
Lasallian Assessment: Charism and the University

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PROLOGUE

Now is a key moment in the history of American Lasallian universities.¹ This document, Prologue and Paradigm, attempts to seize this moment by offering a view of the Catholic, Lasallian university in terms that are comprehensive, specific, and flexible. The number of Brothers continues to decline while their average age continues to rise. Evidence suggests that the percentage of Catholic faculty at Catholic universities is declining.² Lasallian universities face considerable challenges and none greater than how to successfully compete with other universities, many of which possess much greater resources, while not only retaining but enhancing their Lasallian identities. Indeed, we believe that enhancing our Lasallian identities will make us more competitive because students and parents will find attractive an approach to education based on Lasallian values.³ Lasallian assessment is a response to these developments and a paradigm for integrating Lasallian values with those of the liberal arts and the university. Its goal is to create a truly integrated Lasallian university.

Despite significant challenges the seven Lasallian universities in the United States are vibrant and increasingly diverse. With regard to the last point, one American Lasallian university includes the following among its institutional goals:

- to recruit and maintain a distinguished faculty with diverse educational and ethnic backgrounds as guided by the principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action and sustained through programs of development, research assistance, and retraining.
- to recruit and retain qualified students, while at the same time striving to attract a more diverse student body: socially, geographically, economically, and racially⁴

The Catholic, Lasallian university has been mainstreamed, pulled by the inexorable forces of the competitive world of American higher education to appear more and more like

¹ Throughout this document we shall use the term university in its most generic meaning as referring to all tertiary institutions whether they use the term university or college in their title.

² The recent debate on this topic can be sampled in Wilson D. Miscamble, "The Faculty 'Problem,'" *America* (September 10, 2007), 26ff, <http://proquest.umi.com.xxproxy.smumn.edu/pqdweb?index=4&did=1335395001&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1192203322&clientId=39448>, accessed on October 6, 2007 and John T. McGreevy, "Catholic Enough? Religious Identity at Notre Dame," http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id_article=2007, accessed on October 6, 2007.

³ The reader will note the use of Lasallian in both the singular and plural. We believe that all American Lasallian universities share a common understanding of the Lasallian charism yet express that understanding in diverse institutional cultures.

⁴ <http://www.lasalle.edu/mission>.

everyone else. This shift is motivated by a desire to survive in an increasingly de-confessionalized culture but at the potential cost of a loss of identity.

Three Challenges:

The Catholic, Lasallian university faces three specific yet interrelated challenges:

1. The Challenge of Formation.
2. The Challenge of History.
3. The Challenge of the University.

The challenge of formation is a challenge of vocation. Originally, all teachers at the Christian Schools were vowed religious. It is evidence of the innovative genius of the Founder, John Baptist de La Salle, that he established a society of lay brothers who were also professional teachers. Teaching in community continues to be central to the Lasallian charism.

Historically, the Brothers often recruited their best students as future teachers. But, as noted above, Catholic, Lasallian universities have become more diverse and more professionalized, and these more diverse faculties have become more and more distanced from the Lasallian charism for various reasons. Lasallian universities have, of course, recognized this and have instituted formation programs, especially for new faculty. But the challenge of formation is a very formidable one. We believe that the model of Lasallian assessment herein proposed is a practical response to this challenge, because we offer concrete and specific ways to develop our identities as Lasallian teachers.

The Acts of the 43rd General Chapter (in the year 2000, Circular 447) issued guidelines for improved formation of Lasallian Partners consisting of four parts: spirituality, pedagogy, accompaniment, and evaluation. Our document does not attempt to address all the issues connected to Lasallian formation but it does create direction. With regard to spirituality, Circular 447 specifically states that "...Lasallian spirituality is the central element unifying all formation processes."⁵ Our document attempts to include spiritual elements into its definition of Lasallian assessment, but we acknowledge that this essential characteristic of Lasallian formation needs a great deal more attention than we give it here. With regard to accompaniment, we have written this document in close collaboration with select Brothers of the Christian Schools, who have given us invaluable advice and guidance, and with foundational documents and studies written by the Brothers. With regard to evaluation, we have attempted to translate intellectual concepts into experiential practices that can be assessed. Indeed, this is the fundamental intention of our document. With regard to pedagogy, we are a committee of faculty, writing principally for faculty, and we are focused on a Lasallian approach to education that can be identified and assessed.

The challenge of history is a challenge of education. No one suggests that all methods of teaching developed by the Brothers during the foundational period should be used today.⁶ But

⁵ Accessed at www.lasalle.org on October 12, 2007.

⁶ Yves Poutet, FSC. *The Origins and Characteristics of Lasallian Pedagogy*, trans. Julian Watson et al. Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1997, 187-189.

clearly some are as relevant today as they were three hundred years ago. We have incorporated some of these relevant pedagogies, albeit not systematically, into our document. At Saint Mary's University of Minnesota we have consciously embraced the shift from a teaching paradigm to a learning one, as described in the seminal article by Barr and Tagg.⁷ As Thomas A. Angelo has noted, this shift has brought to the forefront of academe the assessment of student learning outcomes.⁸ In this document we suggest that we should also assess outcomes that are specifically Lasallian.

The challenge of the university is a challenge of institution. What is a Lasallian university?⁹ Our answer is an institution that is truly a university and is truly Lasallian. This is more complicated than it may at first seem. In an important paper, Luke Salm, FSC, Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College, concludes,

In sum, we might say that the evidence we have concerning the policies and practices established by John Baptist de La Salle at the origins of the Institute of the Brothers yields very little to support an educational theory based on the liberal arts, understood as a curriculum devoted to liberal learning for its own sake. Rather, the opposite seems to be the case.¹⁰

Brother Luke here refers to the practical and vocational purpose of the Christian Schools established for uneducated French boys, living in poverty, who had no realistic chance to attend a university. Similarly, Brother Luke asks if we have actually accomplished the integration of the Lasallian tradition and the liberal arts. We agree with Brother Luke that what we have accomplished resembles much more a “peaceful coexistence” than true integration. In this document we suggest some ways in which this integration might be fostered.



A Response to These Challenges: Lasallian Assessment:

Lasallian assessment is a means of integrating the Lasallian charism with the purpose of an American Catholic university through the evaluation of Lasallian goals and objectives. Assessment of learning outcomes has become one of the principal endeavors of American universities because of the widespread acceptance of the learning paradigm. According to Polomba and Banta, assessment can be defined as “...the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student

⁷ Robert B. Barr and John Tagg, “From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education,” *Change*, 27 (November/December 1995), 13-25.

⁸ Thomas A. Angelo, “Doing Assessment as if Learning Matters Most,” *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin* (May 1999). Unpaginated, http://www.aacsb.edu/resource_centers/assessment/Angelo-TA-Reprint.asp, accessed on October 12, 2007.

⁹ This question has been explored in Richard Tristano, “Two Parts, One Whole?: The Lasallian University,” unpublished paper, February 26, 2005.

¹⁰ “The Lasallian Tradition and the Liberal Arts.” Presented at Saint Mary's College of California, April 7, 1988, 19.

learning and development.”¹¹ They also suggest that assessment “...is intimately linked to an institution’s mission and learning goals.”¹² It follows, then, that assessment at a Lasallian university ought to evaluate its Lasallian mission and that mission ought to be expressed in the curriculum and how it is delivered. The question is what distinguishes Lasallian assessment from what we might call academic assessment, the more generic form of assessment practiced by most universities? The answer is that Lasallian assessment differs in both *what* it assesses and *how* it assesses.

Palomba and Banta define assessment in terms of programs:

The overriding purpose of assessment is to understand how educational programs are working and to determine whether they are contributing to student growth and development. Hence, **the ultimate emphasis of assessment is on programs rather than on individual students.** (emphasis added) At its most useful, assessment provides information about students as a group – information that can be aggregated across sections of a single course and is meaningful across courses.¹³

In contrast to Palomba and Banta, we believe that Lasallian assessment emphasizes the assessment of individual students, though not to the exclusion of program assessment. Lasallian assessment is guided by four authentic Lasallian characteristics:

1. a personalized knowledge of each student;
2. a warm reciprocal relationship between student and teacher;
3. the theological imperative;
4. integration.¹⁴

The first two obviously require knowledge of students as individuals. One can neither personalize nor have a relationship with someone who is unknown as a person. The third provides a theological basis for this knowledge: that each student possesses intrinsic dignity as a child of God. For example, in *Meditation* 80.3 De la Salle writes:

You are under the obligation to instruct the children of the poor. You should, consequently, cultivate a very special tenderness for them and procure their spiritual welfare as far as you will be able, considering them as members of Jesus Christ and his well-beloved. Faith, which should animate you, should make you honor Jesus Christ in their persons, and make you prefer them to the wealthiest children on earth because they are the living images of Jesus Christ our divine Master.

The fourth, integration, explains the relationship between Lasallian and academic assessments. According to Brother Yves Poutet “self emulation” is the Lasallian idea of assessing students on

¹¹ C. Polomba and T. Banta *Assessment Essentials, Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 4.

¹² Polomba and Banta, 3.

¹³ Palomba and Banta, 5.

¹⁴ These are discussed at greater length in Richard Tristano, “Lasallian Assessment: In the Footsteps of the Founder or a Badly-Put Question?,” a presentation made at Manhattan College on September 27, 2007, 12-14.

their progress as measured against themselves.¹⁵ In turn this is based on a principle articulated in *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*,

The faults children like these [less gifted] commit ordinarily include not following the lesson, not reading well, not remembering or reciting catechism well, and learning nothing or very little. What is beyond their capacity must not be required of them. Neither should teachers let them become discouraged but should manage somehow to advance them, encourage them from time to time, and be satisfied with the little progress that they make.¹⁶

Lasallian assessment fully integrates into itself academic assessment because the Lasallian university is just as much a university as any other and is dedicated to the principles of a liberal education. So, academic assessment emphasizes assessment of programs for the sake of their improvement but also, and as a consequence, for the purpose of assuring that each student learns well. Lasallian assessment, however, creates a greater balance in placing as much emphasis on assessing individual students by “self-emulation” as well as programs.

Lasallian assessment also adds to *what* academic assessment normally examines. For example, assessment of values is essential to Lasallian assessment. According to Hutchings and Marchese transferable liberal learning skills include not only critical thinking and effective writing but also value awareness.¹⁷ Yet, according to Hirsch and Schneider, “... colleges and universities - in practice - do not generally educate for morality as intentionally or proficiently as they do for intellectual skills.” This has the effect of “... [o]ur students [having] all the knowledge and skills they need to act, but [lacking] the focus or the motivation or the profound caring to direct the use of their skills.”¹⁸ Finally, Mark Anderson suggests that assessment of values is possible and best achieved in general education, especially core programs.¹⁹ This is because general education programs have traditionally emphasized “...providing broad exposure to the skills and attitudes that help graduates function in society, rather than on developing specialized knowledge about particular disciplines....”²⁰ The notion of functioning in society is at the heart of Lasallian education. *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, written by De La Salle and used as a classroom reader, proposes Christian love as the foundation of cultural refinement and civility as the key to a well-ordered society.²¹

The Christian Schools have always emphasized not only learning but also the inculcation of values proper to a Christian life. This is most strongly stated by De La Salle in the very first

¹⁵ Poutet, 160.

¹⁶ John Baptist de La Salle, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, trans. F. de La Fontainerie and Richard Arandez, FSC, ed. William Mann, FSC, (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996), 149.

¹⁷ Pat Hutchings, Ted Marchese, “Watching Assessment: Questions, Stories, Prospects,” *Change*, 22 (Sept./Oct. 1990), Issue 5: 12-38. Accessed online September 20, 2007 and without pagination.

¹⁸ Richard H. Hersh and Carol Geary Schneider, “Fostering Personal and Social Responsibility on College and University Campuses,” *Liberal Education*, 91 (Summer/Fall 2005), 10.

¹⁹ Mark W. Anderson, “Should Improving Student Thinking Include Altering Student Values? The Role of General Education.” *About Campus*, 12 (July/August 2007), 23.

²⁰ Polomba and Banta, 239.

²¹ John Baptist de La Salle, *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, trans. Richard Arandez, FSC and ed. by Gregory Wright, FSC, (Romeoville: Lasallian Publications, 1990), xvii.

Meditation for the Time of Retreat where he writes, “God wills not only that all come to the knowledge of truth, but also that all be saved.” (193.3) Therefore, Lasallian universities place a special significance on value awareness that goes beyond those found in the literature cited above. For example, Lasallian universities have a responsibility to expose students to Christian values. This is clearly demonstrated by the earlier practice in the Christian Schools of collecting data in registers, especially the *Register of the Good and Bad Qualities of Students*, which evaluated the student’s dispositions, both as a person and toward learning.²² The academic literature suggests that assessment of value awareness is best placed in general education programs. We acknowledge that most Lasallian universities have already created specifically Lasallian components in general education, where Lasallian assessment may be best conducted. In reference back to the challenge of the university, we also acknowledge that the university is much more comfortable and practiced at assessing knowledge and skills than values. We hope that this document will encourage Lasallian universities to consider assessing values much more systematically.²³



LASALLIAN ASSESSMENT: A PARADIGM FOR LASALLIAN UNIVERSITIES

Following this Prologue is a paradigm, a model for concretely conceptualizing a Lasallian university. In it we make two assumptions. The first is that a Lasallian university is truly a university, truly Lasallian, and therefore truly Catholic. We also assume that all three of these characteristics must be integrated and implemented, if we are serious about the Lasallian nature of our universities.²⁴ Therefore, the reader will notice that we begin with the modern American university in the guise of the “Multiversity” and proceed to the Catholic university before discussing the Lasallian one. Similarly, our goals and objectives are largely integrated. Separating Lasallian goals and objectives from academic ones most often has the result of minimizing the former as non-academic and non-essential. This is not intentional but unfortunately gives the impression that Lasallian outcomes are extrinsic and optional at Lasallian universities.

²² *Conduct*, 241-242 and Tristano, “In the Footsteps, 10.”

²³ We offer this definition: Values are the priorities individuals and societies attach to certain beliefs, experiences, and objects, in deciding how they shall live and what they shall treasure. Therefore, they are not mere cognitive states of mind but an active positioning of self in regard to a whole-person decision, readiness, or disposition to act in certain ways. Values are moral, religious, intellectual, aesthetic, political, economic, and social. They relate self to the world. Ultimately, values are part of our identity and determine the way we put our lives together. Therefore, the mission of a Catholic, Lasallian university is to offer students a clear sense of Catholic Lasallian values, with an invitation to embrace them in forming their identity and living their lives. Freely adapted from Brian V. Hill, “Values Education in Schools, Issues and Challenges,”

http://www.valueseducation.edu.au/verve/resources/ve_acsa_paper.pdf and Richard Morrill, *Teaching Values in College*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980).

²⁴ For a visual depiction of the relationship between the university, Catholicism, and “Lasallian,” see the Appendix: Diagram of the Lasallian University.

Our second assumption is that our Lasallian identity can be expressed in academic language without distorting the charism on which it is based. The evidence for this assumption comes from De La Salle himself and the Brothers who write in the very first paragraph of the *Conduct* of a method that anticipates a modern assessment strategy:

Nothing has been added that has not been thoroughly deliberated and well tested, nothing of which the advantages and disadvantages have not been weighed and, as far as possible, of which the good or bad consequences have not been foreseen.”²⁵

The fruition of the Lasallian charism is first and foremost one of education. The good and bad consequences referred to are learning outcomes that are entirely compatible with the practice of assessment.

The paradigm is arranged much more in a bulleted style than a narrative one. We did this for two reasons. The first was to keep it brief. The second and more important motivation was to express our ideas in simple, broad statements. The reader will note that we discuss the university (through the “Multiversity”) and Catholic higher education in a single page, respectively. Obviously one cannot fully discuss either in such limited space. Our intention was not to write their history but to provide a context for conceptualizing the Lasallian university. In addition, we do not attack the “Multiversity” so much as to recognize its attraction and power and that its identity is quite different from the Lasallian one, which retains an intimacy traceable to the early Christian Schools themselves. Similarly, we recognize that our treatment of the Catholic university may be somewhat ideal because it too is subject to the pressures to become more a “Multiversity.” As an instrument of assessment, the document is itself idealistic in setting out a vision and goals to strive towards.

When we address Lasallian assessment itself we begin with seven broad goals that we suggest apply to all Lasallian universities. We then break them down into thirty-three more specific objectives. Finally, we clarify these objectives with exemplars. Often, we took these exemplars from our own experience; therefore, they are not normative but suggestive. All these things are designed to produce a document that is flexible and could be adapted to the culture of each Lasallian university. We realize that our document is ambitious, and in no way do we mean to imply that each university and the individuals within it must pursue all of the thirty-three objectives. Nor do we in any way intend that all the objectives must be realized to be considered a truly Lasallian university. Rather, we invite each institution to pursue as many of the objectives as desired and practical. The reader will also note that it takes us some time to get to the Lasallian university. We decided that a slow, methodical approach that took the reader from the American university to Catholic higher education, and then to the Lasallian university was necessary before we could venture into the meaning and practice of Lasallian assessment.

We acknowledge that the portrait of Lasallian assessment presented here, with very few exceptions, is academic and classroom-centered. We also acknowledge that the full meaning of a Lasallian education extends to residence halls, cafeterias, athletic programs and the like and has always done so in the Christian Schools. But this is a first effort and we limit ourselves to

²⁵ *Conduct*, 45.

academics because that is what we know best and because this is merely a starting point in a complex process.

Finally, assessment is often thought of in terms of accountability. Lasallian assessment is an effort to hold Lasallian universities accountable to apply the same standards and resources to the teaching and learning of Catholic, Lasallian values as to disciplinary and liberal learning and skill development. We do this because it is our duty as Lasallian educators.



Completed in Winona, Minnesota on November 21, 2007, the date on which in 1691 John Baptist de La Salle, Nicolas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin professed the “heroic vow” to remain together in the society even if it meant living on bread alone.

LASALLIAN ASSESSMENT: A PARADIGM FOR LASALLIAN UNIVERSITIES

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1.1 The University

1.1.1 Source: Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* 5th ed., (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2001).

1.1.2 The Idea of the Multiversity

Evoking John Henry Cardinal Newman, the modern university plays out the eternal battle between liberal knowledge and “useful” knowledge; between knowledge for its own sake and service to industrial society; between teaching and research; between the undergraduate college and the graduate school; between the liberal arts and agricultural and professional schools.* The result is the multiversity, not one community but several:

A community, like the medieval communities of masters and students, should have common interests; in the multiversity they are quite varied, even conflicting. A community should have a soul, a single animating principle; the multiversity

* The similarities between the thought of De la Salle and Newman are worth exploring, particularly the centrality of the teacher-student relationship and the importance of community to learning. See Newman, *The Idea of a University*, (New York, Longmans, Green, 1947).

has several – some of them quite good, although there is much debate on which souls really deserve salvation. (14-15)

The Idea of a Multiversity” is a city of infinite variety. Some get lost in the city; some rise to the top within it; most fashion their lives within one of its many subcultures. There is less sense of community than in the village but also less sense of confinement. There is less sense of purpose than within the town but there are more ways to excel. There are more refuges of anonymity. (31)

The multiversity is a confusing place for the student. He has problems of establishing his identity and sense of security within it. But it offers him a vast range of choices, enough literally to stagger the mind. In this range of choices he encounters the opportunities and the dilemmas of freedom. The casualty rate is high. The walking wounded are many. 31-32

1.1.3 While the multiversity has many positives, especially abundant resources and a wide range of choice, negative effects of the multiversity include:

- Loss of soul
- Less sense of community
- Anonymity
- Confusion and lack of identity
- Disorientation and woundedness

The multiversity is fundamentally a secular institution which, in its sheer size and diversity, asserts substantial influence on Catholic Lasallian universities. In emulating the multiversity, Catholic, Lasallian universities risk losing their unique identity.

2.1 The Catholic University

2.1.1 Sources:

- *Ex Corde Ecclesiae, Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities* 15 August 1990.
- Mark Roche, *The Intellectual Appeal of Catholicism and the Idea of a Catholic University*” (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003).

2.1.2 The Catholic university is subject to all the pressures of the multiversity, many of which are beneficial. Secular research universities tend to be larger than Catholic universities. Catholic universities can play a special role in addressing some of the negative effects of the multiversity.

2.1.3 According to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* the Catholic university has these special characteristics:

- a) The integration of knowledge. (16 = par. in *Ex Corde*)
- b) The dialogue between faith and reason in every branch of learning. (17)
- c) A concern for the ethical and moral implications of knowledge. (18)

With these special effects, particularly on students:

- d) Service to church and society. (31-37)
- e) Integrating faith with life. (38-40)
- f) The dialogue between faith and culture. (43-47)
- g) The evangelization of cultures marked by secularism. (48-49)

2.1.4 Mark Roche interprets these characteristics and effects in terms of:

- **The unity of knowledge.** The Catholic university emphasizes the unity and integration of knowledge; the multiversity emphasizes the variety of knowledge.
- **Universalism.** The Catholic university understands the individual person as one formed within and through community; the multiversity sees the individual as separately constituted and emphasizes individual freedom.
- **A sacramental vision.** The Catholic university presupposes the belief that God works in and through all aspects of created reality and, as such, the university is a medium for God's work in the world; the multiversity has no single common vision but exists for the pursuit of many interests, some even conflicting.
- **Tradition and reason.** The Catholic university emphasizes the value of tradition, as interpreted by the Church, stability, and the great transcendental values of truth, beauty, and goodness; the multiversity emphasizes opportunities and constant innovation.

2.1.5 The Catholic university offers to students an awareness of:

- The identity and the dignity of all human beings.
- Belonging to a local and universal community.
- The integration of Catholic faith with life.
- Their identity and purpose in service to church and society.
- A curriculum that cultivates meaningful and integrative thought across all disciplines.

3.1 The Lasallian University

3.1.1 Sources:

- Luke Salm, FSC, "Is the Lasallian University an Oxymoron?" (1988a)
- Luke Salm, FSC., "The Lasallian Tradition and the Liberal Arts." (1988b)
- Miguel A. Campos, FSC, "Fidelity to the Movement of the Spirit: Criteria for Discernment." (2006)
- Edgard Hengemüle, FSC, "The Lasallian University," *Reflections on Lasallian Higher Education* ed. Craig Franz, FSC., (Moraga, CA: International Association of Lasallian Universities), 2006, 46-56.
- Louis de Thomasis, FSC, "Lasallian Higher Education: A Quest Filled with Paradoxical and Ambiguous Shades of Reality," *Ibid*, 57-69.

3.1.2 The Lasallian university embodies all of the characteristics of the Catholic university with special emphases or gifts derived from the Lasallian charism.

3.1.3 There are significant obstacles to defining a Lasallian university because the Lasallian tradition has been distinct from the liberal arts throughout most of its history. For example, the Lasallian tradition has emphasized the practical value of education rather than learning for its own sake. (Salm, 1988a, 19). On the other hand, the entry of the Brothers into higher education in the United States was altogether Lasallian in that it was very much within the tradition of responding to needs – of the immigrant church.

3.1.4 The key to overcoming the challenges of integrating the university tradition with the Lasallian one is the creation of an institution that is truly Lasallian and is therefore rooted in the mission of offering an education that is readily available, practical, and with an emphasis on the whole human person, while also truly liberal and therefore rooted in the mission to promote the ability to think for oneself, and the value of learning for its own sake. (Salm 1988a, 23)

3.1.5 In sum, a Lasallian university encompasses the characteristics of the liberal arts, a Catholic university, and fundamental Lasallian values that can be assessed. Our method is "...to try to find in the tradition inherited from De La Salle certain qualities that enhance rather than conflict with the total university experience." (Salm, 1998a, 3)

3.1.6 A Lasallian university:

1. Reflects its Catholic and university identities.
2. Reflects the charism of John Baptist de La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
3. Provides a holistic, values-based education that integrates Catholic thought and tradition with various other traditions and cultures.
4. Fosters relationships in community, together and by association, with particular attention to the relationship between teacher and student.
5. Develops an identity in students rooted in faith and zeal.
6. Responds to specific and changing educational needs especially focused on individual students.
7. Measures its effectiveness by how it addresses the religious, social, political, and economic needs of those less fortunate, especially the young.

4.1 Lasallian Assessment

4.1.1 Sources:

- John Wilcox and Irene King, *Enhancing Religious Identity, Best Practices from Catholic Campuses*, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000).
- Richard Morrill, *Teaching Values in College*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980).
- Donald J. Kirby, *Ambitious Dreams, The Values Program at Le Moyne College*, (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1990).
- Catherine Palomba and Trudy Banta, *Assessment Essentials*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).
- Richard H. Hersh and Carol Geary Schneider, "Fostering Personal and Social Responsibility on College and University Campuses," *Liberal Education*, 91 (Summer/Fall 2005), 6-13.

- Mark W. Anderson, “Should Improving Student Thinking Include Altering Student Values? The Role of General Education.” *About Campus*, 12 (July/August 2007), 23-25.

4.1.2 A Lasallian, Catholic university assesses its mission based on criteria derived from its three interdependent identities. Therefore, Lasallian assessment includes the following:

4.1.3 A Lasallian university reflects both its university and Catholic identities.

Assessment:

1. Students develop an appreciation of knowledge and a dedication to lifelong learning.
Examples:
 - a. In a Senior exit survey, students report on the evolution of their appreciation of and their thirst for knowledge.
 - b. Students report on both the reading and the learning activities that they engage in that are NOT connected to a specific course
2. Students demonstrate the capacity to think critically.
Example: Teachers use a common rubric to evaluate students on critical thinking in all majors.
3. Students exhibit open-mindedness.
Example: The University surveys student attitudes on race, gender, sexual preference, and economic privilege.
4. Students develop skills in the spoken and written word.
Example: The University uses a common rubric to measure student progress in courses coded for writing-intensive and oral communication skills.
5. Students are dedicated to service in both church and society.
Example: The university assesses opportunities for service, including individual volunteer experiences and campus-sponsored Mission trips.
6. Faculty focus on the moral and ethical implications of teaching.
Example: Each major or program demonstrates how assignments in its syllabus connect knowledge with justice.
7. Faculty emphasize the relationship between the sacred and the secular.
Example: Faculty incorporate in their teaching the importance of the sacred in culture.
8. Faculty develop a curriculum that integrates faith and knowledge.
Example: Courses across the curriculum are assessed for the exposure they give to issues of faith in connection with their content area, e.g. ethics and science; ethics and business.

4.1.4 A Lasallian university reflects the charism of John Baptist de La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Assessment:

1. The university community knows the life and vision of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.
Example: Faculty, staff, and students read and discuss key Lasallian texts.
2. The university has significant relationships with the Province in which it is located and with the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
Example: Faculty and staff members serve on Provincial and Institute committees.
3. Resident Christian Brothers have an integral role in the life of the university community.
Examples:
 - a. Faculty, staff, and students have formal and informal contacts with Christian Brothers on a regular basis.
 - b. Students and alumni associate with groups such as Lasallian collegians and Young Lasallians.
4. Faculty, staff, and administrators participate in Lasallian formation programs.
Example: The university encourages and funds formation opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators.

4.1.5 A Lasallian university provides a holistic, values-based education that integrates Catholic thought and tradition with other traditions and cultures.

Assessment:

1. The university develops and offers a holistic curriculum.
Example: The curriculum includes courses built across disciplines.
2. The university prepares faculty to address issues of integrating values into various disciplines.
Example: The office of Faculty Development offers regular learning opportunities on how to assess values.
3. Faculty develop strategies that connect values to course content.
Examples:
 - a. Faculty pre- and post-test student values and attitudes toward environmental issues.
 - b. Faculty evaluate student values on world poverty.
4. The curriculum connects subject matter with ethical principles.
Example: A science course considers both the science and ethics of decisions that affect life.
5. The curriculum reflects values from a global perspective.
Example: A course examines the role of women from different global perspectives.

6. The Alumni office surveys the effect of the university experience on life decisions after graduation.

Example: The Alumni office conducts surveys on life decisions after graduation and regularly reports data.

4.1.6 A Lasallian university fosters relationships in community, together and by association, with particular attention to the relationship between teacher and student.

Assessment:

1. Faculty create and assess cooperative learning techniques.

Examples:

- a. Faculty develop rubrics that measure process as well as content.
- b. Faculty link content outcomes to cooperative group tasks by the end of the course.

2. The university assesses the Lasallian nature of the teacher-student relationship.

Examples:

- a. Faculty analyze course evaluations to respond to student needs.
- b. Faculty devise and assess methods to promote student-teacher interaction.
- c. The university analyzes student responses on the senior survey and makes changes resulting from the data.

3. The university emphasizes collegiality in all decision-making processes.

Examples:

- a. Faculty and staff gather information from all interested parties before making decisions.
- b. Faculty monitor discussions with one another and with students; they model respectful dialogue that honors all opinions.

4.1.7 A Lasallian university develops an identity in students rooted in faith and zeal.

Assessment:

1. The university promotes the moral development of its students, integrating knowledge with responsible action.

Examples:

- a. The university organizes university-wide faculty seminars on moral development.
- b. Teachers assess student moral development in a particular class.

2. The university assesses the personal dispositions of students to both learning and ethical living.

Examples:

- a. Faculty develop a dispositions rubric.
- b. Teachers use double-entry journaling in class to document both scholarly connections and individual dispositional responses to the learning.

3. The university develops the students' abilities to make ethical decisions and to act ethically.

Examples:

- a. Teachers correlate pedagogical techniques with ethical outcomes, such as class assignments that go beyond fact and include ethical applications.
 - b. Teachers ask students to choose an ethical alternative and to explain its implications.
4. Students report on their identity development.
Example: Students are challenged to understand and assess their identity development, as well as their own role in its formation.

4.1.8 A Lasallian university responds to specific and changing educational needs, especially focused on individual students.

Assessment:

1. Faculty and staff identify and respond to student needs.

Examples:

- a. Faculty ask their students to provide mid-term feedback on how the students are doing in the course and what can help them be more successful by the end of the term.
- b. The University responds to student needs as conveyed in a freshmen survey and makes decisions for improvement based on those data.
- c. The Academic Skills Center, the Writing Center, the Wellness Center, and the Student Development staff identify and respond to specific needs in their areas.
- d. Students in the freshman seminar report on their attitudes and behavior with respect to time management and other study skills, as well as on alcohol and drug use and other social issues.

2. Faculty create programs to assure individual student success.

Examples:

- a. The university provides student-to-student tutoring sessions in higher-level courses.
- b. Lecture notes, PowerPoint slide presentations, and other documents are posted on web-based sites to help students review major content and concepts.

3. Faculty assess the progress of individual students both individually and as a group.

Examples:

- a. Faculty gather data about prior knowledge and skills (via pretests or interest inventories) and measure student progress against those benchmarks.
- b. Faculty gather common errors in writing (writing-intensive class) and distribute them to students for further work.
- c. Faculty meet with individual students to establish personal goals and to monitor progress towards them.

4. Faculty monitor student motivation and engagement.

Examples:

- a. Faculty who teach a course for majors evaluate students for dispositional issues.
- b. Faculty respond to student feedback when appropriate, including survey responses, informal comments, body language in class, and course attendance.
- c. Faculty observe student engagement in class and try out pedagogical strategies to increase their active engagement.

4.1.9 A Lasallian university measures its effectiveness by how it addresses the religious, social, political, and economic needs of those less fortunate, especially the young.

Assessment:

1. The university creates and supports programs that enable students with financial need to enroll.

Example: Scholarship programs, such as the Brother James Miller Scholarship for Access, enable students with financial need to attend the University.

2. The university develops a system of welcoming and supporting students who are materially disadvantaged, recognizing especially the value of their cultural diversity.

Examples:

a. The university holds events on campus celebrating diverse cultures.

b. The university establishes programs to monitor and promote the success of students who are disadvantaged.

3. The university incorporates issues of social justice within the curriculum.

Example: The university creates courses that explore themes on poverty through various disciplinary perspectives.

4. The university promotes solidarity with people who are less fortunate, with the goal of shaping a just global society

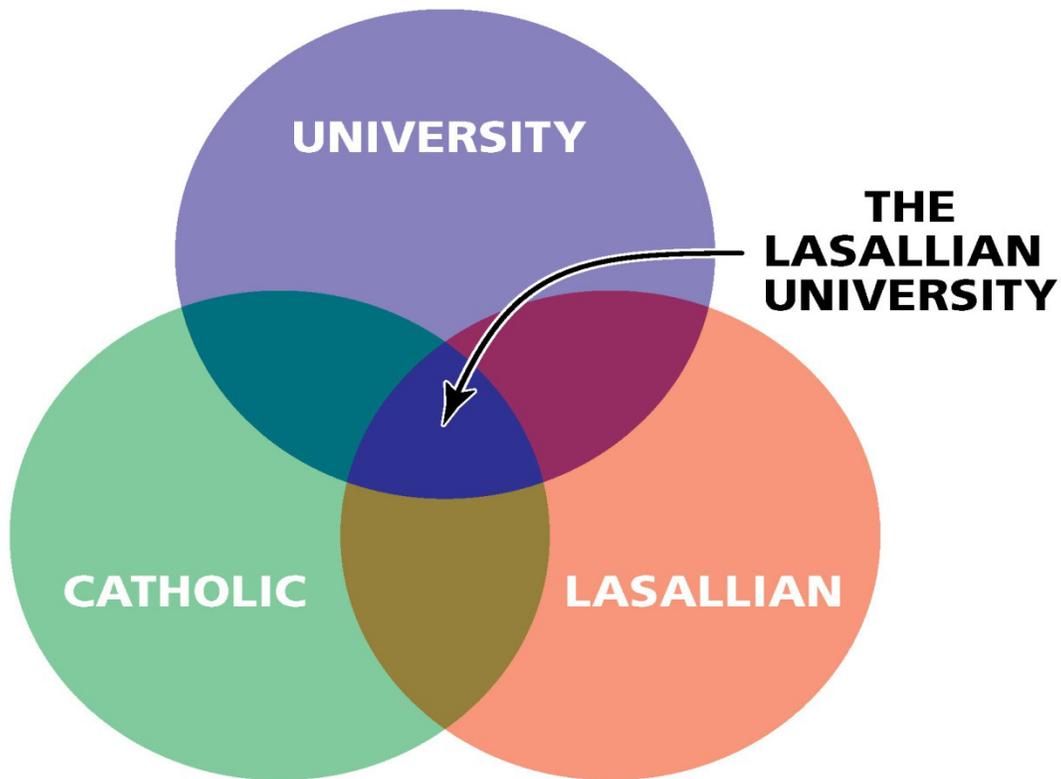
Examples:

a. The curriculum includes a political science, sociology, education, or history course that explores the origins and the effects of poverty.

b. The university provides service-learning opportunities to aid less-fortunate people and communities; it assesses the effect of the experience on students' lives.

APPENDIX: DIAGRAM OF THE LASALLIAN UNIVERSITY

An Integrated View of the Catholic Lasallian University



AFTERWORD

Having the opportunity to present the contents of this paper, I would especially like to thank the participants of the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU), Rome Program and its director Dr. John Wilcox for their valuable suggestions to improve the document. I have decided to respond to these suggestions not by revising the text but, rather, by adding this afterword. Some of the very best suggestions may take years to implement and so I have decided to let this paper stand as is, recognizing that it has many weaknesses that require improvement. But that will best come in the form of the next generation of thinking about the Lasallian university. Meanwhile, here are responses to a few of the points made.

(1) The document makes use of the term *charism*, often in contradistinction to university. This was an effort to identify the two origins of the Lasallian university: the university itself and the work of the founder John Baptist de La Salle. The term has many definitions of considerable complexity. We use it in a simple, non-technical way. Perhaps the words of Brother John Johnston, the late former superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, would offer the most practical definition of *charism*:

Three hundred-twenty years ago, God confided a special mission to John Baptist de La Salle, the mission of providing a human and Christian education especially to poor children and youth. We would say today that God bestowed on De La Salle a *charism*. He shared that *charism* with the first Brothers who then began the process of transmitting it to successive generations of Brothers. Living this *charism* as Brothers of the Christian Schools is the original way.... Nevertheless, we understand more clearly than before that one can live this *charism* in diverse ways. With great joy we see that the *charism* of John Baptist de La Salle inspires not only the Brothers but "a great number of other educators." (Rule, 20). We recognize that the gift God granted him for the service of young people goes "beyond the confines of the Institute he founded...." The *charism* of John Baptist de La Salle is essentially apostolic and, therefore, oriented toward mission. That mission is the human and Christian education of youth, poor youth especially. ("The Lasallian School in Europe Today and Tomorrow," 10 March 2000.)

Therefore, we use *charism* to mean the gift given to the Founder by the Holy Spirit and handed down to the Brothers; that it is identified with the mission to educate the young, especially poor youth; and that it can be lived in various ways. We believe that the comprehensiveness of the document suggests some of those ways.

(2) Suggestions that the document is ideal and too comprehensive are well-taken. It is necessary to demonstrate a way to implement the document, including a sample instrument and/or a rubric. This will take time and will be done either in the form of an appendix or in a completely separate document. Meanwhile, it is useful to have a document that is comprehensive and ideal as a starting point.

(3) Continued calls to apply the document to the university outside the classroom, to student life and other parts of the university, to hiring, promotion, and tenure practices need to be answered.

There are developments underway that are exploring ways to apply some of the ideas presented to other aspects of academic life.

(4) Nothing is more central to the Lasallian charism than teaching. John Baptist de La Salle is the patron of Christian teachers. There are numerous references to Lasallian pedagogy in the document. Perhaps consideration should have been given to a clearer emphasis and more systematic treatment of this important subject. This too we hope will come in time.

(5) The document is clearly placed in the context of the seven Lasallian universities in the United States. This context is not normative but cultural. It would be very useful to the Lasallian mission to clarify just what pertains to the Lasallian charism and what pertains to the various cultures within which it is practiced, for example, asking what is Lasallian and what is American, French, or Mexican? This would serve well Brother John Johnston's insight that the charism can live in diverse ways.

So, while not at all perfect, the document seems to have already provoked deeper thinking about the nature and mission of the Lasallian university and provided an agenda for the future. (R.T. 21 August 2008)