In Deed: A Survey of Programs and Activities Related to Identity and Mission: Santa Clara University

Editorial Board

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In an address on the Jesuit Ministry in higher education, Santa Clara University president Paul Locatelli SJ, said that there must be a way, appropriate to each institution, for students in all academic disciplines to be exposed to “the larger vision for which the Jesuit university exists.”

As part of their program of study, more than 400 Santa Clara students each quarter integrate critical reflection and analysis with experiential learning in the school’s Eastside Project. Course work is enriched by engagement in community programs that serve the poor and marginalized.

As participants in the Eastside Project, they have much to learn from interacting with people outside the protective walls of the academy. “Eastside” is a metaphor as well as the designation of a diverse neighborhood of San Jose, whose Hispanic, Filipino, Vietnamese, Samoan, African-American, and white residents range from destitute and homeless to upper middle class. Students are placed in a variety of programs, including homeless shelters, senior centers and tutoring centers for English as a second language.

Each quarter, as many as 40 academic courses, 400 students, and 27 social service agencies are involved in the project; students spend at least two hours a week in direct, interactive contact with impoverished and marginalized people. The experience puts students through a “reflective process that links their field experience with particular courses and with their lives,” said Eastside Project Director William J. Wood SJ, who is the former executive director of the California Conference of Catholic Bishops and president of the Institute for Food and Development Policy and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

“Our purpose is to provide students with personal experiences of cultures other than their own so that their perceptions of the world will expand and become more accurate. To borrow a geographical metaphor, we are hoping to facilitate an intellectual earthquake, where cognitive and affective plates shift and realign to form a new conceptual terrain.

“Students are jarred, shaken out of their safe and comfortable stereotypes and categories. They are changed by what they experience,” he said.

Students seem to be getting the message. “You need both what you learn in the classroom and in the real world to see the whole picture,” said Dina Shiraki, who worked at the Julian Street Inn, a homeless shelter in San Jose, as part of an abnormal psychology class.

Added Tom Gemetti, who worked at the Montgomery Street Shelter in San Jose as part of a Christian ethics class, “I learned that the homeless are not faceless people, but have an identity similar to you and me.”

Although the Eastside Project’s focus is academic, its contribution to the Eastside community is significant. One of the Eastside Project’s first co-curricular programs was to help undocumented workers apply for citizenship under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Students helped applicants fill out the complicated forms, which were then available only in English, and gather necessary documentation.

Since then students have worked at a variety of placements, including high school, adult education programs, and day-care centers. Law students and faculty provide a legal clinic in a Day Worker Job Center for immigrants co-founded by former Eastside Project Director Dan Germann SJ.

A 1986 letter from then president William J. Rewak SJ introducing the Eastside Project stated: “This pro-

Through the Eastside Project Santa Clara students are involved in a wide range of community projects such as tutoring English as a second language.
longtime SCU faculty member and assistant to the president for alumni affairs, on the occasion of his 50th anniversary as a Jesuit.

The purpose of the Bannan Foundation is to support projects, primarily academic, that enhance and augment the Jesuit and Catholic character of the University. For example, the foundation has awarded grants to distinguished Jesuits for teaching and for the publication of scholarly books and articles related to the Jesuit Catholic tradition. For each of the past 11 years, the foundation has supported two or three visiting scholars at SCU.

In its first year in 1982, the Bannan Foundation’s visiting scholars were Rev. Michael J. Buckley SJ, at that time executive director of the U.S. Bishops Committee on Doctrine; Rev. Patrick Samway SJ, former chair of the English Department at LeMoyne College and a literary editor of America magazine; and William Spohn SJ, professor at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley. In subsequent years, Bannan visiting scholars have represented fields as diverse as theater arts, classics, theology, and the history of technology.

In addition, the foundation supports SCU campus ministry activities, such as retreats for faculty, staff, students, and alumni. It also provided initial funding for the university’s Eastside Project.

Bannan expressed his own perspective on the foundation when he said: “Christian values are constantly being challenged in the life experience of us all. This foundation has as its purpose to advance and enhance those principles, goals, and ideals that are our Christian heritage. Thus far, we have seen notable success to this end.”

- The Center for Applied Ethics was established at Santa Clara University in 1986 to provide support for teaching, research, and community programs in applied ethics. The purpose of the center is to clarify and enhance the role played by individuals and society. Since its opening, the center has sponsored symposia, campus events, an annual conference on nursing ethics, fellows’ seminars, and student discussions on such diverse topics as AIDS, affirmative action, the death penalty, student-faculty relationships, and faculty performance evaluations.

Since 1987 the center also has published issues in Ethics, a quarterly publication designed to facilitate thoughtful reflection on the moral aspects of current and timeless issues of importance to society.

Director of the center since 1992 is Rev. Thomas Shanks SJ, a 10-year veteran of SCU’s faculty and administration. Shanks was a member of the center’s steering committee for six years, and has spoken and written widely on mass media ethics. The ethics center is a central priority in SCU’s current
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$125 million capital campaign. "We hope to increase our endowment from $1.5 million to $5 million," he said. "When that happens, we'll be better able to run programs on important ethical issues on campus, and especially in the local community."

Last summer, for example, Shanks and SCU religious studies Professor Margaret McLean presented a seminar at a local hospital for more than 100 medical professionals to help them develop ways to deal with the ethical problems they face each day.

- The Jesuit ideal of using one's education for the service of others, especially the poor and underserved, has taken on a personal meaning for increasing numbers of Santa Clara alumni. A roster of those who are active or interested in outreach programs has been started by Rev. Daniel Germann SJ, assistant to the president for alumni relations.

- At present, the SCU Alumni Community Service Network lists primarily people in the San Francisco Bay Area, but Father Germann is sure it will grow into a nationwide alumni connection. As the network develops, Germann sees it embracing two different groups of alumni—those already working full time with the poor and those who do not necessarily have such direct involvement.

- For the former group, this can mean finding ways for the university community to provide support and encouragement to alumni in work that often is not visible to the general public. For example, an alumna working in an information and referral crisis center was able to link up with another SCU alumna who provided marketing advice.

LETTERS

Editor:

The Fall 1993 issue of Conversations puzzles me. You seem to have accepted the premise that women in Jesuit institutions are oppressed by men and the feminist agenda for reform as well.

Ms. Cahill (in the article "Women and Men Working Together in Jesuit Institutions of Higher Learning") calls for a reform whose criteria contradict the teachings of the Church as well as the defining ideals of the Society of Jesus. Her view of St. Ignatius' reaction to his memory of [his sister-in-law] Magdalena is a case in point. Finding his sexual feelings aroused, he changed his sensory input - the classic Thomist technique for acquiring the virtue of chastity (which must be informed by charity if it is to be a virtue). Ms. Cahill sees here "ambiguous images of women" in church teaching. What would she wish Ignatius and his men to do? Deny the value of chastity? Deny the Christian love for women that virtue requires? Deny natural sexual feelings? Act them out indiscriminately?

I've been closely associated with Jesuits for over forty years, and not once have I experienced, witnessed or heard of any discrimination against women. The charge slanders sterling priests [of the past] and contemporaries... too numerous to mention.

Sorry, folks; the Emperor Sexism, S.J., isn't wearing any clothes. In fact, he doesn't exist.

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