MANRESA ExAMINES Vocation and the Marquette Student

- Why Enroll at Marquette
- Gender Influences
- Cohort and Longitudinal Findings

The December 2008 Issue of the Manresa Project Review reported the findings of a survey completed by 456 Marquette students in April of 2008. We examine dynamics central to the MANRESA mission regarding the intersection of faith and vocation: Facilitating vocation discernment wherein students include issues of values, identity, and purpose. Vocation here is used broadly, including work-for-pay, community engagement, and other major life commitments such as parenting. In this issue, we report the findings of a second survey, completed in May of 2009 by 539 students, 236 of whom also completed the previous survey. It is rare in university student development research to find such LONGITUDINAL examinations that allow researchers to track change over time within individual students. More common are reports that compare one cohort (such as sophomores) to another (such as juniors) or that compares students of the same status (seniors) across years, such as the graduating class of 2005 compared to the graduating class of 2009. We do complete cohort analyses here but we also are able to report on actual longitudinal data that demonstrates change within particular students from 2008 to 2009. So far, only these two data periods are available for analysis. The 539 students completing the 2009 survey included 51 freshman, 127 sophomores, 178 juniors, and 183 seniors. There were 205 males and 334 females in the sample.

On the Inside

Many of the graphs in this issue employ Z-score scales, which is a way to standardize non-compatible scales such as they can be compared evenly. If one variable was measured on a 10 point scale but another on a 7 point scale, Z scores convert both such that they are now on a standard scale.

A Word from the Director

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” With these words Poet Mary Oliver asks the crucial question that so frames the experience of the contemporary college student. The vocation question actually haunts all of us from childhood on and perhaps even now more than ever through middle age: what am I doing with my wild and precious life? And whatever it is I am doing: why?

This newsletter invites each of us at Marquette: faculty and administrators alike to learn something about the motivation and questions of current Marquette students as they explore the whys and wherefores of vocation discernment.

We invite you to look at the data as well as your own experience of working with MU students. A key component of Ignatian pedagogy is to consider the “context” at the center of an experience. So, as you review the data from the survey and reflect on your own experience of teaching, advising or working with students, what are some of the questions you have?

(Continued on page 6)

Reasons to attend Marquette

(% of students identifying reason as “very” or “extremely” important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This college’s graduates get good jobs or attend top graduate schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This college has a very good academic reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I was offered financial assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*This college has a good reputation for its social activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*I was attracted to the social/justice or community involvement opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These four reasons for attendance were statistically related (significant and positive correlation) to students’ level of involvement in Manresa campus activities

Questions to consider:

How does knowing why students come to Marquette influence curriculum development?

Do any of these findings surprise you?
**Gender Influence**

**Reading the Graph**
With vocation motivation as an exception, the variables included here are all quantified via measures that have been reported to have sound psychometric properties. The sources of these measures and the articles reporting on their utility are available upon request from Ed de St. Aubin. Each variable is reported below with 2 examples of the survey items used to quantify it. The number of items used for each variable appears in the parentheses. (All graphs with variables will follow this template.) Since there was no existing measure of vocation motivation (Voc Mot) – a core interest of our survey – we created two items for each of six motivations. In our survey we included questions for all six of the motivations but report only on the four that had significant findings. Two are included here and we explore two in more detail on page 3. Post survey analyses demonstrate these items to be both reliable and valid.

**Gender Differences**

![Gender Differences Chart]

**Likert Scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree)**
- PERSONAL WELL BEING (18) • I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others
- VACCINE MOTIVATION • I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most people think

**Likert scale from 1 (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate)**
- ANXIETY (4) • Get stressed out easily
- ALTRUISTIC • Love to help others
- EMPATHY (4) • Make people feel welcome
- AM CAN BE (4) • Am deeply moved by others’ misfortunes
- FEEL SPIRITUALLY CONNECTED (6) • Feel spiritually connected to other people

**Likert scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (essential for vocation)**
- SOCIAL JUSTICE (2) • That it improves the lives of those in need
- IDENTITY CONGRUENCE (2) • That it allows me to grow as a person

**Number circled based on God descriptors provided**
- LOVING OF GOD (5) • That it be congruent with my personal identity
- LOVING IMAGE (6) • That it improves the lives of those in need
- UNFORGIVING (6) • That it leads towards social justice

**Frequency in past year of charitable involvement from 1 (never) to 8 (more than once per day)**
- CHARITABLE INVOLVEMENT (7) • Offering care for the hungry or homeless
- CHARITABLE INVOLVEMENT (7) • Assisting with community improvement

**Questions to consider:**
Look at the differences between your male and female students. From your experience what might be happening? Why?

**Reading the graph**
As we can see females from both surveys report similar spiritual struggle this year as they did in the previous year. Males from both, on the other hand, had a significant increase in their spiritual struggle this past year.

**Frequency in past year of spiritual struggle from 1 (never) to 8 (more than once per day)**
- SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE (3) • Questioning my religious/spiritual beliefs
- • Struggling to understand evil, suffering, and death

**Questions to consider:**
What might be influencing male students to have more spiritual struggle: war, the economy, fear of unemployment, course content that challenges previously held beliefs? What do you think? Why?

**Longitudinal Change: Gender and Spiritual Struggle**

![Longitudinal Change Graph]

**Scale: Level of Spiritual Struggle**
Response scale from 3 to 24
- 3 = “Never” and 24 = “More than once a day”
Cohort and Longitudinal Findings

Longitudinal Change: Vocation Motivation

Reading the Graph:
We found it interesting that among students that participated in both surveys there has been a significant decrease in prestige/glamour and money as motivation for vocation.

Likert scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (the essential reason for my vocation)
- Prestige/Glamour (2)
  - That it demonstrates to others how much I have achieved
  - That it puts me in a position of prestige
-Money (2)
  - That it provides desired resources (salary, benefits)
  - That it allows me to reach my financial goals

Question to consider:
Are these findings related to the current state of the economy or the educational environment at Marquette?

Cohort Differences: Career Self-Efficacy-Self-Appraisal

Reading the graph:
We can see in the graph to the right that students score moderately high as freshman in terms of their confidence regarding self-examination as it relates to career choices. This confidence dips down a bit sophomore year and then again increases during the junior year. As one would hope, we can see that students are most confident in this area during the senior year. However, when we look at the scale we can see they are not completely confident.

Indicate level of confidence of accomplishing these tasks. 1 = no confidence to 5 = complete confidence
- CAREER SELF-EFFICACY/SELF-APPRAISAL (5)
  - Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals
  - Define the type of lifestyle you would like to live

Questions to consider:
What might explain the developmental findings suggested by this graph?
Why would sophomores score lower than the other three groups?
Cohort Differences: Manresa Involvement and Vocation Motivation-Social Justice

Reading the graph:
The findings suggest that there is a developmental impact of being involved – specifically as this relates to a desire to pursue a career based on social justice motivations. For first and second year students, there is not much difference between students involved or not involved in Manresa. But as students move toward a career focus during one’s junior and senior years, the gap is quite noticeable – and statistically significantly different.

Question to consider:
What other experiences or influences might foster a vocation motivation of social justice in out students?

Longitudinal Analysis: Manresa Involvement & Religious Engagement

Reading the graph:
It appears that those students who participated in both surveys and are involved in Manresa have had similar, if not more, religious engagement over the past year. Alternatively, those not involved in Manresa have had a significant decrease in their religious engagement.

Question to consider:
Manresa offerings invite students to consider deeper questions. What other programs on campus serve the same function?
**MANRESA INFLUENCE**

**Have You Been MANRESA’d?**

**Reading the graph:**
The MANRESA program sponsors all four of the listed activities. The disconnect between reports of MANRESA involvement and participation in these activities suggests that most students are not aware when they have been MANRESA’d. Rather than creating “brand recognition” or marketing for self-promotion, the program works diffusely to shape the cultural climate on campus.

**Question to consider:**
What other campus activities invite students to reflect on their lives?

---

**Manresa Involvement Differences**

**Reading the graph:**
Many of the findings here follow our intuitions regarding the kind of student involved in Manresa. It makes sense that such a student would be relatively high on social activism, religious engagement, and charitable involvement. It follows that such a student is motivated towards careers that supply spirituality and social justice rather than money and score higher on maintaining a Loving Image of God. It is counter-intuitive that a MANRESA type of student would score significantly lower than others on religious saliency. Religious Saliency refers to the degree to which religion is integrated into one’s life. Individuals high in religious saliency believe that religion is an important part of their lives.

Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELIGIOUS</td>
<td>I find that my ideas on religion/spirituality have a considerable influence on my views in other areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALIENCY (6)</td>
<td>I very often think about matters relating to religion/spirituality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question to consider:**
How does the Marquette experience invite students to think with integrity and congruence about their lives and choices?
Service Learning

Slightly more than one-third of the sample indicated that they had participated in the Service Learning program at Marquette in 2009. Of those students:

- 47.8% noted that this experience facilitated reflection on their lives to “a great extent.”
- 90.9% stated that this experience positively impacted their view of the Marquette experience
- 81.2% noted that this experience positively impacted their view on their future vocation

Closing Thoughts (continued from page 1)

How have your anecdotal experiences merged with this data? Or if something about the data surprises you, what do you think is going on? Chat with colleagues about these findings and then with that data in mind, pay attention to the lives of the students you meet perhaps in a new way.

Father Adolfo Nicolas, the current Superior General of the Jesuits said in an address in Europe last year: “Jesuit teaching at all levels has sought to be useful and practical: it has always been concerned about focusing on the students, on their holistic development.” He added, “The inevitable question is: ‘What type of future do you want to inspire?’ I want to reflect with you about this point.”

Faculty and administrators at Marquette are mentors who inspire students to take on new challenges and to “be the difference.” These words come with gratitude for all of you who take the time to pay attention to our students, to listen to the melodies of their lives, knowing that your care for them will have an effect on countless others as they determine what they will do with their “wild and precious lives.”

Susan Mountin, Ph.D.

Manresa for Faculty in the Center for Teaching and Learning announces two exciting faculty opportunities launching this spring

1) Conversations on Ignatian Pedagogy: Companions in “Inspiring Futures” -- (CIF) A year-long faculty community that will explore the roots and foundations of Ignatian pedagogy along with current best practices. Nominate someone or yourself by sending a letter with your nomination and a statement of support for this person to Manresa for Faculty in the 707 building. Include why participating in this community will benefit the individual as well as students at Marquette.

2) Scholarship of Engagement (SOE) Faculty Learning Community A community that will focus on best practices in service learning and community-based research. The proposal application and more details about this opportunity are available on the Service Learning website [www.marquette.edu/servicelearning]. Questions should be directed to Kim Jensen Bohat, Director of the Service Learning Program at 288-0250 or kimberly.jensen@mu.edu.

Manresa for Faculty is a part of the Center for Teaching and Learning

Director: Susan M. Mountin, Ph.D.
   susan.mountin@marquette.edu
Office Assistant: Teresa Kaczmarek
   teresa.kaczmarek@marquette.edu
707 Building Room 332
288-0263
http://www.marquette.edu/manresa/FacultyandStaff.shtml