

Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education

Volume 8

Article 8

10-1-1995

In Deed: A Survey of Programs and Activities Related to Identity and Mission: Xavier University

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Recommended Citation

McKnight, John (1995) "In Deed: A Survey of Programs and Activities Related to Identity and Mission: Xavier University,"
Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education: Vol. 8, Article 8.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol8/iss1/8>



Maria Pesante, president of the Millville Resident Council, reflects on her experiences during a graduation ceremony for members of the Institute for Community Capacity Building's freshman class. The Institute helps neighborhood leaders focus on their assets as they build their communities from the inside out.

only gives food to the hungry; it also helps students learn about the lives of those they serve.

❖ The Marquette University Action Program, or MAP, provides an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to spend spring break in service and cultural immersion projects throughout North America. MAP volunteers have traveled to Georgia and Oklahoma to help build homes with Habitat for Humanity, served needy families in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia and Kentucky, worked in the central cities of Washington, D.C., Rochester, New York, and Detroit, Michigan, and volunteered on Native American reservations in South Dakota.

The commitment to community is seen every day at Marquette, and its cumulative impact is substantial. This year, students, faculty, and staff volunteered more than 65,000 hours of service. With each hour, the legacy of Father Marquette is renewed.

by Mykl Novak

Published by e-Publications@Marquette, 1995

Xavier University Cincinnati, Ohio

THE INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

No community is built with a focus on deficiencies and needs. Every community, forever in the past and forever in the future, will be built on the capacities and gifts of the people who live there.

John McKnight

These words summarize a unique approach to community revitalization. They also describe the purpose of the Institute for Community Capacity Building: teaching neighborhood residents how to build their communities from the inside out.

Based on the work of John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann from Northwestern University's Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, the asset-building approach attracted the inter-

est of several Cincinnati businesses and social service agencies. Xavier and the United Way & Community Chest teamed up to make the Institute—the first of its kind in the country—a reality on the university's campus.

"People in communities and social service agencies are frustrated: They feel mired in an old system that doesn't work," says Gene Beaupré, Xavier's director of community relations. "McKnight's approach to community capacity building offers a new model, one that starts from within."

Thirty representatives from nine Cincinnati communities were chosen to participate in the Institute's first year. As a group, they attended seven day-long sessions featuring faculty from across the country who are familiar with McKnight's model. Between these sessions, neighborhood leaders met separately with Institute director Kate Fadick and conducted work assignments in their communities.

One work assignment, notes Beaupré, asks participants to list the labels they put on people in

the community—drug addict, alcoholic, dropout, unwed mother. Then each community group had to find three people who fit under those labels and interview them to find out what gift or capacity they can give back to the neighborhood.

"We were trying to teach tools of analysis and change to community leaders and then give them opportunities to put them into practice," says Dr. Ron Slepitz, vice president for student development. "The nine communities who went through the Institute have worked to create partnerships among themselves to put these ideas into practice and to hold themselves accountable for seeing the fruits."

The Institute has attracted the attention of cities throughout Ohio and Indiana. "It would be our hope, consistent with our mission as an institution, that Xavier might become a center for training and involvement in the revitalization of communities," says Slepitz. "But we'll lay the foundation block by block to build that kind of role."

XAVIER
UNIVERSITY/
UNITED WAY
SUMMER SERVICE
INTERNS

Part of Xavier's mission is to prepare its students to go out into society and be ready to take an active role making a difference in people's lives.

This summer, fourteen Xavier students—from freshman to graduate students—have the opportunity to make a difference in the Cincinnati community through service with area social service agencies. Each week for ten weeks, the fourteen will perform forty hours of community service for these agencies through the

Xavier University/United Way & Community Chest Summer Service Interns program. In exchange, they will receive a \$2,000 stipend as well as room and board on Xavier's campus.

The internship program was initiated by John E. Pepper, president of Procter & Gamble, who was searching for a way to involve students in service during the summer while addressing their need to earn money for their education. "Based on the program's first year (1994), we believe this has been a very powerful experience for our students, but also a very powerful experience for the agencies and the individuals they serve," says Dr. Ronald Slepitz, vice president for student development.

"Increased collaboration between United Way & Community Chest and higher education will go a long way toward increasing the difference United Way-funded agencies are making in the lives of people in need," adds Richard N. Aft, UW&CC president. "This unique partnership between Xavier University and UW&CC offers hands-on social service experience to students as they prepare themselves to become responsible leaders."

The placements are diverse. One intern will serve as an advocate for awareness and prevention at Women Helping Women, an agency that provides help and counseling to battered women. Another will work with runaway and homeless teens at the Lighthouse youth crisis center. And two will help two of the communities that participated in Xavier's Institute for Community Capacity Building as they map assets and develop existing relationships with agencies and businesses.

"The process model we're using is a combination of academic community building, communi-

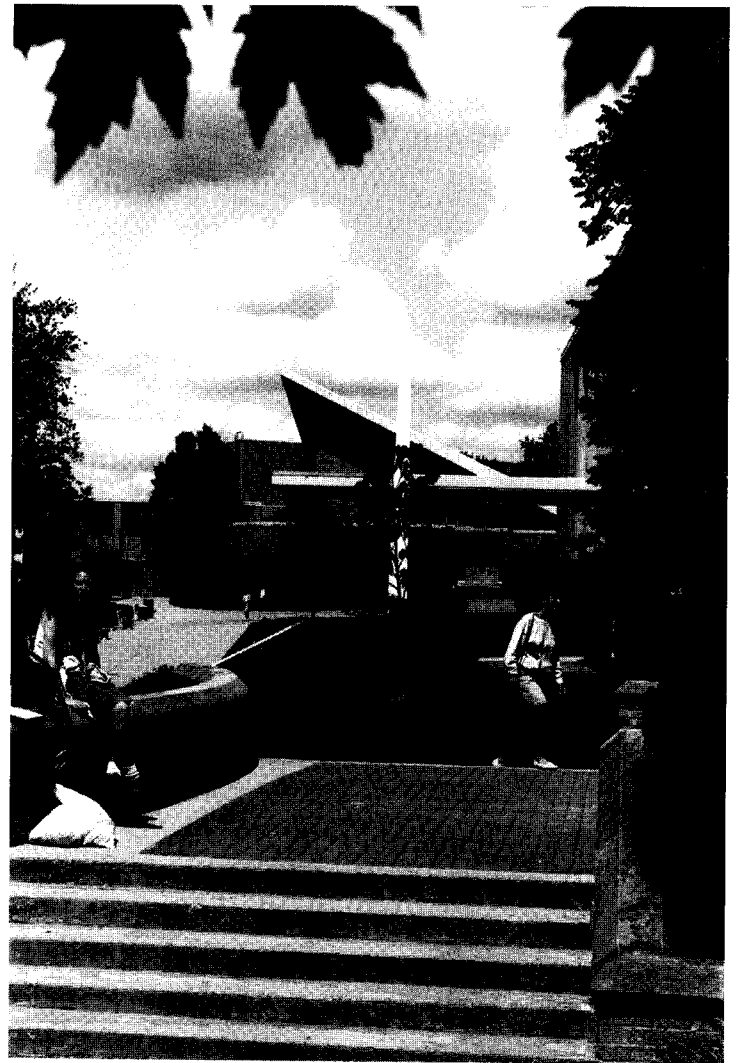
ty service, empowerment, and change to our students," says Slepitz. "If you think about our mission as providing our students with the insights and tools to effect change in society, and you think about what the Institute is about—taking grassroots organizers from those communities and providing them with the insights and tools to rebuild their communities from within—you can see the similarities."

ETHICS, RELIGION & SOCIETY

In 1991, Xavier University's faculty completed a grueling task: revising the core curriculum, the better to reflect the university's mission and prepare students to take their places in a rapidly changing world. An integral part of this revision is the Ethics, Religion & Society focus that made its debut in Fall 1992. ER&S was constructed to address what a poll of Xavier's faculty suggested were the two greatest weaknesses in the prior core curriculum: a lack of attention to values and a lack of disciplinary integration.

The focus is actually a sequence of four courses: a course in theology, a course in philosophy, a literature course titled *Literature and the Moral Imagination*, and a fourth course chosen from twenty-three electives including *Chemistry in Society*, *Moral Aspects of the Workplace*, *Contemporary Ethical Issues* and *Philosophical Anthropology*.

"Instead of having a simple distribution of courses, we've tried to employ an integrated approach so that all the courses tie together," says Dr. James Bundschuh, academic vice president. "How does a philos-



Xavier University prepares its students to play important roles in a rapidly changing world. The core curriculum includes an important focus on Ethics, Religion & Society.

ophy course that emphasizes reason relate to a theology course that is based on faith? How do these approaches differ and where do they come together? How can they build on each other?"

As director of the ER&S focus, Dr. David Weinberg faces a different challenge: how to bring together faculty from diverse backgrounds in an integrated program that addresses moral issues.

"The whole idea is to get students to think about moral, ethical issues in a concrete sense that reflects an interest in other disciplines," says Weinberg. "One of our strategies is to offer faculty work-

shops that give an overview of what's been taught in other ER&S courses. This fall, we'll offer a mini-course in philosophy for faculty members from other departments who are involved in the focus."

"Although it's still evolving," says Bundschuh, "the ER&S focus is really one of the most creative approaches to an integrated core curriculum I've seen. The challenge is to do it well so it will be the meaningful experience we want it to be."