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## Faculty Development: Mission and Methods for Practical Integration

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# Faculty Development: Mission and Methods for Practical Integration

Linda Garofalo, MA, Danute M. Nourse, BA, Mary Garofalo, PhD

## Abstract

Current research suggests that faculty development should address a cross-section of personal and professional needs of the faculty, as well as support the institution's mission.<sup>1</sup> Using evidence to support faculty development can foster reflective practitioners and close the gap between teaching and research by creating "sustainable collaboration practices" between faculty and administration.<sup>2</sup>

Broadly, faculty development is often cited as an integral part of the university, providing ongoing personal, professional, organizational, and institutional support and development opportunities for faculty and administrators.<sup>3</sup> However, strong evidence suggests that faculty development programs are largely ineffective in meeting those goals outlined by the universities.<sup>4</sup> This may be due to the fact that these

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<sup>1</sup> Camblin, Lanthan D., and Joseph A. Steger, "Rethinking Faculty Development," *Higher Education* 39, no. 1 (2000): 3.; O'Sullivan, Patricia S., and David M. Irby, "Reframing Research on Faculty Development," *Academic Medicine* 86, no. 4 (2011): 426.

<sup>2</sup> Mihai, Alexandra, "This Pandemic Must Bring Faculty Development to the Fore," *Times Higher Education*. (2021): 1-8. Accessed, February 6, 2021. <http://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/pandemic-must-bring-faculty-development-fore>.

<sup>3</sup> Camblin and Steger, "Rethinking Faculty Development", 3.

<sup>4</sup> Brinkley-Etzkorn, Karen E., "Learning to Teach Online: Measuring the Influence of Faculty Development Training on Teaching Effectiveness through a TPACK Lens," *The Internet and Higher Education* 38 (2018): 33.; Saroyan, Alenoush, and Keith Trigwell, "Higher Education Teachers' Professional Learning: Process and Outcome," *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 46 (2015): 96.

programs are not sufficiently evaluated to determine the impact on the participants.<sup>5</sup>

Developing a program that infuses the application of a university's mission with the personal and professional wellbeing of faculty is a lofty and challenging task, but a necessary one.<sup>6</sup> Fostering the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) among university faculty, through their teaching, research, and roles in the university community writ large, is essential to maintaining the Catholic identity of the university, in addition to distinguishing themselves in an increasingly competitive market.<sup>7</sup>

Seton Hall University, along with several other Catholic universities, has recognized the key role of faculty and administrators in carrying the meaning of the mission into university life and teaching. They have developed programs across the spectrum of faculty responsibilities through faculty development centers, mission integration offices, and various programs. Some of the most notable are Boston College, the University of St. Thomas, College of the Holy Cross, Sacred Heart University, and the University of San Francisco.

This paper proposes that Seton Hall University's Praxis Program of the Advanced Seminar on Mission is a unique and effective approach to faculty development, providing opportunities for continued growth in ongoing learning and reflection. This approach involves the exploration of mission through philosophical method and study that is based in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, with a practical and integrative project required. The Praxis Program creates an interdisciplinary community that cultivates the *whole person*—intellectually, spiritually, professionally—to appropriate and integrate the mission of the university and thus become “carriers of meaning”<sup>8</sup> in university life and work. Furthermore, this paper proposes that the study of Bernard Lonergan's philosophical method provides a unique and viable

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<sup>5</sup> Chalmers, Denise, and Di Gardiner, “An Evaluation Framework for Identifying the Effectiveness and Impact of Academic Teacher Development Programmes.” *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 46 (2015): 85.; Gegenfurtner, Andreas, “Reconstructing Goals for Transfer of Training in Faculty Development Programs for Higher Education teachers: A Qualitative Documentary Method Approach,” *Heliyon* 5, no. 11 (2019): e02928: 1.

<sup>6</sup> Camblin and Steger, “Rethinking Faculty Development,” 3.; Briel, Don, “Mission and Identity: The Role of Faculty,” *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 31, no. 2 (2012), 169.

<sup>7</sup> Briel, “Mission and Identity: The Role of Faculty,” 169.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard J. Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Method in Theology: Vol. 14*, (University of Toronto Press, 2017), 70.

structure to analyze the mission of the university and to appropriate and integrate its meaning into one's life and work.

### **The Mission of Seton Hall University**

Catholic traditions influence Seton Hall's fundamental identity and sense of purpose. As a Catholic university in community with other such universities throughout the world, Seton Hall embraces the principles set forth by Pope John Paul II in *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. The mission has been articulated in various ways and in different documents, including the University's By-Laws, its mission statement, and in the more elaborate reflection, "Seton Hall: A Catholic University."<sup>9</sup> Across its operations in teaching and administration, the University has aimed to diligently maintain its Catholic traditions.

To carry Seton Hall's historical and institutional commitment to Catholic traditions into present University life and operations, the *Academic Vision* of its current strategic plan recognizes that its teachers-scholars form the heart of the institution. Five equally essential commitments form the foundation of its academic vision: breadth of education; the pursuit, creation, and dissemination of knowledge; the integration of the liberal arts and sciences with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition; faculty-student engagement; and preparation for an uncertain future.<sup>10</sup>

The primary purpose of faculty development at Seton Hall from a mission perspective is the integration of body, mind, and spirit as foundational to the University's mission, focusing on academic and ethical development and a value-centered curriculum<sup>11</sup> "Unless university teachers are themselves integrated persons, we can surely expect disintegrated graduates."<sup>12</sup>

Seton Hall accomplishes these goals using several programs described below, which are designed to engage faculty and administrators in ongoing learning and reflection, as well as participating in rich discussions about the Catholic mission and identity of the institution, including the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. This experience connects

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<sup>9</sup> "Seton Hall: A Catholic University," <https://www.shu.edu/mission-ministry/seton-hall-a-catholic-university.cfm> (accessed June 10, 2022)

<sup>10</sup> Seton Hall University, "Strategic Plan," <http://www.shu.edu/strategic-plan.index.cfm>.

<sup>11</sup> Seton Hall University, "Mission Statement," <http://www.shu.edu/mission.cfm>

<sup>12</sup> Seton Hall University, "Seton Hall: A Catholic University,"

participants to the meaning of the mission<sup>13</sup> and provides a sense of community and belonging resulting in a more fruitful work/life experience. In addition, such reflection and discussion fosters interdisciplinary dialogue for development in scholarship, research, and teaching. This is the specific charge of faculty development for mission integration that is the concern of the Office of Mission and Ministry and its Center for Vocation and Servant Leadership (CVSL).

### **Mission and Faculty Development**

To implement that charge, a series of Mission Seminars is offered specifically for faculty and administrators. In 2008, the CVSL developed and implemented *The University Seminar on Mission*. The readings include important documents relevant to Catholic higher education, a Catholic philosophy of education, and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. To deepen the understanding of the mission, *The Advanced Seminar on Mission* was introduced by the CVSL in 2011. The seminar's success was such that participants requested additional mentoring on the *application* of the mission to their disciplines and administrative departments. In spring 2013, the *Praxis Program of the Advanced Seminar on Mission*, co-sponsored by the Center for Catholic Studies, was offered for the first time. Participation in the two previous Mission Seminars was a prerequisite for those enrolled in this new program as the readings in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and a Catholic philosophy of education were foundational to an understanding of Bernard Lonergan's writings.

### **The Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Lonergan**

Catholic teachings and beliefs included in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition are of central importance to the Praxis Program.<sup>14</sup> In the two prerequisite Mission Seminars, participants were exposed to the rich content of the CIT, and those offerings continue with the syllabus of the Praxis Program.

*Ex corde Ecclesiae* explains the need to foster the Catholic Intellectual Tradition as part of the mission and identity of all Catholic

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<sup>13</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 70.

<sup>14</sup> Monika Hellwig, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University," in *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, ed. Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan (Fairfield CT: SHU Press, 2000), 1-18.

colleges and universities, having as their objective a Christian presence in academia that confronts the great problems of society and culture.<sup>15</sup> To accomplish these goals, the Praxis Program utilizes the Generalized Empirical Method (GEM) developed by Jesuit philosopher and theologian, Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984).<sup>16</sup>

Lonergan refers to John Henry Newman as his “fundamental mentor and guide,”<sup>17</sup> especially during Lonergan’s first years as a student in philosophy. Lonergan was taken with Newman’s idea that the human intellectual capacity naturally explores new insights since questions about improving ourselves and our community are ongoing in the pursuit of satisfactory answers. This exploration directed Lonergan’s life, with one of his earliest contributions to the CIT being the integration of the ideas of Newman and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>18</sup> “Aquinas was a man of theory, system in particular, while Newman was a man of interiority, investigation in particular. It was Lonergan’s later achievement to combine their horizons into a higher viewpoint.”<sup>19</sup>

The most important aspect for Lonergan, in dealing with the truth of tradition, is to understand the process of meaning used by the Church’s forebears. “In grasping both the truth and possibilities of these traditions, Lonergan was able to draw from the past and at the same time look forward to modernity, as a way of augmenting and completing the old with the new.”<sup>20</sup>

Robert Doran suggests that Lonergan’s fundamental orientation was “to preserve, monitor, and reawaken in modern culture the differentiations of consciousness that are displayed in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, in the Christian gospel and the development of dogma in the Church, and in the classic Christian theologies of Augustine and Aquinas.”<sup>21</sup> Lonergan’s integration of all that is positive in modernity

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<sup>15</sup> See *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, part 1, no. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Orji, Cyril, *The Catholic University and the Search for Truth*, (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2013), 59.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Reality, Myth, Symbol,” in Alan M. Olson (ed.) *Myth, Symbol, and Reality* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980) 32-33.

<sup>18</sup> Orji, Cyril, *The Catholic University and the Search for Truth*.

<sup>19</sup> S.A.M. Adshead, *Philosophy of Religion in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England and Beyond*, (London: Macmillan, 2000), 210.

<sup>20</sup> Jacob Dumestre, “The Contribution of Bernard Lonergan toward the Recovery of a Catholic Philosophy of Education,” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1990) in *The Catholic University and the Search for Truth*, Cyril Orji, 107-108.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Doran, *Psychic Conversions and Theological Foundations II*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006), 65.

with the treasures of the past is a continuing challenge for our time. His life's work is at the heart of the living tradition that is the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

### **GEM, the Catholic University, and the Praxis Program**

At its core, the Catholic university pursues the unity and integration of knowledge across disciplines and in so doing requires a proper method to achieve this goal. Developing the appropriate method has been a challenge for the modern Catholic university. John Haughey suggests another compelling reason for the development of a such a method. Most institutions of higher education, whether secular or religious, have mission statements that express their goal to educate the whole person but do not indicate the method by which this will be accomplished. To educate the whole person, following Lonergan's method, requires:

.... a systematic and programmatic attention to the four realms of meaning: common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence. Common sense and theory are the bread and butter of any school...But understanding of the education of the whole person would require faculty and administrators to care for students' own unique interiorities, by teaching and modeling what it means to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible.<sup>22</sup>

In the Praxis Program, Lonergan's Generalized Empirical Method (GEM) has been effective in accomplishing these goals.

From his synthesis of Aquinas and Newman, Lonergan saw the university as having a key role in the culture, with the most important endowment of the university being the intellectual life of its faculty.<sup>23</sup> He understood the challenge faced by the Catholic university in its efforts to integrate revealed and acquired knowledge.

Though a Catholic university does not dispense the grace of God, though it is not entrusted with Christ's mission to teach, though it must see to the conservation and transmission of acquired knowledge before it can turn to its extension and development, still it is the normal center in which both the need for intellectual integration is felt and the way towards that integration is prepared.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> John C. Haughey, *Where is Knowing Going?*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 84.

<sup>23</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "The Role of a Catholic University in a Modern World," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Collection Vol.4*, ed., Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 111.

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan, "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," 112 – 113.

He suggests that the integration of the sciences dealing with concrete human questions is to be found not in philosophy but in theology, the study of which can enrich one with the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love. Lonergan understood that creative solutions based on those virtues can be the redemptive antidote to cultural decline, as well as inform and inspire a Catholic philosophy of education appropriate for the current milieu.<sup>25</sup>

...it is...in the context of Christian praxis that a solution is to be sought. Such Christian praxis is the dynamic of human creativity and freedom in which individually men make themselves and collectively they make the world in which they live. In that dynamic must be recognized (1) developing intelligence as the principle of progress, (2) the evils of individual and group egoism and the arrogance of omniscient common sense as the principles of alienation and decline, and (3) faith, hope, and charity as the principles of recovery from alienation and decline.<sup>26</sup>

Lonergan suggests that the Generalized Empirical Method can be used for the practical integration of theology with scholarly human and scientific studies:

We have been indicating a method, parallel to the method of theology, for integrating theology with scholarly and scientific human studies. The aim of such integration is to generate well-informed and continuously revised policies and plans for promoting good and undoing evil both in the church and in human society generally. Needless to say, such integrated studies will have to occur on many levels, local, regional, national, international.<sup>27</sup>

Lonergan's synthesis of Aquinas and Newman bore rich fruit in his two masterworks, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* and *Method in Theology*. He offers a methodology that can be applied to all areas of human inquiry and as a result, allows for interdisciplinary conversation and collaboration. To accomplish this, it is necessary for faculty and administrators to share not only a common foundational knowledge but also a terminology in philosophy and theology, found in his writings, that encourages such conversation and collaboration in a faculty diverse in disciplinary, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Hence, his definition of method as "a framework for collaborative creativity."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Lonergan, "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," 112.

<sup>26</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, Vol. 17*, ed., Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 370.

<sup>27</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 337.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

As a philosophical framework, Lonergan discusses the basis of his Generalized Empirical Method as an integrative method that highlights the general method of the human spirit as it gives rise to the specialized methods of other disciplines:

First, we shall appeal to the successful sciences to form a preliminary notion of method. Secondly, we shall go behind the procedures of the natural sciences to something both more general and more fundamental, namely, the procedures of the human mind. Thirdly, in the procedures of the human mind we shall discern a transcendental method, that is, a basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise. Fourthly, we shall indicate the relevance of transcendental method in the formulation of other, more special methods appropriate to particular fields.<sup>29</sup>

In the Praxis Program, such foundational knowledge begins with Lonergan's cognitional structure, an understanding of the self-correcting process of knowing that is reflected in his Generalized Empirical Method. These operations include experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. They are levels of self-transcendence because they direct us beyond ourselves and our immediate world into broader horizons. These operations are made possible by the normative dynamic patterns that Lonergan calls "transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible." He states that they are: "... a conscious intending, ever going beyond what happens to be given or known, ever striving for a fuller and richer apprehension of the yet unknown or incompletely known totality, whole, universe."<sup>30</sup>

Lonergan's understanding of cognitional structure is that reality is known by correct judgments, and decisions to act responsibly are the practical application of those judgments.<sup>31</sup> Correct judgments of truth and value are the consequence of being attentive to one's experience, being intelligent in one's understanding, being reasonable in one's judgment, and being responsible in one's decisions.<sup>32</sup> Unique to Seton Hall, this understanding of the process of knowing is being offered in disciplines and programs across the University, as a result of the Praxis Program, in which participants' self-development occurs and practical integration in teaching, research or scholarship is required.

Similarly, the structure of our knowing and doing expresses the conditions of being an authentic person; but this structure is a matter of being attentive,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>32</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 52.

being intelligent, being reasonable, being responsible; accordingly, there are four basic precepts that are independent of cultural differences. Moreover, since the actuation of the structure arises under social conditions and within cultural traditions, to the four there may be added a fifth, Acknowledge your historicity.<sup>33</sup>

To the last point, Lonergan adds: “It has long been my conviction that if [they]....are to live and operate on the level of the times, they must not only know about theories of history but also must work out their own.”<sup>34</sup>

Lonergan describes the operations of the Generalized Empirical Method as follows:

In brief, underpinning special methods there is what I have named generalized empirical method (GEM). Its operations are the operations we can verify each in his own consciousness. And the normative pattern that relates these operations to one another is the conscious dynamism of sensitive spontaneity, of intelligence raising questions and demanding satisfactory answers, of reasonableness insisting on sufficient evidence before it can assent yet compelled to assent when sufficient evidence is forthcoming, of conscience presiding over all and revealing to the subject his authenticity or his unauthenticity as he observes or violates the immanent norms of his own sensitivity, his own intelligence, his own reasonableness, his own freedom and responsibility.<sup>35</sup>

To accomplish these operations, it is necessary to expand one’s horizons and undergo the self-reflective process of transformations or conversions that, over time, permit the self-transcendence that results in authenticity.

By horizon is meant the totality ... within which understanding is sought, judgments of fact are made, and evaluations accepted. Such a totality dominates our knowing and deciding from the very fact that our questions have their origin in the a priori desire to understand, to reach the truth, to know the real, to do what is worthwhile.... It further follows that we have to be converted from assumptions about the real and the good...<sup>36</sup>

Lonergan acknowledges that such a process will be difficult, but nonetheless offers some practical advice:

I would urge better teachers and simplified studies....Everyone can attain a certain measure of self-appropriation, of knowing just what happens when he is

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<sup>33</sup> Lonergan, “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response,” 378.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>35</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” *A Third Collection, Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ*, ed. Frederick Crowe, SJ, (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 150.

<sup>36</sup> Lonergan, “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response,” 380.

coming to know and coming to choose...The big block will not be a total absence of philosophical capacity but the novelty of training teachers that (1) can thematize their own conscious activities and (2) help their pupils to do likewise.<sup>37</sup>

...through such thematizing [they will attain] the appropriation of their own cognitional, affective, and deliberative operations to the point where, as Aristotle put it, they no longer need a teacher but operate on their own...<sup>38</sup>

Lonergan's cognitional structure and resulting epistemology is a fruitful approach to meaningful faculty and administrator development at the foundation of the Praxis Program. Lonergan's Generalized Empirical Method provides Seton Hall University an effective approach to apply the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the overall mission of the University to its varied disciplines and programs.

### **The Praxis Program**

The Praxis Program is an ongoing, interdisciplinary learning community that seeks to engage its participants in understanding their importance in the communication and incarnation of the University's mission. The program is focused on the meaning of Seton Hall's mission, and engages faculty and administrators in a process by which the participants discover ways to reflect upon and apply the mission to their own disciplines, recognize how the disciplines connect to one another, and thus achieve a more integrated understanding of knowledge and its link to the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

#### *The Structure of the Program*

The Praxis Program begins with a six-session introduction to the thought and method of Bernard Lonergan and an exploration of their significance for education. An ongoing monthly program of peer support and mentoring follows, with the purpose of deepening content and discussion, as well as reflection on implementation. Additionally, participants are required to design a practical application to their discipline or administrative area. That practical result, the Application of the Method (ATM), is a distinguishing feature of the program, exploring how faculty have approached mission intentionally in their research, theory, and practice. The program tracks developments (personal,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 372.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 382.

pedagogical, professional, organizational, and institutional) through various data collection and supports the participants' efforts to collaborate, research, write, and publish on their work.

Another highly effective component of the Praxis Program is its annual summer workshop which consists of selected readings and several workshops including an intensive workshop abroad. Five workshops abroad have been held in partnership with prominent Catholic institutions such as the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas, the Gregorian University, the University of Trieste and the Jacques Maritain Institute. The participants find these experiences intellectually and spiritually enriching, further enhanced because they are also able to immerse themselves in locations central to the Catholic faith and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. The analysis of the assessments collected from the participants indicate that they have deepened their understanding of the subject matter as well as enriched their experience of community. Notably those who participate often emerge as peer mentors for their colleagues.

Since 2012, the directors of the Praxis Program have worked with various scholars on the implementation of the program and have also offered consultation to several universities (including Boston College, the University of San Francisco, and St. Mary's University, San Antonio) in their planning for similar faculty development programs using Bernard Lonergan's philosophy. At Boston College, under the auspices of the Lonergan Institute, a faculty development program modeled on Seton Hall's Praxis Program was initiated in 2019, with a third cohort planned for spring 2022. The University of San Francisco started a faculty and staff development program in the academic year 2021-2022, likewise St. Mary's University will have three cohorts of faculty and professional staff beginning in spring 2022, both modeled on Seton Hall's Praxis Program. While all programs keep the essential elements of the Praxis Program, their organization and selection of Lonergan content differs.

### **The Case Study of the Praxis Program**

Philosophically, a key assumption about qualitative research is the view that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds."<sup>39</sup> The qualitative case study considers the interconnectivity

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<sup>39</sup> Merriam, Sharan B., *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education, Revised and Expanded from "Case Study Research in Education,"* (Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco, CA, 1998) 27.

between the phenomenon (or “bounded system”) and its context as inextricably linked.<sup>40</sup> Using case study methodology, situated in a constructivist paradigm, the authors used single-case analysis to examine the Praxis Program. The following research questions guided the inquiry:

How do faculty apply the mission of the university to their disciplines?

How do administrators apply the mission to their responsibilities?

How has the perception of faculty and administrators changed as it relates to the University’s mission?

How has the Praxis Program impacted the personal and professional lives of the faculty?

### Data Collection

The impetus to study the Praxis Program came as other universities began pilot programs using the Praxis programmatic model. However, the program directors have been collecting data on the Praxis Program since its inception in 2013. Three kinds of data were collected from each participant: a programmatic assessment, a self-assessment, and a report on each participant’s ATM. The assessments were open-ended surveys with questions specifically targeting the participants’ experiences of the program, implementing the mission, and the impact on their personal and professional lives. The ATMs are rich with perceptions and experiences of the participants in their application of the method and the impact on students, programs, and co-workers. The data was contemporaneously collected and subsequently analyzed all at one time for the purposes of this article. The assessments and the ATMs collected from the 78 participants serve as rich sources of data providing insights, explanations, perceptions, and descriptions of the experiences of the participants of the Praxis Program over the last eight years.

### Participants

Since 2013, there have been six cohorts of seventy-eight participants in the Praxis Program. Of those, sixty-one are faculty and seventeen are administrators. The faculty are both tenured and

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<sup>40</sup> Stake, Robert E., *The Art of Case Study Research*, (Sage, 1995), 10.

non-tenured. They are across all disciplines on the undergraduate and graduate levels including the School of Health and Medical Sciences and the Law School. The administrators range in experience from two years to more than twenty-five years. Written permission was given by all participants for their responses to be analyzed.

## Analysis

The case study moves beyond ‘thin’ description to ‘thick’ description by analysis of elicited images, language of description and application, and artifacts.<sup>41</sup> As the data was manually coded using Saldana’s *Two Cycle Coding Method*,<sup>42</sup> patterns were identified and narratives of each individual participant were developed using data from the self-assessments, program assessments, and ATM reports. Codes were inductively generated using a thematic analysis approach and emerged from the faculty and administrators’ descriptions of their experiences in the Praxis Program. The three sources of data were triangulated, as were narratives of the faculty and administrators, comparing and contrasting their experiences in order to gain a greater understanding of the impact of the Praxis Program on the participants’ understanding and implementation of the mission.

## Results

Through the data analysis, four main themes emerged as significant to the participants’ experiences of the Praxis Program:

Understanding of the Mission

Mission in Professional Life

Community and Shared Experience

Personal Growth

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<sup>41</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, 10.; Stake, Robert E. “Qualitative Case Studies,” in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 443-466.

<sup>42</sup> Saldana, Johnny, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd 3, 2009),7.

### *Understanding of the Mission*

Of the seventy-eight participants, 88 percent reported that they felt that the Praxis Program helped them understand the mission of the University more deeply. Both faculty and administrators indicated that the curriculum of the Praxis Program strengthened their understanding of CIT and how the mission of the University is situated in that tradition. Significantly, faculty participants discussed the importance of the value-centered curricula anchored in CIT as meaningful in understanding their roles within their disciplines. Only two participants stated that they did not leave the Praxis Program with a deeper understanding of the mission of the University. One of them stated that the philosophy of education being discussed was not sufficiently Catholic. The other stated that the issue of objectivity, in both the religious and academic spheres, needed to be further explained.

Administrators discussed their changed perspective of how important the mission is in everything that they do. Only 4 percent reported that, upon hiring, there was discussion of how the Catholic mission would impact their work at the University. Sixty percent of administrators reported that they had a moderate knowledge of the Catholic worldview before participating in the Praxis Program. After taking the Praxis Program, 9 percent expressed feeling a greater sense of understanding of the mission, the Catholic worldview, and how it relates to their individual roles in the University.

### *Mission in Professional Life*

Both groups of participants discussed the impact that the Praxis Program had on their professional lives, most powerfully in implementing the mission of the University within their disciplines or roles, largely through their ATMs. Faculty discussed the impact on their pedagogy and their perceptions of the impact of these changes on their students.

### *Pedagogy*

Faculty reported experiencing significant changes in their approach to curriculum, content delivery, and overall focus of their teaching. Faculty discussed pivoting from almost exclusively teaching from within their disciplines to employing a more “holistic,” “interdisciplinary,” or “generalist” approach. Some faculty described using Lonergan’s Method as going from the abstract to the concrete to help students “think for

themselves,” “to be proactive,” and “be creative,” and to teach students “ethical practice” as learners.

As practitioners, the faculty almost universally reported that they became more self-reflective about their craft, their biases, and how they planned to approach the material and their role in the classroom as “carriers of meaning” of the mission, as they strive to educate “the whole person.” Nearly all faculty said they have transitioned to a student-centered learning model. Faculty discussed using contemplative pedagogy, mindfulness, and reflective practice through various methods for students to move from “experiencing to making judgements.”

### *Changes in Student Understanding*

Faculty reported an almost universal change in their perceptions of student understanding based on their pedagogical approaches rooted in GEM. By using the cognitional process as a learning tool, faculty reported that students have appeared more engaged, more proactive as learners, more able to articulate their “identity as student” and have a “greater understanding of self through exploration of their experiences, insights, and judgments regarding spirituality and self-actualization.” Students were reported to be more open to new avenues of discourse with other students.

### *Administrators*

Administrators reported several ways they implemented the mission in their roles and responsibilities. Administrators largely expressed an understanding that the mission is part of everything that they do. Many administrators discussed framing their tasks each day with the mission and operating from the premise of how to better serve the students. This is exhibited in some of the curricular changes made in the Law School, in Freshman Studies, and in the Department of Physical Therapy.

Other administrators, focused on the idea of developing employees’ understanding of the University mission, designed and implemented a new-hire training program for administrators. The Catholic Worldview Seminar was developed by several administrators who participated in the Praxis Program. This seminar was designed using the GEM paradigm to educate new administrative hires about the Catholic mission of Seton Hall University.

### *Community and Shared Experiences*

One universal perception reported by the participants was that the shared experiences of the program built an interdisciplinary community. “We heal better, we create better when in community, we reflect better when we are in community. I think insights come more readily when we are in community.”

Participants described their experience in the program as rooted in collaboration across disciplines and roles. Additionally, they discussed feelings of belonging and feeling more connected to the other participants through their shared experiences including training, traveling, discussions, peer support, and teaching. Several participants remarked on the shared Lonerganian terminology, as well as the shared worldview, using GEM as a paradigm for the building blocks of the community. Many participants discussed Praxis members as “friends” and referenced peer support as a substantial component that fostered inclusivity and feelings of connectedness among the participants.

### *Administrators and Shared Experience*

Several administrators said that they often feel isolated “cloistered in [their] own departments,” cut off from the University community. Universally, administrators discussed the rich experience of having a community to which they belonged. Administrators spoke of the value of the Praxis Program as collaborative, “an anchor to the community,” “wonderful opportunity to interact with and learn from others throughout campus,” “meeting other colleagues from other areas and understanding their experiences,” “having a commonality of goodness and values.” Additionally, administrators made suggestions that the University use the Praxis Program as a model for community building and the development of mission integration. All participants emphasized the importance of coming together with an understanding of “common meaning” and purpose.

### *Personal Growth*

Participants consistently discussed the impact the Praxis Program had on their personal lives, worldview, and perceptions of self and faith.

What GEM has provided is legitimacy for everything that I do, both personally and professionally. I have appropriated the method in my teaching... and in my

personal decisions. It has strengthened my resolve to always think big, to get it right, rather than operating in a pragmatic or short-term vein.<sup>43</sup>

Largely, participants discussed the transfer of the self-reflective practice in their professional roles to their personal lives. The areas of growth mentioned include self-reflection on their biases, as well as on their religious faith, and applying the aspects of Lonergan's methodology to decisions made in their personal lives.

## **Conclusion**

These results from the last eight years support the aims of the Praxis Program to provide mission-based faculty development, featuring an understanding and a practical application of Lonergan's Generalized Empirical Method as an effective way to integrate and apply the mission of the University to the disciplines and professions, providing opportunities for ongoing learning and reflection. GEM highlights the general method of the human spirit as it gives rise to the specialized methods of the sciences and scholarly disciplines. GEM also leads to questions of meaning, community, progress and decline in history, religion, and revelation, as well as providing a new constitutive meaning for the faculty community. Even with a faculty diverse in disciplinary, cultural, and religious backgrounds the approach of the Praxis Program, with its emphasis on the meaning of the University's mission as the full development of the human person, permits a retrieval of the true purpose of Catholic higher education.

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<sup>43</sup> Faculty, *Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work*, Seton Hall University, 2018.