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Reports: Making Connections X: Sustaining the Earth, the Self, and Women in Catholic Higher Education (Conference Held at Seattle University in June 2011)

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Loyola Marymount University.

FROM FRISCO TO TACNA CROSSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Technological Universality

Christopher Brooks

We are in the midst of a truly revolutionary period in human history. The development and disbursement of information technology, and in particular the Internet, has created the ability to break down political, cultural, national and geographic boundaries in an entirely new way.

The new opportunities created by information technology also present new challenges, as in the creation of a "digital underclass" who are lacking either access to technology or the education to use it effectively. This is not only a problem in the developing world; it is also a problem in cities like San Francisco.

Here at the University of San Francisco, we have developed a service-learning project called Community Connections to help educate students about digital inclusion. Our students work with local technology centers to provide resources, training, and access for poor and underserved populations. Our students and faculty also travel once a year to Tacna, Peru, to set up and maintain computers, teach classes, and train instructors at two Jesuit schools there.

In doing this, our students learn about universality in two ways: first, through the more traditional Jesuit notion of service-learning as a means of better understanding themselves, the world around them, and the academic concepts surrounding the digital divide. Second, and more novel, our students connect directly with people and cultures that might seem very different on the surface. For a USF student to see a Peruvian student's photos online and realize that they share the same tastes, likes, fears and concerns helps them understand the deep similarities that underlie human experience.

This project also allows for the development of other ways of connecting, from journals detailing the lives of San Francisco's poor and underserved to Skype connections between teens across continents. Our hope is that we are able to use computers not as a way to isolate ourselves from each other, but to connect, share and empower. ■

Christopher Brooks is associate dean for sciences and associate professor of computer science at the University of San Francisco. Community Connections is at: http://www.cs.usfca.edu/cc

MAKING CONNECTIONS X: SUSTAINING THE EARTH, THE SELF, AND WOMEN IN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Conference held at Seattle University in June 2011

Mary-Antoinette Smith

In 2009 the *National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education* (NAWCHE) moved to Seattle University from Boston College, where it was established by Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Ph.D., in 1992. Its new west coast home institution hosted the biennial *Making Connections X: Sustaining the Earth, the Self, and Women in Catholic Higher Education—Present and Future* Visions Conference (June 16-17, 2011). Renowned keynoters included Edwina Gateley, an international speaker, author, and founder of both the Volunteer Missionary Movement and Genesis House, and Latina author/activist, Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Ph.D., who is dedicated to expanding the subjectivity of women of color and to issues of sustainability. As part of their respective remarks, Gateley read from her forthcoming book *Mothers, Sisters, and Daughters: The Shoulders on Which We Stand,* and Gutiérrez y Muhs read from her book of poetry titled Human Sustainability and from her humorous novel titled *Fresh as a Lettuce.*

Conference presenters included women faculty, administrators, staff, and students from many Catholic colleges and universities, several from Jesuit campuses: Fordham, Gonzaga, Loyola Marymount, Loyola Maryland, Santa Clara, and Detroit Mercy. Presentations and workshops centered on how women are contributing to sustaining the earth and themselves as women with professional lives in Catholic higher education, and addressed such themes as sustaining progress towards equality, sustaining women religious, promoting integrative opportunities for women on Catholic campuses, and envisioning the future expansion of NAWCHE to become N/IAWCHE (National/International Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education). More detailed information about NAWCHE, about its transition from Boston College to Seattle University, and about the Making Connections X Conference, may be found at http://www.seattleu.edu/artsci/nawche/. ■

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