

TASK FORCE ON CIVIC AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP FORMATION
BILBAO POSITION PAPER, JUNE 13, 2018

Task Force Members

David Kaulem, Arrupe College, Harare, Zimbabwe (Chair)
Thomas Banchoff, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, United States (Co-Chair)
Susana Di Trolio, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, Venezuela
Pablo Reyna Esteves, Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México, Mexico
Midori Okabe, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan
Roy Pereira, SJ, St. Xavier's, Mumbai, India
Benjamin Tolosa, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Education for Global Citizenship

In a world growing both more connected and more divided, Jesuit universities are called to educate a new generation of leaders and citizens with a global solidarity mindset.

Processes of economic and social integration, driven by ongoing revolutions in information, communications, and transportation technology, are creating more cross-border connections than at any time in history. As a result, the civic and political challenges facing humanity – from economic growth and environmental sustainability to refugees and immigration, gender inequality, and peace – have an increasingly transnational dimension.

Concurrently, those same globalizing processes are bringing people of very different national, religious, and cultural backgrounds into greater contact with one another. While these encounters provide an opportunity to promote dialogue and advance collaboration around common problems, they can also exacerbate differences and generate political and ideological conflict.

Today these forces of division and disintegration are on the offensive. The growth of nationalism, populism, racism, and authoritarianism in many parts of the world threatens efforts to bring humanity together to face the common challenges of the 21st century.

The education of rising generations with a global solidarity mindset has never been more important. And the Society of Jesus, with its more than 450-year-old global horizon and tradition of education for the common good, is positioned to make a distinctive contribution.

The centrality of a mindset that takes global humanity as its point of departure is part of the Jesuit educational tradition that requires intentional support and further development today.

Our challenge is to further develop Jesuit educational philosophy and practice for a global era – to cultivate critical thinking, ethical judgment, and an orientation to service, and form global “men and women of Conscience, Competence, Compassion and Commitment” (Kolvenbach).

The Civic and Political Mission of the Jesuit University

Every university is a “proyecto social” either challenging or reproducing the status quo. Every university president is therefore a political leader – locally, nationally, and internationally.

In an era where politics are degraded, an awareness of this greater social and political responsibility is more critical than ever – linking politics to ethics, responding to concrete situations, and accompanying processes of growth, transformation, and reconciliation.

The entire university community is called to exercise broader social and political leadership. We should bring a positive conception of politics as Caritas (Pope Francis) to universities as they live out their social responsibility in local, national, and global settings.

In addition to educating the young for lives of responsibility, Jesuit universities should engage both with the political class and with civil society to contribute to the common good and promote justice and reconciliation in diverse contexts.

This local, national, and global political and social horizon and responsibility should permeate the teaching, research, service, advocacy, and administrative activities of our institutions. It should encompass both Jesuit and lay leadership. And it should reach beyond those parts of the university traditionally oriented to engagement with the wider society, such as business schools.

Four Dimensions of a Distinctive Jesuit Approach

Since most universities proclaim an ambition to educate citizens and leaders for a better world, what should be the specific contribution of Jesuit institutions?

Catholic Social Thought, with its principles of the common good, solidarity, and respect for the human person, is a valuable resource given its deep historical roots and resonance with the world’s other great religious, philosophical, and ethical traditions.

Most valuable and distinctive within Catholic Social Thought is the “preferential option for the poor” – a clear Gospel value forcefully articulated by both Pedro Arrupe and Pope Francis.

Beginning with the poor highlights the specific content of the concept of the common good in the Catholic and Jesuit tradition – not simply the public good in the aggregate but a just society in which all, even those on the margins, can flourish. It underlines one of the distinguishing features of our globalizing world: the persistence of poverty and rise of social inequality and new forms of exclusion. And it highlights the importance of a global solidarity mindset.

How can Jesuit universities form leaders and citizens in this spirit? Four different but complementary approaches come to mind:

- Preparing future leaders and citizens for lives of service
- Encouraging faculty to address the social impact of research

- Engaging in dialogue with current civic and political leaders
- Developing the university as a comprehensive “proyecto social”

All four approaches to civic and political leadership formation can serve as points of departure for any Jesuit university’s attempts to serve the common good and inculcate an orientation to global citizenship. At the same time, to be effective, each must be responsive to local contexts.

The following sections spell out these approaches in more detail and provide examples of their implementation across the global Jesuit network.

First Approach: Preparing Future Leaders

The most obvious way for Jesuit institutions to further civic and political formation is through the education of students for citizenship, leadership, and lives of service. Here, traditional theology and philosophy requirements, the liberal arts curriculum, service learning, and exposure to global justice challenges (human rights, environment, gender, etc.) constitute a holistic, Ignatian approach to formation.

A more comprehensive approach to this work would connect the curriculum and co-curriculum in new ways, giving students and faculty the chance to more intentionally explore core values in the context of concrete social problems at the local, national, and global levels.

Some of the most innovative work in this area brings in a strong co-curricular and social justice dimension, instilling a sense of global citizenship that unites the immediacy of local needs to which students can respond presently, with a longer-term aim of these students in applying global values across diverse fields as they rise into civic and political leadership positions.

For example, Arrupe Jesuit University (Harare, Zimbabwe) offers a BA Honours Degree in Training for Transformation that teaches students how to lead marginalized communities in countering destructive development practices in Zimbabwe and beyond. St. Joseph’s College (Bangalore, India) sponsors an Outreach Program that puts all students into in-need communities around Bangalore to carry out relevant service projects. And the “Servicio Social” requirement at Universidad Centroamericana (Managua, Nicaragua) has students engage in service projects based both on their particular field of study and on local and national needs.

Education of future leaders at these institutions brings Catholic and Jesuit values into dialogue with local contexts, fostering different but equally important pedagogical models. Arrupe’s dedicated four-year program has students consciously choose to engage in civic leadership formation. St. Joseph’s exposes all students to the theory and practice of servant leadership while also giving additional training to those students selected by their peers as leaders. Universidad Centroamericana also requires service projects as part of the curriculum, but enables students to tailor them towards their particular areas of study.

Second Approach: Addressing the Social Impact of Research

The teaching and research functions of a university are intimately connected. In order to effectively prepare students for lives of service, faculty should, wherever possible, model social solidarity in their research. Universities should encourage faculty to address the social impact of research and how it relates (or may relate in the future) to the preferential option for the poor and an inclusive understanding of the common good.

Research on global health, climate change, and economic development are examples of areas of global scope with increasingly immediate impact on local and national communities. Up to the present, the most typical approach to generating socially impactful research has been to channel these efforts into or through a dedicated social justice-oriented center within the university.

Different Jesuit institutions have found creative ways to integrate the research enterprise with efforts to respond to local and national problems with a global dimension. For example, the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans (USA) channels the university's socially impactful research toward addressing issues affecting the U.S. Gulf South region. It works in collaboration with the Jesuits' U.S. Central and Southern Province and combines social research with policy advocacy directed at local and state governments.

The Center of Ethics and Social Reflection at the Universidad Alberto Hurtado (Santiago, Chile) applies its research to the challenges facing the indigenous Mapuche people and collaborates with Jesuit service organizations active in the field. Its advocacy work, which includes advising the Chilean Ministry of Economy, champions the ideas of a "social and solidarity economy" – an approach reflective of the Latin American tradition of liberation theology.

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University (California, USA) applies research on national and global ethical issues for the benefit of national, global, and local actors. Situated in Silicon Valley where the idea of global citizenship is alive but needs deeper ethical grounding, the Center engages with business, media, and local government leaders to integrate ethics and values into their work in new and effective ways.

While these and similar efforts are to be commended, it is vitally important that academic departments, and not just social justice and outreach centers, intentionally take up the work of advancing research with a positive impact on local, national, and global society.

Third Approach: Dialogue with Current Civic and Political Leaders

It is not enough for Jesuit universities to instill a spirit of solidarity and global citizenship in their students and faculty through teaching and research. As parts of local and national communities, we are also called to engage in dialogue with current political and civic leaders (Catholic or not), inviting them to learn more about the values expressed in Catholic Social Thought – in particular the preferential option for the poor.

Some Jesuit institutions will be well positioned to engage international as well as national and local leaders. But even national and local leaders should be encouraged to adopt a more global horizon in which poverty and social inequality are viewed as shared, transnational challenges.

Several different modalities, from public events to closed forums and executive education offerings, can advance these efforts. For example, the School of Government at Ateneo de Manila (Philippines) runs an Executive Education Program that is built around the needs of local political leaders seeking to navigate the complex web of local, regional, and federal jurisdictions and agencies. The Ateneo's model of training local political officials to understand their operational context and do their jobs well is an effective way to serve the common good.

Georgetown University (Washington, DC, USA) created the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life in 2013 as a forum to promote the Church's ethical teaching and advance constructive dialogue at a time of increasing political polarization in the country. Through public events and smaller seminars, the Initiative reaches out to elected officials in both major parties, as well as their staffs, exposing them to the resources of the tradition as it relates to national and global challenges. A particular focus has been refugees and migration.

In some local contexts, outreach to political leaders involves courage and the risk of open confrontation. For example, the Andrés Bello's Human Rights Center at the Universidad Católica (Caracas, Venezuela) directly challenges the current government's civil and human rights abuses and seeks to educate the public on how to protect themselves and others against arbitrary state power. By emphasizing the Church's commitment to universal human rights and the dignity of the human person, the Center also appeals to the solidarity of the international community.

Fourth Approach: The University as “Proyecto Social”

The imperative of reaching out to civic and political leaders underscores the importance of conceiving of the Jesuit university as more than an educational institution in the narrow sense. We are called to develop the university as a comprehensive “proyecto social” that approaches its teaching, research, and outreach missions not just as an academic mission but also as a way to live out the Gospel in practice.

The Jesuit university, from this perspective, has the capacity to impact the wider political culture and its values by articulating and embodying its particular mission as an institution rooted in a local and national context but exercising global social responsibility and solidarity.

Elements of such a comprehensive approach are evident, for example, in Strategic Plan 2020 of Loyola University Chicago (USA). The university identifies its four priorities less in terms of material growth or reputation than in terms of wider social concerns. They are: collaborative action, research, and programming to reduce health disparities; STEM education and research to promote sustainability; and efforts to reduce injustice and violence. This approach responds both to the problems facing the city of Chicago, as well as to the national and global context.

Javeriana University (Bogotá, Colombia) takes a more grassroots approach to its wider social responsibility. Its Education Project includes a call for members of the university community to orient their work toward the betterment of society, leaving it to individual students, professors, departments, or self-organizing groups to put this into action in specific ways. The engineering faculty, for example, created a course as its “Proyecto Social Universitario” that combines practical skills and their application to engineering problems that help the marginalized.

Regional Collaboration for Civic and Political Engagement

While much of the work of training and engaging civic and political leaders around the values of Catholic Social Thought must be carried out by individual universities situated in particular operational contexts, regional Jesuit higher education networks also play a role.

Regional networks in Latin America have been the most active to date. Seventeen Latin American universities host the Association of Jesuit Latin American Universities’ (AUSJAL) Ignatian Leadership Program, an annual effort open to a select number of undergraduate students to develop leadership skills from an Ignatian and Latin American perspective. For example, Javeriana University (Bogotá) sends about 15 students annually and Iberoamericana (Ciudad de México) about ten. Students complete 150 hours of training in Ignatian thought, self-knowledge, leadership, and national and regional sociopolitical contexts, and of on-the-ground service and personal accompaniment in marginalized communities, all over the course of 8 months, to earn a Diploma in Ignatian Leadership. During the service phase of the program, students are inserted into underserved communities to listen to those who live there, understand their challenges, and develop and implement relevant projects to meet their needs.

Since 2008, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities - Asia Pacific has run an annual Global Leadership Program that brings together teams of undergraduates from five East and Southeast Asian universities: Sofia (Tokyo, Japan), Sogang (Seoul, South Korea), Ateneo de Manila, Fu Jen (Taiwan) and Sanata Dharma (Yogyakarta, Indonesia). The students convene at one of the universities each year around a set theme – “Healing the Broken World” in 2016, for example – where they study and discuss how to address relevant social, political, and ecological issues from the perspective of Catholic Social Thought and Jesuit values; and how to lead fellow students and the wider society in each of their respective countries to take meaningful action.

The Challenge of Global Collaboration

While many Jesuit universities are engaged in creative efforts to promote civic and political leadership formation, drawing on the resources of Catholic Social Thought, there has been a paucity of efforts to pool those efforts through international collaboration.

The regional efforts in Latin America and the Asia Pacific noted above are a good start. But in order to prepare students as global leaders and citizens, we must provide them with global as well as regional experiences. And those experiences must go beyond traditional study abroad

programs to encompass in-depth research and learning about the common challenges facing humanity, and particularly the poor, in our global era.

The existence of the global Jesuit higher education network presents a unique opportunity to foster rich, formative global experiences of this kind, by bringing together faculty and students from different institutions for shared research and teaching – through meetings, site-research, and the innovative use of online tools.

A great many obstacles stand in the way of such cooperation, first and foremost resource constraints. But deeper institutional cooperation, across national and regional boundaries, will be necessary if we are to promote a global solidarity mindset among the students, faculty, and staff at our universities and within our broader civic and political communities.

Appendix 1: Issues Raised at January 2018 Task Force Meeting in Rome

The Challenge of Formation

It is important to appreciate the need for discernment in order to know and decide when and how to be bold.

There is a danger in conceiving of leadership in narrow terms – it has different dynamics across different domains, including the political, economic, social, and religious.

What qualities do we have in mind for formation? It could be “social awareness” and “integral human development” in addition to intellectual capacities.

How do we go beyond giving information about leadership in order to address the heart and bring personal conversion? How can awareness be created?

There is a wrong assumption that Jesuits are necessarily leaders. Jesuits need to be prepared into leadership positions.

Some people talk about “servant leadership”, but we need to unpack what this means. There is no one style of leadership that is all good. We should start to talk about “effective, responsible and professional leadership”.

Alumni

What role could alumni associations play to encourage and strengthen the values aspect of university formation efforts?

Alumni may not be generous in some areas, but they could contribute in terms of time and work to encourage specific values in formation.

It may be worthwhile to engage alumni by bringing them up to date on efforts to build out their alma maters’ greater social and political engagement – a part of university identity and mission they may not have experienced as students. They may prove eager to get involved.

Challenging alumni can be complicated as many alumni offices do not want to push a political position. However, different arms of the university can be used to reach the alumni and push political issues while other arms can remain neutral.

Cultural Differences

There are differences in cultures in various regions. How can civil and political leadership formation be sensitive to these differences?

There is need to appreciate the history of leadership within particular cultures. This would include helping young people to understand how they experience leadership in their families and communities, and addressing distinctions between leadership in modern and traditional societies. How, for example, could we understand paternalism?

How do we approach cultures where “love of neighbor” is not as central a value and “salvation” is conceived as a mainly individual matter? In parts of India, for example, if a person is poor or marginalized, many will attribute it to that person’s karma.

Impact and Evaluation

Success in leadership formation could be demonstrated by those leaders’ ability to transform their own societies. If leaders are not able to help the evolution of their respective societies, how can they be seen as successful? We also need to understand why successful leaders are able to transform society. What is it about them that helps them to bring about this transformation?

Who is our audience in our formation programs? There is need to get involved in advocacy work to sensitize the people in order to raise the expectations which they have of their leaders. We could simplify philosophy and use it to prepare the population to have high expectations.

We need to have concrete indicators of what a university formation entails. There are cases of students challenging leaders for not exhibiting the values they preach.

There is need to give practical ways to illustrate the efficacy of the programme of Ignatian spirituality founded on Catholic Social Thought.

The Formation of Citizens

We must look at the kind of citizen we want to encourage and what qualities they should have – for example, capacity for dialogue and bridge building.

In civic formation, we should focus on students in Catholic universities as well as those in other universities.

Working with Political Authorities

Some Jesuit institutions resist engaging and collaborating with governments and their agencies for fear of tarnishing their reputation, especially when those governments are seen to be corrupt. How can they reconcile this approach with efforts to serve the common good?

There will be differences among university presidents on how to engage political leaders.

Jesuit institutions have existed for a long time and have produced many people who have been implicated in corruption, oppression, and other scandals. What has gone wrong? Jesuit institutions and programs do not seem to naturally impart qualities of virtue and social justice.

Appendix 2: Bilbao Conversation Topics

2.1 Sharing Catholic Social Thought: How can Jesuit universities best share the riches of Catholic Social Thought with civic and political leaders? What best practices exist across the Jesuit higher education network? What are the major challenges in advancing this agenda, and how can they be overcome? How can we better share our resources and experiences across our universities?

2.2 Advancing Catholic Social Thought. How can Jesuit universities best advance Catholic Social Thought in the formation of students? What best practices exist across the Jesuit higher education network? What are some challenges in advancing this agenda, and how can they be overcome? How can we better share our resources and experiences across our universities?

2.3 (Spanish version of 2.2) Promoviendo el Pensamiento Social de la Iglesia. ¿Cómo pueden las universidades jesuitas mejorar la promoción del pensamiento social católico en la formación de los estudiantes? ¿Cuáles son las mejores prácticas que existen en la red de educación superior de los jesuitas en esta materia? ¿Cuáles son los principales desafíos para avanzar en esta agenda y cómo podrían superarse?

2.4 Catholic Social Thought and Research. Can Jesuit universities advance research that helps to realize Catholic Social Thought in practice? Are there ways that we can collaborate in this activity? What best practices of research and advocacy exist across the Jesuit higher education network? What are some challenges in advancing this agenda, and how can they be overcome? How can we better share our resources and experiences across our universities?

2.5 (Spanish version of 2.4) Pensamiento Social de la Iglesia e Investigación. ¿Pueden las universidades jesuitas desarrollar investigaciones que contribuyan a alcanzar el Pensamiento Social de la Iglesia en la práctica? ¿Hay formas en las que podamos colaborar entre nosotros en esta actividad de investigación? ¿Cuáles son las buenas prácticas de investigación e incidencia existen a lo largo de la red de educación superior de los jesuitas? ¿Cuáles son algunos desafíos para avanzar en esta agenda y cómo pueden superarse? ¿Cómo podemos compartir mejor nuestros recursos y experiencias entre nuestras universidades?

2.6 The University as “Proyecto Social.” To what extent is the Jesuit University a “proyecto social” dedicated to the transformation of the wider society? What best practices exist across the Jesuit higher education network? What are some challenges in advancing this agenda, and how can they be overcome? How can we better share our resources and experiences across our universities?

2.7 (Spanish version of 2.6). La Universidad como "Proyecto Social". ¿En qué medida la Universidad Jesuita es un "Proyecto Social" dedicado a la transformación de la sociedad? ¿Cuáles son las mejores prácticas que existen en la red de educación superior de los jesuitas en esta materia? ¿Cuáles son algunos desafíos para avanzar en esta agenda y cómo pueden superarse? ¿Cómo podemos compartir mejor nuestros recursos y experiencia en nuestras universidades?