attracted to the Catholic Social Teaching principles of the common good, solidarity, and stewardship, while also engaging fully in the pedagogy of service-learning.

Like Nadel, Mehnaz Afridi affirmed the Christian Brother identity as the “heart and soul” of Manhattan College, where she is associate professor of Religious Studies, and spoke of herself as a Lasallian. A Muslim scholar, Afridi also directs the college’s Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center and understands the LaSallian tradition as supportive of social change and sensitive to the interfaith mission of her center.

The third responder was Sr. Eileen Fagan, SC, associate professor of Religious Studies at the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She recalled the Vatican II challenge of the Church to embrace a new way of being in the world, one that incarnates the social reality, in all its suffering, violence, poverty, and discrimination. Recalling Lakeland’s description of the “neoliberal” world as self-referential, Fagan noted that the Church itself needs to “undergo a paradigm shift,” to cease being “self-centered” and to focus on “encounter, accompany, and dialogue.”

**Living out the Mission**

Lakeland also called on Catholic colleges and universities to “teach what is vital to the world and to salvation.” What is vital to the world seems to also be vital to the experiences of the students at our institutions. The students who participated in the panel discussion at the end of the conference beautifully shared Lakeland’s “good news” by articulating how they engage with Catholic higher education, and perhaps even more interestingly, how they engage with the charisms at their institutions.

Five students, from a sophomore theology student through a second-year MBA graduate student (representing St. Francis College, St. John’s University, Iona College, the College of Mount Saint Vincent, and Manhattan College), began by sharing why they chose to attend a Catholic institution. While a few students sought out a Catholic college to “live out their faith” or “seek comfort, safety, and growth,” others found themselves attending a Catholic

*Continued on page 12*
college because of the personal care and welcome they and/or their families felt when visiting campus. One shared that she told her mother, “I want to come here because they care about me.” And even having no explicit intention of exploring their faith, these students were invited into various programs that enriched their faith and personal growth.

Recognizing that they were selected for the panel as exemplary students, deeply engaged and able to articulate their experience at Catholic campuses, the moderator asked the students about the experience of their peers. All of the panelists spoke to the feelings of inclusion and comfort that their peers felt, which they largely attributed to the Catholic heritage and, specifically, their institutional charisms. Regardless of faith, institutional values helped unify peers in spite of, or by embracing, differences.

When asked what Catholic higher education meant to them or how they understood it, the panelists spoke to many of the elements identified by Lakeland as being vital to the world — a sense of community, social justice, respect for God’s creation, growth, spirituality, and identity. One panelist even spoke about the development of the soul. However, living out these missions, they largely attributed to their institutions’ founding order charisms, which called them to social action, embracing the preferential option for the poor, engaging in regular reflection, demonstrating hospitality, and more.

By way of conclusion, each student panelist shared examples of how she or he lives out their institutions’ missions each day. Examples came from formal and informal programs, roles, and experiences. One panelist hosted mission retreats for local high school students. Another participated in Midnight Runs, serving the hungry and homeless in New York City. One panelist lived in community as a student campus minister, hosted service projects for her peers, and participated in mission trips, including one to L’Arche in Rochester, NY. Another panelist was a graduate assistant in his campus mission office. One ran music ministry and ensured the group’s policies and practices were as inclusive as possible to limit barriers to participation.

Some of the panelists noted their colleges’ required theology class and spoke to the impact of in-class discussion and exposure to institutional mission and heritage. Aligned with Lakeland’s ideas, the session concluded with the panelists agreeing that more in-class exposure and discussion would best allow all students the opportunity to engage deeply with institutional mission and Catholic identity. Such exposure might reach a broader cross-section of students, not just those who are able to afford the cost or time needed to participate in mission trips, service projects, or other mission-related extracurricular activities.

One of the highlights of the symposium deserves final mention: its tribute to Sr. Alice Gallin. Sr. Jane Finnerty, OSU, Provincial leader of the Ursuline Sisters, shared many stories of Sr. Alice, including her die-hard support of Notre Dame football as one aspect of her iconic commitment to Catholic identity. Br. Raymond Vercruysse, CFC, of Iona College’s Board of Trustees and his congregation’s Province Leadership Team, spoke of Sr. Alice’s longtime commitment to social justice and the fierce tenacity of her commitment to Catholic higher education. It is safe to conclude that such tenacity is needed as Catholic colleges take on the significant challenges of the day.

The contributions of Sr. Alice Gallin, OSU, to social justice and to Catholic higher education were remembered during the event at Iona College.
Carlow University Receives Grant to Address Personal Violence Issues

Carlow University has received a grant for nearly $300,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) to support the development of a Coordinated Community Response Team to address issues pertaining to sexual, dating, and domestic violence.

“This grant will support Carlow in implementing comprehensive coordinated responses to crimes on campus through partnerships with victim service providers and justice agencies,” said Stephanie Wilsey, dean of the College of Leadership and Social Change. “Often, the first person to know, other than the victim, about an incident of dating violence or domestic violence is a peer. So it is important to have students, faculty, and staff receive education and training on what to do and how to get help if they encounter a victim of violence.”

In addition to on-campus trainings, the grant will fund the creation of a project coordinator who will plan project activities, oversee data collection, and serve as the point of contact with internal and external partners, which include Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, the Pittsburgh Police Department, and the Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Unit at Children’s Hospital. The proposal also specifically addressed representation of the LGBTQ community and students with disabilities, as research has indicated that both of these groups are disproportionally affected as victims of sexual, dating, or domestic violence.

Caldwell University Dedicates New Chapel ‘at the Heart’ of Campus

In a historic occasion for Caldwell University, alumni, benefactors, faculty, staff, students, and other guests gathered for the dedication and blessing Mass for the new Sister Mary Dominic Tweedus Chapel in September.

Located “at the heart of our campus,” said President Nancy Blattner, OPA, the chapel “provides more access to sacred space in a heavily traveled area of the campus” and serves as a daily reminder of Caldwell’s Catholic and Dominican heritage. Blattner pointed out that the site overlooks the cemetery of the Sisters of Saint Dominic, the founders of Caldwell University, and the burial place of Sister Mary Dominic Tweedus, OP, the aunt of the new chapel’s primary benefactor.

The celebrant for the Mass was Msgr. Robert Emery, pastor of St. Aloysius parish in Caldwell, NJ. “This chapel leads us to God,” Emery said. “It opens our minds to his truth and our hearts to his goodness. Above all, it speaks of his longing to dwell in our souls — if only we would come here and put ourselves in his presence.”

In designing the new chapel, careful consideration was given to preserve many of the distinctive features of the old chapel “so that there remains an unbroken bond between Caldwell’s past and its present, between its founding and its future,” said Blattner. “We are surrounded by the exquisite original stained glass windows and Stations of the Cross. The tabernacle and the main altar were constructed using materials from the high altar in the former chapel.” In addition, six large stained glass windows from the old chapel depicting Dominican saints now serve as artwork outside the chapel.

Read more about the new Caldwell University chapel.
Saint Louis University Holds ‘Pop-Up Pilgrimage’

Traditionally, a pilgrimage required of a believer to journey to a holy site, often under rigorous conditions. Famous pilgrimage routes include the road to Santiago de Compostela, the burial site of St. James the Apostle, and sites in the Holy Land.

St. Ignatius referred to himself as a pilgrim in his Autobiography, said David Suwalsky, SJ, of the Office of Mission and Identity at Saint Louis University, and his first urge after his experience of conversion was to journey to Jerusalem so that he could walk in the very footsteps of Jesus.

Last spring, SLU students, faculty, and staff members gained a new perspective on the university’s spiritual home and a chance to consider their own journeys toward holiness, as part of the university’s first “Pop-Up Pilgrimage.” Guided by Suwalsky, the pilgrims went behind the scenes at St. Francis Xavier College Church, learning new things about themselves, the church, and SLU history in the process.

“The notion of a journey toward holiness is integral to Ignatian spirituality,” Suwalsky said. “At a place like SLU, we can share with one another our experience of God and goodness with sensitivity and in a spirit of mutual understanding.”

Subsequent “pop-up pilgrimages” have led participants to other sites imbued with history and Ignatian symbolism.

Read more about the pilgrimages online.

Renovated Hall Puts Community at the Heart of St. Mike’s

When asked to describe the University of St. Michael’s College in Toronto, students often mention “community” as a foundational part of their experience. The newly renovated and fully accessible Brennan Hall offers a concrete example of the ways in which community is an essential and longstanding feature of the student experience at St. Michael’s.

“The revitalization of Brennan Hall represents this university’s commitment to student experience,” says President David Sylvester. “By placing key services and resources alongside club and gathering spaces in the heart of our campus, the new Brennan Hall brings together every part of St. Michael’s student life — spiritual, academic, personal, and social — in the same way a St. Mike’s education forms the student as a whole person.”

The renovated space (see photo, right) unites services such as the Office of the Registrar, Campus Ministry, and Student Life offices with the dining hall.

Giancarlo Mazzanti, registrar and director of student services, says, “The revitalization of the main level of Brennan Hall has been the catalyst in improving the student experience on our campus.” He mentions one of the key benefits has been that staff “are in constant contact with students and sharing in the community experience,” and that the new spaces bustle with students “studying and meeting with academic advisors, learning strategists, career advisors, or our Campus Ministry team.”

Read more about the renovation of Brennan Hall.
Franciscan University Launches Discipleship Program

“Go and make disciples of all nations,” Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew. To assist Catholics in answering this call, the Christian Outreach Office of Franciscan University of Steubenville recently announced the launch of Discipleship Quads, an initiative designed to lead groups of four people through a year-long journey of discipleship.

The groups meet weekly and share in prayer, fellowship, learning, and accountability. The Christian Outreach Office offers the program free of charge.

While the entire Christian Outreach Team participated in the development and testing process, Mark Joseph, executive director of the office, spearheaded the project with Kristi Scheerbaum, who worked for Christian Outreach for nine years. In her current role as consultant, Scheerbaum oversaw the research for the project.

According to Joseph, “The Catholic Church needs disciples who are answering the call. But without true friendships, accountability, and genuine conversations, many Catholics find this difficult.”

Scheerbaum says, “At the end of the year, the goal is that each person would be sent forth to start his or her own Discipleship Quad with three other people, therefore continuing the discipleship chain.”

Bob Rice, professor of catechetics and director of the master of arts in catechetics and evangelization at Franciscan University, wrote the lessons provided in the Discipleship Quad Guidebook. Designed to take about 12 months, the program rotates facilitation among the members so that each person feels confident to go out and form a new group of his or her own.

Catholic Distance University Expands Service to Incarcerated

Catholic Distance University educates students throughout the nation and the world in Catholic theology, the liberal arts, and faith development through online programs. Since 1984, the university has also educated incarcerated students through paper-based courses. Now, thanks to a significant grant from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the university is educating incarcerated students through digital tablets approved for use in prisons.

CDU’s courses are accessible through a partnership with Edovo Corporation, which helps incarcerated individuals build better lives by providing access to educational, vocational, and treatment programming. CDU’s courses are the first Catholic content offered on the tablets, which are available in 129 prisons. Incarcerated students had completed over 81,000 CDU courses through the tablets as of mid-September.

“‘The blessing is that the courses are really being used. The most popular courses are on Christian prayer and the gospels,’” says Sister Dolores Keyser, who became involved in prison ministry through her order and has used her IT knowledge to add 18 CDU courses to the tablets in the last 15 months. “‘They are really interested in the Bible.’”

Most of those enrolled in the program take continuing education courses, but several are in the BA in theology degree completion program, working to earn a degree while behind bars.

Read more about CDU’s service to incarcerated students.
Barry University Creates Institute for Mission and Leadership

Barry University is creating the Adrian Dominican Institute for Mission and Leadership in honor of former president Sister Linda Bevilacqua, OP, and her predecessors. Sister Linda, who led the university from 2004 to last June 30, is the only Adrian Dominican Sister in full-time ministry at Barry.

“It is essential that we cultivate and sustain our mission in the heritage of the Adrian Dominican Sisters for future generations,” said John Bussel, chair of Barry University’s board of trustees. “The Institute will honor the work of Sister Linda and her predecessors, and through its staff and physical space will serve as the nexus for mission-centered education and leadership formation in alignment with Barry’s mission and core commitments.”

Barry University has received lead gifts from the Adrian Dominican Sisters, the Shepard Broad Foundation, and the Garner Foundation. In addition to the redesigning of physical space, the university has created an endowment to support the Institute. A long-term goal is to secure grant funding for research projects in leadership development for faculty and staff to promote and enhance mission engagement.

The Institute is expected to open in January 2020 and Sister Linda will serve as its founding director. Plans for the Institute include workshops, lectures, and special events that focus on the importance of mission-centered learning, as well as programs and services on moral concepts such as justice, equity, access, and equality issues. The university also plans to create a resource library and develop resources that address the values and purposes of Catholic higher education.

“I am deeply humbled and honored by the creation of the Institute,” said Sister Linda, who was named president emerita upon her retirement. “With the engagement of students, faculty, and staff, we will work diligently to strengthen the infusion of the university’s core commitments — Knowledge and Truth, Inclusive Community, Social Justice, and Collaborative Service — into all aspects of the university’s life.”

La Roche University Students Live and Volunteer with Vincentian Residents

La Roche University and Vincentian Collaborative System have partnered to offer Western Pennsylvania’s first intergenerational residency for college students and seniors. The Students in Residence program offers a unique opportunity for students to live and volunteer with seniors at Terrace Place at Vincentian, a new independent living community for individuals 55 and older. Participating students receive free room and board, with all major utilities included.

“La Roche University continually seeks new and innovative ways to serve the local, regional, and global community. The Students in Residence Program at Terrace Place allows us to meet the needs of a growing population right here in the North Hills of Pittsburgh,” said Sister Candace Introcasa, CDP, president of La Roche. “By 2030, nearly a quarter of Pennsylvania residents will be 65 years old. This groundbreaking program allows students to serve this demographic while forming rewarding connections with members of an intergenerational community.”

As part of the program, students live in a Terrace Place apartment with another Student in Residence for one academic year. In exchange for room and board, students agree to spend time with residents for a minimum of six hours per week. Students may volunteer to provide technology assistance, organize events, perform light housework, or provide dedicated social time.

Natasha Ngandwe, a senior majoring in health science, currently participates in the program. She said the most rewarding part of living in an intergenerational environment is the opportunity to exchange experiences.

“Being able to gain knowledge and give it back is an amazing experience,” Ngandwe said. “By helping our seniors, we help ourselves. Whether big or small, my contribution can influence someone else.”

Read more about the Student in Residence program.
New Sacred Space Dedicated on Marquette Campus

A dedication ceremony last May brought together Marquette University students, faculty, staff, and community members to honor, welcome, and bless a statue of the Virgin Mary, which stands inside a newly constructed grotto.

Funded by several Marquette benefactors, the grotto is located just behind the university’s St. Joan of Arc Chapel. It is free-standing and designed to engage with the existing Joan of Arc garden elements. The statue of the Virgin Mary faces south and is nestled into a land form, designed to offer a sheltered space for the statue and place for prayerful contemplation.

The location was chosen after Rev. Tom Krettek, SJ, vice president for the Office of Mission and Ministry, and Kurt Young Binter, project manager, facilities planning and management, walked around campus in search of the perfect spot for the grotto. They concluded that placing it near the chapel felt right. “In that spot it will reinforce the special sacredness of that space,” Young Binter said.

The idea for the grotto came after President Michael R. Lovell completed the 18-month Ignatian Colleagues Program based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Lovell said his idea for the grotto was connected to his final project, titled “Sacred Spaces,” in which he catalogued the religious spaces and artifacts on campus that communicate Marquette’s Catholic and Jesuit identity.

“Throughout my life, Mary has been a steadying guide and a reminder that Jesus is God, but also human like every one of us. When we take time for reflection, Mary teaches us so much about simplicity, grace, and strength,” Lovell said. “My hope is that this grotto will serve as a special and sacred place of devotion, inspiration, and prayer for Marquette students, faculty, alumni, and staff for decades to come.”

Take a virtual pilgrimage of all of the sacred spaces on Marquette’s campus that highlight the university’s Catholic, Jesuit identity.

Sacred Heart University Celebrates Chapel’s 10th Anniversary

Ten years ago, construction concluded on one of Sacred Heart University’s most beautiful and welcoming facilities, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. The university will celebrate the chapel’s 10th anniversary with yearlong festivities, the first of which took place in September, when the chapel was rededicated by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the papal nuncio to the United States.

“It is important that we celebrate the chapel, which is at the center of the university campus and its community. It occupies a prominent position that is impossible to miss from almost any direction,” said Fr. Anthony Ciorra, vice president of mission and Catholic identity. “The chapel is a place the community comes together for Mass and other religious services, and it also serves as a gathering place for guest lecturers, in-depth discussions, musical celebrations and more.”

David Coppola, senior vice president of administration and planning, oversaw the chapel building project from its planning phases to the final installation of its stained-glass windows. Coppola said celebrating the anniversary gives the SHU community an opportunity to look back at its history and look ahead to its future.

“The chapel serves as a wellspring of welcome,” Coppola said. “It’s a place people come together to be encouraged, nourished and taught, while also providing a space for reflection.”

For more information, visit the chapel’s 10th anniversary calendar online.
Siena Gathers to Remember Br. Ed

More than a thousand members of the Siena College community, along with area dignitaries, gathered in September for a memorial Mass (pictured, right) honoring Siena’s late president.

Br. Ed Coughlin, who died July 30 following complications from heart surgery, was remembered as a kind and humble man whose daily life was a witness to his religious faith and the Franciscan tradition on which Siena was founded.

Toward the end of the Mass, the Br. F. Edward Coughlin, OFM, Endowment to Advance Franciscan Values was announced by John Murray, chairman of the college’s board of trustees. The endowment will support the Siena mission and its intrinsic connection to the values of St. Francis of Assisi. It was founded by the Coughlin family and their in-laws.

“We want to make sure Br. Ed’s love for Siena’s Franciscan tradition continues,” said Murray. “Let us continue to live the Franciscan values that Br. Ed taught us.”

Read more about the Mass honoring Brother Ed.

Collaborations & Connections

Rockhurst University and Saint Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City have signed an agreement under which the Saint Luke’s College of Health Sciences would become part of the university. The proposed formal transaction will significantly expand the university’s ability to meet the growing need for health-care professionals throughout the region.

Walsh University and Aultman Health Foundation have collaborated to establish a dual-appointment professorship in bioethics that recognizes the importance of the humanities in health care.

Funded by a $1.8 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, Allegheny Health Network (AHN) and Carlow University are embarking on a four-year project that will train newly graduated nurse practitioners to care for patients in underserved and disadvantaged communities.

The University of Montana and Carroll College have launched two partnerships to help students obtain graduate degrees in less time and at a lower cost than traditional paths. Both programs also aim to serve the state’s economic needs in law, public policy, and public administration.

Siena College and Maria College have announced that they will offer a dual degree program in nursing, joining both colleges’ commitment to a holistic approach to nursing and the mindful delivery of authentic patient-centered care. The four-year program will award an associate of science in nursing at the end of the junior year, and a bachelor of science in nursing at the end of the senior year.

St. Norbert College and Concordia University Wisconsin School of Health Professions have established a partnership that will give current St. Norbert College students and alumni who have completed their undergraduate degree priority admission status in occupational therapy, physical therapy, and physician assistant programs at Concordia.

In July, Catholic Distance University signed a Memorandum of Understanding and an articulation agreement with Shepherd University, a state university in West Virginia. The agreement allows students who earn CDU’s AA degree in the liberal arts with a concentration in Catholic studies to continue on at Shepherd University to earn a bachelor of arts degree.

Brescia University and Owensboro Community and Technical College have announced a new transfer agreement. Students in programs that offer the associate in applied science degree will be able to transfer up to 77 credit hours to Brescia toward a bachelor’s degree in integrated studies.
How Effective Is Campus Ministry?

Catholic higher education has long recognized the value of campus ministry as a vital link between the Church and students. In 2018, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released “A National Study on Catholic Campus Ministry,” a report distilling the results of a survey of individuals responsible for the pastoral care of their college or university community, as well as students who participate in campus ministry.

This installment of “Talking Points” distills data from the 384 respondents who served as a campus minister at a Catholic college or university, and the 1,166 students who attended a Catholic institution.¹

Perceived Effects of Campus Ministry

The survey invited both campus ministers and students to describe how well they felt engagement in campus ministry prepared students for life after college. Campus ministers were asked to consider all students involved in campus ministry, while student respondents answered from their personal experiences.

Despite some differences, when combining “somewhat agree” and “strongly agree,” both campus ministers and students reported relatively similar levels of agreement across several specific measures (see Figure). Students and campus ministers both indicated that campus ministry prepared students well for a lifelong relationship with Jesus (92 percent) and for being compassionate toward those on the margins (90 percent and 98 percent, respectively).

Both groups were also asked to identify activities that most contributed to students’ spiritual growth. Roughly two-thirds of campus ministers reported service/charitable work and retreats as most impactful.

Campus ministers at Catholic colleges and universities are charged with the spiritual well-being of all students at the institution, regardless of students’ religious identity. In fulfilling this charge, campus ministry is furthering the mission of Catholic higher education by enabling all students to deepen their relationship with Christ, engaging students in social justice and service opportunities, and preparing them for life after college.

Questions for your campus:

- What percentage of your students are engaged with campus ministry? Is the figure rising or declining?
- Which types of experiences tend to elicit the deepest engagement from students and others on campus?
- In what ways does campus ministry help your students continue their spiritual development after they graduate?
- Do your campus ministers find meaning and job satisfaction from their work? Which elements do they identify as the most meaningful?

For the full analysis, read “Campus Ministry: Walking with Students into the Future” on the ACCU Infographics webpage, www.accunet.org/Infographics.

¹ ACCU would like to extend its gratitude to the Secretariat of Catholic Education at the USCCB for its generosity in providing the data for this analysis.
NEW: Leaders in Catholic Higher Education
This program offers rising leaders a distinctive portfolio of competencies essential to Catholic higher education. Programming is offered online and through in-person sessions and imparts knowledge and skills, as well as opportunities for personal transformation.

Annual Meeting & Pre-conference Events
The ACCU Annual Meeting is the association’s headline conference in Washington, DC, bringing together hundreds of presidents and senior executives from Catholic colleges and universities around the world to discuss topical issues in Catholic higher education. The winter weekend includes pre-conference events for distinct affinity groups within Catholic higher education, including Women Executive Leaders.

The Institute for New Presidents of Catholic Colleges and Universities
All presidents in the first two years of their presidency at a Catholic college or university — as well as interim presidents — are invited to the Institute. Content focuses on duties related to leading the Catholic identity of a college or university. Enroll and be part of this full-day seminar, taking place immediately before the ACCU Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

Mission Leadership Institute
An intensive 4-day summer program designed to help new, emerging, and experienced mission leaders, the Institute is an excellent opportunity to gain new perspectives, learn new skills, and refresh their spirit.

Rome Seminar
Get an intimate look at the leadership and life of the Catholic Church at its heart through the Rome Seminar. Presidents and senior administrators are invited to explore faith, theology, and history through this 5-day program offered every year in late spring.

Institute for Administrators in Catholic Higher Education
Since 2001, the Institute for Administrators in Catholic Higher Education has provided an opportunity for senior leaders in Catholic colleges and universities to interact with outstanding scholars and practitioners to address 21st century issues in Catholic higher education.

Collegium
For the last 25 years, Collegium has been an annual colloquy on faith and intellectual life that connects faculty for mission-oriented leadership in Catholic higher education. The weeklong summer program is guided by experienced faculty, researchers, and administrators in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

More information about each program, including dates and registration fees, is available online. Visit www.accunet.org/Programs-Events to see our full calendar of leadership and other events.