

Encouraging Ignatian-based Xavier Values in Management Thinking

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Situation

Xavier, being a Jesuit university that is fully vested in the teachings and philosophy of St Ignatius, has an opportunity and responsibility to help students understand, internalize, and act using Xavier's Ignatian -based values of reflection, discernment, solidarity in kinship, service rooted in justice and love, Cura personalis, and Magis. The school begins this process by ensuring our undergraduate core course curricula supports and reflects these values. The expectation, then, should be continuity from the core curricula into non-core and courses in our students' majors. This will provide opportunities to practice, think, and use Xavier's Values, and see how the values are in unison with, and support learning, understanding, and action in areas related to the students' primary interests. The expectation is that the values are ingrained in the students' thought processes and become important tools in the toolbox of knowledge received from Xavier.

In the case of this particular application, the interest is in applying these values to business education; specifically MGMT 200 - Organizational Management. MGMT is a brand new course that will be offered for the first time in Fall 2020. It is a combination of a number of courses taught previously. As such, this report is more forward looking (What will we do) rather than backward looking (What did we do?). This course has these basic high-level objectives for the students:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the terminology, concepts, research, and theory related to Managerial Behavior
- Develop and execute solutions to ethical and social decisions problems facing managers
- Identify the variety of tasks and behaviors a manager must perform proficiently
- Utilize various human resource functions to achieve organizational goals, while diagnosing and accounting for the effect of related human social dynamics
- Integrate global issues in management decisions to strategically direct organizations

More specifically, the course has the following learning goals:

Critical Thinking

Learning Goal: WCB graduates will be able to think logically, reason quantitatively, and utilize appropriate

Ethics and Social Responsibility

Learning Goal: WCB graduates will be able to recognize ethical issues, discern moral implications of decision making, and be prepared, and willing, to serve as responsible and professional members of society.

Effective Written and Oral Communication

Learning Goal: WCB graduates will be able to organize, support and communicate ideas clearly and effectively, employ multiple mediums of communication (e.g., written, oral and visual), and adapt communication to audience, context or purpose.

Global Perspective and Cultural Diversity

Learning Goal: WCB graduates will appreciate the historical and cultural contexts of the world in which they live, demonstrate the competencies required for engaging in global business activities, and respect and value diverse peoples and perspectives.

Understanding and Application of Knowledge Across Business Disciplines

Learning Goal: WCB graduates will be able to evaluate business from an integrative and holistic point of view, leverage the synergies between functional business areas, and demonstrate college-level mastery of their chosen discipline.

Personal and Professional Development

Learning Goal: WCB graduates will be well-prepared for their future careers and appreciate the importance of continuous professional development and life-long learning.

As an introductory course in business, and given the overall course objectives and specific learning goals, MGMT 200 is an ideal course for students to begin understanding how to apply Xavier Values in business. The business manager faces a number of issues that Xavier Values will help address. There are right vs right situations where the manager must choose from two or more positive options. There are also "the lesser of two evils" situations where a decision must be made and neither outcome is desirable. Additionally, managers regularly face situations that are challenging. They must choose who to hire and fire. They may have to decide who gets the less than desirable work assignment or choose who, of multiple employees, may get a bonus or raise. They will help those who work under them deal with life's challenges; terminally ill family members they are caring for, children with special needs they are parenting, dealing with their own LGBTQ+ challenges, and others. The challenges managers face are ideal for applying Xavier Values to provide an aid to help them find a desirable and acceptable solution.

Challenge

Although the course is designed to introduce the student to managerial principles and has an emphasis on ethics as one of the learning goals, what is missing is the specific and explicit application of Xavier Values to the learning process. Whether considering the common text or the syllabus, Xavier values have not been specifically identified or recommended as a requirement for teaching and developing new managers. As a result, this leaves open an opportunity to apply these concepts to the structure of the course.

Solution

Two ways I will address this challenge is through the use of debates and the semester-long research projects.

Debates

Debates are used as an opportunity for teams to do research on a current managerial or overall business issue. Teams debate each other on a topic they are given to research and prepare.

Current Approach

The approach used in the debate follows:

1. Students are divided up into teams at the beginning of the semester. These are the debate teams. They are also the teams used for in-class exercises and for their semester-long research project. This gives the teams a number of opportunities to work together, learn strengths and

weaknesses, and work through the initial challenges of bringing people together into newly formed teams.

2. The students are given topics to research and debate. Previous topics have included such issues as
 - Whether women are paid the same as men,
 - Which is better? Being efficient or effective?
 - Are affinity groups (e.g. gender, race, nationality) positive or negative for organizations.The topics tended to be issues that were common to managers or tied to a specific subject that was either a current events topic or a hotly debated topic.
3. Each topic had opposing sides. The students must prepare arguments for both sides. For instance, for whether women are paid equally to men, they have to research and develop an argument that demonstrates women are paid the same if not more than men, and they must develop an argument showing women are not paid the same as men. Their arguments are prepared as PowerPoint presentations and submitted to me the day of their debate. The team must be prepared to argue either side of the topic. The particular side the team debates is chosen in the class period in which they debate.
4. The teams argue their respective sides of the debate. At the end of the debate, each team has the opportunity to challenge the other team questions to expose the weaknesses of their argument.
5. Grades have historically been determined using the following rubric:
 - Slide visuals: 10 points
 - Research quality: 50 points
 - Quality of argument (fact based vs opinion): 25 points
 - Quality of rebuttals: 15 points

Updated approach

This approach can be upgraded to incorporate Xavier's Values. The following changes will be incorporated moving forward.

1. Update the rubric to include the application of Xavier Values. The rubric that will be used will be:
 - Slide visuals: 10 points
 - Research quality: 30 points
 - Quality of argument (fact based vs opinion): 25 points
 - Application of Xavier Values: 25 points
 - Quality of rebuttals: 10 points
2. Topics should focus specifically on areas where Xavier Values must be considered deeply on both sides of the argument. An example may be "Should a university accept students based on grades alone?" This would require an in-depth consideration of several of the Xavier Values on whether grades should be the sole criterion, or whether other criteria should be considered for admission as well.
3. Team reflection and submission of which Xavier values were most salient in their arguments and why. This section would be added to each deliverable, pro and con, and will comprise the *Application of Xavier Values* section of the grade.

Research

Current approach

Each team is required to perform a semester-long research project on a topic of their choosing. The topics must relate to a management concept, technique, philosophy, guru, or a related notion. The students submit their topic for review, feedback, and approval. A key criterion for acceptance is the extent to which the topic is accretive to what is taught in class so that the material in class is expanded in a way where there is integrity between the topic and the course. The objective is to provide additional learning for the students by expanding the base material into newer or more intriguing areas of business. Once completed, the students have two deliverables; a written paper and a presentation, generally 15 minutes or less. The research and the findings are subsequently presented to their classmates. Classmates are tested on the materials presented as their final exam.

The current rubric for the research is:

- Content - 30 points
- Cases and examples - 25 points
- Tying material to class - 25 points
- Presentation and professionalism - 20 points (including meeting deadlines)

Content relates to the comprehensiveness and thoroughness of the prose in the presentation. Cases and examples focus on application of the research topics; who has implemented the concepts? What is a positive example? Negative? Tying the material to class is the piece that represents the integrity between the researched topic and the discussions in class. Students are to make clear ties and relationships with topics discussed throughout the semester. Presentation and professionalism reflects both the quality of the verbal and written presentation and how professionally the group behaved through the entire process. Did they meet deadlines? Did they have review meetings with me to discuss challenges and progress? How effective was their written communication?

Updated approach

The research component will be updated with a component reflecting the Xavier Values in a manner that is most appropriate given the topic and the resulting context. The idea will be for the students to use Xavier Values to discuss issues such as the challenges or benefits of implementing the concept, or the impact the topic can have on the employees, the organization, or the community. This will require the students to look deeply at the topic, understand it and the resulting implications, and describe these in detail in their papers and to their classmates. The rubric will be updated as follows:

- Content - 20 points
- Cases and examples - 20 points
- Tying material to class - 20 points
- Presentation and professionalism - 20 points
- Reflection on Xavier Values - 20 points

Summary

These changes will allow the students to think about numerous managerial topics and issues, in ways that not only reinforce the course objectives and learning goals, but also give them a number of opportunities to thinking about managerial concepts and issues in a different way using Xavier Values. Through understanding new ideas and having to argue opposing sides

of a managerial issue, and by doing both through the lens of the Xavier Values, each of the assignments should take on a deeper level of comprehension and meaning to the students. It is my desire that this exercise will prove valuable enough to the students that they continue to consider new concepts through the same lens.

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