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## **Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on Lasallian Research**

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Researchers, staff, and students from twenty Lasallian Institutions representing more than ten countries gathered during the sixth International Symposium on Lasallian Research. After an opening mass, participants were welcomed by Brother William Mann, FSC, president of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. While his opening statement touched on many subjects, Brother William emphasized collaboration, which emerged as a central theme throughout the Symposium.

Dr. Carlos Costa's opening keynote address began the sixth annual symposium. Dr. Costa's legerity and limpid account of the Conference of the Parties (COP) 15<sup>th</sup> meeting in Copenhagen illustrated the challenges faced by many of the world's leading countries due to global warming. Dr. Costa spoke of his optimism going into the meeting and the expectation of having a signed agreement before the deadline. Unfortunately, that optimism quickly changed into concern and doubt as the deadline approached with very little to no movement toward an approved agreement. According to Dr. Costa, there were 110 heads of state attempting to find common ground on how to limit global warming by no more than 2 degrees celsius. Given the political gridlock, the committee agreed to collaborate with only the 20 most influential countries with the vision that if agreement could be found, the remaining smaller nations would support the global initiative. In the end, attempts at compromise proved unsuccessful and the leaders returned to their respective countries with less than an optimal agreement. While the agreement was not all that participants hoped, Dr. Costa shared what he learned from those meetings and other collaborative work. First, he indicated that collaborations allow us to dream bigger than we have before. Second, that we should be humble and recognize the greatness in other. Third, collaboration should focus on the needs of beneficiaries. And finally, like all Lasallian endeavors, we accomplish projects together and by association rather than acting as solo performers.

The second keynote address featured a business developer and research scientist from General Mills Corporation. Dr. Olaf Gruess and Dr. Christine Nowakowski, both food scientists by training, discussed the process of matching innovation in concert with collaborative partnerships to meet needs in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. Specifically, Dr. Gruess espoused the importance of focusing on more of a "Blue Ocean" approach to business as opposed to a "Red Ocean" strategy. From a "Blue Ocean" ideology, an organization is more inclined to seek partnerships to meet the needs of the market. Furthermore, a firm is eager to address untapped needs of future markets. A "Blue Ocean" approach deviates from traditional business strategies as the ultimate vision is to navigate to unchartered territories with new ideas. Pursuit of a successful "Blue Ocean" strategy, Dr. Gruess posits that General Mills partners with small start-

ups such as *Six Foods* and *Eat Your Coffee* to provide intellectual and physical capital to help ensure future success. His keynote also focused on providing entrepreneurs with the opportunity to make the world their lab and to foster collaboration with larger corporations to create the best product possible.

On a related theme, Dr. Nowakowski offered numerous examples of how the firm has forged various external philanthropic partnerships. Partners in Food Solutions and Compatible Technology International (CTI) are just a few of the collaborative agreements General Mills has secured allowing the firm to remove barriers in order to facilitate innovative strategies to thwart hunger in developing regions of the world. For instance, General Mills has partnered with local farms offering novel methods to prepare various grains, fruits, and vegetables preventing spoilage and waste. In addition, given General Mill's capacity to leverage economies of scale, the firm is better able to negotiate input prices for small farmers, resulting in greater profitability that can be reinvested in equipment and additional jobs.

In addition to the aforementioned keynotes, symposium participants had the opportunity to listen and engage in a presentation by Dr. Susan Hines. In her illuminating presentation, Dr. Hines examined the lived experiences of six first-generation Lasallian women in leadership. The following eight highlights offer a glimpse into the results of her study. First, a majority of the women leaders started their academic careers as faculty members. Second, the research suggested women were asked by the Brothers to accept leadership roles within their respective institutions. Third, some of the women felt welcomed and their voices were heard, while others expressed a feeling of isolation. Forth, all six leaders embraced a strong Lasallian commitment that was traced to various formation experiences. Fifth, the research suggested a perceived difference in experiences between the Brothers, lay men, and lay women. Sixth, all women subscribed to an altruistic leadership ethos. Seventh, the study suggested future women Lasallian leaders to adopt the following behaviors: listening, learning, asking questions, setting limits and finding balance. Finally, the study concluded with the following recommendations: a) invite more women into Lasallian leadership roles, and b) create communities for women.

The breakout sessions were informative and relevant to the Lasallian research agenda. A synopsis of a few of the breakouts follows. The rising cost of higher education and how to control these costs was discussed at one of the first sessions. Groups of researchers from Manhattan College, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, and Bethlehem University conducted research studies on the topic of financial literacy. In particular, one of the studies investigated what determines financial knowledge amongst students. Another area of inquiry looked into the need for financial literacy as an element of the core curriculum. Although this area of research is in its infancy stage, it is clear that there is a large gap in financial literacy amongst college students. Specifically, the research hinted at the fact that students with unique demographic factors seem to have greater financial literacy. For instance, business majors appear to be more financially knowledgeable as compared to other majors. Moreover, students that are cognizant of their parent's income appear to be more financially literate. Furthermore, according to the study conducted by professors at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Lasallian universities have an opportunity to support a high level of financial illiteracy. If we were to consider the parallels of basic illiteracy during the 1600's and John Baptist de La Salle's desire to help the youth, we as Lasallian institutions have an opportunity to ameliorate the financial illiteracy by offering college

courses aimed at demystifying basic money concepts such as debt management, budgeting, savings, and time value of money.

In other breakout sessions, a group of scholars addressed the construct of perception and success in a hybrid environment. In the first of the three sessions, Professor Trimboli offered the audience an introduction into the science of cooking. His course visits a Wholefoods cooking workshop seven times a week. During their time, students are afforded the opportunity to engage with the food. To better appreciate how temperature and solvents modify the chemical properties of various ingredients. Professor Herkenhoff offered insight into how a flipped classroom might enhance the learning experience. In particular, her study proposed that students that enroll in a flipped classroom seem to retain more information months after the course. Anecdotally, the findings suggest that the flipped classroom offers students what they need, when they need it, and overcomes the tendency for binge learning. Finally, Professor Garrison espoused an indelible learning ethos. Professor Garrison avows; “enter to learn and learn to serve.” This ideology guides her teaching approach as her students collaborate with a plurality of charitable organizations such as Caritas Village, the Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities. The overarching theme is to afford students the opportunity to serve in order to learn and glean skills essential to the nursing profession.

In the third breakout session of the afternoon, three professors from Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota proffered updates on their work with the Hendrickson forum. The Hendrickson Forum is an annual event in which Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota invites world-renowned speakers to discuss topics related to ethics and leadership. Given the burgeoning library of recorded presentations, the university desires to leverage the insight and knowledge permeating in the various presentations. In order to help ensure this wealth of knowledge is shared with our communities of learners, one professor, Dr. Salim, invited EdPuzzle and Flipgrid into his classroom, requiring students to view sections of Hendrickson videos and respond to questions. Our second professor, Dr. Charron, required students to watch two particular Hendrickson videos and respond to questions that requires the learner to engage with current course material, while, encouraging them to reflect on current ethical dilemmas. The ultimate goal of the various exercises is to better appreciate the interplay between ethics and intracultural communication. Finally, Dr. Beekie, created a class project in which the students were asked to complete a comparative analysis amongst the various Hendrickson videos. The students were to reflect on the skills and communication skills gleaned from each of the Hendrickson speakers, and based on their new skills to construct a personal and professional improvement plan.

In addition to all of the scholarly presentations at the sixth annual International Symposium on Lasallian Research, there was a four-session student panel on health, technology, religious truth, immigration, and the work of Dorothy Day. In the first student session, Frank Reguso talked about the blood flow through a cardiovascular system and how the flow inside the cardiovascular system is pulsatile, thereby exhibiting both laminar and turbulent flows at different times. He used particle image velocimetry (PIV) technique to analyze the velocity field, thus providing a better understanding of the flow inside the cardiovascular system and the transport of oxygen and waste. Hongbin Xu, an undergraduate student, talked about magneto-electric nanoparticles (MENs) infused with drugs as being a new method by which to deliver drugs for use in cancer treatment. Mr. Xu explained how this method allows targeted drug delivery and the release of the

drug on-demand, which can then result in minimizing the toxic side effects associated with conventional treatments.

In the next student panel, Naouras Almatar talked about Syrian immigrants, the Syrian colonies of the US in the 1900s, and the Syrian refugees that are currently living in Turkey. She discussed how this study provides a clearer image of the situation today and how immigrating from one place to another is very difficult for these immigrants, especially since they have moved their entire lives out of Syria to a new land. Naouras's study also provided data about how Syrians have become integrated in both the American and the Turkish communities. The next talk was given by Emily Center, which highlighted the vision of Dorothy Day. Emily looked at the problem of economic inequality and the root causes of this inequality, mainly in the state of New York. From her study, literature review, and personal visits to New York worker cooperatives and Catholic Worker houses, she was able to offer a critical analysis of the role of worker cooperatives in New York.

The first talk of the third student panel was on a network function virtualization framework. In this study Randa Al-Obayyat, a student from Bethlehem University, worked with Dr. Ahmed Hussien from Manhattan College to assess the next generation of mobile core network entities with the intent to virtualize and adapt them for cloud environment deployment. Finally, in the last student panel a collaborative undergraduate study about the valgus knee was presented. In this study, students from kinesiology and mechanical engineering departments worked together to design a knee brace to prevent ACL injuries in women. Daniel Wiess, the mechanical engineering student from the group, explained that a preliminary training brace was developed to promote muscle memory associated with landing with ones feet parallel to each other. He also added that this initial model was used to design a new brace by determining the stress in the knee ligaments, and thereby evaluate the ability of the brace to reduce ACL loading. Daniel concluded by saying that the new brace was used in a seven-week training program at Manhattan College by women athletes.

Our closing keynote speaker, Tracy Adams, offered a chilling glimpse into the challenging reality facing too many young people in Australia. Tracy Adams is the CEO of Yourtown, which is an organization that provides counseling, employment training, and mental health assistance to youth ranging from the ages of 5-25. Yourtown's overarching vision is to break the cycle of disenfranchisement and create independence for the next generation. According to Adams, Yourtown makes over 200,000 connections per year with their target market. Tracy Adams's discussion examined the confluence of hardships faced by the disenfranchised populations of Australia: namely high levels of unemployment, homelessness, and mental illness, which according to the speaker culminates in hopelessness. In order to dismantle the underpinnings of generational poverty and hopelessness, Yourtown conducts a large amount of research to better understand the emotional and cultural headwinds faced by the aforementioned youth population. In all, Tracy Adams reminds us that one of the goals of higher education is to conduct quality empirical research to address the challenges faced by our global brothers and sisters.

The sixth annual International Symposium on Lasallian Research extended another opportunity for faculty, staff, and leadership to engage in robust and insightful dialogue. The keynote speakers, coupled with the various breakout sessions buttressed the Lasallian ethos of continuous

education and collaboration. Saint Mary's University of Minnesota was instrumental in providing excellent accommodations and colleague hospitality. As we look forward to the next International Symposium on Lasallian Research in Minneapolis, we encourage you to mark the following dates, September 21-23, 2018 in your calendar.

## **Endnotes**

1. Dr. Antar Salim is a core associate professor in the doctor of business administration program at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. He earned a DBA with an emphasis on management from Argosy University, a master's of business administration from Southern Illinois University, and a bachelor's in chemical engineering from the University of Michigan.

2. Dr. Camela Steinke is the program assessment and effectiveness research specialist at LaSalle School in Albany, NY and an adjunct professor in the University at Albany's School of Criminal Justice, the College of Saint Rose in Albany, the SUNY Plattsburgh, and Excelsior College. She earned a PhD in Criminal Justice from the University at Albany and a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and Spanish from the University of Nevada, Reno.

3. Dr. Parisa Saboori is an associate professor in the mechanical engineering department at Manhattan College. She received her master's and PhD in mechanical engineering from The City University of New York. Prior to earning her master's and doctorate degrees, she received her bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Bu Ali Sina University in Iran.