

CAMPUS MINISTRY

Drafted by Lulu Santana

Over the last several years, questions of vocational discernment have been tangibly present throughout the university, especially through the efforts of the DISCOVER project. The present reality of the university and the process of “Future Directions” provide a prime opportunity for departments such as Campus Ministry to ask, “What is our vocation within this Catholic, Jesuit University?” In the simplest form, Campus Ministry seeks to address the pastoral and spiritual needs of the university community. Santa Clara University’s commitment to integrated education has encouraged Campus Ministry to provide students, staff and faculty with opportunities to inform their faith and share their spirituality with others. In his 2000 address at SCU, Fr. Kolvenbach, S.J. spoke of Campus Ministry’s contribution to higher education:

“Campus Ministry does much to foment such intelligent, responsible, and active compassion, compassion that deserves the name solidarity . . . The measure of Jesuit universities is not what our students do but who they become and the adult Christian responsibility they will exercise in future toward their neighbor and their world.”¹

Campus Ministry’s contribution to the “Mission of Santa Clara as a Catholic, Jesuit University in a Globalizing World” will be to reach out throughout the university to be informed about how to better respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of the community.

Campus Ministry accompanies people in an array of settings: Prayer and worship services, Retreats, Scripture study, Social justice education, Vocational discernment, Resident Ministry, Peer Ministry, Hospitality, Immersion, Marriage preparation and Weddings, Faith formation, Spiritual Direction, Pastoral presence in times of death/crisis, and others. When hundreds of people gather on a weekly basis in the Mission Church for Catholic liturgies, one can find undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, staff, faculty, and members of the surrounding community. For many, these liturgies act as a springboard for other spiritual needs and they look to Campus Ministry to provide these services. Much of what Campus Ministry does is geared towards the Christian, Catholic undergraduate population. However, the ability to be a place of welcome and support to people of various belief systems is challenged by limited resources? For example, the Campus Ministers are 10-month employees who are not present on campus during the months of July and August.

Campus Ministry has identified several areas to address in the coming months and years that can better enable us to contribute to the distinctive nature of Santa Clara University. These areas reflect services that are ongoing, and could be strengthened and also ways in which Campus Ministry might be invited to broaden its scope of service to the wider university community.

1) Liturgical/sacramental/pastoral/spiritual life

Campus Ministry must ensure that it continues to provide the liturgical opportunities and sacramental formation that are sought out at a Catholic university. Some ways to enhance these services include:

¹ Peter Hans-Kolvenbach, S.J., “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education,” Santa Clara University, Oct. 6, 2000.

- Continue to evaluate liturgical offerings, including how they include or exclude members of different cultural backgrounds.
- Develop a liturgy course for undergraduate students in collaboration with the Religious Studies department.
- Maintain a welcoming and supportive environment to respond to crisis moments.

2) Outreach and collaboration with other university departments

Campus Ministry can expand its regular dialogue and collaboration with people throughout the university. Existing partnerships and suggestions for growth include:

- Resident Ministry can continue to provide new opportunities for Campus Ministry to be in ongoing conversation and service with the faculty, staff, and students who shape the Residential Learning Communities.
- Human Dignity Week provides Campus Ministry and Santa Clarans for Social Justice, a student organization advised by Campus Ministry, the opportunity to collaborate with other student organizations and academic programs with the purpose of “educating for solidarity.”
- The Ignatian centers support the spiritual needs of the university from distinct perspectives, which Campus Ministry cannot provide due to limited resources. The Arrupe Center has provided regular spiritual offerings for staff and faculty. The Arrupe Center has provided experiential learning and reflection opportunities through the Ministry intern program and Immersion trips.
- The Jesuit Community and Campus Ministry are regular collaborators in meeting the spiritual and pastoral needs of the university, particularly liturgical and sacramental needs. Regular conversation and consultation must continue.
- The academic departments of Religious Studies and Pastoral Ministries seem to be natural collaborators, but more can be done to understand the resources available within each group and how these can be better coordinated.

3) Interfaith outreach and dialogue

How does Campus Ministry embrace the “creative tension” present between reaching out to people of all faith traditions and maintaining the services that flow from our Catholic, Jesuit identity? Building relationships with those of non-Catholic faith traditions can help Campus Ministry understand their needs. For example, Campus Ministry needs to enter into greater dialogue with students from Jewish Student Union, the Muslim Student Association and CORE Christian Fellowship. Campus Ministry has enjoyed a close relationship with the local Catholic Church through liturgical, sacramental and social justice endeavors, and should pursue similar relationships with non-Catholic spiritual leaders throughout the Silicon Valley. The Religious Studies Department, particularly through the Local Religions Project, can help make these connections. Another important step is the development of a space on campus that is welcoming to people of all faith traditions. The plans to convert the current chapel in Nobili Hall into an interfaith prayer space will contribute greatly to foster an inclusive environment.

4) Retreats

Campus Ministry provides several types of retreats throughout the year. In recent years there have been several shifts that need to be considered as Campus Ministry identifies who seeks retreat opportunities, what types of retreats are needed, and how often should retreats be offered.

The DISCOVER project has developed retreat opportunities within RLCs. Other departments like the Center for Student Leadership, Arrupe Center, and Bannan Center provide retreat opportunities for specific needs. In some cases, Campus Ministry has been asked to help develop and/or facilitate retreats with specific themes, for groups such as International Programs, the Arrupe Center, the Bridge Program, and the Alumni Office. The area of retreats within Campus Ministry calls for an assessment throughout the university: what are the needs/interests, what is already being offered, and how can Campus Ministry provide for these needs within our retreat program and in collaboration with other departments.

5) Peer Ministry

In all that Campus Ministry does, there are opportunities for the mentoring of students in leadership and service—for the “educating in solidarity.” Peer Ministry has been a way to formally offer students the opportunity to grow and develop relationships with each other and Campus Ministry through intentional community living and/or formation for service and leadership in liturgical ministries, social justice, and retreats. Campus Ministry is in the process of revamping the Peer Ministry program to fulfill the following objectives:

- Support the development of “Peer Ministers” within the RLCs.
- Develop Campus Ministry Internships for students to explore vocations in ministry.
- Facilitate a Campus Ministry Intentional Community within the current “Peer House” at 529 Lafayette St. This community would be comprised of recent alumni who are committed to live in an intentional faith community.

As Campus Ministry develops its programs and services, an accompanying challenge will be the process of assessment. How do we gauge Campus Ministry’s ability to contribute to the pastoral and spiritual needs of individuals? Of a university community? How does Campus Ministry prioritize the diverse needs of a broad constituency (undergraduates/graduate students, staff/faculty, alumni, and community members)? This in itself is an area to examine. The process of “Future Directions” will hopefully help to identify measures that can keep Campus Ministry accountable to the community while honoring the subjective nature of pastoral service.

The process of taking an honest look at what is Campus Ministry’s vocation within the university mission is both messy and exciting. Numerous and complex pastoral needs are present within the university community. Campus Ministry, with its limited resources, is called to be creative and intentional in understanding these needs and in deciding how to prioritize the manner in which it responds.

Reflectors

Jason Beyer, NSJ, Tina Denena, Ingrid Honoré-Lallande, CSJ, Laurie Laird, Sonny Manuel, SJ, Lisa Millora, Mario Prietto, SJ, Rebecca Schlatter, Greg Schultz, Matt Smith, David Thompson, Peggy Tritto, Charlie White