Teaching to Catholic Mission in Professional Education: A Comprehensive Model for the Integration of Catholic Social Teaching

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Abstract

Professional education programs have the dual challenge of fulfilling the mission of two entities: their sponsoring institution and their profession. This may appear to be an inconvenient and even daunting burden. But, upon consideration, it becomes evident that the two missions are compatible and present rich and strategic opportunities to enhance the other. This article describes how one school of professional education creatively met this dual call to mission to pursue excellence in its educational program. Through a comprehensive model using the rich resource of Catholic Social Teaching, this school discovered new ways to enrich and distinguish how it educates and prepares a cadre of professionals to serve and lead in their profession and their community. The model, focused on social justice, holistically addresses faculty development, curriculum development, and student engagement. This case study presents rationale, strategies, and outcomes to inform and inspire other Catholic-sponsored professional education programs.

The Call to Mission: Institutional and Professional

Catholic colleges and universities are the standard-bearers of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT). It is their mission and sacred trust to preserve and enliven this religious heritage in the higher education arena. There are numerous essential attributes of the CIT, including fidelity to faith and reason, sacramental worldview, and appreciation and respect for tradition. The expectation that graduates will use the

knowledge they acquire for the benefit of their community[1] is the pivotal attribute of this discussion. This expectation is rooted in Scripture and reiterated in numerous Church documents. Scripture explains that for righteous Christians, faith is not enough; fulfilling the gospel message of "love one another" requires going beyond beliefs and words to engaging in action. Pope Paul VI in *Gaudium et spes* beckons all persons of good will (and Catholic individuals and institutions in particular) to recognize the "special obligation [that] binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path."[2]

More recently, the Church has directed a call specifically to Catholic colleges and universities to more clearly demonstrate their Catholic identity. Pope John Paul II, in the 1990 Apostolic Constitution, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, outlined a blueprint envisioning Catholic educational institutions as primary players in a vision of world transformation. John Paul II called universities to be "ever more effective instrument[s] of cultural progress" as they sought ways for "more just sharing of the world's resources…[and] a new economic and political order that will serve the human community."[3] Clearly, advancing the wellbeing of humankind and working for social justice are important commitments of the Catholic faith, its intellectual tradition, and its vision for higher education.

Professions are also called to be mission-driven. Some professions, such as social work, have articulated a mission statement that identifies two fundamental commitments: (1) to generate, maintain, and apply a specialized body of knowledge, and (2) to contribute to society using the profession's expertise and resources. Lynch supports this in his claim that professions, like governments and economies, have been created as a means toward the common good.[4] He observes that, while the creation and use of specialized knowledge is regarded as "essential," oftentimes professions' attention to the common good is "diminished."

[1] Monica K. Hellwig, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University," in *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan, eds., 7-10 (Fairfield, CT: Sacred Heart University Press, 2000).

[2] Pope Paul VI, "*Gaudium et Spes*: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

[3] Pope John Paul II, "*Ex corde Ecclessiae*: On Catholic Universities," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae_en.html.

[4] Daniel R. Lynch, "Professions and the Common Good," *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education* 25 (2006).

Fidelity to both the use of knowledge and contribution to the common good are viewed as imperative in distinguishing between a profession and an occupation.[5] Expectations and standards pertaining to how a profession contributes to the common good are generally addressed and explicated in a code of ethics; the social work profession provides a useful example.

Social work is a regulated profession. In addition to a national accrediting agency (Council on Social Work Education) and state laws that establish boards of social work (which, in turn, set policies for practice), the primary authority on social work practice in the United States is the National Association of Social Work (NASW). Perhaps the most important leadership function provided by NASW is its code of ethics: "a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers." The *NASW Code of Ethics* is a comprehensive set of ethical principles and standards outlining social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, colleagues, agencies, the profession, and society.[6] The *Code* identifies two overarching mission areas of the profession: service and justice. In relation to the justice mission, the *Code* states that "social workers challenge social injustice" as follows:

> Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice…Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, service and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision-making for all people.[7]

Social work is illustrative of other professions, including medicine, law, psychology, and the various health care disciplines, which are likewise regulated and guided by codes of ethics; these codes define standards for the generation and application of knowledge as well as parameters for the profession's commitment to advance the wellbeing of society.

Like the helping professions, Catholic colleges and universities are charged with advancing the wellbeing of humankind. This shared commitment to enhance the common good reflects a strategic mutual purpose. In light of this mutuality of mission, Catholic colleges and universities are ideal sponsors for professional education programs. In turn,

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[5] Ibid., 14-21, 137-139.

[6] National Association of Social work, *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers,* 1999: 2.

[7] Ibid., 5.

Catholic institutions benefit from the on-campus presence of these professional education programs. They serve as powerful avenues through which the institution may realize its goal of preparing students to contribute to the common good.

This mutuality of mission provides an arena for the strategic application of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The experience of one school of social work and its initiative to integrate CST offers a compelling model for teaching to mission across diverse Catholic-sponsored professional education programs.

Social Work for Social Justice: An Initiative to *Teach to Mission* through the Integration of Catholic Social Teaching

In response to its dual *call to mission*, a Midwest school of social work (hereafter referred to as "the School") set out to integrate CST into the curriculum as a means of effectively educating students to fulfill their institution's and profession's commitment to the common good. What initially appeared to be a straightforward, curriculum-focused project became a transformative journey focused on identity and mission.

The following three goals guided this initiative: (1) to enhance faculty understanding of, and commitment to, Catholic mission and professional mission; (2) to increase faculty and student understanding of CST and the congruence between CST and social work professional ethics; and (3) to strengthen the social justice content of the curriculum through the integration of CST. This comprehensive initiative addressed three components: faculty development, curriculum development, and student engagement.

Faculty Development

The School's faculty participated in a comprehensive range of faculty development experiences that started in 1999 with particularly intensive work occurring during 2005-07. This faculty development was critical to the initiative. It laid a foundation, set a context for the work, and, later focused on accomplishing actual integration activities. In the early phase, faculty participated in a weekend retreat focused on the CIT and the Catholic mission of the institution. Faculty had the opportunity to read selections from source documents, hear presentations from theology colleagues, and engage in discussion about the tradition. They learned how the CIT informs the work of the university as well as their role as members of the institution. It is important to note that

several faculty members also participated in rigorous, university-sponsored faculty development opportunities, including extensive reading and discussion of seminal writings by Saint Augustine, Lawrence S. Cunningham, Dorothy Day, E.F. Schumacher, Pope John Paul II, James T. Burtchaell, and John Cardinal Henry Newman, among others.[8] Church documents such as *Rerum novarum*, *Pacem in Terris*, *Economic Justice for All*, and *Gaudium et spes* were also read and discussed. These experiences were instrumental in helping faculty recognize attributes of institutional culture that are reflective of CIT and, therefore, of the School's Catholic identity. The challenge of familiarizing faculty with CIT is a formidable one that must be ongoing and continuous.

In another early phase of faculty development, the faculty read a primer on CST and participated in retreats and seminars. These experiences provided an overview of the sources, methods, and themes of CST, and an opportunity to discuss its application to contemporary social problems. Experts, including noted academics, theologians, and a local pastor, inspired the faculty by sharing wisdom and real-world examples. The faculty brainstormed and discussed the potential benefits of, perceived barriers to, and possible strategies for integrating CST into the curriculum.

The faculty development dimension of this initiative unfolded over the course of several years. It included a series of presentations where faculty heard from representatives of various religions (including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Protestantism) about how social justice commitments are articulated and embodied in these faith traditions. This component responded to the commitment of the faculty to respect and embrace the religious diversity of students enrolled in the program as well as the faculty's own diversity. Throughout all components faculty participants were encouraged to reflect on their own religious and spiritual beliefs and the interrelatedness of their personal, professional, and faith-based commitments to social justice. Another component focused on the concept of vocation. During one retreat-like process, faculty participants were invited to consider their own vocational formation and growth experience and how they—as teachers, mentors, and advisors—support students in identifying and responding to their vocational calling.

While these faculty development activities afforded an opportunity to launch this initiative and increase understanding, it is important to acknowledge that the process also included challenges. Because the

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[8] Excerpts from several authors were part of a university-sponsored faculty development program. They were provided to participants as copies in a larger packet of participant materials.

School's faculty reflects diversity across various dimensions—religion, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation—some aspects of the dialogue were contentious. Such difficult areas included Church practices that the faculty viewed as inconsistent with social work values and/or CST (such as the disparity in gender roles in Church hierarchy and the perceived response to gay persons).

Though progress was sometimes slow, faculty participants persevered in their efforts and were able to articulate the following points of consensus:

- We have a responsibility, by virtue of our professional code of ethics, to educate students to serve and work for justice.
- Principles of CST are universal in nature and provide a framework for educating for justice.
- Integration of CST in the curriculum must be congruent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Areas of divergence between social work ethics and Church practices must be clearly articulated and addressed.

Achieving these points of consensus was important for the process, as it enabled the faculty to acknowledge that difficult dialogues can be avenues for discovering shared insights and reaching common ground. It became clear that challenging discussions, which seem to focus on divergent perspectives, also present opportunities for discernment of consensus. Building on this consensus eventually enabled the faculty to create a philosophy statement that formally articulates the School's social justice mission. This was an important milestone in the faculty development process because it explicates the School's Catholic identity and commitment to social justice.

The School's philosophy statement (Appendix I) articulates the following definition of social justice informed by Peter Henriot, S.J.: "Social justice means loving people so much that I work to change structures that violate their dignity."[9] The premise of this definition of social justice is that it entails systemic change in society, which results in efforts to make social policies and institutions more responsive to human need and quality of life for all groups. The philosophy statement identifies CST as a tradition of social ethics with universal relevance and a resource that informs the social work educational model. Of utmost importance, this statement declares a commitment to integrate CST into the cur-

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[9] Fred Kammer, *Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 226-227.

riculum and to educate "justice-oriented social workers." The philosophy statement is featured in all official documents of the School including student handbooks, recruitment materials, and policies and procedures manuals.

As there are many frameworks that describe CST and delineate its themes, the School decided at an early stage to select and develop one framework. It chose that of the office for social justice of the local archdiocese, recognized for its national leadership in education and application of CST, which identifies ten key principles of CST: human dignity, community and the common good, rights and responsibilities, option for the poor and vulnerable, participation, dignity of work and rights of workers, stewardship of creation, solidarity, role of government, and promotion of peace.[10]

Another important faculty development activity focused on a comparative analysis of CST and the professional code of ethics. Through a structured and participative exercise, the faculty identified extensive convergence between social work ethics and CST. Three areas of divergence between social work ethics and Church practices were also identified and discussed: equality of women, reproductive self-determination, and gay rights. The emergence of these areas of divergence surprised no one. Naming the issues was important, for this acknowledged the reality that there are instances in which social work values and Church practices differ. In order to maintain a high level of integrity, the faculty agreed that it is important to be open and transparent about both the convergence and divergence between social work ethics and Church practices and to continue dialogue about both.

The comparative analysis between social work ethics and CST resulted in a synthesis that led to the formulation of the School's own statement of justice principles entitled *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* (Appendix II). This amalgamation of social work ethics and CST, which reflects actual language from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' statements on social teaching and the social work code of ethics, has become the centerpiece of this initiative.[11] Now when faculty speak of the integration of CST into the curriculum they are speaking of the application and amalgamation of these principles. The *Ten Principles* define the School's "brand" of social justice—one that is

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[10] Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, "Catholic Social Teaching," www.osjspm. org/catholic_social_teaching.aspx.

[11] U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/foundationdocs. shtml.

informed by both CST and social work ethics: they have become the bedrock for the School's efforts. Formulation of the justice principles also created a tool useful for curriculum development, as will be discussed in a section to follow.

As faculty development continued, considerable progress was apparent. By discussing social justice in deeper ways, the faculty was forging a new familiarity with and appreciation for CST and the Catholic identity of its sponsor institution. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge, once again, that the process was complex. At times, the dialogue was difficult and tense. Momentum stalled when concerns arose regarding perceived oppressive practices or occurrences within the Church, particularly in relation to the status of women and gay persons. The social work profession is a staunch advocate for equal rights for both of these groups. There were times when it was difficult to talk about these difficult topics and maintain project momentum. Several discussions focused on the contrast between the Church's teaching on the nature of the human person, and the social work profession's ethical code with its emphasis on self-determination. To tackle these challenges, a faculty development session focused on the *Catholic Common Ground Initiative Principles of Dialogue* outlined in *Called to be Catholic: Church in a Time of Peril*. This led to further consideration of the *Common Ground Guidelines* and, eventually, to adapting them to the purposes of the School's initiative.[12] The School's *Finding Common Ground Guidelines* have been helpful in advancing the dialogue essential to this initiative (Appendix III).

Several insights have emerged from reflecting on the role faculty development played in this initiative. First, there has been a range of varied individual responses and receptiveness to this work with some faculty being eager and others expressing reticence and needing time and support. It is important to see this variation in faculty response as normative, something to be expected and accepted. Doing so without judgment maintains an openness that is essential for continued engagement and progress. Second, it is clear that this work, which is focused on social ethics, elicits heartfelt responses that tap into an individual faculty member's personal spiritual and religious beliefs. One does not participate in this work without being affected by it. Again, this is to be expected, accepted, and supported. For these reasons and because faculty development plays a central role in curriculum development ef-

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[12] National Pastoral Life Center, http://www.nplc.org/commonground/principles_of_dialogue.php.

forts, it is important to acknowledge that faculty development is an ongoing, continuous activity. It is essential to advancing the knowledge-base, deepening understanding, and extending the faculty's sense of competency related to CIT and in living out the Catholic identity of the institution.

Curriculum Development

Extensive faculty development and the formulation of *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* laid the groundwork necessary for the curriculum development component of this initiative. It includes two phases: curriculum review/analysis, and integration.

Consistent with the social work practice of starting where the client is and a philosophy of building on existent strengths, curriculum development began with an assessment of present practices. This process focused on the question, "To what extent is social justice content already present in the curriculum?" Standing committees within the School are responsible for primary content areas in the curriculum. These committees include all faculty members of the School and are a primary means through which faculty design, implement, and assess curriculum goals and objectives. Each of these content committees reviewed the present curriculum and identified social justice content. Each course of the curriculum was reviewed and an inventory was completed which outlined current content and activities related to justice.

This process resulted in a litany of strengths and provided evidence that faculty was already teaching justice to a substantial extent. It was also apparent that there were many opportunities to make justice content more explicit in the syllabi and to integrate it more consistently. This discussion encouraged active participation and the faculty identified many new opportunities to incorporate content on social justice.

Next, each curriculum committee considered the *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles*, the goals and objectives of the content area, and selected specific *Justice Principles* that relate to each content area. A grid was compiled summarizing the *Justice Principles* and again relating them to each content area. These grids are available to faculty as they integrate the *Justice Principles* into the curriculum.

Once faculty completed the assessment of current practices, compiled an inventory of current inclusion of social justice content, and identified the *Justice Principles* pertinent to each curricular content

area, the stage was set for the actual integration of new social justice content into the curriculum. Faculty identified courses in the undergraduate and graduate curricula as starting points for the integration of the *Ten Principles*.

The first step in the integration process provided an opportunity for curriculum content committees to brainstorm creatively in response to the following question: "Considering the *Justice Principles* identified as relevant for the content area, what are logical points of intersection in each course where the *Justice Principles* could be integrated to enhance student learning?" While the emphasis of this exercise was to integrate social justice into existent course activities, faculty also generated ideas about new ways to both broaden and deepen the integration of social justice content. These brainstorming sessions were creative discussions in which faculty participants were encouraged to think big about transforming the curriculum to balance and reflect both the service and justice functions of the profession. This exercise resulted in lists of ideas about how to enhance justice content in specific course syllabi through integration in existent programming and addition of new activities. Instructional modules were also developed to serve as models for faculty to use or adapt.

To monitor the integration initiative, the School has adopted two forms of assessment. (1) Student feedback is collected at the end of each course using a standardized form. These data are compiled and reported to faculty at the end of each semester and utilized in the annual curriculum review process. (2) The School also measures the outcomes of its educational program by administering a pretest to students beginning the program and posttests to students at completion. Items addressing social justice have been incorporated into these instruments allowing the School to measure outcomes and progress on student learning about social justice. These two approaches to assessment enable the School to track student learning on a course-by-course basis and in relation to the program as a whole.

Student Engagement

Students participated in focus groups to solicit their input on this initiative. The School's justice principles were presented and students were asked to consider and discuss the advantages, concerns, and suggestions about their integration into courses.

Students identified a number of potential advantages to integrating the principles into the social work curriculum. Nearly all students recognized the congruence between CST and social work ethics, perceiving CST principles as "universal to all people." Several students noted that CST has the potential to enrich the social work code of ethics with "more depth, specificity, and richness."

Numerous students agreed that the institution's Catholic identity makes CST a desirable and logical addition to the social work curriculum. Some students indicated that they came to a Catholic institution specifically for a values-based education in which spirituality and faith are considered important. Given the Catholic identity of the institutions, several students felt that marketing the integration of CST in the social work curriculum would enhance the attractiveness of the program for many prospective students. They believed that CST would distinguish the School's curriculum relative to regional competition. The participants expressed the importance of social workers participating in efforts for justice and were enthusiastic about the ways CST could enhance this awareness and effort. On a practical level, students of color believed that the use of these principles in the curriculum would prepare all students to work more effectively with diverse populations and at-risk groups.

Students perceived the integration of CST as a means to increase awareness of the importance of spirituality in social work education and practice. Students recognized CST as a bridge that may help them become more comfortable in talking about religious/spiritual beliefs. This is an important skill as clients may have religious/spiritual beliefs that need to be considered.

Three primary concerns were identified in regard to the proposed integration. Several students expressed the opinion that, "it is very important to distinguish between CST and [other] Catholic doctrine to avoid student resistance" observing that, "some people have allergic reactions to anything that comes from a church" and noting that "the political environment is very volatile in relation to religion right now." Concerned with cultural diversity, many students named a concern that non-Catholic and/or non-Christian students may feel alienated or excluded from the discussion. Generally, students expressing this concern did not suggest that this should prevent the School from integrating CST, but rather, that it should be done with care. One student noted, "At a Muslim university, I would expect to discuss Islamic content in my classes," suggesting that a Catholic perspective is to be expected in a Catholic institution. While some students suggested that the integra-

tion of CST might attract students and assist in marketability of the program, other students noted that the "Catholic" label could deter some students who might misunderstand the nature of such teaching.

Students also noted that it is crucial that all members of the faculty be "on board" with this initiative if it is implemented and suggested that faculty development would be important. Presentation/integration of the principles consistently throughout the curriculum was considered essential. One student noted that faculty will need to be truly invested in the process and comfortable with "facilitating the emotions and variety of opinions that are likely to come up in discussion."

Outcomes of a Work in Progress

The integration of *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* continues as a work in progress. While it can easily be argued that "mission work is never done," it is useful to step back and take stock of the School's efforts to address institutional and professional mission through the integration of CST. While many tasks of integration linger, it is important to note and to celebrate the progress achieved to date. The faculty, student, and curriculum activities have generated the following outcomes:

• The School's faculty and students have a renewed commitment to social justice. A commitment that predated this initiative has been strengthened and made more explicit in the School's literature, procedural materials, and course syllabi.
• The School has reviewed the social justice content within the curriculum, inventoried strengths, and identified opportunities as well as strategies to integrate social justice content throughout. Phased and systematic integration has begun. Assessment methods have been put into place to measure outcomes.
• Faculty and students are developing a keener understanding of Catholic mission and identity and its relationship to the social justice mission of their profession.
• The faculty has a deeper appreciation for CST and the rich resource that it presents to social work education and practice and to higher education.

Two unanticipated outcomes were also generated by this initiative. In June of 2007, the School hosted a national conference entitled *Social Work for Social Justice: Strengthening Social Work Education through the Integration of Catholic Social Teaching*. More than half of the Catholic-sponsored social work education programs in the U.S. were

represented at this unprecedented gathering to share best practices and to connect, collaborate, and celebrate mutually shared commitments as Catholic-sponsored social work education programs. Also, in conjunction with this conference, the School published *Social Work for Social Justice: A Resource Guide.* This guide includes 70 instructional modules created by the School's faculty and contributed by conference participants as well as the documents and tools generated through the initiative. The enthusiastic response to the conference has catalyzed plans for a biennial national program to advance this collaborative effort to apply CST in social work education.

Catholic Mission and Professional Mission: A Call to the Common Good

Catholic colleges and universities share a mutuality of mission with the professions in a commitment to educate students to contribute to the common good. The social work case study profiled the effort of one Catholic-sponsored professional education program to address its Catholic and professional missions through the integration of CST. This case study provides rationale, strategies, and outcomes that have relevance for education programs in other professions, particularly those sponsored by Catholic institutions. The framework provided by CST is an invaluable resource for professional education faculty as they live out mission and design curriculum. The School's experience attests to the substantial convergence between their professional code of ethics and the principles of CST. Other professional education programs are likely to discover the same meaningful convergence between their codes of ethics and CST, which may inform and inspire ways they might live out their dual mission to institution and profession. This process provides immensely valuable opportunities for faculty development, curriculum development, and student engagement in mission.

While attention to mission may sometimes be perceived as a distraction from priorities such as teaching and research, attention to mission actually provides rich opportunities to define, distinguish, and advance the primary functions of academic work. In the quest to educate students for roles of service as well as leadership for the common good, the missions of Catholic institutions and professional education combine forces in an especially potent manner. Catholic Social Teaching, in particular, offers a compelling resource for empowering students and future professionals to fulfill the gospel mandate to love one another and to contribute to world transformation.

Appendix I

Social Work for Social Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action

> "Social Justice means loving people so much that I work to change structures that violate their dignity." Peter Henriot S.J.

Philosophy Statement

The *NASW Code of Ethics* identifies the profession's core values as service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. The *Code* goes on to discuss numerous specific ethical principles and standards in the context of the service function. It provides, however, far less detail related to the justice function. The *Code* states that "social workers challenge social injustice" as follows:

> Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, service and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision-making for all people. (NASW Code of Ethics, 1999)

Out of its firm commitment to social justice and by virtue of the Catholic mission of our sponsors, the College of St. Catherine and the University of St. Thomas, the School of Social Work recognizes Catholic Social Teaching as a rich resource to inform and further specify social justice goals of social work education and practice. Catholic Social Teaching represents a tradition of social ethics which has derived from multiple sources, including scripture, papal encyclicals, episcopal statements and writings of theologians. Catholic Social Teaching, which addresses the challenges of economic and political life and global harmony, defines standards that universally apply to *all* human beings and provide guidance as to how people should interact and treat one another within the economic and political spheres of our communities and world. As such, these social teachings provide direction on how to live out the Judeo Christian mandate 'love one another.' Thus, Catholic Social Teaching is relevant to all people, not just Catholics. While all faith traditions make a contribution to social justice, the words of Brian Rusche, Executive Director of Minnesota's Joint Reli-

gious Legislative Coalition (JLRC) articulate the gift rendered by Catholic Social Teaching:

> Catholic Social Teaching is the most systematic and thorough attempt by a religious faith to articulate its positions on social policy. For JRLC's interfaith work, it provides a first lens to look at nearly every social justice issue and seriously influences all our position statements. Catholic Social Teaching is a gift to the world and people of all faiths.

Through careful analysis and extensive discussion, the social work faculty has examined the convergence between the NASW Code of Ethics and Catholic Social Teaching. This exercise has led to the development of *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles*. The integration of these principles into the curriculum recognizes and acknowledges the universality of these principles across numerous other faith traditions. As social work educators, we are bound by the *NASW Code of Ethics* and therefore responsible to teach our students to become professionals dedicated to service and justice. *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* provides a framework for strengthening the way in which we educate for justice and prepare students for competent and ethical social work practice dedicated to both service and justice.

Appendix II

Social Work for Justice: Ten Principles

Human Dignity	**Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**
Dignity of the human person is the ethical foundation of a moral society. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals. Social workers treat each person in a caring, respectful manner mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities and social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems. Social workers act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person or group on any basis.	*In a marketplace where profit often takes precedence over the dignity and rights of workers, it is important to recognize that the economy must serve the people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.* Social workers challenge injustice related to unemployment, workers' rights, and inhumane labor practices. Social workers engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.
Community and the Common Good	**Solidarity**
All individuals by virtue of their human nature have social needs. Human relationships enable people to meet their needs and provide an important vehicle for change. *The family*, in all its diverse forms, *is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened. The way in which society is organized—in* education, *economics, politics,* government—*directly affects human dignity and the common good.* Social workers promote the general welfare	*We are our brother's and sister's keeper. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences.* An ethic of care acknowledging our interdependence belongs in every dimension of human experience, including the family, community, society, and global dimension. Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage

and development of individuals, families, and communities. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people at all levels to promote the well being of all.	people as partners in the helping process and seek to strengthen relationships among people to promote well-being at all levels.
Rights and Responsibilities People have a right and a responsibility to participate in society and to work together toward the common good. *Human dignity is protected and healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met.* Accordingly, every person has a fundamental *right to things necessary for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are responsibilities to family, community and society.* Social workers, mindful of individual differences and diversity, respect and promote the right of all individuals to self-determination and personal growth and development. Social workers provide education and advocacy to protect human rights and to end oppression. Social workers empower individuals/groups to function as effectively as possible.	**Stewardship** *It is incumbent upon us to recognize and protect the value of all people and all resources on our planet. While rights to personal property are recognized, these rights are not unconditional and are secondary to the best interest of the common good especially in relation to the right of all individuals to meet their basic needs.* Stewardship of resources is important at all levels/ settings: family, community, agency, community and society. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation for all people. Social workers promote the general welfare of people and their environments.
Priority for the Poor and Vulnerable *A basic moral test of any community or society is the way in which the most vulnerable members are faring. In a society characterized by deepening divisions between rich and poor, the needs of those most at risk should be considered a priority.* Social workers advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and	**Governance/Principle of Subsidiarity** *Governance structures in all levels/ settings have an imperative to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. While the principle of subsidiarity calls for the functions of government to be performed at the lowest level possible* in order to insure for self-determination and empowerment, higher levels of

to promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice. Social workers pursue change with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups to: address poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice; and to expand choice and opportunity.	government have the responsibility to provide leadership and set policy in the best interest of the common good. Social workers engage in social and political action in order to promote equality, challenge injustice, expand opportunity, and empower individuals, families, and groups to participate in governance structures at all levels.
Participation *All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. Social justice and human dignity require that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is the ultimate injustice for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly.* Social workers strive to ensure access to equal opportunity and meaningful participation for all. Social workers empower individuals and groups to influence social policies and institutions and promote social justice. Social workers advocate for change to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources and opportunities required to meet basic needs and develop fully.	**Promotion of Peace** In light of the human dignity and worth of all and the ethical imperatives of solidarity and stewardship, we are called to promote peace and nonviolence at all levels within families, communities, society, and globally. *Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon the respect and cooperation between peoples and nations.* Social workers promote the general welfare of society from local to global levels.

July 2006. **Sources**: NASW Code of Ethics; *US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Social Justice—Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.*

Appendix III

Finding Common Ground

> *As we work together to build a program and a profession which more strongly articulate a commitment to social justice…*

1. We will recognize that no single voice/view has a monopoly on the truth. We will remind ourselves that solutions to our challenges will emerge from dialogue that embraces diverse perspectives.
2. We will not envision ourselves or anyone as 'having all the answers.' No one person/group will judge itself alone to be possessed of enlightenment or spurn others as wrong or misguided.
3. We will test all ideas/proposals for their truth, value, and potential impact on our program, on our students, and on the clients they will serve. This is our responsibility as ethical social work educators.
4. We will presume that those with whom we disagree are acting with good intentions. We will extend civility, courtesy, and genuine effort to understand their concerns. We will not diminish nor trivialize their ideas or concerns with labels, abstractions, or blanket terms (such as she/he 'just doesn't get it', 'is a sellout', 'has been led astray', 'is misguided', etc). Instead, we will embrace the complexity of the realities we face and examine their various and multiple dimensions.
5. We will put the best possible construction on differing positions, addressing their strongest points rather than seizing upon the most vulnerable aspect in order to discredit them. We will detect the valid insights and legitimate worries that may underlie even questionable arguments.
6. We will be cautious in ascribing motives. We will not impugn another's motives, loyalties, opinions, or comprehension. We will not rush to interpret disagreements as conflicts of starkly opposing principles rather than as differences in degree or in prudential judgment about the relevant facts.
7. We will embrace the realities of our institutional cultures, not by simple defiance or by naïve acquiescence, but acknowledging both their valid achievement and real dangers.