

**THE BISHOP JOHN S. CUMMINS INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC
THOUGHT, CULTURE AND ACTION
Meeting: 13 February 2007**

MINUTES

Present: Shane Keane, Annie Chase, Pamela Thomas, Alexis Doval, Kara Boatman, Ted Tsukahara, Scott Kier, Steve Woolpert, Carole Swain, Zach Flanigan [for Norrie Palmer], Frances Sweeney, Jane Camarillo, Sharon Sobotta, Jennifer Pizga [for Janet Luce], Ron Olowin, Brother Charles Hilken, Darcy Tarbell, Brother Donald Mansir.

Opening, Prayer and Welcome

Brother Donald opened the meeting at 3:05pm Pamela Thomas led the members in an opening prayer, remember the death of Brother James Santiago Miller, FSC.

Brother Donald asked the members to welcome the new Vice-Provost for Student Life, Jane Camarillo.

Minutes

The Minutes of the December meeting were reviewed and approved. [15-0-0]

Discussion

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to a discussion on what the core curriculum of a Catholic liberal arts college would look like. Apologizing for having to be absent, David Gentry-Akin sent a statement to the members. Steve Woolpert distributed a draft as the starting point to the discussion:

- 1) *Knowledge of Catholic teaching, focused by engagement with and reflection upon questions about the nature of creation and human existence.*
- 2) *Moral and ethical reasoning, demonstrated through application to contemporary and enduring problems within and across diverse communities.*
- 3) *Commitment to the common good practiced by sharing goods and services with those who are in need.*

The members discussed Steve's suggestions and agreed that learning objectives should not be relegated to courses but to the entire collegiate experience. The methodology should be to engage students; it should be relational so that students can make connections. Most members are concerned that the faculty is not satisfactorily prepared; they need to be educated in the Catholic intellectual tradition. But, how do we inculcate a respect for mystery which should form the basis of the methodology?

It was suggested that perhaps the Jan Term make assist with this. Instead of a theme for the Jan Term, a topic or issue related to the Catholic intellectual tradition might be looked at from different perspectives by different disciplines and expertise. [Brother Donald suggested the Institute consider stipends for faculty to write position papers from a

particular perspective/expertise on topics/issues related to the Catholic intellectual tradition.]

Shared experience is important for students; physics majors, business majors, etc. integrating Catholic teaching with their overall program. [Currently, Jan Term and Collegiate Seminar are the two shared experiences for students.] Hopefully, this shared experience would help students to distinguish one voice from another. As written in William Graham's article, "Seven approaches that make a college Catholic:"

Today's students have been raised in a culture that prizes tolerance and diversity. Those who do not have a firm grasp on what true tolerance or real diversity look like will sometimes suggest that all voices are equal. An intellectually mature Catholic asks questions and seeks answers as she learns to think and judge with the church. And she keeps at it until death.

By provoking ourselves and our students into consideration of voices, a Catholic college or university gives priority to modeling a health and vital community, to supporting one another in genuine love, to praying together formally and informally, and to uniting with one another in crises. If our students experience a Catholic community during their university years, that experience will transform their hopes and their lives ever after.

The students on the Board raised the concern about courses which include in their titles the term "Catholic." Wouldn't any course which investigated ethics, for example, look at the Catholic perspective; at least not oppose it. It should be presumed that moral principles would be from the Catholic perspective.

It was also agreed that the learning objectives should include the hope to graduate persons who will serve the Catholic Church; should include formation for vocation and not simply train students for professions.

Finance Report

Scott Kier provided the members with an updated financial report.

God and Science Panel Discussion

Annie Chase reminded the members of the God and Science Panel Discussion, co-sponsored by the School of Science and the Cummins Institute. The Discussion is scheduled for Wednesday, 7 March at 7:00pm in the Soda Center. The topic is 'abortion.' Various perspectives will be presented, including the Catholic by Brother Donald. In addition to Annie, Darcy Tarbell and Kara Boatman are on the planning committee. Members are encouraged to attend.

Catholic Relief Services

A request was made by Joseph Symkowick, Partnerships Officer of CRS in Sacramento to share some of how and why CRS, guided by Catholic teaching, is attempting to increase the awareness of global poverty and establish a sense of solidarity with the poor in the rest of the world. CRS has a number of offerings and opportunities for university communities. The Board agreed to invite Mr. Symkowick to the March meeting in order to discuss possible collaboration.

Brother Charles Hilken's Reading Group

Carole Swain announced Brother Charles Hilken's special offering to lead a discussion on the book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* by Jacques Dupuis, SJ. There are two options for participation: Mondays, March 19, March 26, April 16, 11:30am -12:30pm; and Thursdays, March 22, March 29, April 12, 12:30pm -1:30pm. The groups will meet in the Faculty Development Conference Room. Members are invited and call RSVP to Sally Jamison.

Announcements

Brother Donald read a 'thank you' note from Jed Friedman who participated in the NOLA Jan Term trip. Shane Keane offered his own thanks to the Board for the Institute grant to support the trip. Students who participated will make a presentation to the Board at the March meeting.

Janet Luce had a reading distributed to the group entitled, "The Catholic University as Promise and Project," by Michael J. Buckley, SJ.

Brother Donald adjourned the meeting at 4:40pm

Respectfully submitted,

Brother Donald Mansir, FSC
Chair