

# Nursing Students' Learning About Pastoral Agency

**To what extent are DePaul's Master's level nursing students who participated in the end of life presentation able to articulate basic understanding of pastoral agency as it directly relates to nursing care particularly around end of life issues?**

## Learning Outcome

Students who participate in the Office of Religious Diversity educational programming will apply what they learned to their daily life and world understanding.

## Methodology

- Data for this project was collected through a post-presentation survey that qualitatively measured learning outcomes around students' basic understanding of pastoral agency in nursing.
- 129 students enrolled in 5 nursing classes during the fall and winter quarters were invited to complete an anonymous learning survey immediately following the class presentation.
- Data was analyzed by coding student responses to questions relative to the curricular content presented in the classroom.

## Demographics

- Of 129 students invited to participate, 128 students (99%) completed the learning survey.
- All participants were Master's level students in their first quarter of classes in the School of Nursing program.

## Key Findings

- 125 students (98%) were able to demonstrate a basic understanding of pastoral agency in nursing around issues of death and dying and within nursing in general.
- Interest in interfaith or cultural issues was notable with 38 students (29%) referring to this topic and 28 students (22%) indicating interest in gleaning more on the topic.
- 32 students (30%) specifically indicated pastoral agency would not only be an important part of their work around end of life issues, but within all aspects of their nursing.

## Plan of Action

- Share assessment project results with Office of Mission and Values and key faculty and staff within the School of Nursing
- In conjunction with School of Nursing and Mission and Values, develop a plan for offering pastoral agency training to DePaul's nursing students by fall of 2017
- Engage in conversations with Office of Mission and Values and School of Nursing faculty and staff to discuss ways in which pastoral agency might be taught to all nursing students, perhaps through a seminar program

“[The presentation] made me feel a sense of ‘call’ and ‘service’ to help people during these times [of dealing with death and dying].”

“Nursing is not all about academics. The real part of nursing is about being there for the people and helping them with everything, not just the physical.”