

# Journal of Vincentian Social Action

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Volume 1 | Issue 1

Article 4

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May 2016

## From Mission to Scholarship: Welcome to JoVSA


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### Recommended Citation

Southwell, Deanne A. and Conry, John M. (2016) "From Mission to Scholarship: Welcome to JoVSA," *Journal of Vincentian Social Action*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholar.stjohns.edu/jovsa/vol1/iss1/4>

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# From Mission to Scholarship: Welcome to JoVSA

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**S**t. Vincent DePaul's devotion to addressing the needs of the poor is rooted in the foundation of a Vincentian education. Vincent believed in action with impact and creating practical solutions to improving the lives of those in need. A Vincentian education in the twenty-first century preserves this unique tradition while committing to a dynamic educational vision which nurtures a sense of civic responsibility in the hearts and minds of its recipients.

In 1870, St. John's University was created to provide a quality education to an underserved population. As a Catholic and Vincentian institution, the University provides a distinctive, value-based education to its students. In addition to this proud tradition, the University continues to enhance its resources to address the needs of a transforming world. University graduates have the skills needed to succeed and navigate a complex global market while acknowledging

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the value of human rights and dignity, which are the cornerstones of a Catholic and Vincentian education.

In 2008, the University created a new unit to highlight and strengthen the distinctiveness of its mission. The Vincentian Institute for Social Action was created as part of the University's strategic plan, with a goal of broadening the Catholic and Vincentian mission in the educational experiences of students. It provides a platform for a variety of educational programs where faculty and students can examine issues of poverty and social injustice through the lens of homelessness, hunger, healthcare and education. Based on the University's Catholic and Vincentian ideals, the Institute endorses a worldview that recognizes the importance of global interdependence and supports its development through faculty research and student programming. It also promotes collaboration throughout the University community in activities designed to advance systemic change.

The Vincentian Institute is comprised of four interrelated units: Academic Service-Learning, Community Partnerships, the Ozanam Scholars Program and the Faculty Research Consortium. Each area represents a specific academic concentration grounded in the Vincentian mission. Academic Service-Learning is a site-based experiential learning model which connects students to service as a means of understanding course concepts. Community Partnerships are collaborations with nonprofits, government agencies, and other community organizations committed to bringing about positive changes for underserved populations. This area supports service and research opportunities for various Institute constituents. The Ozanam Scholars Program is a four-year formation. Guided by the themes of academic scholarship, Vincentian leadership, and global citizenship, the Ozanam Scholars Program provides a platform for students to critically examine the systems that perpetuate poverty and equips them with the tools to elevate their contribution to society and advance social justice on a local, national and global scale. The final unit is the Faculty Research

Consortium (FRC). The FRC is a select group of interdisciplinary faculty members from each academic college of the University. FRC members have demonstrated teaching, research and scholarly expertise in areas related to community service, civic engagement and social responsibility. The FRC is guided by a Chair and supports faculty research, develops research initiatives through community partnerships, recruits faculty mentors to support these initiatives, engages students and faculty on issues of social justice, and guides the implementation and development of Institute assessments.

The development of these units created a need for a platform to herald the academic accomplishments of faculty and students and share advancements in the area of social justice. The FRC was identified as the unit to guide and develop this new initiative in collaboration with the University Library. The proposed tool was an academic journal. The journal would be mission-focused addressing social justice issues, poverty, causation and solutions-based approaches. The tool would be a hub for scholarly work throughout the University community. It would engage the local, national and global community in intellectual activity. Additionally, it would provide open source, peer-reviewed articles and field-based research and focus on studies evaluating solutions to social injustice, with implications for public discourse and policy, and macro-program development. The journal would be a source of scholarship and a place for provocative discussion on poverty for scholars at St. John's and beyond.

St. John's University is committed to preserving its unique mission while exploring innovative opportunities and partnerships to enhance the experiences of students and faculty. The Vincentian Institute is proud to introduce the Journal of Vincentian Social Action (JoVSA) as an example of this commitment. The journal will showcase mission-related initiatives which are academic, community-based and sustainable. Through the journal, the University will further secure its place as an institution not only committed to academic excellence but to the betterment and health of society.

We would like to acknowledge the administrators and faculty, both past and present who have been instrumental in the development of the Vincentian Institute and by extension the Journal of Vincentian Social Action. The success of our various initiatives would not be possible without the dedicated efforts of individuals committed to the vision of St. John's University. For more information on the work of the Vincentian Institute for Social Action visit our website at <http://www.stjohns.edu/faith-service/social-action/vincentian-institute-social-action>.