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## **Momentum, Exemplars, and Future Research Themes: A Report on the Third Annual Symposium on Lasallian Research**

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This White Paper offers a description and summary of the Third Annual Symposium on Lasallian Research held September 25-27, 2014 on the Twin Cities Campus of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. The paper begins with an overview of symposium participation. It then proceeds to offer reportage of the three main addresses (Brother William Mann, Rebecca Proehl, and Thomas Clasen), breakout sessions, and additional symposium conversations.

Attendance at the 2014 Symposium was double that of the previous year. The 123 participants included representatives from all five Lasallian colleges and universities in the United States, as well as from Lasallian institutions in 10 other countries. International attendees hailed from Andora, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, and Spain. Other types of Lasallian ministries were also present including child care agencies, high schools, middle schools, District offices, and the regional (RELAN) office. Two participants were from outside of the Lasallian network.

The boost in symposium attendance can be attributed in part to the promotion of the International Association of Lasallian Universities' (IALU) Research Agenda, a document fairly broadly disseminated (e.g., in *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 4.2, and via the IALU website), but not yet much discussed. While participants were keen to engage the IALU research agenda of education and learning innovations, there was also interest in and excitement about the role of Lasallian researchers in the areas of food, nutrition, and health, and in sustainability and the environment. These three IALU research themes were evident throughout the symposium, beginning with Brother William Mann's welcome.

### **Welcome Address: Brother William Mann**

Brother William Mann, the President of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, formally welcomed the participants to the Third Symposium on Lasallian Research on Sunday, September 28, after the Opening Mass. Brother William acknowledged the gathering momentum that characterizes the flourishing interest in Lasallian research and can be verified by considering how much has happened since the first two symposia were convened. The first symposium in

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The authorship team for this report is comprised of three participants in the Third Annual Symposium on Lasallian Research, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota – Twin Cities Campus, Minneapolis, MN, September 25 – 27, 2014: John M. Crawford, FSC, Ph.D. is assistant professor of religion at La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA; Timothy Gossen, Ed.D., is Associate Vice President for Mission at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota; and Jennifer M. Pigza, Ph.D., is Associate Director of the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA) at Saint Mary's College of California, Moraga, CA.

2012 attracted about 40 participants. This third symposium was attended by over 120. One of the active participants in the first two symposia, Brother Robert Schieler, is now the new Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Brother William observed that “concrete research partnerships are being forged,” and this may be seen in the present gathering that represented a confluence of four different groupings: 1. The Action Plan of the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU); 2. The Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN); 3. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools Lasallian Research and Resources Service centered at the Generalate in Rome; and the work of the Rectors of Lasallian Universities in Mexico and the Presidents of the Lasallian Colleges and Universities in the USA (LACUP). Brother William made explicit reference to the Research Agenda proposed by IALU which identified three areas of emphasis: 1. food, nutrition, and health; 2. sustainability and the environment, and 3. education and learning innovations. Those agenda items alone accounted for greater participation in this symposium by a larger number of international participants and by practitioners of the sciences. There is much synergy over other items of interest including the creation of a Lasallian Research Network, exploration around topics of Academic Mobility and Exchanges, and the potential of distance learning and online education to further a Lasallian research agenda.

Brother William noted that the recently concluded 45<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (2014) advanced several significant topics for consideration that have direct import on the work of Lasallian research. The Chapter renewed the commitment of the worldwide Lasallian family to the defense of children. Capitulants created a declaration of Lasallian pedagogical practices in the twenty-first century. The Chapter called for ongoing work related to pastoral ministry and catechesis with “sensitivity, openness, and dialogue” respecting the diversity and multiple religious contexts experienced within Lasallian ministries worldwide. The Chapter requested IALU’s assistance with four areas of concern: 1. Preparing teacher and student leaders; 2. Providing for effective formation programs within the Districts of the Institute; 3. Addressing the need for higher education in emerging sectors of the Institute; and, 4. Addressing the evangelization of students. Some of these items which the General Chapter identified had been addressed to the Chapter from the 2013 2<sup>nd</sup> International Assembly which had called for an updated declaration about Lasallian pedagogy and the need to mentor formators who will be able to form and accompany Lasallians in the future. Brother William’s welcome concluded with the observation that based upon the Lasallian association which has “the human person as its core, and society’s poor as its focus” we face an imperative to action. “Now is the time to forge research partnerships.”

### **Keynote Address #1: “The Transformative Nature of Lasallian Research”**

*Rebecca Proehl, Ph.D., Professor, Kalmanovitz School of Education, Saint Mary’s College of California*

Dr. Rebecca Proehl presented the first keynote address to the symposium late in the afternoon of September 28, 2014. Her report centered upon research related to a particular group of “catalyst schools,” namely public charter schools that are grounded in a religious tradition and heritage. Her study examined the experiences of Lasallian-inspired public charter schools in Chicago, Illinois. This movement toward catalyst schools which are funded publicly and reflect the social and cultural orientation of religious traditions without explicitly offering religious instruction during the school day has been tried in a variety of cities in the United States, including Washington, DC, and Miami, Florida. Dr. Proehl’s study included two K-8 schools in the

Chicago group: Howland and Circle Rock Elementary Schools and Maria High School, former all-girl Catholic High School that became a K-12 charter school. Proehl's research investigated the aims of such catalyst schools. In theory, these schools continue to reflect the values and practices found in Catholic schools. The schools build hope within economically poor communities. The combination of rigor and relationships at the core of these catalyst schools ideally result in greater academic achievement and encourage more students to pursue a college preparatory curriculum and to advance to higher education. Dr. Proehl framed the premise of her study about merging the cultures between Chicago Public Schools and Lasallian-inspired schooling by raising the key question: Can you transfer Catholic ethos into public schools?

Dr. Proehl reported that the research methodology employed in the study was developed and implemented by one doctor of education and two doctoral students. They conducted forty interviews, systematic observations in twenty classrooms, several school-wide observations or organizational culture and operations, and conducted an extensive document review. The study generated seven themes. The most significant theme is that "Mission is key." Constituents in each of the schools in the study demonstrated "passionate commitment" to the mission of these schools and were very familiar with their respective "Mission Statements." Less clear, however, was the articulation of a specifically Lasallian mission within these catalyst schools. Dr. Proehl suggested that this deficit is better addressed with an articulation of "intentional Lasallian values." The companion to mission was the role of leadership. Strong leaders articulate and reflect the mission of the school. Another observation relates to the paradox of structure. Catholic and Lasallian schools are traditionally lean on bureaucracy; public schools are not. The fact that these schools were new models of religiously-valued educational institutions that must relate to a complex governmental agency like the public school administration in a major city requires great effort to work toward balance. Looming over the whole project is the "specter of the Chicago Public Schools."

Dr. Proehl reported that there are gains and losses to be accounted for in this new model of publicly funded religiously-valued schooling. On the positive side, the catalyst schools are intentionally attempting to provide education for the students in service to their families and the wider community which celebrates deep, respectful, encouraging values. The schools themselves are larger than the San Miguel Schooling model, so more students are served without the onerous task of school administrators to do constant fundraising. The Lasallian-based catalyst schools provide welcoming and nurturing places. Gospel values are strong. The schools emphasize both the right of students to be treated with dignity and those of teachers to teach with dignity. The schools foster positive relationships and intentionally reach out to build school-wide communities. Although religious instruction is not part of the direct curriculum at present, the schools try to provide an atmosphere open to religion as a topic in academic discourse and as an aspect of lived reality for many students, families, and staff.

Proehl's research revealed a number of challenges that the catalyst schools face. The "specter" of public schooling lurks in places like the high-stakes pressure these schools face regarding standardized testing goals. If the schools do not achieve expected levels of testing results, their charters are in jeopardy. Similarly, the schools face voluminous compliance requirements. Administrators must devote much of their time to meeting these expectations. They feel frustration about the never-ending issues of budgeting and financings when dealing with "the

system.” They also admit to a perceived negative impact from the culture of public education. Though the schools may be modeling a fresh methodology, they also face an insidious public school culture that devalues change.

Dr. Proehl indicated that her work has had a positive reception by the people in the catalyst schools. They appreciate the observations which allow them to rededicate to the Lasallian mission and its values. Among the anticipated changes are the creation of mission committees in each of the schools, charged to develop and articulate mission effective standards, including standards that explicitly address the values of faith and zeal. The catalyst schools acknowledge a need to focus on integrating the story of John Baptist de La Salle into their own mission stories. These needs will require new publications and resources to inform people about De La Salle, the Lasallian Educational Mission, and its values, particularly as they apply to a new model of charter/catalyst schools. In all, Dr. Proehl’s keynote address provided symposium participants with great insights about an emerging educational reality for Lasallian research. This launch of a nationwide movement of faith-inspired, publicly supported schools grounded in Lasallian pedagogy represents a new field of interest and opportunity for educational service for today.

### **Keynote Address #2: “The Global Water and Sanitation Scandal: A Challenge for Lasallian Universities”**

*Thomas F. Clasen, J.D., Ph.D. Professor, Water, Sanitation, and Health at the University of London’s School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Rose Salamone Gangarosa Chair of Sanitation and Safe Water at Emory University in Atlanta.*

Dr. Thomas Clasen presented the second keynote address to the symposium in the morning of September 29, 2014. His report centered upon research related to water and sanitation and the work he has done around the world to ensure individuals have access to both. Tom gave statistics illustrating how many people do not have safe water to drink, explained how safe water and sanitation are primary ways to prevent diarrheal diseases, and described how the rural poor around the world are most at risk, especially children.

Research consistently demonstrates that water contamination often begins at the point of collection and without filtration products, storage becomes an issue and consumption is dangerous. Throughout the world non-government agencies as well as governments are trying to improve conditions and prevent waterborne diseases. Research, Tom reported, has been helpful to improve lives and move policy to assist the most vulnerable amongst us. The Lasallian community can assist with this issue and should. Lasallian schools are present in most of the countries with disease burden due to lack of clean water and sanitation. Because the issue usually disproportionately affects children, women and girls, and the poor, he also stated the “solutions have much to do with education of the young and vulnerable – the people that are the focus of the Lasallian Educational Mission.”

Tom challenged the attendees and reminded them that lack of clean water and sanitation directly hurts the education of a child. If a child is sick because of the lack of resources such as these, they are not only negatively impacting their health but also their education because they are unable to attend school. Lasallian institutions of higher education have a major advantage in assisting the world because they are geographically widely dispersed and have access to some of the areas most in need. Lasallian colleges and universities also have a mass quantity of students

most of whom are able and willing to collect data and study these topics. These students do not have to be “traditional” science majors but could be students in business, sociology, government, psychology, engineering, etc., who are interested in research, can look at the issue of water and sanitation through the lens of their own discipline, or can work with others to take a multidisciplinary approach with the desire to make a contribution to the field.

Dr. Clasen indicated this type of research not only assists the local communities and improves the health of the individuals living there, it also profoundly changes the student’s outlook on life and positively transforms them. The Lasallian network is geared to collaborate and if a multidisciplinary approach is taken our ministries can work together to actually contribute greatly to the world. Tom closed with challenging Lasallian colleges and universities to research and teach about water and sanitation because doing so “provides an extraordinary opportunity to practice our values of education, poverty alleviation, and environmental stewardship.”

**Education Practitioner Panel: “A Call for Research Assistance from RELAN Ministries”**

*Chris Fay, President, Lasallian Association of Secondary School Chief Administrators and Principal, Christian Brothers High School, Memphis, TN; Phil Pusateri, Chairperson, Midwest District Lasallian Mission Council, Principal, De La Salle Middle School, St. Louis, MO; Jolleen Wagner, Chair, RELAN Young Lasallians Committee, Director of Lasallian Volunteers; and Bill Wolff, Mission Executive Council, District of Eastern North America, Executive Director, La Salle School, Albany, NY.*

This panel of practitioners, from various ministries and experiences, shared their perspectives on the needs they see for research at their Lasallian ministries, including: technology use in Lasallian high schools, the outcomes and significance of a year of service among Lasallian Volunteers, how various ministries are serving students who are in need of financial, academic, and spiritual assistance, and the increase of Lasallian middle schools becoming charter schools. Panelists each had a few minutes to present; however, most of the time was devoted for attendees to ask questions of the panel. A significant component of the panel presentation was learning about each panelist’s interpretation of why and how various topics ought to be studied. It was helpful for researchers from Lasallian higher education to hear and consider together the diverse needs and desires of the entire Lasallian network.

**Breakout Sessions**

Twenty-five high quality breakout sessions were held throughout Monday and Tuesday representing current Lasallian research. Presenters represented a number of different ministries as well as a variety of different topics. Each presentation related to one of the three IALU research themes (1. Food, Nutrition, and Health, 2. Sustainability and the Environment, and 3. Education and Learning Innovations). Even though the majority of the presentations fell under the theme of “Education and Learning Innovations” each of the themes were represented. Five timeslots for sessions allowed attendees to choose an assortment of presentations.

The following comprehensive list represents the titles and researchers of the breakout sessions organized by the three IALU research themes:

**Theme 1: Food, Nutrition and Health (e.g. biochemistry of food products, science and engineering of potable water, cancer risks and cure associated with food, economic impact studies of nutrition programs in schools)**

- “Microeconomics and Households: An Innovative Teaching Approach to Engaging Students in Food, Nutrition, Health, and Environmental Sustainability,” Michael Ratajczyk, M.A., Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Winona, MN, USA.
- “Food Safety Management Standards: How to Enhance their Implementation in SME’s,” Zam-Zam Abdirhman, Ph.D., and Loïc Sauvée, Ph.D., Institut Polytechnique LaSalle, Beauvais, France.
- “Risk Factors in Health of New Registered Students at University of La Salle Pachuca,” Juan Bautista Garcia, Margarita Bautista Garcia, Laura Elizabeth Bautista Garcia, and Lucia Acosta Garcia, Universidad La Salle, Pachuca, Mexico.
- “Food Security in Togo’s Sorghum Industry: Agricultural Innovation, Territorial Governance, Social and Cultural Acceptance,” Ceapraz Lucian, Ph.D., Abalo Chango, Ph.D., Catherine Delhoume, Ph.D., Institut Polytechnique LaSalle, Beauvais, France.
- “The Effect of Processing on the Nutritional Composition of Cocoa-Derived Foods,” Frédéric J. Tessier, Ph.D., Julián Londoño, Ph.D., Céline Niquet-Léridon, Ph.D., Philippe Jacolot, Ph.D., and Larbi Rhazi, Ph.D., Institut Polytechnique LaSalle, Beauvais, France, and Universitaria Lasallista de Medellin, Colombia.
- “Development of Healthy Squash (Cucurbita Maxima Cuchesne) Based Sauces,” Marichou Seniorin, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.

**Theme 2: Sustainability and the Environment (e.g. dealing with climate change, eco-design of houses and urban centers, industrial ecology, air and water quality monitoring in mega-cities)**

- “Issue-Framing and Personal Garbage Production: Prevention vs. Detection,” Emily Hause, Ph.D., Saint Mary’s College of California, Moraga, CA, USA.
- “Results Not Services: Presenting Funders with What They Want to Buy,” Camela Steinke, Ph.D. and Bill Wolff, AFSC, La Salle School, Albany, NY, USA.
- “Responsible Stewardship from a Scientist’s Perspective: Grappling with Synthesis and Change in a Skeptical World,” William Price, Ph.D., La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

**Theme 3: Education and Learning Innovations (e.g. access to education among the poor, impact of use of tablets for learning math and science, coping mechanisms among children with learning disabilities, predicting the academic emotions of young learners based on physiological signals)**

- “Implementing and Sustaining Engaged Pedagogy,” Jennifer M. Pigza, Ph.D., Saint Mary’s College of California, Moraga, CA, USA.
- “History, Community and Argument: Lasallian Education from a MacIntyrean Perspective,” Jordan Copeland, Ph.D., La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA, USA.
- “Ethical Dilemmas Faced by Adult Students in the Workplace and the Implications for Curriculum,” Richard Callaway, Ph.D. and Bob McElrath, M.B.A., Ed.D., Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA.
- “Assessing the Impact of the International Summer Leadership Program for Lasallian Students: Three Years in the Making,” Carlos Coelho, Ph.D., Centro Universitário La Salle-Unilasalle, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- “Lasallian Community Appreciation and Reflective Study: The Benildean Experience,” Christine Joy A. Ballada and Alejandro S. Ibañez, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, Manila, Philippines.
- “Psychophysiological Methods for Assessment of Education and Learning Innovations,” Jeffery Sable, Ph.D., Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN, USA.
- “Lasallian Pedagogy: Who We Are Is What We Teach,” Brother John M. Crawford, FSC, Ph.D., La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA, USA.
- “De La Salle, Accounting, and You: What if John Baptist de La Salle Taught Your Accounting Class?” Derek Jackson, CPA, M.B.A., Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Winona, MN, USA.
- “Outcome-based Education: A Welcome Development in the College of Humanities and Sciences of De La Salle Health Sciences Institute,” Juanito Cabanias, Ph.D., De La Salle Health Sciences Institute, Manila, Philippines.
- “Exploring the Impact of Values Assessments and Reflective Writing,” Doug Paxton, Ph.D. and Maura Wolfe, M.A., Saint Mary’s College of California, Moraga, CA, USA.
- “The Qualities of Lasallian Higher Education,” Timothy Gossen, Ed.D., Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Winona, MN, USA.
- “Improving Research Skills in Undergraduate Courses Through Collaborative Learning in Multidisciplinary Groups,” Patricia Kayser Vargas Mangan, Ph.D., Brother Cledes A. Casagrande, FSC, and Brother Paulo Fossatti, FSC, Centro Universitário La Salle-Unilasalle, Canoas, Brazil.
- “Building Relationships in a Blended Learning Environment,” Mary Louise Wise, Ph.D., and Jack McClure, Ph.D., Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA.

- “An Environmental Science Curriculum to Prepare Under-represented Minority High School Students for Success in STEM,” Nathan Lien, Ph.D., Joshua Lallaman, Ph.D., Moni Berg-Binder, Ph.D., and Jane Anderson, Ph.D., Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Winona, MN, USA.
- “To Build a Common Journey: Lasallian Educational Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Brother Diego Muñoz, FSC, Ph.D., Brothers of the Christian Schools, Rome, Italy.
- “Supporting College Students with Multiple ‘Adversity Indicators’: A Lasallian Approach to Students on the Margins,” Jaime Lynn Longo, Ph.D., La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

### **Additional Sessions**

The concluding session of the Symposium was a collection of roundtable conversations for attendees to reflect on what they learned and experienced at the Symposium and to share ideas they have generated for new or continued research. This final session was facilitated by Dr. Roxanne Eubank of Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota and involved small and large group discussion.

Attendees from the United States and Mexico were invited to a roundtable which fostered a discussion of possible collaborative programs and research. Brother Andres Govella Gutierrez (University of De La Salle, Bajio) and Dr. Jennifer M. Pigza (Saint Mary’s College of California) facilitated the session which was attended by 34 people. The session allowed attendees from these ministries to learn from one another and explore future possibilities. The presidents and rectors of these institutions will take up the agenda in their future meetings.

### **The Future of Lasallian Research**

The substantial growth in the Symposium on Lasallian Research provides evidence that Lasallian researchers are invested in applying their skills and talents to meet pressing issues both within the Lasallian network and for the common good. Presenters and attendees ranged not only from across the world, but as evidenced in the breakout sessions, they also hailed from across academic disciplines. As the 2014 Symposium concluded, there was great commitment to the IALU Research Agenda and to returning in future years to share our progress.