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Rooted in Mission: Family and Consumer Sciences in Catholic Universities

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The purpose of this paper is to establish the unity between the missions of the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) discipline and Catholic higher education by demonstrating relationships among (a) Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and the role of the service principle to FCS; (b) Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) and the centrality of intellect to FCS; and (c) the institutional charism and the shared calling of FCS professionals, exemplified by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, sponsors of Fontbonne University. Key philosophical and foundational FCS papers along with documents pertaining to the principles of CST, CIT, and the charisms of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet were examined and shared meanings were identified; institutional mission statements from respective sponsored institutions were likewise compared. The review process permitted a very pointed comparison between the disciplinary and institutional missions, substantiating the congruity between the two. The parity between professional and Catholic institutional missions outlined in this paper suggests that the longevity of FCS programs could be fostered by taking root in Catholic institutions.

As noted by the National Center for Education Statistics, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is a discipline at the post-secondary level that encompasses 31 different fields of study (Dickeson, 2010) related to foods and nutrition, human development, family relationships, housing and interior design, textiles and apparel, and family resource management, among others. Founded in 1909 as home economics, in 1994 the name Family and Consumer Sciences was adopted by consensus of the professional membership of what was then the American Home Economics Association. The organizational name change to the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences created a cascade effect for departments of home economics at colleges and universities across the country. At Fontbonne University, home economics—a founding program of the institution—adopted the name of Human Environmental Sciences, mirroring the name change of home economics departments across the state of Missouri. It is important to note that these

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name changes affected professionals only in the United States; globally, the discipline is still recognized as home economics. Consequently, home economics, family and consumer sciences, and human environmental sciences infer the same discipline, but the names are historically and regionally situated.

Over the last decade FCS has struggled to maintain its disciplinary status in higher education, and continues to do so primarily due to a lack of understanding, or perhaps appreciation, for the integrated purpose of serving individuals, families, and communities that unites what are perceived to be unrelated fields of study. Although the decision to eliminate or reorganize FCS programs to attend to the dynamic needs of the respective institutions has been lamented privately by many FCS professionals, little has been done to examine institutional fit in relation to the mission of FCS and the respective institutions of higher education. The work of FCS, a discipline founded primarily by 1862/1890 land grant (public) institutions, has never been considered in light of Catholic mission or teachings, though Anderson and Nickols, as recently as 2001, spoke of the "heart, head, and soul" of the FCS profession—intimating a spiritual *calling* to the discipline of FCS. It is this analogy of heart, head, and soul that resonates quite deeply with the mission of Catholic higher education, as Catholic Social Teaching (CST), Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT), and the respective charisms of institutional founders are integrated into the curricular and co-curricular experiences to enrich the education of students. The purpose of this paper is to establish the unity between the missions of the FCS discipline and Catholic higher education by demonstrating relationships among (a) CST and the role of the service (heart) principle to FCS; (b) CIT and the centrality of intellect (head) to FCS; and (c) the institutional charism and the shared calling (soul) of FCS professionals, exemplified by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, sponsors of Fontbonne University, in particular. The parity between professional and Catholic institutional missions outlined in this paper suggests that the longevity of FCS programs could be fostered by taking root in Catholic institutions.

Method

In an effort to establish the unity between FCS professional and Catholic institutional missions, commonalities were identified between the missions of FCS and Catholic higher education. In particular, the FCS mission was operationalized through the professional commitments to service, intellect, and individual calling, identified by Anderson and Nickols (2001). Expanding on

this work, Nickols et al. (2009) demonstrated how the FCS body of knowledge ought to guide the work of practitioners and scholars alike, in an effort to address quality of life issues for diverse audiences. Utilizing nested imagery, the FCS body of knowledge (see Figure 1) guides FCS professionals to draw from and promote the theoretically informed interrelatedness between family well-being and the social environment, as various issues related to wellness, resource management, sustainability, global interdependence, appropriate use of technology, and capacity building are addressed (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Council for Accreditation, 2010).

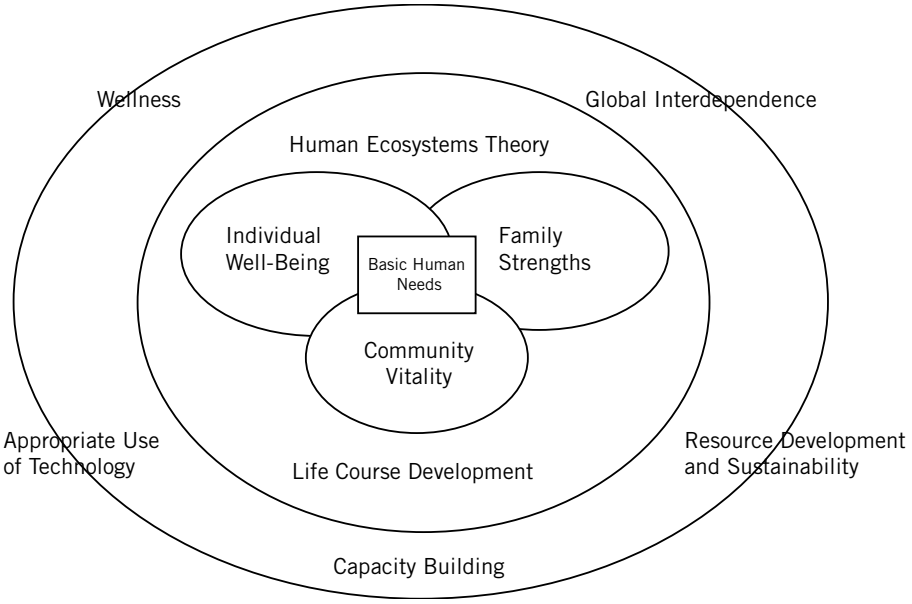

Figure 1. A heuristic capturing the FCS body of knowledge. From "The Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge and the Cultural Kaleidoscope: Research Opportunities and Challenges," by S. Y. Nickols et al., 2009, *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, 37*(3), p.268. Reprinted with permission.

The mission of Catholic higher education was operationalized through CST, CIT, and the shared meanings of charisms of particular institutions home to FCS programs, including the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul (SC), and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ). Particular attention was given to the charism of the CSJ, sponsors of five universities with FCS programs, includ-

ing Fontbonne University. The interface among CST, CIT, and institutional charism might be best understood through the notion of catholicity, which demands a faith-filled solidarity among all peoples that seeks both justice and truth (Groome, 2002). Paralleling the FCS commitment to service, intellect, and a shared calling, CST demands action to promote justice and unity (Office for Social Justice, n.d.; Vatican Council II, 1965/1996) informed by an openness to truth reflected in CIT (Cahoy, 2003; Launderville, 2002), and inspired by a shared charism.

This study examined key philosophical and foundational FCS papers along with all materials central to the work of Fontbonne University's Mission Integration Task Force, including principles of CST and CIT. IHM, SC, and CSJ charisms were examined and shared meanings were identified; institutional mission statements from respective sponsored institutions were likewise compared. The review process permitted a very pointed comparison between the disciplinary and institutional missions, substantiating the congruity between the two.

Called to Serve: FCS Practice and Catholic Social Teaching

Inherent in both FCS practice and CST is the call to serve others (Brown, 1985; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], n.d.), most often exemplified through the sharing of information, more typically recognized as "teaching." While the delivery of content knowledge is essential to improving the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities, it is likewise important to teach people strategies for challenging the status quo and promoting a sense of human agency that promotes freedom for all (Brown, 1985; USCCB, n.d.). These sorts of practices reflect universal values that transcend the local, affecting people from around the globe. Such global perspectives are central to both FCS practice and CST, which promote commitments to global understanding as well as global community building (International Federation for Home Economics [IFHE], 2008; Vatican Council II, 1965/1996). For both FCS practice and CST, the notion of service suggests a dedication to community that rests on the ability to promote a commitment to the common good.

Primacy of Community and the Common Good

As articulated in the FCS body of knowledge, efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals and families are directly related to fostering community

(Anderson & Nickols, 2001; Nickols et al., 2009). FCS professionals are required to develop skills that promote a sense of interdependence and solidarity among community members, exemplified through the primary concern for the common good (Brown, 1995). The term community suggests both participation in, and responsibility for community formation; a responsibility that Brown (1985) argued must be centered in the promotion of democratic practices:

> unless the actions of home economists [FCS professionals] do contribute to the common interests of those served rather than to any special and powerful interests that dominate society, we not only contradict ourselves; we also become unwitting partners in promoting an undemocratic society. (p. 7)

FCS professionals are not only obliged to address the common good but also to foster concern for the common good among those whom they serve.

Challenged by past and present FCS leaders to act from a politically moral stance centered on "love for people and society" (Baldwin, 1995; Braun & Williams, 2002; Brown, 1985, 1995; McGregor, 2006; Vaughn, 2005), FCS professionals are positioned to work for the common interests of citizens, namely: freedom, equality, legitimate power, obligation, and justice, thereby fostering the capacity of those served. The ultimate purpose of FCS professional practice rests in an ability to promote individual capacity and use that capacity to redress issues that marginalize individuals (Brown, 1985). Capacity building is a principle introduced by Brown that is now integral to the current FCS body of knowledge (Anderson & Nickols, 2001; Baugher et al., 2000; Nickols et al., 2009). The intersection between the service-oriented perspectives of FCS practice and CST was intimated by Brown (1995) as she cited the USCCB:

> Basic justice demands the establishment of minimum levels of participation in the life of the human community for all persons. The ultimate injustice is for a person or a group to be actively treated or passively abandoned as if they were non-members of the human race. (pp. 17-18)

From both the FCS and CST perspectives, inclusion of all people is central to the notions of community and community formation.

An examination of CST documents (Office for Social Justice, n.d.) demonstrates the concerns inherent to both FCS practice and CST, whereby indi-

vidual well-being is clearly centered in the notion of community:

> The human person is both sacred and social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, *in community*. Human beings grow and achieve fulfillment *in community*…How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the *capacity* of individuals to *grow in community*…Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the *common good* [emphases added]. (¶ 3)

In both FCS practice and CST, it is important to promote community and responsibility for the common good and it is through education that this becomes possible.

Like FCS leaders, the framers of *Church in the Modern World* understood the role education must hold in promoting the common good. Promoting justice in the world demands no less than "people who are capable of providing the generations to come with *reasons for living and for hope* [emphasis added]" (Vatican Council II, 1965/1996, p. 197). Similarly, FCS professional practice serves to "enable others to make strides toward fulfilling their basic human needs, and become empowered to fulfill *personal and group hopes and dreams* [emphasis added]" (Anderson & Nickols, 2001, p. 17).

A closer look at both the themes in CST and the concepts particular to the FCS body of knowledge communicate further parity between the missions (see Table 1). Both the concepts of community vitality and capacity building found in the FCS body of knowledge easily relate to most of the CST themes, confirming the centrality of community to each. Likewise, the promotion of life, hope, and dreams is equally apparent, as each CST theme attends to a particular aspect of life and wellness, which are FCS concepts, and the possibility and hope for communal participation for each individual. The CST themes suggest that full participation can only be achieved when individuals, communities, and nations work in concert with one another for the common good. This sort of collaboration and play among individuals and communities parallels the essence of the human ecosystems theory, which is a key theory identified in the FCS body of knowledge. As communicated through Bronfenbrenner (1986) and later by Buboltz and Sontag (1993), the well-being of individuals, families, and communities is best fostered through interaction among all parties. The nested model suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1986) demonstrates that individuals and families are impacted by various social institu-

tions, including those (a) that immediately impact the family (mesosystem), (b) those that immediately affect adults but not children (exosystem), and (c) those that define the social norms and rules (macrosystem); the model also suggests (d) that individuals and families are historically "situated" within this social milieu (chronosystem). The value of the ecosystems model is that the direction of influence moves both inward and outward. This multidirectional influence confirms the role, responsibility, and possibility for individuals and families to change the social environment, and thus justifies the promotion of capacity and human agency—concepts integral to both FCS practice and CST. The strength of the human ecosystems model is that it also infers the possibility for examining implications of social interactions related to community and the common good locally, nationally, and globally.

Educating Toward a Global Perspective

As addressed in *Church in the Modern World*, the notion of community must also reflect a global dimension:

> The more closely the world comes together, the more widely do people's obligations transcend particular groups and extend to the whole world. This will be realized only if individuals and groups practice moral and social virtues and foster them in social living. (Vatican Council II, 1965/1996, p. 197)

Catholic universities have a significant role in promoting moral resolve for global social well-being among students. CST attends to issues pertaining to globalization; an example reflective of the "megatrends" that Archbishop J. Michael Miller (2007) believed ought to be addressed by Catholic universities worldwide. Globalization, both the benefits and challenges to all cultures, might be better understood when contextualized through multiple lenses, including economic, environmental, cultural, and political perspectives on globalization (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999). Such lenses permit the evaluation of how issues related to trade, migration, and human actions on the natural environment impact the intricate web of human life. More so, use of these contextual lenses assist in illuminating concerns related to global homogeneity and the possibility of cultural erasure, as well as more cooperative, democratic-based principles that increase access and civil rights to individuals worldwide (Held et al., 1999). These lenses necessitate multiple research meth-

Table 1

Comparison of Catholic Social Teaching Themes and the FCS Body of Knowledge

Themes in Catholic Social Teaching*	FCS Body of Knowledge Concepts**
Dignity of the Human Person: Belief in the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. Human life is sacred, and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for a moral vision for society. This principle is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the image of God. The person is the clearest reflection of God among us.	Individual well-being, basic human needs, capacity building, family strengths, life course development theory
Common Good and Community: The human person is both sacred and social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. Human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. Human dignity can only be realized and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society.	Community vitality, capacity building, family strengths, wellness, human ecosystems theory
Option for the Poor: The option for the poor is an essential part of society's effort to achieve the common good. A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special attention to those with special needs, to those who are poor and on the margins of society.	Individual well-being, basic human needs, capacity building, human ecosystems theory
Rights and Responsibilities: Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency, starting with food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care, and education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.	Wellness, community vitality, capacity building, human ecosystems theory
Role of Government and Subsidarity: The state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. All people have a right and a responsibility to participate in political institutions so that government can achieve its proper goals.	Wellness, global interdependence, capacity building, human ecosystems theory
Economic Justice: The economy must serve people, not the other way around. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. They also have a fundamental right to organize and join unions. People have a right to economic initiative and private property, but these rights have limits. No one is allowed to amass excessive wealth when others lack the basic necessities of life.	Community vitality, wellness, human ecosystems theory

Table 1 *continued*

Comparison of Catholic Social Teaching Themes and the FCS Body of Knowledge

Stewardship of God's Creation: The goods of the earth are gifts from God, and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. There is a "social mortgage" that guides our use of the world's goods, and we have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship, a sign of our respect for the Creator.	Sustainable use of resources, community vitality, human ecosystems theory
Promotion of Peace and Disarmament: Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, "Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements." There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.	Community vitality, family strengths, human ecosystems theory
Participation: All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.	Basic human needs (democracy), community vitality, life course development theory, human ecosystems theory
Global Solidarity and Development: We are one family. Our responsibilities to one another cross national, racial, economic, and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice. Authentic development must be full human development. It must respect and promote personal, social, economic, and political rights, including the rights of nations and of peoples. It must avoid extremists of underdevelopment on the one hand, and "super development" on the other. Accumulating material goods and technical resources will be unsatisfactory and debasing if there is no respect for the moral, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the person.	Appropriate use of technology, global interdependence, community vitality, capacity building, human ecosystems theory

Note. *(Office for Social Justice, n.d.)
**(Nikols et al., 2009)

ods and interdisciplinary efforts to deepen understandings of globalization, including a humanistic approach that is typical of a Catholic university education (Miller, 2007).

Global interdependence specifically related to individuals, families, and communities around the globe is likewise reflected in the FCS body of knowledge particular to the United States. Worldwide, the IFHE (2008) endorses a "humanistic thrust" to promote a global scope for FCS studies, including a focused concern for (a) the well-being of individuals, families, and communities at the local, societal, and global levels; (b) an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to knowledge acquisition and scholarship; and (c) a demonstrated ability to critique the status quo and transform the lives of individuals, families, and communities, promoting well-being across all segments of humanity. IFHE's commitment to critique unjust practices to transform the lives of individuals and families is consistent with CST practices that ultimately seek the emancipation of people in all parts of the world.

FCS grounds practice and service in moral action and that moral action rests on the use of the intellect as expressed in the discipline of FCS itself. According to Arcus (1999), to care (a requisite for moral action) requires the use of the intellect, an assertion that has particular implications for FCS programs at Catholic universities and colleges, as both the profession and the institution recognize the importance of a contextualized, liberal education as a foundation for serving others (Brown, 1985; Cahoy, 2003). The fundamental connection between intellect and FCS professional practice parallels the relationship between CIT and CST, additionally exemplifying the unity between the FCS discipline and Catholic institutions of higher education.

Intellectual Traditions: FCS and Catholic Intellectual Tradition

For both FCS and Catholic higher education, developing an intellect capable of fostering the common good among community members requires a commitment to diversity (Cahoy, 2003; Nickols et al., 2009). Diversity however, must be considered from multiple intellectual perspectives, including content (e.g., knowledge about diverse audiences; Cahoy, 2003), use of a variety of theoretical frameworks that guide scholarship (Brown & Paolucci, 1978), and appreciation for multiple intellectual perspectives (Brown, 1985; Launderville, 2002), to name a few. This sort of multidimensional thinking provides the scaffolding necessary to instill in people a responsibility to the common good articulated in both the Vatican Council II (1965/1996) documents as well

as Brown's *Philosophical Studies* (1985). Although both FCS and CIT embrace diversity, neither is immune from conflict, particularly centered on different perspectives held by professionals. Within Catholic higher education, the divisiveness might be articulated as sectarian/secular differences, while in FCS, the conflict might precipitate as the practitioner/scholar divide. What becomes important is to attend to difference with an intellectual, integrative approach, which might be understood through the notion of praxis.

Praxis: Integration of Intellect and Practice

The scholarship of Brown (1985, 1995) and others (Baldwin, 1995; Henry, 1998; McGregor, 2006; Smith, 1998) demonstrates that the critical science premises are central to the intellectual foundation for current FCS practices. As such, FCS professionals are obliged to evaluate social and political knowledge and practices in terms of (a) the intent to predict and control the natural world (technical mode of rationality); (b) the ability to foster shared meaning making among individuals and communities (interpretive mode of rationality); and (c) a commitment to examine social structures and their ability to promote or hinder individual, familial, or community autonomy (emancipatory mode of rationality; Brown, 1985). Brown's contention that FCS ought to contribute to a democratic society can be seen in relation to these three modes of rationality introduced by Jurgen Habermas. Accordingly, Brown (1985) asserted:

> When we confine our approach to those we serve to acting as technical experts on how to do this or that, we are upholding technical rationality as *the* mode of rationality [emphasis in original]. Unless we recognize that hermeneutic [interpretive] rationality and emancipative rationality are to promote reflective understanding and moral direction in the goals sought and critical awareness of existing social beliefs and practices of political-moral concern, we inhibit the development of autonomous persons. This reflects not only in the persons whom we serve directly but also in these same persons' practices in promoting or hindering the development of others. (p. 43)

Expanding disciplinary thinking beyond the technical to both interpretive and emancipatory modes of inquiry parallels the intent of CST, as each CST theme aims to promote equality among individuals, families, and communities globally (Vatican Council II, 1965/1996). This is likewise demonstrated through the

quest for knowledge inherent in CIT, which ultimately seeks to educate people capable of liberating those marginalized in society (Cahoy, 2003). For FCS, the findings from these communicative interactions and deliberations must inform the disciplinary content of FCS as much as intellectual reflection ought to inform practice. As such, the dynamic between intellect and practice can be best defined as *praxis* (Foster, 1986; Stevens, 2002).

The Scholarship of Difference and Differences in Scholarship

Exploring individual and communal meaning making through multiple strategies that promote autonomy warrants multiple strategies of inquiry as well. As outlined in *Home Economics: A Definition* (Brown & Paolucci, 1978), because FCS is considered a "practical science" it must depend on knowledge that is determined by multiple theoretical frameworks, including: (a) empirical theories, (b) phenomenological theories (meaning making), (c) analytical theories (language/semantics), and (d) normative theories (judgment of actions), each of which contributes to the overall understanding regarding the quality of human life. Beyond the traditional empirical and phenomenological inquiry reflective of technical and interpretive modes of rationality, analytical and normative-based scholarship address questions that examine and promote emancipative action (Brown & Paolucci, 1978). Thus by encouraging a multidimensional approach to scholarship, policies and practices that impede the autonomy of individuals, families, and communities may be illuminated, offering possibilities for emancipation. Promotion of this sort of critical scholarship better positions FCS against previous criticisms of being reactive as opposed to proactive in advocating for social change (Nickols et al., 2009). For FCS scholars in Catholic institutions of higher education, such scholarship would allow for examination of difference and promotion of diversity, which is central to CIT.

Although challenging, developing an authentic openness to diversity is primary to CIT. According to Cahoy (2003), CIT requires that

> we need to be open to those who are not like us; think about the culture in which we live; use new ideas to understand and communicate the Gospel as we move to new times and places; listen to those outside the church to hear what God might be speaking through them; and through it all…exercise…reason. (pp. 5-6)

Drawing on the work of Monika Hellwig, renowned theologian and past president and executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, Cahoy articulated the centrality of "inclusiveness" to CIT, affirming that "diversity and openness…[are] *required* [to] be truly catholic [emphasis in original]" (p. 9). Openness to diversity however, is not just required in relation to those who are served; it must also be applied to intellectual debates within academia itself.

Calling attention to the possibility of thinking that CIT is exclusive to like-minded individuals, Cahoy (2003) continued:

> Thus using the affirmation of Catholic tradition and community to create a ghetto of like-minded people is a *misunderstanding* of the specific tradition of *this* community. Turning in upon ourselves in parochialism or sectarianism *is a failure to live up to our ideals as a church* [emphasis in original]. In the end, it is a failure to be Catholic, not merely a failure to be humane, relevant or politically correct. (p. 9)

The proposition of this false dichotomy between the sectarian and secular world is inconsistent with CIT, yet it often captures the intellectual debates central to academia, creating an "us and them" mentality. As understood by Cahoy,

> As real and frequent as that fight may be…it is a fight *within* the tradition and community of faith. It need not and should not be understood as a fight between *the church,* identified with the forces of conformity, on the one side, and *reason* [emphasis in original], the forces of secularism, on the other. (p. 10)

For Catholic institutions, it is as important to respect the diversity of those who are served by CIT as it is relevant to embrace the diversity of scholars and scholarship conducted within institutions of higher education, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike. This consideration of diversity among different ways of thinking and acting is definitely a shared concern with FCS, where practice is often disengaged from intellectual pursuits.

Although the intellectual heritage of FCS is well documented by Brown and others, efforts to inform FCS practice intellectually and reflectively are slow in coming as arguments justifying the intellectual/practitioner divide have persisted over time (Brown, 1985). Rather than exercising praxis through FCS

work, FCS professionals have, historically, minimally reflected on the dynamics between the intellectual foundations of FCS and its subsequent practice (Brown, 1985). The discomfort with acting intellectually can likewise be seen in the mistaken dichotomy between faith and reason that often confronts Christians and non-Christians alike (Heredia, 2001). Brown's connection between intellect and practice is similar to the premise of CIT offered by Launderville (2002), in which there is no dichotomy but an understanding that "faith demands the engagement of the mind" (p. 1) and that such engagement allows for "the promise of Christ among us to bear on the struggles of human existence" (p. 2). As FCS is called to promote the autonomy and well-being of individuals and families, its practice must be founded on the intellectual premises of the profession, just as faith-based action must be grounded in CIT.

Within Catholic academia, there too is a possibility for additional divisiveness. Despite the clarity and fullness of inclusion offered through CIT, scholarly pursuits are not without their share of contentions, as a debate of ideas can often be reduced to debate regarding the character of individuals. Acknowledging the perceived tensions between academic freedom and the Catholic university, Launderville (2002) looked to CIT, in which

> The human person is not understood as an isolated will guided by intelligence but rather as a social being related to all of reality. Catholic institutions need to encourage debate, even on the most controversial of issues. Such debate will lead to *opposing sides to become more informed about one another's views* [emphasis added] and, in the long run, can promote a greater appreciation of the complexity of the created world. (pp. 6-7)

In light of CIT, all are called to participate in the debate and to seek Christ in others, opening us to the possibility and the gift of deeper understandings (Cahoy, 2003).

Such openness central to CIT likewise is reflected in the companionate notion of a "sacramental world-view," whereby all things learned or discovered have the potential to reveal God's creation. Whether studies are embedded in the sciences, arts, music, literature, history, mathematics, or even FCS, all disciplines can foster sacramental insight, enriching the tradition. As FCS examines the human condition from a multiplicity of perspectives, the possibility for scholarship to illuminate creation is immeasurable. Inclusive of both imagination and memory, a sacramental world-view frees us to consider

ways of thinking that shift our understandings between reality and possibility. Speaking about the "tyranny of the present," in which the current state of the world is taken as immutable, Cahoy (2003) likened a sacramental world-view to fostering a willingness to use one's imagination to create a world of possibility and hope: Catholic universities "practic[ing] the liberal arts as the *liberating arts* [emphasis added]" (p. 8). Conceiving of Catholic universities as institutions in which individuals study for the purpose of liberating self and others corresponds well with the critical science perspective in FCS, as the foundational documents likewise promote emancipation of self and others through the purpose, discipline, and practice of the FCS field (Brown, 1985).

Tensions inherent to both the intellectual milieu of FCS and CIT center on three basic issues, namely: (a) the disengagement of practice from intellectual reflection; (b) the perceived conflict surrounding the quality and focus of academic pursuits; and (c) the apprehension toward dialogue with those who think differently than ourselves. The basic concern that can be distilled from these three issues is the human tendency or affinity for similarity rather than difference. While FCS and CIT necessitate a professional ability to foster community, the challenge to promote a professional community, especially among differences, demands a personal commitment from each person (Brown, 1985; Launderville, 2002).

Brown's (1985) primary interest in *Philosophical Studies* was to bring FCS professionals together to articulate the purpose of the field. She sought a "mutuality" of understandings among peers, so that the collective FCS efforts would more aptly promote autonomy among individuals, families, and communities. Although Brown was mindful of the multiple perspectives expressed by colleagues, the expectation for full participation of the professional body was clear: it was not permissible simply to "choose" not to participate in the dialogue intended to bring consistency to FCS work. Abdicating one's voice was antithetical to Brown's vision of dialogue, community, and capacity building of the profession itself.

Brown's intention of unity demonstrated through a shared purpose is echoed in the earlier discussion surrounding the challenges within CIT. What is often misunderstood is the potential to promote diversity while maintaining unity. As noted by Launderville (2002),

> the Catholic approach, which aims for unity and universality, counsels the cultivation of love for nature, for others, and especially for God. It is such love or other-directedness that will allow the subject to respect

> one's own experience and the unique experiences of others but at the same time will not see this individuality as disruptive of unity. (p. 6)

Addressing difference through the capacity to be other-directed demonstrates the human ability to persist through conflict: fracturing the community because of difference is not reflective of CIT (Launderville, 2002). The possibility of creating community rests in our willingness to foster a consistent, communal response toward embracing the other within those with whom we come in contact. For FCS, this possibility rests in the "soul" of the profession, and for Catholic institutions of higher education this possibility is brought to fruition through the respective charism of the sponsoring institution. This calling, both professionally and institutionally, likewise expresses the unity of missions between the FCS discipline and Catholic institutions of higher education.

Called By the Spirit: FCS and Institutional Charisms

The key to promoting a communal response embracing the other among FCS professionals is located in the body of knowledge and its related papers (Anderson & Nickols, 2001; Nickols et al., 2001). The suggestion that a professional "soul" exists not only intimates a sense of spirit connecting FCS colleagues, but that a deep-seated purpose unites all. When asked to respond to the prompt, "What constitutes the soul of the profession?" the collective thinking of FCS leaders discerned that FCS is, indeed, the sum of its membership (Nickols et al., 2001). It is the belief of the FCS leadership that FCS professionals experience a calling to a life of service to improve the human condition (Nickols et al., 2001). Most remarkable, is that the origin of this shared calling varies among individuals. As modeled by FCS leaders, the profession's ability to embrace the other rests in the ability to understand the origin of one's own professional calling and that of one's peers. Attentiveness to one another, then, brings FCS professionals more fully into community.

This same sense of community can be found among Catholic women religious organizations that sponsor universities that are home to FCS programs. For example, examination of the charisms of the IHM, the SC, and the CSJ all speak to a commitment to community both within and beyond the organization. Broadly, the charisms reflect a commitment to serve those marginalized in society as expressed through notions of solidarity (Sisters of Charity Federation, 2011), dedication (Sisters, Servants of Immaculate Heart of Mary, n.d.), and love of neighbor without distinction (Sisters of St. Joseph of Caron-

delet, St. Louis Province, 2011). For the Sisters of Charity (2011), it is through collaboration, which implicitly demands the appreciation of the diversity of gifts each sister brings to the organization. Likewise, the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity intimates a shared commitment to serve God and others (Sisters, Servants of Immaculate Heart of Mary, n.d.). For the CSJ (Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province, 2011), the charism of unity and reconciliation conveys the pursuit of right relations with all and will be used to explore further the relationship between a Catholic institution's charism and the FCS professional calling.

The CSJ Charism: Unity and Reconciliation

The CSJ intentions and purposes (Byrne, 2000) to create their community can be informative to FCS professionals. Those familiar with the CSJ immediately reference the community's connection to the "dear neighbor." The outward creation of community—connecting neighbor with neighbor—grows directly from the CSJ commitment to fostering community *among themselves*. Unity, which lies at the heart of their comm*unity*, does not demand uniformity within the communal body. Rather, the unity expressed through the CSJ charism (unity and reconciliation) calls each to community based on a common vocation, "which functions primarily in a climate of *shared spiritual discernment* in an attempt to live according to God [emphasis in original]" (Byrne, 2000, p. 15). In addition to a shared calling, the individuality of persons requires that they, too, seek to embrace the other among their sisters, by realizing the second part of their charism: reconciliation. The desire to seek unity with one another consequently obliges each person to reconcile differences that could separate one from the other.

Unity and reconciliation is the process by which the CSJ community is created, restored, and healed (Byrne, 2000). In this sense, its charism brings to fruition the notion of right relations, recognizing the power of God in their midst as they work to serve the dear neighbor without distinction, while simultaneously creating community among themselves and with God. Captured in the image of *The Two Trinities* (created and uncreated) painted by Bartolomé Estaban Murillo (1640), the dynamic of grace in human action is realized and consequently humanized through Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. As understood by Byrne (2000), "while the Holy Spirit is 'all love,' Joseph is the model, for the sisters, of the most perfect love and charity among themselves…and…toward every kind of neighbor" (p. 10). As such, the painting captures the sense of

grace necessary for the CSJ to carry out their work together, around the world.

The CSJ charism and the commitment to seek right relations serves as a viable lens for both promoting FCS professional relationships envisioned by Brown (1985, 1995) and for extending the notion of a shared FCS "professional soul." Drawing from the CSJ charism of unity and reconciliation could assist the profession in (a) redressing the fractured nature characterizing the discipline and its diverse content areas over the past few decades; (b) allowing FCS professionals to competently attend to their shared calling to improve the human condition; and (c) creating a consistent, communal response toward embracing the other as deliberation of the purpose, discipline, and practice of the field continues, thus restoring, healing, and recreating FCS in a new light.

At Fontbonne University in particular, the CSJ charism of unity and reconciliation is central to studies in the Department of Human Environmental Sciences (HES). Through the HES core course work (Foundations in HES, Advocacy for Professional Practice, and Senior Synthesis in HES) and beyond, faculty work to instill in students an appreciation for the unified commitment to address quality of life issues among all undergraduate majors, including dietetics, early childhood, family and consumer sciences, and fashion merchandising. Faculty also address the diverse knowledge each major area of study brings to bear on issues pertaining to the well-being of individuals, families and communities, and the importance of collaboration for a holistic, integrative approach to their future work.

While the work of the HES department is consistent with the CSJ charism that permeates the university, it likewise reflects the institutional commitment to "educate students to think critically, to act ethically and to assume responsibility as citizens and leaders" (Fontbonne University, 2009, ¶1). Commitments to both CST and CIT consonant with the institution's strategic plan (Fontbonne University, 2011) are reflected through studies in HES as students are challenged to address intellectually the dynamic needs of diverse individuals, families, and communities to promote the well-being of all.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to demonstrate the inherent unity that exists between the FCS disciplinary mission and the institutional mission of Catholic higher education. Drawing on the metaphor of heart, head, and soul offered by Anderson and Nickols (2001), analysis of foundational documents related to FCS found that the FCS mission is best understood through examination of

its professional practice, intellectual heritage, and shared professional calling. Likewise, the mission common to Catholic colleges and universities is similarly distinguished through its connection to CST, CIT, and the charism particular to each institution's founders (e.g., the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the sponsors of Fontbonne University).

Findings demonstrate a strong connection between missions, particularly in relation to professional and institutional interests to serve individuals, families, and communities to promote the common good, both in the near environment and globally as well. Although the missions each address particular sets of false dichotomies related to their intellectual heritage (practitioner versus intellectual in FCS and sectarian versus secular in CIT), both professional and institutional missions share a commitment to embrace knowledge from multiple theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. Additionally, both share a commitment to scholarship that examines policies and practices that promote the status quo power relations while aiming to liberate those marginalized by such injustices, reflective of a commitment to praxis. Though there are tensions embedded within each of the missions and related practices, the understanding of a shared calling transcends these differences as each is positioned to foster a communal response to embrace the other, especially when considering the charism of respective institutions.

The unity demonstrated between the FCS discipline and Catholic institutions of higher education provides an opportunity for professional dialogue. The intellectually informed commitments to social justice initiatives inspired by a shared calling among professionals suggests a need for further study. While the CSJ charism of unity and reconciliation particular to Fontbonne University and its CSJ sister institutions clearly resonates with the FCS discipline, it becomes important to learn more about the relationship between FCS and the charisms of other organizations. In particular, it would be beneficial to examine in more detail the charism of the IHM and SC in relation to FCS, especially since each sponsors higher education institutions that house FCS programs. And though the intent of this paper was to demonstrate the fit of FCS programs in Catholic colleges and universities, the method utilized might also be a practical way to examine institutional commitments to programming more fully. Dickeson's (2010) work on program prioritization articulates the importance of program fit to institutional mission: this paper provides a framework for examining mission fit specifically related to Catholic institutions of higher education.

As FCS programs continue to be eliminated from or reorganized within

institutions that once housed founding FCS (home economics) programs, it becomes imperative to examine the fit between disciplinary and institutional missions. The intellectual and social commitments shared by FCS and Catholic institutions of higher education clearly demonstrate their suitability to one another. This paper presents a possible direction for future conversations regarding the longevity of FCS programs in higher education. Based on the findings, it is plausible to suggest that the future of FCS programs could be rooted in Catholic colleges and universities.

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