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Project Title: Applying Ignatian Principles to a Multidisciplinary Forum on Restorative Justice

Project Overview: I co-designed a University-wide, multidisciplinary forum on restorative justice (I will co-direct the forum in fall, 2013) that is grounded in Ignatian principles. First, the two-week forum will promote contemplatives in action: the first week is dedicated to panel presentations and critical analysis of theories about restorative justice, and the second week focuses on applying and implementing these theories through active engagement with the community. Second, the forum will facilitate institutional collaboration and networking by bringing together constituencies from the School of Education, the College of Liberal Arts, the Law School, the Center for Service and Action, the CSJ Center for Reconciliation, and the Center for Urban Resilience. Third, there will be specific attention to considering restorative justice as an exercise of Ignatian imagination; the forum will include work with the Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative. Fourth, the forum will integrate engaged scholarship and engaged learning with the aim of individual and structural transformation.

Rationale: We wanted to bring together scholars from numerous disciplines, staff, students, and community members in order to invite campus-wide reflection on the meanings of restorative justice (addressing harm, teaching conflict prevention, rebuilding relationships and communities, and reintegrating offenders into society), their interdisciplinary, interfaith, and international dimensions, and their connections to Jesuit education.

Project Details:

- Convened a twelve-person working group constituted by faculty, staff, and students in order to study feasibility of planning and implementing conference.
- Drafted a proposal for the forum and successfully submitted it to Dean's leadership team
- Developed two-week forum model consisting of several panels, presentations, and exhibits/performances (first week) and coordinated student, staff, and faculty involvement in restorative justice activities in the community (second week)

Indications of Successes:

- Though the forum will not occur until fall, 2013, there is tremendous enthusiasm among members of the steering committee and various entities throughout the University.
- The BCLA Dean's Office is offering significant budgetary, administrative, and technical support for the forum.
- The complexity and richness of the topic will generate substantive conversations and active engagement with the community.

Challenges:

- Will sufficient numbers of students attend the forum events?
- Will the integration between theory/contemplation and action fully materialize?
- Will the forum establish a foundation for sustained discourse and future initiatives?