



**Catholic Campus Ministry
Annual Assessment Report
Academic Year: 2013-2014**

Name of Department: Catholic Campus Ministry

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Abstract

This project engaged Catholic Latino students from Tepeyac (this group was created this year in CCM for Latino students to explore issues of identity, spirituality and development), as well as other Latino students from other Latino organizations or classes. The purpose of the project was to identify ways in which these students might better understand and relate to their cultural and spiritual identities. This was done intentionally, as the students were brought together regularly to relate to peers who are facing similar developmental challenges – all engaged in a safe space created for this purpose.

The methodology consisted of a focus group (TEPEYAC) and personal interviews with different students, including from a class called “Looking for God in Latin America” (winter quarter) and also student leaders from other Latino student organizations on campus (including DALE, BAILE, MECHA, and Latino fraternities and sororities). This assessment was grounded in a constructivist theoretical framework, which assumes that knowledge is mutually constructed between the person conducting the assessment project and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Constructivism was appropriate for this assessment project because we sought to understand, through dialogue with the participants, how they made meaning of their spiritual and cultural identities. To understand the participants' meaning making, this assessment project used narrative inquiry methodology. The purpose of narrative inquiry is to understand the wholeness of human experience through data collected in the form of stories; stories offer revealing glimpses into inner selves (Lieblich et al.; Riessman, 2002). Stories not only reveal, but also shape identity because identity stories are "told, revised, and retold throughout life. We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell."

Through these methods it was found that there was clear growth in understanding and embracing spiritual/cultural identities among Latino students, especially those who consistently participate in the focus group. An unexpected result of this project is that Catholic Latino students found common ground and unifying principles with Latino students from others in different campus Latino organizations. The result of this experience was the creation, for the first time, of a coalition of DePaul Latino organizations. Consequently, 15 to 20 Latino leaders met

consistently every week during the spring quarter to consolidate the coalition and plan for next year – all done in the best spirit and legacy of our Vincentian tradition.

Introduction and Context

Latinos are the largest minority at DePaul: 14% of our students (3,412) self-identify as Latinos during the academic year 2013-14. Most of them come from very traditional Catholic families. There is an articulated disconnect for many of these students between how they live there spiritual/religious life on campus and their religious identity at home. Many of these students, like any other college student, struggle to make meaning spiritually/religiously and feel conflicted with the idea of taking distance from religious values learned at home.

During this year CCM has worked diligently to help Latino students find a “home” and a connection within University Ministry (UMIN), CCM and Student Affairs. Slowly, some of these students are becoming more engaged in CCM and have found that from CCM they can project and connect themselves to other student communities at DePaul. In a recent survey published by Mission and Values 37% of our students identify themselves as Catholic; among them a large group are also Latino students.

Throughout the 2013-14 academic year CCM worked closely with a group of Latino student, providing spiritual education, activities, service and reflection opportunities with the purpose of answering one question:

How do Latino students who have participated in the Catholic Campus Ministry understand and/or articulate their own faith in relationship to their cultural and religious identity?” Related to this broad question is a secondary question of interest: *“What are the factors which contribute to or hinder their understanding of faith and their connection to the Vincentian legacy?”*

Intentional spiritual and Vincentian programming with Latino students not only provided a means for answering the assessment questions, but it also supported two CCM learning outcomes:

- (1) Students who participate in CCM programming will contribute to programs or causes and reflect on their own spirituality, which will continue to support their values.*
- (2) By participating in CCM programming, students will develop a competent and meaningful understanding of the Catholic Vincentian tradition that will allow them to participate in a faith community.*

As Latino students became more engaged in CCM experiences and values, they also came to learn more about their Catholic tradition and faith. This entire project was dedicated to helping students commit to spirituality, identity and development. In addition, the project helped Latino students who may have viewed the office of CCM with some skepticism to recognize the unifying places within a very diverse community and to feel entirely welcome in it.

Both of the CCM learning outcomes are in keeping with the mission of DePaul University and also reflected in the Division for Student Affairs mission statement and specifically relate to the Division of Student Affairs Learning Outcome:

Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will demonstrate an understanding of their own and others' faith and spirituality; in their actions, behavior and decisions, they will demonstrate values central to the Vincentian mission of DePaul.

The assessment question proposed advanced the core values and mission of CCM, UMIN, Student Affairs and especially the DePaul Vision 2018 goals 3 "Strengthen our Catholic and Vincentian Identity" and 4 "Foster Diversity and Inclusion". In this sense the DePaul's Vision 2018 became the foundation upon which the assessment question was developed.

The CCM assessment project also provided co-curricular learning opportunities around Catholicism, Vincentianism, and Diversity and it was geared toward a very specific group of students, both in keeping with the same Vision 2018 objective. The co-curricular emphasis of Vision 2018 is also a significant component of the Division for Student Affairs Strategic Plan.

The theory behind the assessment question was two-fold:

(1) Latino students who did engage in CCM spiritual formation and celebration can discover that the struggles they experience in making meaning spiritually and religiously are shared by other Latino and Non-Latino peers in similar ways. These three elements intersect in creating these struggles: development – culture – and personal identity formation.

(2) Embracing an intentional community of faith development would encourage and empower Latino students to intentionally reflect on issues of identity, spirituality and development and to reconnect with family values from a new perspective.

These two theories are a part of the common wisdom of those doing ministry with Latino young adults in the USA. This was one of the main conclusions of the 1st Encuentro of Latino Young Adult Ministry in Notre Dame in 2006. In South Bend, 1,680 Latino youth gathered together with bishops, priests religious and lay people ministering to them to explore the present and the future of Catholic Latinos in the USA.¹ Many of these youth were college students. The answer to CCM's assessment question proved both parts of the theory to be correct.

Methodology

The assessment question was specifically oriented toward Latino Catholics at DePaul. This group consists of students from different countries and cultural experiences. Three different kinds of students were a part of this project: (1) Tepeyac Students (this was the focus group. 17 unique students participated in different meetings. Seven of these students were consistent during the entire year. (2) 19 Latino students from the class "Looking for God in Latino America" were a part of personal interviews and a survey. Many of these students had 2-3 interviews. (3) Finally 11 student leaders from other Latino organizations (including DALE, BAILE, MECHA, and Latino fraternities and sororities) were also part of personal interviews. A total of 47 students actively participated in this assessment project. Each participant in this assessment self-identified as Catholic or Spiritual.

¹ National Catholic Network of Latino Young Adult Ministry - Conclusions (Notre Dame 2006).

All participants in the focus group shared thoughts through journaling and group reflections and assisted in planning and implementing large group events of a Catholic-Vincentian nature. Seven students regularly continued to learn and reflect upon the Catholic identity through weekly meetings held throughout the year. Four of the key leaders were very crucial in creating the coalition of Latino organizations and led the works of the 15-20 leaders of this coalition during the spring quarter.

Participants were informed of the purpose of the project and that the results of the project would be shared with the larger University Ministry community and Student Affairs. Participation was optional and all who chose to participate in the assessment project and successive activities gave verbal consent prior to participation in the project and its activities. At the end of the project a short survey was sent to 17 of the most active students in the project and 14 submitted responses. All students who participated in this project were asked if their comments/reflections might be quoted in the assessment report if necessary. In total, 45 of the 47 students gave permission to use their comments as necessary, which we have honored in what is shared in this report.

Questions used for all 3 groups of students:

- 1. How do you identify yourself culturally and spiritually? Have you ever had any issues with your identity or introducing yourself to others?*
- 2. How was your religious experience at home? How is this experience different from how you live or not your faith today?*
- 3. What does it mean for you to be Latino and Catholic?*
- 4. How do you make meaning? What dimensions of the Vincentian tradition can you incorporate in the process of making meaning in life?*

This is a sample of a Tepeyac (focus group) Reflection/Journaling, Story Telling meeting:

These meetings occurred every week during the entire year. The meetings were both a space of formation and a time for story telling (constructivism). Many meetings were a series of conversations on the Catholic traditions and the essential role of the Vincentian tradition in the Catholic identity. Others were used for storytelling. Students were invited to prepare their stories and to find the meaning of these stories in how they make meaning. Students were encouraged to identify common elements in their different stories

The agenda for meetings were simple: (1) Common Prayer (2) Silence and personal reflection. (3) Journaling (4) Invitation to share, personal thoughts, with the entire group.

What is the most significant thing you learned about the Catholic Tradition?

With which Catholic tradition do you most connect? Why?

With which Vincentian value do you most resonate? Why?

How might you live out Catholic and Vincentian values in your own life?

Below are findings from the Tepeyac students - identified criteria for Catholic-Vincentian events:

- (1) Activities that promote spiritual growth and community building

- (2) Activities that promote Vincentian solidarity with underprivileged students of communities
- (3) Activities that promote/support immigration reform and undocumented students.

Short Survey Questions:

This survey was sent to 17 students from the 3 cohort groups (7 from Tepeyac, 5 from the class, and 5 from coalition) who remained most engaged and active in the majority of CCM activities related to the assessment project.

Instructions: Please take a moment to answer each of the following questions. Please be honest in your reflections. Answer quickly, providing your inner reaction.

As you reflect upon your engagement with CCM programs, retreats, worship, ministry and other events or activities throughout the past three quarters, what was the most useful/meaningful thing you've learned about "being Latino, Catholic and Vincentian?"

Name your greatest "Catholic and/or Vincentian" accomplishment of this year.

What question remains at the top in your mind about what it means to be a Latino Catholic and Vincentian?

What might you do beyond this year to live out Catholic-Vincentian values?

Findings/Results and Discussion

Advancement Towards Learning Outcome:

Learning Outcome	Number of Students Assessed	Number of Students with Acceptable or Better Performance
<i>By participating in CCM programming, students will develop a competent and meaningful understanding of the Catholic Vincentian tradition that will allow them to participate in a faith community.</i>	23 students	18 students

Below summarizes the findings from the assessment project – from 47 students engaged in the project. This assessment provided insights and information indicating that students from Latino Catholic faith come to DePaul:

- Without an understanding of the Catholic and Vincentian identity of the institution
- Lacking interest in or desire to engage in the Catholic life on campus because home was “too Catholic” or not Catholic at all...
- Willing and able to learn about and embrace their Latino Catholic and Vincentian identities.

- Struggling with issues of identity, development and spirituality as most students do.
- Without an understanding that the religious identity of Latino students is not that different from other cultural groups on campus.
- Initially thinking that they were not welcomed in CCM or that CCM was boring.
- Trying to move from the traditional religiosity of their families to understand/call themselves spiritual people and are very interested in service to underprivileged individuals and communities.²
- With no clear understanding of the connection between ethnic and religious identity in Latino students.
- Perceiving threats to their identity during the first year in college.
- With family and cultural backgrounds are conflicting elements for students to identify who they are in a new environment like college when they feel they belong to a minority.
- With Latino identity not being important for some Latino students.

The project also found that students who engage in an intentional Catholic community, reflection/prayer, and service tend to:

- Integrate with confidence Catholic and Vincentian identity into their lives, beliefs, spiritual formation and involvement.
- Recognize how Catholicism and Vincentianism can bring students, from all cultural backgrounds, together for a common good
- Find language to express who they are culturally and religiously.
- Generate effective channels of solidarity inside and outside of DePaul with underprivileged students and communities.
- Identify other Latino organizations and coordinate programs for connection and service together as a whole
- Discover that there is a positive impact in self-confidence and identity for students who engage in DePaul students' communities where they feel welcomed and engaged.

This project left some challenges for our CCM office:

- Attentiveness to cultural diversity is essential if we really want to serve our very diverse community of students, faculty and staff.
- Defining Catholic and Vincentian identity is not possible if is not made from a cultural perspective.
- Our students struggle daily with issues of personal identity, spirituality and development. This is a changing generation and we need to be attentive to see where they are leading us in our ministerial work.
- Students, who have the opportunity to participate in an intentional community of faith that meets regularly, naturally find language and confidence to pray, reflect and express their spiritual/religious identity.

² This finding is in tune with the Mission and Values survey conducted this year (2013-14). Many of our students identify themselves as spiritual but non-religious. A large group thinks that service to the poor is essential in their lives.

The following quotes from Latino CCM students who participated in the assessment give emphasis to assessment indications:

“I’m not afraid to introduce myself, I am however nervous of making a bad first impression. I do not introduce myself as Mexican with confidence. I also try to present myself as respectful/professional as can be because there are always stereotypes towards Hispanic teenagers. I don’t feel lower than the other “American” students, I feel higher in the sense that I know the feeling of struggle and I understand consequences. I understand that Mexicans are stereotyped a lot especially when it comes to talking about religious or cultural scenarios. That’s why I am respectful, I keep my manners, as well as I keep my morals by staying calm and confident of whom I am.”

“This was very different when I came to DePaul 4 years ago. There were rarely any Latinos to be seen and it did intimidate me at first but I’ve become more comfortable in this setting as a first generation student.”

“I second guess myself when introducing who I am, both to Latinos and Americans. I feel as if because I am Latino, I am not expected to be in the Academic circle of University educated people. On the other hand I feel disconnected from the majority of first generation immigrants because I am not just to work, build a house, buy a car and go back. Religious identity is important to me, but I was never invited to be a part of a religious community like this one.”

“I think being an immigrant in the U.S. will make you feel different at some point even if nobody is bothering you about it. There will be something that you don’t share with Americans or that you see how your family looks so different from American families. But at the end it is just a matter of time for you to adapt, find your place and feel part of the group. Catholic Faith has not a role in how I identify myself. For me it is important to serve other though.”

“I did not have any idea of what Vincentian means till I came to DePaul. I really like very much understanding what Vincentian means and feeling invited to be a part of this tradition. I do feel uncomfortable introducing myself as “Hispanic.” However I do feel a sense of inferiority because I am “first generation.” For example when speaking in class I am always a bit hesitant /nervous. I guess this could come from a sense of low self-esteem, from a belief that I might not know as much as the others. I believe that this is not an uncommon feeling among other first generation students. This group is important for me to feel more comfortable with my own cultural and spiritual identity.”

“Prayer is a very important part of my life. As a catholic, I believe prayer is strongest when praying the rosary. I always pray this in continuity with my family. I feel it is very important to pray so you can keep a close relationship with God. I always pray at church and especially on my own whenever I have many thoughts on my mind.”

“I link spirituality to family. My mother taught me how to believe and how to pray and helped me to memorize versus and psalms. It is an integral part of my life. God is someone to talk to in times of hardship, in times of need, when one needs empowerment, peace, guidance and or

wisdom. I pray with my family, on my own or at church. I pray the rosary on my commute and pray short prayers during the day. I also do Taize and listen to music with meaning.”

“My identity is different than other Latinos here in the United States. I have a hard time identifying myself with other Latinos because I don’t look Latino. This feeling has lowered my self-esteem. I’ve tried my best to surround myself with a diverse group of friends but at times I feel let down when Latino group of friends approach me (it is common that same race people group because they feel safe and welcomed). As a first generation student here, I feel a mixed sense of esteem. Here in Chicago I’m exposed to more Latinos but professors have mixed expectations of me. Those who know my ethnicity and that English is my second language don’t challenge me the way professors who don’t know my history do.”

Probably the most pleasant surprises of this ongoing assessment project were the following:

- (1) We identified Latino students who are willing to serve as leaders (Peer Ministers) in our CCM office.
- (2) A new tradition (group of students) was created: TEPEYAC, a community of Latino students who want to reflect and discuss on issues of identity, spirituality, and development. This group enriches the diverse face of CCM.
- (3) For the first time in a long time, DePaul has an official *Coalition of Latino Organizations*. This coalition is going to be very instrumental in the years to come for Latino students to feel at home at DePaul while they develop common programs around Latino Cultural Identity, Immigration Reform, Undocumented Students and Issues related to the Larger Latino Community, including lack of opportunities, LGBTQA Latinos, poverty, faith, violence, women issues, etc.
- (4) We identified possibilities to connect with other Latino organizations in the city and across campuses of other universities in the Chicago area.
- (5) We (CCM) provided hospitality to ESFOR -the Chicago Archdiocesan School of Formation for Latino Young Adult Ministry. Tepeyac students were involved in hospitality and many of our students played an active role in several of the meetings of this group of 50 ESFOR leaders coming from many parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- (6) Several of our students (15) participated in a city-wide Latino college student gathering at Loyola University to promote immigration reform.
- (7) Latino students on campus want to help first year Latino students during the process of adjustment.
- (8) Self-identity is essential to be a meaningful member of a large diverse community like DePaul.

If we consider the large growing Latino community on campus (3,412 students) we are very aware that the sample group was limited in size. Another limitation came through attrition. As students came toward the end of the academic year, fewer were engaged in the TEPEYAC project. This means that this is an ongoing project and that we need to work hard with the new leaders we have. In contrast the group of leaders from the coalition grew consistently throughout the final quarter – there was a lot of energy around this project.

Even though the scope and extent of the assessment was limited, the results from this small sampling provided useful insights and implications regarding Catholic - Vincentian education in a ministerial/co-curricular way.

For all the information that was collected from students, only themes related to the original assessment questions were analyzed. Many other rich and significant themes emerged, but given the scope of this project, they were not considered.

Implications

Catholic Campus Ministry, in its 2013-14 goals, called for intentional outreach to Latino students. The main purpose of this assessment project was to evaluate the kind of impact we can have among this community of students. We already begin to develop a curriculum for Latino ministerial formation of college students, based on the many great things that happened this year and the many challenges/opportunities we were able to identify. This assessment project stresses the importance of developing and consistently utilizing this curriculum.

This assessment project provides helpful insights so that the Division of Student Affairs, UMIN (CCM) and the larger university community have an opportunity to explore and address the many implications of calling ourselves a *diverse* community and taking seriously Vision 2018.

The outreach and attention to the needs of minorities in all fields of development (including the spiritual realm) is the only way for us to keep our core values - DIVERSE-CATHOLIC-VINCENTIAN - with honesty and integrity. As more students from all backgrounds learn more about the meanings behind the core value/s of our institution and understand the imperatives of the "Vincentian Way", they will discover commonalities among themselves and develop leadership skills and values that will empower them to become socially responsible leaders from a Vincentian perspective.

Note: IRB approval for this project was not sought.

The results for this project will be shared within Latino students engaged in CCM in 2014-15, CCM and UMIN staff, and the broader Division of Student Affairs. A pastoral reflection on the significance of DIVERSITY among all our communities will be shared with UMIN students and staff. Students will be encouraged to use their knowledge and the results of the project to teach, inspire and encourage new Latino students inside and outside CCM. Many of the Tepeyac activities rooted in this project will continue to improve and develop the Latino presence and identity within CCM-UMIN.

Attachment: Sample Agenda and Conclusions from a TEPEYAC Meeting:

TEPEYAC
October 1, 2013

11 participants

1. Prayer - all
2. Icebreaker – introductions for new students - (Student)
3. Events – responsibilities – (Student)
4. Reflection: struggles for Latino immigrants in building an identity in US... the role of spirituality (Advisor: Fr Memo)
5. Meeting this Thursday with Latino Leaders of the Archdiocese of Chicago _Hospitality – (Student)

Findings/Themes/Significant Questions from Discussion:

- Who are the Latinos, the Hispanos? How did they get here, what are their customs and beliefs? In what ways are they so similar and yet different from non-Latinos and also from each other? Are there really any Latinos or Hispanos in the U.S., or are there only Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Cubans, etc., lumped together for bureaucratic or political reasons but really very different.
- And why "Latinos" "Hispanos," "ibero-americanos," "hispanics," "Hispanic, Hispano, Latin or Ibero Americans?" Why can't they get together and agree on one name, one identity? Aren't they just being complicated to give us problems? And why do they claim to be different from Irish, Italian, Jewish or Afro-Americans? Why don't they learn English?
- The answers aren't easy in part because the questions may be misguided. And this problem has roots in the diversity and complexity of the Latino world. Many come from urban situations in the big cities. Others identify with temporal migrations and with life in small Texas towns. Some have had a history in what is today considered U.S. territory, for several generations; others arrived in the 1920s, the 40s, or a few weeks ago, from a poor region of Mexico, from a revolutionary struggle in Central America, from arid or tropical climates, from Afro- or Indian-Latin American areas or cultures, etc. Some in fact are blacker, more Indian, whiter than others, and there is no necessary connection between color or physical traits and cultural characteristics. Above all, to speak of los hispanos in the U.S. is to speak about key sectors of the work force, sectors that participated in industrial development and now participate with difficulty in the post industrial process.
- Latinos have so well served as a low paid work force in the railroads, the fields, restaurants and the wartime frontlines. Of course many Latinos work with their hands, and there are more and more who are professionals or business people; so we may ask if we are dealing with a people or various peoples with certain things in common that relate them to each other, but with such clear differences that we won-der, again, if we should really be able to lump them together under one rubric.
- Finally, Latinos may turn the issue around and ask, who are the Americans? When Latinos say, hey, I'm American, they may mean, look, I was born here or I have papers. But they can also be reminding us of the fact that everyone in the new world is indeed American--that the word American doesn't only designate the people of (or "made in") the U.S.A.--and that in fact those who are often called "Americans" (and who have unwittingly or not appropriated the name of the entire continent) are also the only people in the Americas without a name that is totally and uncontestedly theirs. Then we come to the effort to find a name for all the Latin Americans living in the U.S.--those of the U.S. of Spanish language, culture or name. Again, who are they? What is the role of spirituality in all the development of this NEW (Latinos in America...Latin-Americans) identity?