EDUCATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2019
10-Year Edition

BERKLEY CENTER
for Religion, Peace & World Affairs
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

In collaboration with the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service at Georgetown University.
ABOUT THE BERKLEY CENTER FOR RELIGION, PEACE, AND WORLD AFFAIRS

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University seeks a more just and peaceful world by deepening knowledge and solving problems at the intersection of religion and global affairs through research, teaching, and engaging multiple publics.

Two premises guide the center’s work: that a comprehensive examination of religion and norms is critical to address complex global challenges, and that the open engagement of religious and cultural traditions with one another can promote peace. To this end, the center engages students, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in analysis of and dialogue on critical issues in order to increase the public understanding of religion.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH, TEACHING AND SERVICE

The Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service (CSJ), founded in 2001, seeks to advance justice and the common good through promoting and integrating community-based research, teaching, and service by collaborating with diverse partners and communities. CSJ works in three key areas: community and public service, curriculum and pedagogy, and research. Through such critical and engaged work, Georgetown builds on its tradition of academic excellence and contributes in singular ways to the Jesuit ideal of justice education and action “for the glory of God and the well-being of humankind.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Berkley Center and CSJ are grateful for the many partners and supporters who have made the past 10 years of the ESJ Project possible, including Rodney Jacobs for his generous startup support and the many partner institutions who have served as hosts to our students. In particular, we would like to thank Georgetown’s Jesuit community for helping us establish partnerships with Jesuit and other institutions around the world. Furthermore, we are indebted to Georgetown’s Vice President for Global Engagement and Berkley Center Founding Director Thomas Banchoff and Berkley Center Senior Fellow Katherine Marshall for developing a vision for the ESJ Project, and to former Berkley Center and CSJ staff members Melody Fox Ahmed, Sara Singha, and Jennifer Rosales for further developing and expanding the program throughout the years and mentoring dozens of students along the way.

The Education and Social Justice Project is administered by Dr. Ryann Craig of the Berkley Center and Dr. Andria Wisler of CSJ.
# Table of Contents

Introduction 1
ESJ Alumni Working in Education 4
Ten Years of ESJ Work Around the World 5
A Decade of Success 7

**Dublin, Ireland**
Overview 10
Report 10
Interview Excerpts 29

**Chiang Saen, Thailand**
Overview 31
Report 31
Interview Excerpts 51
INTRODUCTION

When the Education and Social Justice Project (ESJ) began in early 2010, the vision was to engage students and build knowledge about the connections between the global challenges of poverty and education. Through the generous startup support of Rodney Jacobs, who has served on the Georgetown University Board of Regents, the program has now sent 38 students to 38 countries. Under faculty supervision and with the full input of our Jesuit local partners, students gather information conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews, analyze the best practices of innovative initiatives, and share their findings with a wider global audience.

TEN YEARS OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL IMPACT

In the last decade, Georgetown has increased its emphasis on education research by developing an interdisciplinary minor in education, inquiry, and justice; multiple research methods courses touching on education and justice; and a unique approach to a master’s program in educational transformation, rooted in the relationship between social justice and education. Georgetown’s institutional trend and emphasis on education and social justice is no accident; it is the natural result of our Jesuit identity, reflecting the history of the Jesuit mission to advance the global common good through education. Throughout these 10 years, the Education and Social Justice Project has served as a model and site of experimentation for curricular and co-curricular programming on the critical issue of education and, importantly, has helped Georgetown strengthen its partnerships with Jesuit organizations around the world. Specifically, through the global network of secondary and post-secondary Jesuit institutions, ESJ Fellows have supported local projects from Argentina to Zambia. Fellows have worked with organizations serving the educational needs of AIDS orphans in Nairobi, Kenya (Ryan Covington, SFS’11), and among First Nations in Australia (Nicholas Na, SFS’18) and Canada (Caitlin Snell, C’16). Of particular note is the long-standing relationship ESJ has developed with Fe y Alegría, a global federation of local organizations that offer educational opportunities to the poorest sectors of society.

Thanks to the support and guidance of Georgetown University Board of Directors Vice Chair Rev. Daniel Villanueva, S.J. (G’15), ESJ fellows have carried out projects with over a quarter of Fe y Alegría’s affiliates, including in Bolivia (Lisa Frank, C’13), Chile (Cindy Shuck, SFS’11), Peru (Nicholas DiRago, C’14), Spain
(Grace Koehl, NHS’19), and Uruguay (Charlotte Markson, SFS’13). This kind of reach, across countries and demographics but with common cores, will allow for more comparative insights as we continue to gather research over the next decade.

As the Education and Social Justice Project has cast a wide net across the globe, we have sought to establish or strengthen long-term reciprocal partnerships with our host sites. When Nicholas DiRago (C’14) arrived in Lima, Peru, in the summer of 2013, his aim was to compare curricular design and socioeconomic integration between Fe y Alegría’s schools among the poor and Colegio de la Inmaculada, an elite preparatory school. DiRago’s work became the springboard for a now five-year collaboration of reciprocal immersion between Lima’s Jesuit university—Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (UARM)—and Georgetown University. UARM now hosts one of Georgetown’s Magis Alternative Break Programs, which exposes students to Peruvian community-based initiatives designed to address broad societal problems and leaves participating students equipped with the tools to lead and support similar initiatives in their own communities.

The Magis Alternative Break Program first included a trip to the Dominican Republic in 2019 after Mary Breen (SFS’19) served as an ESJ Fellow at the Dominican Republic-Haiti border in May and June of 2017. During her three weeks in the region, Breen worked with her host institution, Border Solidarity (Solidaridad Fronteriza), to learn about the complex border dynamic between the two countries. Breen’s experience led to a sustained relationship with Border Solidarity, which now hosts a Magis Alternative Break Program that allows Georgetown students to interact with Dominican farm workers and Haitian immigrants at the northern Haitian-Dominican border. Breen led the first Magis Dominican Republic trip; her reflections on these experiences, captured in the following pages, as well as the long-standing partnerships developed through Breen’s and other ESJ Fellows’ work, exemplify the far-reaching and long-lasting impact the Education and Social Justice Project has had on fellows, the communities they serve, our host sites, and the Georgetown community.

**THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF THE ESJ**

As the ESJ Project has grown over the past 10 years, so has the structure of the program and the increased demand for academic rigor among our fellows. From the outset, participants were guided by faculty and staff in research methods,
INTRODUCTION

trained in interviewing techniques, and coached through producing a final case study. All case studies to-date are published on the Berkley Center’s website, creating a digital, public archive for researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and our partners. Fellows now benefit from a one-credit spring-semester research methods course, preparing them for all aspects of the research process, from interviewing protocols to digital scholarship design.

Moving forward, fellows will create a dynamic long-story final report and presentation that integrates the latest in digital scholarship. The publication of research findings in engaging digital formats, from text mining tools and data visualization graphics to embedded videos, will allow fellows to develop highly marketable skills in research outputs. These digital reports will act as informative, accessible resources that provide qualitative, comparative research on community-based efforts, benefiting both our local partners and our target practitioner and policymaker audiences. In addition, ESJ Fellows’ three to four weeks in-country conducting fieldwork and their creation and publication of a final product will now be recognized as one-credit courses, respectively, reflecting the increased academic rigor of the program.

Ultimately our ambition for the program is to extend our founding vision—to engage students and build knowledge about the connections between the global challenges of poverty and education—to new fields. We aspire to support research that explores the complex relationships between environmental challenges, voluntary and forced migration, disease and well-being, and poverty, allowing us to provide a greater number of fellowships to undergraduate students from across Georgetown’s schools and to better support our local partners’ missions as they work to promote social justice by addressing a number of interconnected global challenges.

2019 STUDENT FELLOWS

The 2019 ESJ cohort sent three Georgetown University students to Ireland, Thailand, and Malawi to conduct in-depth examinations of innovative educational initiatives. Mackenzie Price learned about the intricacies of ecumenical faith, religiously-charged politics, and communal dialogue at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland. Allison Ross spent three weeks in Chiang Saen, Thailand, at the Xavier Learning Community (XLC), where she examined inclusion and inculturation, or how the XLC creates a unique community out of the diversity of its students and staff. Isaac Kim explored community building as a form of Catholic inculturation and the formation of Ignatian leaders at the Loyola Jesuit Secondary School (LJSS) in Kasungu, Malawi. Kim’s final case study will be published on the Berkley Center’s website in 2020. Full reports and interview transcripts for all 10 years of the Education and Social Justice Project are available on the project website: https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/esj.
Adam Barton graduated from Georgetown College in 2016 with a major in Spanish and Portuguese studies and a minor in education, inquiry, and justice. He traveled to Brazil (2014) to study the Opus Prize–winning international community health organization Pastoral da Criança through the ESJ Fellowship. Adam is a current Luce Scholar and educational researcher in Japan, building a Maryland–based educational nonprofit focused on global citizenship. He previously served as a researcher at the Brookings Institution Center for Universal Education.

“Being at Georgetown, I found what really energizes me and what I want to do with my life: to live in the service of others...The idea of the whole person and how it can encompass solidarity with humanity and with your neighbors, friends, and loved ones was something that specifically came from the ESJ Project. That vision of human flourishing is what I took away...and it has morphed into the way I want to impact the world through this vision of participatory design and co-creation for social change.

It is hard to emphasize enough how much the experience impacted me. Having the opportunity to conduct ethnographic research with the supportive guidance of professors as a student who didn’t know what I wanted or needed set me up on this research trajectory. This was the first offer that I was given to not just learn about the world through scientific inquiry but to learn in a way that would be actionable—that I could share with the community. To have my research training be grounded in community needs and experiences drove me to seek out further opportunities, from a Princeton in Latin America Fellowship to a research assistant position at the Brookings Institution to a Henry Luce Scholarship in Japan...I came into Georgetown not knowing that I cared about research, yet ESJ helped me discover this passion for research for social change.”

Elisabeth Lembo graduated from Georgetown College in 2014, majoring in government and minoring in art history. Her ESJ project in 2013 examined the role of Jesuit education and social justice in post-communist Poland. After graduation, she joined Teach For America (TFA) and worked as a second grade teacher in Duncan, Mississippi. She has returned to the Mississippi Delta to work with TFA’s summer training institutes as their director of data management and as a corps member advisor. Currently, Elisabeth is completing a master of public administration degree at Cornell University, where her research has focused on education programs and policies, working with qualitative and quantitative data collected to explore the impact that school-based health centers have on rural communities across the United States.

“During the fellowship, I had the opportunity to conduct interviews in both rural and urban regions across Poland. I was particularly moved by my experiences working in more rural parts of southeastern Poland. I started to think a lot about the opportunity gap that exists for many students in very rural regions both in the United States and abroad—and knew this was an area where I hoped to serve. This played a crucial role in my decision to move to the Delta.

ESJ offered me a deep appreciation for qualitative, field-based research to see how important it is to gain a comprehensive understanding of any community which one is analyzing. I realized during my time with the fellowship that, especially in unfamiliar settings, it can be common for people to get caught into the ‘single story’ narrative. My time in Poland—talking with dozens of people who held many similar, as well as many different outlooks and opinions—debunked this narrow view for me very quickly. This mindset has been formative to my approach living and working the Delta, and it has informed my work since then.”
### TEN YEARS OF ESJ WORK AROUND THE WORLD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARGENTINA</strong></td>
<td>Combining Social Justice with Microfinance in Argentina</td>
<td>Sarah Baran</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUSTRALIA</strong></td>
<td>Educating First Nations Students at Jesuit Schools in Australia</td>
<td>Nicholas Na</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BANGLADESH</strong></td>
<td>Supporting the Hardest-to-Reach Students in Bangladesh</td>
<td>Kendra Layton</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOLIVIA</strong></td>
<td>Fe y Alegría and Social Justice in Bolivia</td>
<td>Lisa Frank</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BRAZIL</strong></td>
<td>Building Solidarity through Community Health Education in Brazil</td>
<td>Adam Barton</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BURKINA FASO</strong></td>
<td>Caring for the Whole Person in Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Hopey Fink</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAMBODIA</strong></td>
<td>Promoting Primary Education in Cambodia</td>
<td>Annie Dale</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CANADA</strong></td>
<td>Cultural Education among First Nations in Canada</td>
<td>Caitlin Snell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHILE</strong></td>
<td>Education Reform in Chile</td>
<td>Cindy Shuck</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOMBIA</strong></td>
<td>Promoting Peace and Social Justice in Colombia</td>
<td>Erin Luck</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</strong></td>
<td>Promoting Justice through Education along the Dominican Republic-Haiti Border</td>
<td>Mary Breen</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EL SALVADOR</strong></td>
<td>Community-State-Church Partnerships Supporting Education in El Salvador</td>
<td>Codie Kane</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRANCE</strong></td>
<td>Preserving Russian Culture through Education and Religion in France</td>
<td>Masha Goncharova</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GUATEMALA</strong></td>
<td>Development, Education, and Justice in Guatemala</td>
<td>Nicholas Lake</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HAITI</strong></td>
<td>Promoting Justice through Education along the Dominican Republic-Haiti Border</td>
<td>Mary Breen</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDIA
Catholic Education in India
Deven Comen, 2011

IRELAND
Secularism and Faith in Irish Higher Education
Mackenzie Price, 2019

ITALY
Education to Prevent Abuse against the Vulnerable in Italy
Mayeesha Galiba, 2018

JORDAN
Fostering Community through Education in Jordan
Jonathan Thrall, 2016

KENYA
Educating AIDS Orphans in Kenya
Ryan Covington, 2010

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN KENYA
Khaliyah Legette, 2016

MALAWI
Forming Ignatian Leaders in Malawi
Isaac Kim, 2019

MEXICO
Migration and Social Justice in Mexico
Carolyn Vilter, 2016

MOZAMBIQUE
Cultural Empowerment through Education in Mozambique
Harshita Nadimpalli, 2017

NICARAGUA
Student Involvement in Social Justice in Nicaragua
Gianna Malta, 2014

PERU
Fe y Alegría and Social Justice in Peru
Nicholas DiRago, 2013

PHILIPPINES
Building Effective Public School Systems in the Philippines
Brian Dillon, 2010

POLAND
Local Education and Social Justice in Poland
Elisabeth Lembo, 2013

RWANDA
Education and Peacebuilding in Rwanda
Mariam Dieffallah, 2016

SENEGAL
The Intersection of Faith and Education in Senegal
Sabrina Khan, 2015

SLOVENIA
Jesuit Education in Central Europe
Sarah Jannarone, 2016

SOUTH AFRICA
Integrating Faith and Science in South African Education
Conor Finnegan, 2011

SOUTH KOREA
Social Justice in South Korea
Dana Drecksel, 2015

SPAIN
Faith-Based Education and Social Responsibility in Spain and Latin America
Grace Koehl, 2018

THAILAND
Creating an Inclusive Community in Northern Thailand
Allison Ross, 2019

UGANDA
Religious Education in Uganda
Shea Houlihan, 2012

UKRAINE
Higher Education and Social Justice in Ukraine
Anastasia Sendoun, 2017

URUGUAY
Fe y Alegría and Social Justice in Uruguay
Charlotte Markson, 2012

ZAMBIA
Pursuing Just Economic Development in Zambia
Brittany Fried, 2018
“ESJ helped me come to understand research as a vocation. Carrying out an original research project and arriving at novel findings brings out the difference between being a good student—not a unique quality among Hoyas—and a calling to research. This is especially true for young adults, myself included, who did not grow up in environments in which being an academic or research professional was a common career or professional ambition.” Nicholas DiRago (C’14) served as an ESJ fellow in Lima, Peru in 2013.
“For me, the defining characteristic of a Georgetown education is the attention given to formation, to forming students as human beings rather than providing a transactional four-year degree. The ESJ fellowship and the related Alternative Break Program trip are tremendous examples of that process of formation. These opportunities were not only some of the most challenging and meaningful experiences during my time at Georgetown, but also impacted the person I am and the choices I have made. Spending time in Dajabón, Dominican Republic, taught me a great deal about social justice issues, as well as the importance of accompanying others even just for a moment, the value in entering a new environment being paradoxically independent yet entirely dependent on others, and the necessity of truly listening.”

Mary Breen (SFS’19) first traveled to Dajabón as an ESJ fellow in 2017 and returned in March 2019 as a student leader for the first Alternative Break Program trip to Dajabón.
DUBLIN, IRELAND
MACKENZIE PRICE (C'20)
DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AT TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

Religious and political contention in Ireland between its Catholics and Protestants started when Protestants from England invaded the mostly Catholic country. The English secured authority over the island in 1652, during which time land was confiscated from Catholics and redistributed to the Protestant elite. Penal laws were introduced against the Catholic population. These laws barred Catholics from practicing Catholicism, voting, holding public office, and owning land. In 1829, many of these restrictions were removed and, after many wars, most of Ireland was liberated from English rule in 1922.

Trinity College Dublin (TCD), the most prestigious university in Ireland, sided with the English Protestants during the war. The college was established by Queen Elizabeth as a Protestant school during
the Reformation. It received financial benefits from the government and, in return, graduated many Protestant supporters.4 By the 1700s, Trinity graduates made up the bulk of the clergy, lawyers, judges, and country gentlemen who belonged to the English-instituted Church of Ireland.5 The school prevented Catholics from attending by instituting religious tests from 1637 to 1773. Until as late as 1873, Catholics had to denounce their faith to earn fellowships and scholarships.6 After the 1922 peace treaty and Britain’s official withdrawal from the country, Trinity lost most of its government representatives, and thus its great political influence and source of funding.7 It petitioned the Irish-run government for grants in the 1960s and only received them on the condition that TCD separate its Anglican denominational instruction into a separate divinity school.8 Since then, Ireland has eradicated all the Protestant church’s influence on its laws and social standards, only to replace them with a similarly strong Catholic influence. Today, Trinity is composed of mostly Catholic students and staff.

During the past three decades, however, strong Catholic sentiment has started to fade. In 1991, 92% of Irish citizens called themselves Catholic; in 2002, fewer than 89% said the same.9 From 2011 to 2012, this number dropped again from 84% to 78%.10 Many Irish researchers speculate that the decline is linked to sexual abuse scandals of the Catholic church, proximity to other secularizing European countries, and increasing diversity in Ireland.11

The decrease in people who identify as Christian is particularly pronounced among the younger generation. One 2017 study reports that only 70% of Irish youth think of themselves as either Catholic or Protestant. Less than half of respondents felt that their religious faith was very important, and 25% reported going through a crisis of faith.12 Another study found that 91% of Irish youth sampled aged 14 to 24 said they were less influenced by the Catholic Church than their parents.13 In a country where Catholicism has been the bedrock of its people’s culture, morals, and insurgence against oppressive rule, this recent lack of interest in organized religion has challenged the lifestyle of all who reside there, Christian or not.

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS AT TRINITY

There are four main Christian organizations at Trinity. The Laurentian Society and the Christian Union are student-run clubs made up of mostly Catholics and evangelical Protestants, respectively. Trinity’s chaplaincy, which is sanctioned by the university, houses four chaplains who have general domain over the university’s chapel. Finally, the Loyola Institute is a newly-founded Catholic center which hosts an undergraduate degree in Catholic studies.

In 1991, 92% of Irish citizens called themselves Catholic; in 2002, fewer than 89% said the same. From 2011 to 2012, this number dropped again from 84% to 78%.
The Laurentian Society (LS) was founded in the early 1950s, fell dormant in the early 1990s due to lack of interest, and was revived around 2011. It used to be a straightforwardly Catholic club, but was reclassified as a Catholic cultural society to follow 1990s regulations imposed by Trinity’s Central Societies Commission. These regulations barred clubs from having direct religious or political affiliations. The society is described by people both inside and outside the organization as a philosophically inclined, private group that enjoys debating scripture. Members host a prayer night in Trinity’s chapel and afterward enjoy tea, biscuits, and worship music in the upper common room of the chaplaincy. The Laurentian Society is one of two societies (the other is the Jewish Society) that has permission to organize in this common room. Organization members estimate that anywhere from 60 to 100 students are involved in the LS though only 10 to 20 attend events on a regular basis. To put these numbers into context, there are over 17,000 students at Trinity.

The Christian Union (CU) is described by people outside the organization as an evangelical Protestant society intending to convert others; one insider described its goal as “ultimately to introduce the person of Jesus to whoever wants to meet Jesus on campus.” The CU is a branch of a wider Christian Union body in Ireland that was founded in the 1950s as the Evangelical Union. Since the organization has operated continuously from the 1950s to today, the CU, unlike the LS, does not have to comply with the 1990s ban on religious affiliation. The CU at Trinity holds an annual “Events Week”—sometimes called “mission” by CU members—when they host two lunchtime talks a day for five consecutive days. Talks draw in attendees through their controversial topics, such as “Is God a Homicidal Maniac?” Other CU events include
weekly discussions about scripture on Thursday nights and weekly evangelical-modeled prayer. The Christian Union is the most widely known Christian society on campus, with approximately 150 members and 70 to 80 regularly attending members.

Trinity’s chaplaincy consists of four chaplains: one Anglican, one Methodist, one Jesuit, and one Dominican. All four chaplains are proud to say that the chaplaincy is ecumenical in nature and that Trinity’s chaplain was the first in Dublin to host ecumenical services. Though chaplains are university staff, they are nominated and paid by their respective denominations. Catholic chaplains hold Mass in the chapel on Sundays and in the chaplaincy on all other days; about 15 to 25 students and staff attend Sunday Mass. The Anglican chaplain hosts regular services in the chapel and conducts Evensong, an Anglican song service, with the chapel choir every Thursday night. The Methodist chaplain does not host services, likely because the number of Methodists on campus is miniscule. The only mandatory service the chaplains host is an annual service for chosen scholars and fellows of the college on a day called Trinity Monday; this service alternates between Catholic and Protestant every year. Additionally, chaplains handle matters of death. When a student dies at home, chaplains verify their death and decide how the school will release the news; when a student dies at school, chaplains are often in charge of notifying the parents. Chaplains also hold occasional ecumenical memorial services for distinguished members of Trinity. They provide emotional support to the living as well. They are sometimes sought as personal counselors by students and have referred a small number of students to the university counseling services (and occasionally, vice versa). They are involved in a few bureaucratic processes: They review student petitions to use the chapel, attend the monthly Heads of Services Committee meetings and Student Life Committee meetings, and occasionally sit on the staff board that decides to whom the school should award fellowships.

The Loyola Institute will be partially absorbed into the new School of Religion, which will have its debut in the coming 2019–2020 academic year. The School of Religion is combining three previously separate departments—the Department of World Religions and Theology, the Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE), and the Loyola Institute (LI). The department has taught religion from a sociological, non-partial perspective for over 40 years ever since it separated from Trinity’s old Anglican Divinity School in the 1960s. The department will be completely dissolved in the merger. The Irish School of Ecumenics administers mostly post-graduate degrees; it was attached to the department in 2007. The Loyola Institute came to Trinity in 2011. Before the merger, it offered both undergraduates and postgraduates a degree in Catholic theological studies. It will retain its name and postgraduate degree after the merger but will no longer offer an undergraduate degree.

The three branches consolidated because a 2018 external assessment that takes place every five years declared that neither the department nor the LI had drawn
The coming School of Religion will offer a degree in religion that is meant to combine the curriculums of the department and LI. The degree allows students to specialize within their religion studies in either the cultural study of religion or Christian theology. Both the ISE and the LI receive external funding from parent organizations and will be allowed to retain their names, while the department, sustained entirely by Trinity funds, will be entirely absorbed. There has been contention surrounding the situation preempting the merger. Some department employees protested the entrance of the LI, arguing that it would take up department funding and ossify its faculty. Other professors welcomed a Catholic studies branch. All agreed, however, that the new School of Religion is the best solution to unite the programs.

**TRINITY: SECULAR, CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT—OR ALL THREE?**

Christian influences, specifically Catholic and Anglican, are strewn across Trinity’s campus. The Laurentian Society is composed predominantly of Catholics; the Christian Union is composed of predominantly evangelical Protestants. The chaplaincy is made of two Catholic and two Protestant chaplains, but this combination is invariably referred to by staff as “two Catholics, one Methodist, and one Anglican.” The Methodist chaplain speculated this wording is to prevent undue associations with the age-old conflict, though Anglicanism’s historical prominence may also be a relevant factor. Chaplains are not paid by the university—they are paid by their individual denominations—but they are still involved in formal university affairs, such as bureaucratic meetings, memorials, collaboration with counseling services, and the Trinity Monday service. That service, in fact, is held in a hall decorated with portraits of significant Protestant figures. Many of these religious influences are simply remnants of Trinity’s complicated religious past. For example, the Anglican chaplain is given the formal title of dean of residence because of Trinity’s Anglican roots, even though this title is an empty one, according to another chaplain. The chapel and campanile, two prominent religious symbols, adorn campus. Christian scripture is recited in Latin at graduation ceremonies, which goes largely unnoticed among students and staff.

*Tensions between Catholics and Protestants may be long gone on campus, but the university still bears the marks of both strains of Christianity. Today, however, these elements seem to work not in opposition to each other, but in conjunction with each other, providing a Christian breadcrumb trail back to the past.*

The now secular Department of World Religion and Theology used to host an Anglican ordinands degree that enabled Trinity students to become priests. This divinity program was moved off campus, but the university pays staff to teach some of its courses. Trinity still has ties to ordination on campus, however. Its Center
for Biblical Studies continues to host select classes, which students inside and outside the university can use as credit towards Anglican ordination. Yet the Loyola Institute—which moved to campus after the department’s secularization—cannot hold classes counting towards Catholic ordination because it was not sanctioned by the archbishop. According to one ISE professor, this was mainly due to protests against a Catholic presence at Trinity. Tensions between Catholics and Protestants may be long gone on campus, but the university still bears the marks of both strains of Christianity. Today, however, these elements seem to work not in opposition to each other, but in conjunction with each other, providing a Christian breadcrumb trail back to the past.

Though Christian influences can be found throughout campus, most students and staff have difficulty deciding whether Trinity today is secular or not. In fact, many grapple with the meaning of secularism itself. Fourteen interviewees were asked whether Trinity was a secular institution or not. Of that 14, 11 said that Trinity was secular, one said it was not, and two said it was more complicated than a yes-or-no answer. Those who describe the university as secular point to the fact that day-to-day operations of the college are academic in nature, most of the academic staff are not ardent members of faith, and Trinity’s student body is religiously diverse. These interviewees claim, “You can be who you are here,” and that religion only “runs in the background” of Trinity life. However, six of these individuals subsequently listed reasons as to why Trinity may not be secular, without reneging their original positions. These doubts often included examples of religious practices in the university, such as the Trinity Monday scholar service and the college’s very title, College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Queen Elizabeth near Dublin. Four interviewees explored what secularism would mean in a university and country so immersed in religious dialogue given that religion is so infused into historical buildings, extracurricular activities, and the general atmosphere. As one philosophy student mused:

“It’s almost like we don’t even know we’re that way because we’ve been that way so long...it’s just, like, in the air.”

The Christian atmosphere is a nebulous one, and the question of whether it is there or not seems of little importance to participants who, as Irish citizens, are already accustomed to the integration of Christian traditions into their daily lives.

A TURNING OF THE TIDE, A KICKING OF THE CHURCH

The secular trend sweeping the country, on the other hand, has captured the attention of everyone on campus. Recent Irish censuses may indicate that almost 80% of the
The populace is Catholic, but many interviewees insisted that far less than that percentage habitually practice Catholicism. “They are, in a sense, not culturally Catholic,” said one Catholic administrator who works closely with students, “if you look at church attendance…there’s no more than 8%. It has collapsed.” One Catholic chaplain estimated that maybe 15% of Trinity students actually practice Catholicism, and Trinity’s senior tutor, who oversees the student advising system, estimated that no more than 10% of the staff and faculty are religiously observant.

Some Christians choose to view this decrease in religious observance in a positive light. They reason that the secularist movement has simply distilled the pool of Christians, weeding out those who are not core believers. “People talk about the decline in church now and I think, well, actually it just gives us a more true figure of who wants to go to church, instead of the feeling I have a duty,” remarked Trinity’s Anglican chaplain Reverend Steven Brunn. He is glad to have a world in which faith, rather than custom, is the only reason people attend church. He is not alone in that opinion. One Trinity graduate who was involved with the Laurentian Society explained that “those involved are more dedicated when the community gets smaller.” After all, as one evangelical-identifying student in the CU thoughtfully pointed out, the original followers of Jesus were few in number. As the modern number of Christian practitioners continues to decrease, it seems less likely that the church will regain the prominent stance it held a few decades ago. No one is more aware of this than Christians. As the previous CU member said:

It’s not like we’re trying to preserve status quo by thinking we’re in the majority when we’re clearly not. We just have to be realistic and accept those facts.

Perhaps redefining dwindling church attendance as a distillation of believers is an attempt by Christians to accept these facts with grace. Their attitudes make a grand blow to their base seem like a self-selection of sorts. In this way, Christians can still appear in control of their narratives as the secular trend that is sweeping Ireland changes the country’s traditional religious, social, and cultural landscape.

Some say that faith has simply become individualized. “I think organized religion… among young people in Ireland is like, nearly dead,” said one Trinity student pursuing a degree in medicine, “but…I think individual faith is still there.” He explained: “I do believe in a god and I do pray, but I’m not about doctrine.” As the power of the church decreases, younger people are feeling less pressure today to partake in formal religious practices. Many say they are satisfied simply with a private relationship with God through personal prayer and belief. This step away from organized religion dovetails with increasing perceptions of the church as rigid, unaccepting, and overly doctrinal. The result is a do-it-yourself belief, where faith operates on one’s own schedule rather than the other way around. Many refer to this individual faith in joking terms, questioning its validity. One CU member called believers who go to church but who do not think critically about faith and scripture
“Sunday Christian[s].” One liberal student called believers who selectively choose to practice certain traditions and not others “à la carte Catholic[s].” But underneath these jokes, for a few, lies frustration. As one Laurentian Society member explained, calling oneself Catholic without practicing all of its traditions can be uncomfortable for practicing members. Regardless, this wave of individualized faith is unlikely to recede given its increasing popularity among the younger generation. It will forever change the cultural traditions that have been central to Ireland’s identity since the country’s inception.

Participants of all beliefs named excessive control of the church as a central reason for the recent decline in faith. This long-standing resentment of the church is often overlooked by literature on religious decline, which tends to focus on anger spurred by the recent sex abuse scandals in the Catholic Church. One liberal student voiced frustration with the church’s involvement in government laws. Another student in the Laurentian Society lamented that many religious figures simply seek political power; yet another non-religious student clarified that, while religion itself is accepting, past religious mandates have been dispiriting. One Catholic chaplain explained:

The whole kind of drift from the church started in the early…1950s or 1960s really…The sexual abuses [sic] crisis, that certainly hasn’t been the cause of that. It obviously contributed to it in some ways, but [the secular drift] came out of people’s perception that…there was too much control in Catholic Ireland of the clergy and the people.

Backlash against religious control has corresponded to a national “kicking of the Catholic Church,” as one ISE professor put it. One Loyola Institute student studying Catholic theology described a certain anti-Catholic sentiment among...
fellow students. “It’s not violent or anything; people just don't like it. They don't like the sound of the word [Catholic].”27 Critiques of Christianity in general are growing. So obvious is this unrest that one professor of religion consciously adjusted his curriculum to take “a more antagonistic approach” to Christianity to grab students’ interests. The Trinity administration itself is seen as a neutral body on the subject of religion by most students and staff, but its inhabitants seem to evoke a stronger message. One student put it this way: While Trinity as an institution “does not take much of a view on religion…The wider university as a living ‘thing’ is most certainly partial against Christianity.”28 Surely not all people on campus hold animus toward the church, and surely not all among those who do hold animus direct it toward individual church members. Regardless, the general anti-Christian zeitgeist of campus has not gone unnoticed by many of its attending Christians.

PRAYERS, PRECONCEPTIONS, AND POLITICS

Many Christians feel frustrated by how members of their religion are perceived. One Catholic student explained:

*The idea of the Catholic Church is that they're all pedophiles and they're really against sex. And there's always truth in those things, because what you see in the media is the pastors who are homophobic, are very intense…And that's the preconception people will have...[so] we're carrying the weight of the, like, the people who get in the media.*

Not all Christians feel that these media images represent them, but rather that they represent the most severe and vocal members of the Christian faith. They are worried that the Christian label has become synonymous with “extreme,” “unforgiving,” and “culturally outdated.” One Christian Union member had this to say about his organization: “We want to show our college that being a Christian doesn’t make you a reclusive, backwoods idiot who doesn’t engage in our society.” It is important to many Christians to distinguish themselves from the most severe members of the Christian faith, or in some cases from the church entirely. “Going around with a cross on your neck and stuff, people will say, you know, oh he supports this child-abusing, misogynistic, homophobic church or something, you know? But…There is a distinction. There will always be a hierarchy for all of us,” a Loyola student maintained. He understood public anger at the church hierarchy, spurred by its historic social control and recent sex abuse scandals, and was angry about it himself. But he did not understand why he felt like anger at the institution was also directed at Christian practitioners. “I’d be flamed for saying this in public,” he confessed, “but they could be a bit easier on us, you know? It’s not easy.” The associations of Christians and certain views—pro-church, homophobia, misogyny—run deep. They are not always wrong. But they are a blanket classification of a community with more complexities than what one may discern from the media.
In Ireland, it is also common for Christians to be associated with conservative social and political views, in this case loosely defined as against gay marriage and abortion legalization. “You can’t really be conservative without being Catholic,” one Catholic student reflected. But he clarified the opposite is not necessarily true: “You can be Catholic without being conservative.” In other words, many Christians do not hold conservative views, but those who do hold conservative views are typically Christian. This makes it easy to equate Christianity with conservatism, overlooking the less represented and less vocal Christians with liberal views. This makes for an interesting dynamic between Christian practitioners of all political perspectives and liberals advocating for gay marriage and abortion at a university that was described by one student as “the most left-wing college campus in Ireland by far.”

The recent legalization of abortion in 2018 was a landmark political event that exacerbated tensions among the student body. Most students at Trinity College were in favor of legalizing abortion, “obviously,” as one LS member put it. However, the same student lamented that the view became the “prevailing orthodoxy” on campus with little room for dissent. For example, the Student Union (SU) at Trinity, a group meant to advocate for and represent Trinity students on a matter of issues, declared itself as openly pro-choice. It conducted a vote which found that the majority of students supported choice and consequently created an informal pro-choice group, set up pro-choice flyers and rallies, and even tried to convince the Trinity administration to take a pro-choice stance. Students of all affiliations voiced anger at the SU’s unilateral representation of the student body on such sensitive matters. “There’s, like, thousands of students out there with… all different beliefs,” said a student. "Everyone has different opinions,” said one student; “The SU has views [people] don’t necessarily agree with,” said another. Next to the SU, there is comparatively little representation of dissenting views. One Catholic Loyola Institute student expressed exasperation toward what he felt was an unequal playing field: “The secular movement is cramming reforms down people’s throats without dialogue.” While not all students feel as vociferously, there is a general consensus that balanced dialogue between liberals, conservatives, and typecast Christians is scarce.

Despite the dominance of the pro-choice groups on campus, there remain pockets of pro-life students and groups that argue against the majority opinion. Trinity’s senior tutor recalled “standoffs” between the two camps: “You’d have a [pro-life] counter protest. In small people, three or four with banners. And they were fairly severely harangued by many students.” Similarly, a Catholic student said that, while pro-choice flyers were left up in student common areas, pro-life flyers were ripped down.
The referendum sparked malicious behavior by both Christians and liberals. One Catholic student said that there were “sort of [verbal] attacks on the church and on Christianity and stuff” on the liberal side, and on the Christian side “horrible things they [said]... about women and stuff like that.” A student studying philosophy called both politically active Catholics and hardcore SU politicians “authoritarian and manipulative” in their lobbying tactics. A student pursuing a degree in the Loyola Institute said that reformers and conservatives employed the same strategies while “duking it out.” However, one graduated student who was affiliated with the Laurentian Society offered that it was mostly liberals framing the debate as a religious one, since abortion is more of a personal issue. From all perspectives, there was little mention of Christians, conservatives, or liberals discussing these issues with each other respectfully, or at all.

**SUPPRESSION OF THE “MAJORITY”**

In any case, the contentious dialogue in an already changing religious landscape can make it hard for some Christians at Trinity to express their views. “The strength of the progressive bloc in the college…makes you less likely to want to dissent,” said one undergraduate student. “You’d be cast out,” said a Loyola Institute student of anyone who would try to form a pro-life group at Trinity. Even one non-religiously affiliated philosophy student recognized, “If you’re the average Joe, and you’re not pro-abortion…you’d probably just shut up.” There is much fear that people in an overwhelmingly liberal campus will react negatively to differing political or social views.

Indeed, many participants recited personal examples of negative reactions to their opinions on politically and religiously charged matters. A Loyola Institute student was called homophobic when he expressed his ambivalence about gay marriage. A pro-choice student was surprised at his friend’s displeased reaction when he said he would date a pro-lifer. One gay Christian often receives backlash for her religious affiliation. She explained, “Especially in LBGT groups. They’re very much like, ‘How dare you?!’” Even when reactions are not explicitly negative, identifying as Christian may still provoke a subtle kind of wariness. One Loyola Institute student remarked, “Somebody like me, studying Catholic theology, is viewed as somebody suspicious.”

Sure enough, one non-religiously affiliated student reflected on this preconception: “I’m just afraid of people who are a bit too religious, that way. It’s not founded.” He pondered:

> If some French guy came in with a big cross and I’m like, "Oh, he’s gonna be a bit different." But like, we never really chat about anything different; [I] just put him in that box. 

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Surely not all people on campus with liberal views hold antipathy toward Christians, but even a subtle sense of suspicion or a few small instances of outright disdain can affect the willingness of Christians to express their views and feel accepted in the Trinity community.

Christians conscious of negative associations such as these develop strategies on how to disclose their faith. Some elect to avoid disclosure in situations that might cause contention. For example, admitting to pub-goers that he studies theology is a “mistake” for one ISE professor.\(^{52}\) A Loyola student did not attend his class on the day that students planned a pro-choice walk out, so that he could avoid the awkward decision of whether to stay, exposing himself, or to endorse a view he did not share. Another Loyola student picks and chooses who to disclose to, explaining that “you know who to say, I’m a student studying theology’ and I’m a Catholic too”\(^{53}\) based on the way they talk about the church and science. Others gloss over their Christian affiliation not for their own protection, but for the comfort of others. One Laurentian Society member clarified that, while she is comfortable with her faith and with religious conversation, some of her acquaintances are not, and her aversion of the topic is “more out of respect for them.” When one chaplain hears contentious, political conversations in the common room, he stays in his office. “I think it’s better that I don’t go in there,” he pondered.\(^{54}\) “I think with my collar, with my status, with my role, I’m always going to take a position.”\(^{55}\) Finally, there are those who intentionally disclose their religion to bring a contentious conversation close to home. When she hears someone argue that Christians do not believe in science or marriage equality, one Catholic student points out that she is a Christian who believes in these issues to derail their argument. An ISE professor hosted a talk advocating for gay marriage from the religious perspective because she “wanted to at least display… that there were many Christian and religious voices that were also pro-gay marriage.”\(^{56}\)

Faith practitioners exhibited markedly different strategies for discussing and disclosing their faith, and no one way seems more or less successful than another. It is interesting to note, however, an emerging trend: Christians who have more conservative views but who lack a Christian community—the two LI students and the ISE professor—were more inclined to hide their affiliation. Christians who also held conservative views but who involved themselves in a religious community—the chaplain and the LS member—occasionally tempered religious discussion, but for the sake of others. Christians who had more progressive social views disclosed their religious affiliation, but only for the purpose of fighting the stereotype of Christians as social conservatives. As such, it seems that repression of views is most common among Catholic conservatives with no religious community. With no like-minded cohort to turn to and nothing in common with social liberals, members of this group are the most isolated. It is no wonder that, stranded in a polarized atmosphere, their predominant strategy is to say little.
DIVERGING PERSPECTIVES ON DIALOGUE

Some participants speculated that, despite the variety of views on campus, people rarely hear perspectives outside of their own. Members of both non-practitioner liberal communities and of the Christian faith seem to agree on this point. “I think generally in college most people hang out with people who have the same views,” remarked one liberal student in Trinity’s Philodemic Debate Society.57 One recent graduate who was in the Laurentian Society thought it very possible for a non-religious Trinity student to not have a single religious friend during their time at the college. A Trinity administrator who works intimately with students confirmed that conservative Christians and other students “keep well away from each other.” Christian groups are also criticized for isolating themselves. One Loyola Institute student called the Laurentian Society and Christian Union “insular” and called the chaplaincy “not very open.” Another student pointed out that small and little-known Christian groups exist and “both like it and want it that way.” He explains that, because to be a Catholic is to oppose the social order, Catholic groups are becoming “far more tribal,” leaning into their beliefs and away from outsiders. Members of the Laurentian Society and Christian Union did not perceive this to be the case. When asked, one member of the Laurentian Society said his friend group is based more on “intellectual curiosity” than on religious affiliation, and a Christian Union member heavily involved with the organization expressed his commitment to connecting with outsiders. However, neither talked in depth about encounters with people with differing religious or political views. Overall, it seems that groups of all kinds are likelier to stick to their own than branch out, contributing to a dialogue disconnect running through campus.

When conversations between people of different perspectives do take place, they can be unproductive or hostile. People on campus are often “talking past each other,” mourned one Trinity graduate. Each person asserts their own views but does not consider their partner’s point. When asked whether social conversations were more likely to be productive or argumentative, one gay-identifying Catholic respondent said more likely to be argumentative—from both atheists and Christians. A non-practicing Catholic noted that, while many people can appreciate both sides in a discussion, others “argue for the sake of arguing.” One focus group conversation revealed these dynamics in action. Two participants exchanged veiled, agitated quips as to whether the Student Union, who represents the Trinity student body on a litany of issues, should spend their funds on abortion advocacy:

C: As a representative [of the Student Union], I had to deal with, well, all of us had to deal with a massive deficit, caused by um…caused by flagrant overspending, campaigns for national issues. Maybe we could have had a greater impact on the local level, if that funding was handled better.
A: That’s not the only thing that there’s overspending on.

C: Yeah… But over-spending is over-spending.

A: Okay, but you’re isolating that one thing, and it wasn’t just that one thing.

M: The, what do you mean, what thing, the abortion referendum? 58

As this excerpt shows, when communication does occur between people of differing views, it can be inexplicit, strained, and unyielding.

Not all participants feel that Trinity is a contentious campus with little dialogue. Many instead feel that the campus is an open and accepting place that is conducive to serious discussion. For instance, one chaplain commented that “Trinity is a generally happy place” and another called it “not a polemical kind of place.”59 Members of Christian clubs sometimes mentioned polarization on campus, but all said that neither political nor social disconnects have personally affected their experience at Trinity. In fact, three remarked that they found conversations about faith with others very fruitful and respectful. Two liberal students who are not practicing Christians mused that they have not even heard of any controversy concerning secularism or left-wing politics. When the life experiences of so many people portray such different pictures of campus dialogue, it is hard to conclude who is “right” and what dialogue on campus is really like.

At the very least, a deeper analysis offers insight into a pattern between respondents’ social communities and how they view religious dialogue at Trinity. Trinity affiliates who are part of a liberal community or a Catholic community generally feel that Trinity is less contentious than those who are best defined as standing somewhere between those two camps. This in-between affiliation is mostly comprised of practicing or lapsed Christians who are not heavily involved, if it all, in a Christian community like the Laurentian Society or Christian Union. Students attending the chaplaincy and Loyola Institute would also be best described as “in-betweeners,” though staff of these two institutions are more involved in these organizations, and thus are more surrounded by a Catholic community.

For example, two Loyola Institute students who are not associated with any of the aforementioned groups called the climate “horrendous” and “vicious,” respectively. One gay-identifying Catholic student who visits the chaplaincy but is not in a religious club recalled many argumentative conversations. The senior administrator who recalled contentious abortion protests calls himself a “critical liberal Christian.”60 In contrast, while one member of the Laurentian Society did acknowledge that there is somewhat of a dialogue disconnect on campus, he, another Laurentian Society member, and a CU member reported no difficulties of their own in connecting with people of all kinds. When asked about any abortion scuffles, the Anglican chaplain commented, “I don’t hear about
protests.”\textsuperscript{61} Ironically, it seems that those at the far ends of religious communities are those who perceive campus as less polarized. It is possible that, by existing in such communities, they may have unknowingly isolated themselves from the most contentious moments created by said polarization. Those in the middle, however, find campus more polarized. Yet, their objectivity must also be held under scrutiny: Perhaps those who find themselves between, rather than in, communities are overexposed to conflict, or even resentfully attentive of it.

**COHESION IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

Since different members of the Trinity community occupy different positionalities, it is difficult to say just how accepting Christian groups on campus are. One student who served as the secretary of the Laurentian Society called his club a “stimulating environment” that promotes “radical inclusivity.” He recalled interfaith events, movie showings, and a book group. One Trinity administrator, however, called the group “conservative, intolerant, and dogmatic,” and two other uninvolved Catholic students called the group a conservative organization reputed for its pro-life stance and outspokenness against the political striking of the referendum.\textsuperscript{62} Another non-religious student said he is “a bit suspicious” of LS members: “They meet upstairs at the top of the chaplaincy, and they have better biscuits and better money.”\textsuperscript{63} Members of the Laurentian Society tend to have positive views of the organization, while outsiders are far more critical. This could be for a range of reasons, among them theories that insiders have overly optimistic, biased views of their own organization and that outsiders have overly critical views of a club they are not a part of.

A similar logic can be applied to the Christian Union. A member of the organization showed pride for the Christian Union’s strong outreach efforts and its desire to simply “show people the light” at recruiting events.\textsuperscript{64} He said, while many individuals in the club may have their own view, “CU wouldn’t have engaged in politics. Pretty much at all.”\textsuperscript{65} However, one gay-identifying ex-CU member said that, while the CU never explicitly came out against LGBT rights, they asked her to step down from her position in the organization once they discovered her sexual orientation, and CU members offered her conversion therapy for her “same-sex attraction.” She contrasted their message of inclusivity with their prayers that she said focused on “helping non-saved friends” and Events Week talks where a speaker once said, “If you aren’t Christian, you have no morals.”\textsuperscript{65} Even the Methodist chaplain joked, “I don’t think the CU thinks I’m Christian” because he works in an ecumenical chapel.\textsuperscript{67} Another unaffiliated student said that “the CU is very prominent but I’m not sure how well-liked.” One ex-CU member added:

\begin{quote}
I can’t think of a single non-Christian who has a good view of the Christian Union on campus. No one, really.\textsuperscript{68}
\end{quote}
The criticism of the Christian Union is more severe than that of the Laurentian Society. Still, without an objective truth, it is up to individuals to decide where exactly the organization stands.

Most chaplaincy-goers, on the other hand, have nothing but positive things to say about the space. Two students know others who have used the chaplains as a personal counseling resource; another personally recalled a time when a chaplain noticed he was crying and asked if he wanted to talk. Though the chaplaincy common room is filled with mostly Christians, it is open to people of all faiths. As one non-religious student studying philosophy who often hangs out in the chaplaincy put it, “You can talk about anything.” The Methodist chaplain even helped students create an informal LGBT Christian support and prayer group, which he hosts at his house once a month.

The only questions of equity in the chaplaincy are those regarding its ecumenical nature. While the Trinity chapel is ecumenical and while chaplains share services at special events, chaplains focus on projects that cater toward their own base. As the Methodist chaplain put it, the “Catholic chaplains are here to make little Catholics.”69 One Catholic chaplain explained, “Our first commitment is to the Catholic students and staff.”70 Furthermore, one chaplain noted that the Anglican reverend spends most of his time looking after Anglicans through “more structured” programs like the chapel choir. The Methodist chaplain, on the other hand, considers himself a chaplain for all rather than only for Methodists, though he recognizes this may be only because there are so few Methodist students. Unlike the others, “I don’t have a really easy life,” he joked.71 On the other hand, it is worth questioning whether focusing on one’s own religious base is necessarily a bad thing. As religious affiliations decrease, it is perhaps natural to desire a cultivated community. In the Catholic chaplains’ case, this is certainly unabashedly so. Yet the answer to this question—how equality and recognition should be balanced—is, yet again, a subjective one.

Beyond ecumenical politics, one student also voiced a desire for the chaplaincy to host staff of faiths other than Christianity, though he noted that one Catholic chaplain might object. “It’s not bad,” he said, “There’s just no one trying to change things.” On the contrary, the Anglican chaplain mentioned that the seeds of a diverse assistant chaplain program are being sown at this very moment. This reform is far from implementation and would not provide assistant chaplains with the same authority as current chaplains, but it is an unprecedented step towards religious diversity at the university.

The Loyola Institute is experiencing perhaps the most contention of all the main Christian organizations on campus. Certain staff members oppose having a Catholic-affiliated body like the LI at an institution of higher learning. One staff member called this Catholic body “a toxic brand.” The Loyola Institute came from the Milltown Theology School around 2010. According to one staff member who worked in the secular Department of World Religions and Theology, part of the reason Trinity accepted the LI on campus was because, in doing so, they received a sizeable donation from the Catholic Milltown Institute during a time of financial need. According to this professor, its arrival was “divisive to the point
of destroying careers,” and that half of the Department of World Religions and Theology staff left in protest. While this department professor against the LI said “I think I would have a lot of allies,” another professor from the ISE said that there were only a small but vocal amount of staff protesting. This ISE professor also noted that many professors had welcomed the arrival of a Catholic institute because they had wanted one for years, and those professors even wrote documentation to welcome it. Regardless of past conflicts, all participants asked agreed that the School of Religion merger is the best solution. “At this point, it’s the only solution. I’m just not happy about how we got there,” commented the aforementioned department professor. One Loyola Institute student, however, voiced concern: “I’m worried that LI will lose its Catholic identity.” Some seem worried about the School of Religion implementation process. One Loyola Institute professor called the merger “ambitious” and pondered that “only time will tell whether it’s successful.” From its inception as a Protestant bastion to the expulsion of its Anglican Divinity School, Trinity has long struggled with whether and, if so, how to integrate theology into its educational services. The religion at hand may have switched from Protestant to Catholic between the 1950s and today, but the essence of this historic debate wages on.

CONCLUSION: THE KICKING STAGE

The different influences of Protestantism, Catholicism, and most recently secularism create a quagmire of social phenomena that Christians at Trinity must navigate. The university itself must face questions about its institutional identity and consider its effect on Dublin’s best and brightest. Should institutions of higher education be secular, non-partial to religion, or welcoming to religious influences? Is it possible for Trinity to be secular given its deep roots in religious history? Given its ongoing ties to Christianity through the Catholic Loyola Institute, Anglican ordination funds, the chaplaincy, and more, can the university still present itself as neutral?

Trinity’s staff and students themselves are grappling with questions concerning campus dynamics that are just as complex, if not more so. Are non-practicing Christians “real” Christians? How many “real” Christians are there at Trinity, and why does this number vary depending on who you ask? Members of the Trinity community with different perspectives perceive polarization on campus differently. Who is right? Does an objective verdict even exist? Often, the same people who believe the church should retract its reach also believe Trinity Christian groups should be more inclusive. What would that inclusivity look like? After all, the Laurentian Society’s non-proactive, relaxed recruitment policy led others to accuse
them of secrecy, but the blatant outreach of the CU drew even more criticism. What is the right balance for Christians to turn inward versus outward? How will they navigate accusations of insularity versus oppression?

There are, of course, no easy answers. There is no blueprint with instructions on how to sew together a community frayed by a long-standing religious conflict. There is no protocol for soothing a people in the midst of growing pains, as the new generation attempts to renegotiate the claims that Christian churches—both Catholic and Protestant—have laid on Ireland’s laws and its people. Ultimately, many people at Trinity and in Ireland at large are torn. There is, as one history professor of the ISE reflected, “a love-hate relationship” with the church. People feel loyalty to the longstanding tradition and cultural bedrock that is the Christian religion in Ireland. Yet, they also feel resentment toward the amorphous, socially created “institution” of this religion, which represents the church’s legislative control, conservative ideals, and sex abuse scandals. Some choose to step away from religious practice, if not from faith itself, and extend indiscriminate suspicion toward those who choose to still practice. Others react to that suspicion by staying within their own Christian communities, sometimes choosing to not see that any outside suspicion exists at all. Yet, others still are caught in the crossfire, both skeptical of the church and also acting as its representatives.

One Catholic recent graduate, overwhelmed by the recent surge of anger toward the church, voiced fears that the new secular push would erase Christianity entirely. “Broad culture has decided we don’t need religion,” he mourned. His alarm, though often unspoken, is not unshared. No matter how many Christians paint the decline in church attendance as a positive trend, concerns about their shrinking membership are rippling through the community. But despite the onslaught of change, for better or for worse, Christianity will never be erased. The simple fact is that Trinity—like the rest of Ireland—cannot forget its religious influences. Nor should it try to. To do so would not only deny students the ability to unpack the histories that continue to shape their education, but would overlook the opportunity to create an informed interreligious dialogue grounded in experience and truth. The student rejected from the CU for her sexual orientation had this to say:

> I wouldn't say [Trinity’s] completely robbed of religion…You can see different things that indicate religion is there, but it’s no longer the thing it was…And I think that, looking at stuff like the Book of Kells… We can’t get rid of our churches and our buildings just because oh, secular. They’re history as well. And we can’t deny it.75

With the fears or hopes of the eradication of religion either assuaged or dashed, the only clear path forward is serious, unbarred dialogue. Lack of interpersonal communication has made it far too easy for members of the Trinity community to argue with archetypes rather than with real people. The Christian becomes the conservative, controlling bigot and the liberal becomes the anti-establishment, prejudiced faith-exterminator.
Of course, conversations that resemble aggressive assertions more than they do true communication only reinforce these stereotypes. But, to a similar effect, the exchange of polite niceties leaves the toxic typecasts untouched. In some ways, it is a more detrimental approach, as it suggests no community rift exists in the first place. As one student phrased it, “Political correctness creates a disconnect.” Students recall with frustration classes with members reluctant to debate the touchy topic of religion. “You can see [students who disagree with Catholic doctrine] sort of sitting there and they’re trying not to say anything,” said one Loyola Institute student describing the atmosphere of his Catholic theology courses. “But it would be nice if they would speak up more…and you could have actual conversations,” he proposed.76

No “actual conversation” is ever easy to initiate, nor is it likely that the first few will create any meaningful change. The newfound anger and resistance many Irish people hold toward organized religion cannot be easily disarmed, but it has become a vehicle for people to explore what they do and do not want their relationship with religion to look like. As one professor explained, many “haven’t gotten beyond the kicking stage. So, the church is there to be kicked.”77 But he held hope for the future. “You achieve a certain level of maturity when you’re able to forgive your parents, and maybe we as a culture will have some way of accommodating ourselves to forgiving the religions that shaped us.”78 Forgiveness will certainly come with time. After all, today’s religious conflict is not the only one the Irish people have had to overcome. For now, Trinity staff and students simply need to deflate their parodied impressions of each other. A productive conversation to this end does not mean people of opposing views have to agree, or even get along with each other. They just need to find a human connection. “I don’t think you can ever change someone’s mind and that’s not my goal,” remarked one Catholic student accustomed to these kinds of conversations. “My goal is to just have a mutual understanding.”79
INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

Christian Union Member, Trinity College, Dublin

What are your goals for outreach?

Outreach is ultimately to introduce the person of Jesus to whoever wants to meet Jesus on campus. We keep the outreach very Jesus-focused; we try to have talks to meet people where they’re at. So if you want to imagine your average university student—your average guy, your average woman, who maybe grew up in a not very religious home—sometimes, a lot of times, there are people quite bitter at the Catholic Church, just in general, for a lot of justifiable reasons in Ireland. So, that’s why we try to have edgy talk titles, as I mentioned earlier. So, yeah, that’s kind of our main reason. Basically, [to] introduce people to Jesus because we think in the CU [Christian Union] that following Jesus and having a relationship with him is the best decision you could ever make. So we try to show people that we’ve found that in our case: here’s a speaker to explain, why we want to answer your questions.

Secondly, I think we want to show our college that being a Christian doesn’t make you a reclusive, backwoods idiot who doesn’t engage in our society. Certainly, the people in CU will be very much want to be part of campus culture, and you want to show that being a Christian doesn’t mean you can’t have any more fun. So, we want to show the rest of our campus that we’re—I suppose—a legitimate society that it’s fun to be a part of. We think because of our Christian faith that it is fun. It kind of binds us together and is a good unifying force.

You said you wanted to show that not all Christians are recluses. Do you get the sense that people might think that?

Yeah, I think zooming out to the wider social context of Ireland… people’s perception of religion—Christianity, in particular—is, I would describe it as perhaps a legalistic thing that you have to do every week. For example, you were obliged to attend Mass, you were perhaps forced to take the first holy communion, first confession, that kind of thing, but perhaps you didn’t have the more full understanding of what those sacraments meant… I think the Church in Ireland in the past was a bit too legalistic, a bit too moral. It was seen as—I’m trying to describe it—perhaps there wasn’t that dynamic of [a] personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It was more, you attended Mass, you got your weekly, tick the box, weekly obligation. You could describe it maybe you were a “Sunday Christian,” that what happened in that hour of Mass didn’t particularly affect the rest of your weekly life. This is on top of—some would describe—the Catholic faith of Ireland. They didn’t really answer people’s questions or explain things; it was “this is the way we do things.” And perhaps [they] weren’t very good at giving rational answers or explaining, and I think that sort of tense, moralistic, religious culture created Catholics, like perpetuated them, without perhaps an authentic faith underneath.
Catholic Chaplain, Trinity College, Dublin

In what situations would students be referred from counseling to the chaplaincy?

I think loneliness, you know. They want to have a good role model. Some students are not able to really make friends, fluently, confidently, like other students. A lot of our students are very articulate; they can express what they want. But there are other students who are just very lonely, very enclosed, very vulnerable. They’re here to complete their studies, they’re here to complete a course, but the naturalizing, socializing is not normal for them.

The chaplaincy can be more of a safe zone as well. People aren’t going to tease you here—they’re not going to target you.

How many people involved in the chaplaincy would you say are of another faith [than Catholicism]?

Oh, I would say a majority. I’d say about, hmm, maybe one-third come here for reasons of faith. Whether that’s Christian faith or involved in the Christian Union, or involved in the Catholic chaplaincy. And it’s a smaller group. But then, the larger group, even the regulars that come here, they’re not formally involved in the church or in the Christian community. They may have faith privately, but that’s not their motivation for being here. They’re here because they’re welcome, for a cup of tea. They’re here because they’ve got to know the chaplains, or they’ve made some friends here. So it’s much more, kind of human.

Member, Laurentian Society, Trinity College, Dublin

What did you do in the Laurentian Society?

In third year… I wasn’t a part of it in any active official capacity so I just went to events. Laurentian was going through a bit of a revival because it had been quite dormant the previous year or two—there hadn’t been that many events. Yeah, I enjoyed it; it was intellectually stimulating. There were lots of interesting speakers and events, there were lots of interfaith events… Yeah I just, I liked the environment. It was a stimulating environment that was also fun, you know?

What do you think spurred on the revival?

I suppose it was just the people involved. It’s undergone several revivals: It was founded in the early 1950s, and it kind of fell dormant around the early 1990s. And I think it was revived around 2011, 2012. And then… it depends who’s involved. Sometimes people just aren’t as engaged or whatever, and sometimes other people have to kind of pick it up and revive it again. So it really depends on the committee, I suppose, and who’s doing it.

And it’s kind of changed because it was originally the Catholic Society. But when it was revived in 2011 or so, they changed, it had to be—because the [university] rules of the societies had changed—it’s now the Catholic Cultural Society. Officially.
OVERVIEW

Allison Ross is a student in the Georgetown School of Nursing and Health Studies, class of 2020, pursuing a bachelor’s degree in global health and minors in government and economics. During summer 2019, she traveled to Chiang Saen, Thailand, to conduct research at Xavier Learning Community (XLC) as an Education and Social Justice fellow. In Thailand, Catholics have a long history of adapting to other cultures, incorporating elements of local customs and religions into Catholic practices. Given this history of flexibility, as well as the ethnic and religious diversity at XLC, Allison’s case study focuses on inclusion and inculturation at XLC, or how the school creates a unique community out of the diversity of its students and staff. Through 24 interviews, as well as observations of XLC residents in classrooms, Masses, and other extracurricular activities, Allison examines the defining elements of community at XLC and how those elements contribute to the school’s dual missions of education and spiritual development.

INTRODUCTION

Though less than 1% of Thailand’s population is Catholic, the Catholic Church has consistently maintained a presence in the country, often instituting development programs aimed at alleviating material poverty. Catholic groups perform charitable work and run nonprofit organizations throughout Thailand, but most large-scale development projects occur in the north of the country, such as the Mekong Delta region. While as a whole Thailand is relatively ethnically homogenous, the mountainous northern regions of the country contain various minority populations, including the Akha, Karen, Laha, Hmong, Yao, and Lisu. Some of these communities came to Thailand as refugees, such as the Karen, who fled warfare in neighboring Myanmar in the 1990s. Others came as economic migrants, like the Akha, who migrated from Tibet and southern China in the early
1900s. Though these minority groups speak different languages, practice different religions, and follow different traditions, they face similar social, economic, and cultural difficulties in comparison to ethnic Thais. Originally economic migrants or refugees from nearby conflicts, Thailand’s highland populations live in geographically isolated areas, speak little Thai, and have low rates of Thai citizenship, hindering their access to the formal economy and social services. With many working as undocumented subsistence farmers, these communities make only a fraction of the country’s average income and receive the lowest amount of public spending per capita. With few economic or educational opportunities, Thailand’s ethnic minority communities remain trapped in cycles of poverty.

Aware of these inequalities, the Jesuit mission in Thailand opened Xavier Learning Community (XLC) on August 19, 2017. Located in the Golden Triangle of the Mekong Delta, where the borders of Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos meet, XLC provides higher educational opportunities for nearby communities. XLC currently offers bachelor’s degrees through a partnership with Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, though the school will soon seek accreditation from the Thai government to become Xavier College and grant its own degrees. Each year, XLC accepts approximately 40 students, giving them full scholarships to study English for eco-tourism, English for health services, or English for teaching. After graduating, these fluent English speakers will return home to begin businesses, improve their communities, and train others to follow in their footsteps. In this way, XLC aims to economically empower marginalized populations in northern Thailand.

Beyond its core program of English education, XLC strives to enrich student learning through cultural festivals, service projects, and exercises in guided reflection. Through such educational practices, which utilize the arts and humanities for personal moral development, XLC works toward the Jesuit goal of educating “the whole person.” In this context, this means that by graduation, not only will Xavier students have gained employable skills, but they will also be cross-cultural communicators and committed agents for social change.
Catholics in Thailand have a long history of adapting to local contexts, incorporating Thai language, religion, and cultural traditions into their Catholic practices. As a Jesuit school in northern Thailand, Xavier Learning Community follows in this tradition; XLC has had to adapt to a number of factors, such as the fluctuating budget and student body of a new school, an ethnically and ideologically diverse population in a Jesuit school, and the administrative and governmental oversight of a Thai school. As a result, XLC has instituted practices that render it different from other Catholic institutions or Thai universities. This research focuses on the practices that make the school unique, as identified in interviews with XLC residents, including its reliance on foreign staff, promotion of Jesuit values, creation of intentional community, and engagement with ethnic diversity. How did these traditions come about, and how do they influence XLC’s mission of promoting students’ educational and moral development? By examining how and why these practices came to be, this research seeks to determine which should be intentionally maintained and which should be rethought as the school establishes itself as Xavier College in the coming years.

**INTERNATIONAL STAFF: AN ENGLISH ENVIRONMENT**

As a new and expanding school, Xavier Learning Community faces unique budgetary challenges which influence staffing norms at the school. With most of its funding used for the construction of new classroom buildings and residence halls for its growing student population, XLC has little funding for teaching salaries. To make up for this initial shortage of Thai academic staff, the school relies on English-speaking volunteers sent by Jesuit universities and service programs in countries such as Indonesia, Australia, France, and the Philippines. Most volunteers have university or advanced degrees in English or education, as well as prior teaching experience, though some are recent high school graduates. These volunteers spend anywhere from six weeks to one year at XLC teaching classes, organizing activities, and living with the students. While such an international staff is largely a byproduct of the school’s budget limitations rather than an intentional personnel choice, it has in many ways proved a boon for XLC, creating a culture of English-speaking and language learning unmatched by other Thai universities.

Foreign staff create a different classroom environment at XLC than that found in the rest of Thailand. In other schools, the country’s strong culture of respect for elders and superiors contributes to a sense of hierarchy in the classroom. Students listen diligently to lectures, but they are discouraged from asking questions about material that they do not understand. Often in Thai classrooms, student questions or confusion are taken to imply that the teacher did not explain the material adequately.
Sri Maryati, former head of XLC’s English department, explains that for students:

> Asking questions in classrooms is not the culture. So, when they were in high schools, they really did not ask questions of the teachers. Because when you ask questions to the teachers, the teachers might feel bad, might feel upset that, “Oh, why? You didn’t understand my explanation? I’ve done my best and you still didn’t understand. Oh, you upset me.”

As a result, Thai students often struggle to comprehend complex grammatical concepts on their own. However, at XLC foreign volunteers change this classroom dynamic. They are often younger than professional Thai English teachers, and they are more likely to think of student questions as part of an engaged learning process. The volunteers regularly encourage questions in the classroom and ask for student feedback, responding to difficulties and adjusting lesson plans accordingly. With such a style of instruction, XLC students feel more comfortable expressing confusion about pronunciation or asking for clarification about conjugation. This communication contributes substantially to the learning process, as students can better understand the nuances of the English language.

Foreign teachers also encourage a culture of consistent English usage, both inside and outside the classroom. In Thai high schools and universities, most students learn English from classes predominantly taught in Thai. Students memorize phrases and grammar rules, but rarely practice listening or conversing in English. While they technically understand the language, these students struggle to develop a natural comfort with and confidence in speaking English. In contrast, XLC’s multinational staff makes English the natural lingua franca of the school. Most of the foreign volunteers do not speak fluent Thai, so they teach classes entirely in English. Even after class, students must continue to practice conversational English as they interact with XLC staff.
with staff members during meals, games, or evening tutorial sessions. Though conversing in a foreign language can often be awkward or difficult, XLC students cannot default to Thai to communicate with staff, so they quickly grow used to expressing themselves in English. Filipino teacher Miguel Cabreros explains:

*What a lot of us appreciate with the Australians being here, the foreigners being here, is that we get to converse as often as possible and in a very casual way, and indirectly practice English already. And then learn new things about cultures and whatnot. And so, I think this is something we would compromise if all if not most of the teachers were Thai natives. Because obviously if the teacher's Thai, it's not to say that they're not going to be friends. But if they're going to talk like during lunch or during your spare time, you're going to talk in Thai anyway. Or if they're going to talk in English, it's going to seem artificial and forced, because they would both know that they know how to speak Thai anyway. So, I think with us being here, we afford that opportunity to them.*

During casual conversations about music or sports, students employ the vocabulary and grammar they learned in the classroom and gain comfort with the language. These regular interactions create an “English environment” at XLC, where students recognize the value of even imperfect English. As Thai teacher Angsumalee Samerporn explains, XLC students realize that “English is just a tool to communicate. It’s just something that you’re gonna use it for, maybe using it for a living someday, but it’s nothing that you can bring to judge other people.” Instead of laughing at mispronunciations or criticizing the errors of their peers, XLC students encourage each other to practice and work together to improve. With such consistent exposure to the language, XLC students quickly gain fluency in conversational English, a skill level which other Thai schools cannot always achieve.

XLC’s staff members improve the educational environment not only by creating an English-speaking culture, but also by ensuring that all students can keep up with the language. In many universities, whether in Thailand or elsewhere, students are ultimately responsible for shaping their education. While teachers are available to provide support, if shy or weak students do not seek out assistance, teachers will not prevent them from falling behind. At XLC though, staff members truly believe in the school’s mission to provide a meaningful opportunity for all students. Whether they came to XLC through a Jesuit volunteer organization or a connection with Thai Jesuits, staff members are heavily motivated by religious or humanitarian ideals. As American Father Thomas Michel, S.J., describes:

*It’s like Jesus’ story of the good shepherd and the hireling. The hireling’s just doing this because he’s getting a standard wage; he’s not going to have the same kind of*
commitment. But a teacher who’s a volunteer, they’re really good because this is part of their life commitment. This is how they’re living their life authentically rather than just getting a salary. And so that means that they’re going to take extra care of the students.17

XLC’s staff, both Thai and foreign, came to XLC to help students. As a result, when Jesuit fathers say, “If you see weak students, please pay attention to them. […] These students are the sheep that God has given to us to take care of,” staff take the sentiment to heart.18 When students struggle with English, staff members give them additional attention. Teachers communicate with each other about student needs, such as more conversation during meal times, practice with a certain subject in class, or an extra tutoring session in the evening. XLC teachers then work to provide this assistance, taking on extra responsibilities and making themselves available to help at all times of the day. With such committed staff members, XLC ensures that its students feel comfortable speaking English regardless of background or ability, further enhancing educational quality at the school.

Despite these benefits, there are also drawbacks to XLC’s volunteer-based staff. Volunteer teachers rarely stay for more than 12 months at a time, and they all arrive at different points of the year. Such frequent turnover makes it difficult to organize staff orientations, workshops, and training sessions.19 Without an all-staff orientation, XLC struggles to provide each of its teachers with fundamental training in Jesuit education, lesson planning, or Thai cultural practices. Though teachers do hear about these topics in various staff meetings, many believe that this is not enough. Staff members from other countries must learn about the context of the students in order to teach most effectively, and this process takes time. Foreign teachers need to adjust to Thai hesitations at speaking out or asking questions in the classroom, as well as learn how to accommodate the linguistic backgrounds of students from different ethnic groups.20 However, once staff reach this basic level of proficiency, they soon need to leave, and replacement volunteers begin the process of learning students’ contexts anew. This lack of continuity impedes teaching efficiency, and it makes life more difficult for students outside of the classroom as well. In XLC’s small community, students grow close to the teachers, but this sense of connection only lasts for a year at most.21 Such turnover inhibits the development of long-term mentoring relationships between students and staff and impedes the sense of community that XLC strives to create.

In addition to regular turnover, a large number of foreign teachers can also hamper the early stages of the English learning process. Because foreign staff often cannot speak Thai, they can struggle to explain English concepts such as verb tense or pluralization to beginning students. Thai teachers can demonstrate these concepts with Thai comparisons, which can be extremely beneficial for students who are
new to English, while foreign teachers cannot provide much explanation in Thai. Furthering the problem, native English speakers often have trouble defining grammatical rules in their own language. To them, many of the nuances of English grammar simply feel natural, which can make it hard to define clearly how they are used. Native English speakers might struggle to explain the difference between “who” and “whom,” or why the plural of “ox” is “oxen.” Though XLC students benefit from consistent use of English in the classroom, fluency in a language does not always translate to an ability to teach it well.

Counterintuitively, Xavier Learning Community’s limited budget has in many ways enhanced its educational outcomes, bringing inspired international teachers to the school. As XLC finishes the construction phase of its development within the next two years, the school plans to use a larger portion of its funds to recruit permanent, salaried Thai staff members. A majority-Thai teaching force will help XLC obtain Thai government recognition as Xavier College, and it will add consistency and experience to the school’s classrooms. As it moves forward, XLC must ensure that it recruits teachers who are as enthusiastic about the school’s mission as current volunteers are. Otherwise, XLC risks losing the classroom culture that makes its English education program so effective.

JESUIT VALUES: THINKING FOR OTHERS

XLC wants to do more than teach students to speak English well though. As a Jesuit school, it aims to form “fully human persons,” with a holistic process that engages students intellectually, spiritually, and socially. As American teacher John McConville explains, “Very much part of Jesuit education is educating the whole person, which is not just gaining knowledge but learning how to live together, how to love and respect each other, you know, how to be of service, not only to your community but to the outside world.” In their schools, Jesuits intend to not only educate students but also instill in them a desire to better themselves and the world around them. Because XLC is supported by the Jesuits, receiving volunteer staff, curricular advice, and financial support from institutions across the globe, this altruistic mentality is prominent in its community as well.

Across cultures, Jesuits strive to educate students who will go on to be leaders and changemakers, people who recognize problems in the status quo and seek solutions. XLC follows in this tradition, with an aim “to form young people to become humane and competent leaders able to respond to the needs and challenges in their respective contexts.” Support from international Jesuit institutions brings a unique focus on global issues to XLC’s classrooms, one
not found in every Catholic school in Thailand. With advice from established Jesuit schools like Sanata Dharma University in Indonesia and Ateneo de Davao University in the Philippines, XLC incorporates a focus on critical thinking into its curriculum, through classes like Critical Speaking, Critical Reading and Writing, Book Report, and others. In Critical Reading, for example, sophomore students research and write argumentative essays on topics of their choosing. In their papers, students have advocated for issues such as legalizing gay marriage, allowing felons to vote, and requiring counseling before cosmetic surgery. In other classes, students have produced videos about gender equality, analyzed passages about deforestation and climate change, and discussed ways to prevent human trafficking in Thailand. As student Rungniga Keereckroekkong notes, such schoolwork encourages “thinking for other people,” or considering the impact of one’s actions on the world.

Even with this emphasis, many staff members report that critical thinking does not come naturally in XLC classrooms. Students tend to shy away from controversial topics, especially if they do not have any personal experience with the subject. In the Critical Reading class, many students chose topics to get the assignment “over and done with,” rather than issues they seemed to genuinely feel passionate about, and students do not tend to discuss social or political issues with their peers outside of the classroom. Many XLC staff members believe this hesitation is a result of students’ prior educational experiences. Thai culture often stresses deference to authority and discourages criticisms of one’s superiors. As a result, high school classes rarely encourage students to engage in the kind of critical thinking that XLC staff ask for. When students are unused to or uncomfortable with discussing social problems in Thai, it becomes even more difficult to do so in a foreign language. Because it is so difficult, students tend to complain about or try to avoid this kind of work in the classroom. Miguel Cabreros, co-teacher of Critical Reading and Writing, notes:

Because they often kid around and say that they hate the subject, it’s so difficult. But I feel like that’s just how we act universally, that’s just how we act when something is so foreign, more-so difficult for us. We just tend to think of it as something that’s ruining our lives, something that we don’t want, but I hope […] that they’ve overcome that hurdle of shying away from these topics.

While classwork helps students improve and develop critical thinking abilities from year to year, some staff members feel that classwork alone is not enough to ensure that students continue to think critically after graduation. At Jesuit universities like Sanata Dharma and Ateneo de Davao, critical thinking is incorporated into more than just classwork; it is also encouraged in extracurricular activities and everyday life. If XLC wants its students to develop a lifelong
analytical disposition, the school should follow these models and promote a more discursive culture outside of the classroom. As XLC grows, it ought to work critical thinking into daily life, by holding discussion groups with students, encouraging casual conversations about contemporary issues, or posting relevant news articles on bulletin boards. Without this, XLC will not produce as many students who habitually engage with societal issues and seek solutions for them.

Beyond developing students into critical thinkers, another goal of Jesuit education is to form reflective students, those who understand themselves and consider the deeper significance of their experiences. Given the school’s small community, Xavier Learning Community is particularly capable of encouraging genuine reflection among its students, as the school’s four priests work closely with students to prompt contemplative thinking throughout the day. Beginning their first year, all students take a weekly reflection course, taught by the Jesuit priests. Each session, the priests encourage students to think deeply about themselves and the world around them, using questions like, “What are you grateful for?” and “What childhood memories stand out to you? Why?” To get students thinking during the course, the priests employ a variety of mediums such as videos, songs, and artwork. Classes often begin with clips from Disney movies, videos about religious figures like Mother Teresa, or quotes from historically significant individuals. Students then discuss with the priests how these materials relate to their lives and their own experiences, as well as what they were inspired by. Thai Father Nopparat Ruankool, S.J., explains:

> Sometimes I have a student, I ask, “You said that you are happy, you are sad. Why?” Well, they must know the reason. They cannot feel something without the reasons, right? Of course, we may have some time [that] we feel without the reason. But to know the reasons will help us to slowly see that there’s something that affects us. […] For example, like you’re feeling happy because you’re grateful for your family. You’re not only happy, but you’re grateful for your family. So that means family affects you to be happy. That’s why family is something that’s important. But without seeing about family, it’s just happy, it’s not like that, right?

Through reflection, Father Nopparat guides students to a deeper understanding of their emotions, experiences, and values, helping them discern what is important in their lives. With such insights, students can improve themselves and better empathize with others. Outside of these classes, students also reflect in daily morning meetings, called morning gatherings, and in the Mass that occurs every night. Staff occasionally incorporate reflection into their lesson plans as well, asking students to think about what they have learned and why it is important to understand.
Because reflection is so prevalent on XLC’s campus, most students feel that they have learned and grown from the process. Sophomore student Suwanni Bunyuenkun explains:

> When you do something, no matter what thing, if you just let it go, it’s nothing. But like, [it happens] when you do something and then you reflect [on] it and then do again. And then you can say, “What can I do for better? What have I done? What should I do?” So, from that, you learn. Without that, you just let everything go. You never learn anything about anything.39

When students reflect on events, whether good or bad, they can process and learn from them. Some students say that they improve their time management and study habits with reflection by recognizing the various ways that they procrastinate.40 Others report more empathy for others, as they are able to think through the reasons behind emotionally charged situations.41 Still more note that they want to help others as a result of reflection, because videos about Mother Teresa and global poverty allow them to realize the benefits they have and what they can share.42 Though students might not reflect as often in the future as they do at XLC, they clearly recognize the value of introspection and have formed a habit that will help them throughout their lives.

Besides reflection, another aspect of the Jesuit tradition is “contemplation in action,” which is a recognition that thinking alone can be insufficient without materials from which to learn. As a result, XLC provides “field days for reflection,” which are opportunities for students to serve the broader community.43 Once or twice a semester, the school brings together all of its students to do a service project, referred to as “work camp,” where they help nearby communities and villages.44 At past work camps, students have helped build a village library and a wall for a church. In addition, XLC invites local children for English tutoring programs every Saturday, taught by XLC students and staff. Not only do programs like these provide a direct benefit to the communities around XLC, but they also create experiences on which the students can reflect. Students who participate in work camp continue to contemplate the meaning of their service upon their return. They reflect on what they were asked to do and how helping others made them feel. Student Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul explains:

> At that time, we have activity with the blind students. […] But our students, some of them, I think that they like, [were] touched by them. Like these people are blind, right? But they [are] still happy. […] This thing, they might be touched by them to be more, more thinking about how they have, what they have now and what the blind people have. Why they still happy? Why they still have very happiness? And kind of, I think, they maybe encourage them. I think it’s both
ways. Because the blind people were encouraged by our student[s], like they’re not alone. And they also encourage[d] our student[s] that they have everything, everything good. And you should work hard, work for others.45

After participating in the work camp, XLC students like Chaiwat think through their experiences and emotions, a process which deepens their understanding of gratitude and enhances their desire to serve others.

Not only does XLC provide service opportunities for its students to reflect on, but the Jesuit priests also serve as role models who inspire students to work for others. At the school, the four Jesuits have very busy schedules, working full time to teach students, handle administrative matters, and minister to neighboring villages, among other obligations. Despite their tight schedules, the priests always make time for the students, and the students admire the Jesuits for being humble, hard-working, and self-sacrificing. Thai teacher Angsumalee Samerporn notes:

We can see from our priests, like for our priests they work hard and that and they never like, they never complain that they work hard. They [are] just doing it and they [are] doing it for other students. And I think the students know this. So, they [are] teaching by, not telling, but they [are] teaching by doing it every day, every day. And all of us actually, we know how much they sacrifice their own personal time for us, so I think [the students] see it every day. They learn it every day. And one day it’s gonna be, they gonna, how do you say it, little by little they gonna, things gonna happen in their lives from seeing it and seeing through it.46

By working hard and making sacrifices to support the students, the priests demonstrate the Jesuit concept of “men and women for others.” They serve as personal models of moral lessons learned in the classroom, inspiring students to behave compassionately as well. It is clear that the priests’ behavior has a strong influence on the students at XLC from the beginning of their time at the school. Students refer to the priests as “our platform and guideline,” noting, “They work hard for us, so we have to work hard for our people.”47 Students feel grateful towards the priests and the rest of XLC’s staff and recognize that they should give back to others in turn when reflecting on their teachers’ examples.

With these models as an influence, students regularly demonstrate their desire to help others. They go out of their way to help classmates struggling with chores or school assignments and check in on new teachers as they adjust to Thailand. XLC students also overwhelmingly want to pursue careers where they can help others, hoping to teach English in their villages, work to promote human rights, or start sustainable businesses that can lift communities out of poverty.48 As American teacher John McConville explains, “There’s this feel of genuine interest and care for the other” at the school, brought about by XLC’s Jesuit influence and close
As XLC takes on more students in the coming years, school-wide outings like work camp will become more logistically and financially burdensome, and one-on-one mentoring relationships between the priests and students will become more difficult to foster. Despite this, XLC should continue to prioritize opportunities for critical thinking, regular reflection, and community service at the school, ensuring that its students graduate ready to serve others.

**INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY: RULES AND SOCIAL NORMS**

Besides developing students who reflect and think critically, Xavier Learning Community also strives to form individuals who can live together in community. With its motto, “Growing in community, sharing with society,” the school tries to foster a sense of shared norms, identity, and belonging among its students. Because XLC is a relatively isolated, small residential school, it has a unique ability to create such a feeling of common ownership, instilling a sense of personal responsibility and respect for others in its students. That said, as the school grows and the student body changes, the ways in which XLC fosters this common ownership have had to change as well.

At XLC, students and staff spend most of their time together, sharing meals, classes, daily chores, and other school-wide activities. XLC takes advantage of this time together to create a sense of unity among residents. Daily Mass serves as one prominent example of this bonding. Because Masses are a regular opportunity for people to come together, the priests make them highly personal and relevant to XLC. The homilies focus on issues that are pertinent to the students to “bring lessons to their lives, rather than faith in a very abstract way,” as Thai Father Peter Pichet Saengthien, S.J., explains. During a Mass before their upcoming final exams, Father Pichet stressed to students that test scores do not define personal worth in the eyes of God. Other homilies relay similarly relatable messages. Discussing the homilies that she has heard at XLC, Indonesian teacher Teresia Triutami states, “Here, it’s more contextual, and they try to make it more meaningful for the students so that the students can realize something. They feel like oh, it’s really close to them, and then it can move their heart.” Though not every student is Catholic, having this personalized space to reflect on their lives, hear advice from the fathers, and sing together every night creates a strong sense of belonging and togetherness at XLC, which carries over into daily life outside of Mass.

The Jesuit fathers and XLC staff also engage in “conscious community-building” in other ways as well. They celebrate students’ birthdays, along with Thai and Jesuit holidays. In addition, the school holds ceremonies for teachers, researchers, and
others as they come and go. XLC’s staff members introduce new arrivals at Mass and school-wide meetings. When someone leaves, XLC holds a parting ceremony in which students and staff tie white threads called *sai sin* around the departing individual’s wrists, wishing them good health and a safe journey. These communal practices ensure that “people just don’t show up”; instead, they are recognized for their time at the school.53

As a result, XLC students feel that it is “a bit like family to live here.”54 This feeling of togetherness helps XLC achieve the educational component of its Jesuit mission. It improves the English education at the school, as teachers form bonds with the students that encourage communication and help them better understand an individual’s strengths and weaknesses. A strong sense of community also contributes to students’ willingness to speak English outside of the classroom, since they feel less worried that their close friends will make fun of their abilities.

In order to maintain this community dynamic, XLC encourages students to think carefully about what it means to live with other people. Communities do not come about effortlessly, so the school teaches that everyone has a role to play in preserving this sense of unity. To live well with their peers, students must recognize that their actions impact other peoples’ quality of life, so they cannot always do anything that they want. For instance, if students arrive late to scheduled meal times, the cooks must wait for them. If students leave air conditioning running, the whole school will have to pay for it. If students perform their chores poorly, the common spaces will not be ready for use. To prompt students to think about the externalities of their actions, XLC staff discuss behavioral norms like these in weekly school-wide meetings. With this regular emphasis on pro-social behavior, students understand that “living in community means we cannot always do what we want to do.”55 In general, students adhere to XLC’s daily schedule and recognize that their individual actions impact the whole community. They consistently perform their cooking, cleaning, and
farming tasks thoroughly, conserve electricity and water whenever possible, and help each other when problems or difficulties arise.

As the school grows and more students live at XLC, it is harder to motivate everyone through school-wide meetings. As a result, XLC increasingly relies on a code of conduct to encourage students to think about the impact their actions can have on others. This enforceable code of conduct governs student behavior, defining how students can interact with opposite-gender peers, describing the permissions required to leave campus, and forbidding the consumption of alcohol. By emphasizing the importance of the rules, school administrators hope to prevent actions that could create animosity between the students or problems for the school, and to provide a foundation for pro-social behavior. As Father Nopparat Ruankool, XLC’s director, explains:

> You know, we have the motto of the school, “Growing in community, sharing with society.” So, all the rules are just to support, just to help us that we can think more about the community, to live with each other, sharing for one another. So that’s why the rules should be [a] minimum of what they can do, but try to encourage them to think what they can do more for XLC.56

For instance, XLC’s rules specify that students must go into their own dorm buildings by 10:00 p.m. each night, because they will disrupt others trying to study or sleep if they continue to talk and play outside. If someone wants to go to sleep earlier than 10:00 though, XLC hopes roommates take it upon themselves to be quiet and considerate earlier in the evening.

While the weekly meetings at XLC do teach students about self-regulation and respect for others, some feel that XLC’s rules can occasionally impede the school’s goal of forming individuals with a natural sense of concern for others. According to some XLC students and staff, top-down rules do not tend to motivate self-reflection in the same way that widely discussed community norms do. When students are motivated by avoiding punishment, rather than creating a respectful community, they do not always consider the broader purpose of the requirements or how their choices affect their peers.57 When strict codes of conduct make pro-social behavior a requirement rather than a well-respected norm, students struggle to internalize the significance of their actions to the community. According to one teacher, students have not “bought in on [the rules] on an emotional level” to the same extent that they have embraced other aspects of community life, which can undermine the sense of trust and unity that XLC strives to build.58

Compounding this problem, members of the XLC community feel that some rules can be overly restrictive. For instance, the consumption of alcohol is
forbidden, even when of-age students are back home in their own villages. As one student noted:

_The Jesuits, they work very hard for us. But I think that sometimes it’s too strict there. And with that strict rule, it’s not that happy. [...] I understand that this is the new place, the new Jesuit project of education in Thailand. Lots of people focus on this place, and we should care about the image. But sometimes I think that, besides the image, they should care about the happiness of people inside this as well._

Some students and staff feel that the code of conduct mainly serves to promote XLC’s educational reputation, especially given its position as the first Jesuit school in Thailand, and they struggle to understand how certain rules, like forbidding alcohol consumption, maintain a sense of shared community. Students acknowledge that XLC, in “trying to create students with good character and good habits,” has genuine concerns about their conduct. That said, students sometimes feel that the school does not trust them. Instead of asking students to think for themselves and trusting that they will then behave wisely, XLC finds it necessary to impose strict regulations. For some, this sends a message that seems at odds with the Jesuits’ desire to produce individuals who think critically and make independent moral choices. As one student notes, “We feel like we [are] kind of adults, like we are already in kind of university. We should have to think about ourselves and then what to do sometimes. In their view is strict, like, to talk about, ‘You cannot do this, do that’ all the time.” In this way, XLC’s rules seem to discourage students from reflecting on their options and making informed value judgements.

With a small campus and student body, Xavier Learning Community has been able to develop a strong sense of community among students, and this camaraderie improves English education at the school. As XLC grows though, the school has been adding to its code of conduct, attempting to maintain a sense of community in the face of the problems that a larger student body can pose. As a result, many measures are relatively new, and there has been little opportunity for feedback from students and staff. Moving forward, XLC should provide a forum for all parties to discuss the rights and responsibilities of XLC residents. An open and consistent dialogue will ensure that students understand the community-building purpose behind XLC’s new rules, and it will also inform the administrators about whether a given rule bolsters or detracts from this aim.
UNITY IN DIVERSITY: RESPECT VERSUS EMPOWERMENT

Because XLC aims to serve Thailand’s disenfranchised minority populations, the school brings together students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, including Karen, Akha, Lahu, Lanna, and Hmong people. In northern Thailand, individuals from these different minority groups live together peacefully, though the populations tend to be isolated from each other geographically. As a result, while some of XLC’s students are used to interacting with those from different tribes and villages, others have rarely had the chance to meet people from other areas. For these students, the transition to XLC and its diversity is not always easy. This unfamiliarity creates a need for the school to forge unity among the student body, a process which occasionally limits difficult conversations about diversity.

During their first few months at XLC, many students spend most of their time with peers from their own ethnic group, working together in classes or talking with each other during meals. As Father Nopparat describes, “They like to be together with their own tribes. Maybe when they walk together, the close friends, they [are] mostly from their own tribe.” Because students are adjusting to their new school environment, they understandably gravitate towards peers with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Interacting with those who speak the same language and practice the same traditions creates an easy familiarity between students, while getting to know students from tribes with different communication styles and cultural norms can be more difficult. As one Akha student describes, “Especially when we first came here […] even when I am with them, just one Akha, there was me
and then like maybe nine Karen, they still talk in Karen. They just sometimes speak in Thai.64 When students are used to speaking Akha or Karen with their friends, they sometimes forget to speak in Thai in the presence of their classmates, alienating students from other ethnic groups.

Understanding these tendencies in its students, XLC strives to push them out of their comfort zones by encouraging students to get to know their peers from all backgrounds. The school regularly uses group activities to form bonds among students, conscientiously assigning students of different ethnicities to work together on class assignments or chores. Chores especially provide a space for easy conversation between diverse students.65 To pass the time when farming rice or cooking a meal, students often begin by asking each other, “Have you ever done something like this before?” opening the door to further discussion about similarities and differences.66 In addition to helping students talk with one another, XLC also provides many opportunities for students to experience their peers’ cultures. On Sundays, the school encourages students to wear their traditional cultural outfits to Mass, and weekday Masses often include songs in languages like Akha or Karen.67 On special occasions, students perform traditional dances for their peers or visitors to XLC. During cultural celebrations, such as the Akha Swing Festival, the school often takes students to visit their classmates’ villages, in the hopes that they will better understand and appreciate where their friends grew up.68

As XLC strives to create community out of this diversity, the priests and teachers emphasize that all people are equal, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or religion. As sophomore student Rungniga Keereckroekkong notes, “Fathers say, ‘You are [the] same family, don’t separate.’”69 In Mass, reflection classes, and weekly meetings, XLC students consistently hear that they share more similarities than differences. When combined with regular cross-cultural interactions, students take to this message well, frequently expressing their beliefs that “We are one family”; “We’re just the same”; and “We’re human, and we’re equal.”70 As they interact with individuals from different populations, XLC students realize the fundamental similarities between themselves and others, breaking down prior assumptions, hesitations, and stereotypes. Though XLC students rarely disrespect or judge unfamiliar ethnic groups in other settings, the school helps them form deep friendships across cultures that they might not otherwise.

This emphasis on equality effectively motivates students to respect their peers, but the idea that “we are all the same” occasionally leads students to paper over important differences between them. Though XLC students enjoy visiting different villages, observing cultural festivals, and interacting with new people,
very few of them discuss their ethnic background with each other outside of these events. For many, this results in only a superficial understanding of other ethnicities. When asked in interviews about what it means to be from one ethnic group or another, many students struggle to describe differences besides language or attire. In part, this difficulty occurs because XLC students worry about stereotyping their peers from other groups. Reflecting on the differences between Thai and Karen culture, Karen student Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul explains, “I don’t think like that. I think it’s kind of human being, right? […] I don’t like separate them by their ethnic minority like that.” In his mind, focusing too much on distinctions between ethnicities runs counter to recognizing shared humanity, and other students echo this sentiment. As a result, XLC students enjoy getting to know each other, appreciating the variety and novelty that ethnic diversity brings to their campus, but they do not necessarily engage in deeper conversations about an ethnic group’s history, such as Karen persecution in Myanmar, or the meaning behind cultural traditions, like the significance of the Akha Swing Festival.

In addition, some students hesitate to ask about others’ backgrounds and experiences unprompted. Because many have dealt with poverty and hardship before coming to XLC, students worry that such questions could make their classmates feel upset or embarrassed. Summer student Phuwadol Aisae explains, “Because we are respect[ful], and we don’t ask about problem of them, because maybe we can make them sad. Yes. They are [going to] lie about the problem.” In a school striving to create a unified community out of diverse ethnicities, conversations about discrimination can be uncomfortable and difficult because not all students are impacted in the same way. To avoid creating conflict or animosity among their peers, some students avoid these discussions entirely.

XLC respects ethnic diversity among its students, but some residents remarked that the school must do more to truly nurture it. As one individual explains, “They look at this multiculturalism thing in the superficial, sugar-coating level,” letting visual displays of diversity fill in for deeper conversations about the lived experiences of members of Thailand’s minority groups. Though the school exists to address disempowered populations in Thai society, it rarely pushes students to think deeply about other cultures. As XLC takes students to various villages and festivals, staff only infrequently talk about the history of these populations or the unique struggles they face in Thailand. In classes like Thai Society or Critical Reading and Writing, XLC generally does not prompt students to discuss the root causes of poverty in northern Thailand. As one individual explains:
They just don’t mention about the suppression, about the unfairness that the Thai state has done to these tribes. They don’t address the cause of the problem of why some tribal people have not obtained Thai citizenship yet. They don’t address the problems. Once you address those problems, you can’t avoid telling the story about the suppression.76

Some historians have argued that the social and economic inequalities among Thailand’s ethnic minorities are a result of years of neglect and misrule by the Thai government, which might explain XLC’s hesitation to take on more controversial issues.77 Staff members note that these conversations can be difficult for a young school which must maintain the approval of the Thai government, a state not known for its willingness to accept those critical of political authority.78

Despite these barriers, some staff and students feel that the school should do more to embrace the difficulties that come along with empowering populations. One XLC resident notes, “If you want to really promote multiculturalism, you need to embrace the confrontation between different minorities and the mainstream people. [...] And I don’t see that in XLC.”79 Though it can be hard, a crucial part of empowering populations is to recognize the struggles that they face. For the sake of creating one “XLC family” among many diverse students, the school has often overlooked these discussions. Without such conversations though, XLC students will not be thoroughly equipped to push for social change and community empowerment. The Jesuits are known for pushing the boundaries of comfortable discourse, and as XLC makes its place in northern Thailand, it could think more about how to promote these kinds of conversations, whether in the classroom or outside of it.

CONCLUSION

As a Thai Jesuit university staffed by international volunteers and serving minority populations, Xavier Learning Community has adapted to its contexts, including budget constraints, a growing student body, international influence, and Thai social norms. As XLC strives to empower Thailand’s disenfranchised communities, the school’s unique circumstances influence its mission of holistic education in complex and interrelated ways. International staff members create an English environment on the campus, and a strong sense of community encourages students to speak without feeling embarrassed about grammatical mistakes. Reflection classes and service opportunities encourage students to be self-sacrificing and mindful of others, though strict rules that preserve community life occasionally hinder this moral development. A strong sense of equality and belonging creates mutual respect among diverse students, but a desire to preserve this unity can deter difficult conversations about hardship and oppression. These defining elements often came about as by-products of other factors, such as limited funding leading
to a reliance on foreign volunteers, rather than by intentional design. Though initially out of XLC’s control, these characteristics are not set in stone. As Xavier Learning Community grows into Xavier College, it has an opportunity to reshape itself to better educate students and encourage their personal development.

In this way XLC demonstrates that, for Jesuit schools in a myriad of different environments, best practices are ultimately contextual. A school’s external environment shapes the practices available to it, just as economic, cultural, and political circumstances influence how XLC can approach educating its students. That said, XLC’s experience also shows that none of these characteristics are immutable. By relying on certain key qualities, XLC can improve on its weaknesses while maintaining its strengths. With intentionality, the school can seek out permanent Thai staff who possess the passion and drive of short-term international volunteers. With ingenuity, XLC can incorporate critical thinking into everyday activities outside of the classroom. With discourse, the school can facilitate a more thorough understanding of its code of conduct and community norms. With resolve, XLC can prompt difficult conversations about diversity, privilege, and oppression. Above all, Xavier Learning Community can rely on a cooperative spirit to improve itself moving forward. As long as students, teachers, administrators, and staff remain willing to work together to improve their community, XLC will grow into a reputable Thai Jesuit university.

Above all, Xavier Learning Community can rely on a cooperative spirit to improve itself moving forward. As long as students, teachers, administrators, and staff remain willing to work together to improve their community, XLC will grow into a reputable Thai Jesuit university. In so doing, Xavier Learning Community will serve as a model for new Jesuit schools across the globe. Though they may operate in different contexts, these schools have similar capacities for growth and change. With commitment and cooperation, these Jesuit institutions can modify and improve their practices, educating and empowering students for many years to come.
INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

Angsumalee Samerporn, Teacher, Xavier Learning Center

*What was the experience like when you got to Xavier? Did it feel very different than your hometown, religiously, or the same?*

I did not feel that different, because, since, you know, I was born in the Catholic family, right? I think my family quite strong Catholic, but not too strict. I mean they are strong, like they believe in Christ. They have faith in Jesus. They have faith in people. They kind of carry the positive energy in the family... I’m not sure that I can say that I believe in God, but whatever. When you pray to someone, only think... because I was born with it, so when I pray to something or I feel like very low, whatever. When you talk to someone, it’s like it’s God, but I don’t know what God that I’m talking to. But maybe that’s Jesus, that’s God, or whatever, but I still have faith in other religions. So, when I came here I did not feel that thing, that change a lot. I still feel like okay still. Everything is like, you get from that everything that they say, that they talk about, maybe except the one that they mention it a lot—the Ignatius pedagogy or something. Yeah. Which is, they mention it a lot, and I think it’s about the Jesuit method of teaching or something. Which is, I did not, I did not study in the deep detail about it yet. Just that part that I feel like [is a] new thing to me.

_Besides reflection, what else about Catholicism do you see reflected at Xavier?_

Hmm, I think, for here, before you’re doing something, the thing that they want you to, to [be] concern[ed] a lot is about, concern about other people. Like when you go outside, you may [have] thought about your right. You have a right to do this, you have a right to do this. But here, even if you know that you have a right to do something, but it’s like you have to [have] concern about other people who live with you too. Not just do what you think that you have a right to do.

John McConville, Teacher, Xavier Learning Center

*How would you say that teaching and working at XLC compares to other teaching jobs you’ve had in the past?*

Well, I mean there’s a remarkable difference in terms of the students. It’s partly because of location, where we are. We’re a somewhat isolated community out here in the countryside, and because of the different strict rules of the living conditions, we’re kind of forced into a community. But also, the students, most of them really enjoy being in the community, so it’s not like a forced community, so to speak. But the restrictions keep us pretty tightly together. So, there’s a lot of friendliness. Students are enthusiastic. They express gratitude. I think some of the students have a hard time connecting with me because they’re taught to be very respectful of adults, and I’m an older adult. So, they haven’t warmed up. But most of the students are extremely friendly. It’s in contrast to teaching in the United States, where it takes a little bit longer to make connections with students.
That idea of being respectful of adults, how does that influence the classroom?

I think it’s more complex than what we see. It’s a very interesting thing but it’s very hard to describe it simply, so I may get a little convoluted here. The students, what I notice with Thai people and I also notice it with our hill tribe students, who are a mixed bag—you know, they have a lot of experience living in Thailand but they also grew up in very unique communities where the culture is stronger than the Thai culture, and the Thai culture, family Thai culture and societal Thai culture, is a lot stronger than American culture in general—so they’ve been taught to respect the adults. And they do, but they also are very friendly. So, it’s like you get that side-by-side, and there’s no way to explain it in terms of comparing it. It’s just a fact. So, some days you’ll meet the students and you could tell they’re tentative and they want to be respectful. And other days, I’ll get a big hug from them. They’ll run up and be very cheery. So, I think part of it is mood, because these are college-age students and you know you go through so many emotional ups and downs. It’s a time where people fall in love a lot, and I think that that is part of the equation. So, it’s not just me. I think as I stay on here, there are more and more students who confide in me, where they didn’t do that in the beginning.

Chaloemsree Tahong, Sophomore Student, Xavier Learning Center

Can you think of anything that XLC does that was different than your high school that helps you learn English?

Actually, learning English here and also my high school, they are very different. So, in my high school, even though I majored in English, I have to study like ten 10 hours a week for English. But mostly I study with like Thai teachers. Like, they teach English but there [was] only one American teacher there. But here mostly we study with native speakers, with like the teachers who are from different countries. So, when they teach us, they have to speak English. And even Father Pichet [Saengthien, S.J.,] he always speak[s] English, you know, when he teach[es]. And sometimes like when the first time I came here, when I study Thai or science, sometimes Father Pichet teach[es] in English. But in high school, even… when I study English, the teachers, they don’t speak English while they are teaching. As well as they, yeah sometimes they are very good at grammar. They know what is right, what is wrong, blah, blah, but they don’t know how to speak. They are not able to speak in daily life.

Is there anything else that you can think of that makes education at XLC different than your high school?

I think because when I’m here, I have more opportunity to communicate in English with native speakers or the people who are from different countries. But in high school, mostly I speak Thai. Yeah, I speak Thai. But even with the American teacher, I have only one hour to study with her like in a week, so I don’t have much opportunity to communicate with her like that. So, I think it is good to be here.
IRELAND

1. The English Protestants were of the Anglican faith. The subcategories of Catholic and Protestant are overly broad for strains of religion so complex and imbued with individual meaning. For the purposes of this paper, however, they will be used in order to convey the dynamics of the Catholic majority and the non-Catholic Christian minority in Ireland and also allude to the social significance of the Catholic and Protestant divide in Ireland throughout the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries.


3. Twenty-six out of Ireland’s 32 counties were declared as independent from Britain, while the rest—known collectively today as “Northern Ireland”—are still under British control. Counties in Northern Ireland are Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone.


5. Ibid, 121.


15. Anglicanism and Methodism are, coarsely speaking, subcategories of Protestantism. Anglicanism was the faith practiced by the English forces that occupied Ireland. Jesuit and Dominican are, coarsely speaking, subcategories of Catholicism. Trinity’s Divinity School was moved to an off-campus location in order to further eliminate any partisan religious influence in the university’s administration.

16. Interview, anonymous student, June 20, 2019.

17. Interview, senior administrator, June 7, 2019.


19. Email interview, anonymous philosophy student, June 20, 2019.

20. Interview, Christian Union member.

21. Interview, anonymous student focus group, June 17, 2019.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Interview, anonymous student focus group.


26. Interview, Professor in the Irish School of Ecumenics, June 10, 2019.

27. Interview, student in Loyola Institute, June 5, 2019.

28. Email interview, anonymous philosophy student, June 20, 2019.

29. Interview, anonymous student, June 21, 2019.

30. Interview, Christian Union member.

31. Interview, student in Loyola Institute.

32. Ibid.

33. Interview, student in Loyola Institute.

34. Ibid.

35. Interview, anonymous student focus group.

36. Interview, Laurentian Society member, June 24, 2019.

37. Interview, Laurentian Society member.

38. Interview, anonymous Loyola Institute student, June 12, 2019; anonymous Loyola Institute student, June 12, 2019.

39. Interview, anonymous Loyola Institute student.

40. Interview, senior administrator.

41. Interview, anonymous student.

42. Interview, student in Loyola Institute.

43. Letter, anonymous philosophy student, June 20, 2019.

44. Interview, anonymous Loyola Institute student, June 12, 2019.

45. Letter, anonymous philosophy student, June 20, 2019.

46. Interview, anonymous Loyola Institute student, June 12, 2019.

47. Interview, anonymous student, June 20, 2019.


49. Interview, student in Loyola Institute.

50. Interview, anonymous student, June 20, 2019.

51. Ibid.

52. Interview, Professor Andrew Pierce.

53. Interview, anonymous Loyola Institute student, June 12, 2019.

54. Interview, Catholic chaplain B, June 12, 2019.

55. Ibid.

56. Interview, Professor of the Irish School of Ecumenics, June 5, 2019.

57. Interview, anonymous student focus group.

58. Interview, anonymous student focus group.

59. Interview, Catholic chaplain B.

60. Interview, senior administrator.

61. Interview, Rev. Steven Brunn.
62. Interview, senior administrator.
63. Interview, anonymous student, June 20, 2019.
64. Interview, Christian Union member.
65. Ibid.
66. Interview, anonymous student.
68. Interview, anonymous student, June 21, 2019.
69. Interview, Methodist chaplain.
70. Interview, Catholic chaplain A.
71. Interview, Methodist chaplain.
72. Interview, Professor Benjamin Wold, June 11, 2019; Interview, Professor Andrew Pierce.
73. Interview, anonymous Loyola student.
74. Interview, professor in the Loyola Institute, June 27, 2019.
75. Interview, anonymous student, June 21, 2019.
76. Interview, student at Loyola Institute.
77. Interview, Professor Andrew Pierce.
78. Ibid.
79. Interview, anonymous student, June 21, 2019.
THAILAND


7. Interview, Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul, July 5, 2019; Interview, Miguel Cabreros, July 9, 2019; Interview, Puritchaya Santimanoaktu, July 9, 2019.


9. Interview, Miguel Cabreros.

10. Interview, Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul.


12. Interview, Angusumalee Samerporn; Interview, Miguel Cabreros; Interview, Chaloemsree Tahong, July 1, 2019.

13. Interview, Miguel Cabreros.


15. Interview, Angusumalee Samerporn.

16. Ibid.


19. Interview, Sri Maryati; Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

20. Interview, Miguel Cabreros; Interview, Teresia Trisutami, July 4, 2019.

21. Interview, anonymous student.

22. Interview, Angusumalee Samerporn.


26. Interview, Miguel Cabreros; Interview, Sri Maryati; Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.


29. Interview, John McConville; Interview, Miguel Cabreros; Interview, Sri Maryati.

30. Interview, Rungniga Keerectroekkong.

31. Interview, Miguel Cabreros.

32. Interview, Miguel Cabreros; Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

33. Interview, Miguel Cabreros.

34. Interview, Miguel Cabreros; Interview, Sri Maryati.

35. Ibid.

36. Interview, Miguel Cabreros.

37. Interview, Nopparat Ruankool, S.J.

38. Ibid.

39. Interview, Suwanni Bunyuenkunk.

40. Interview, Chaloemsree Tahong.

41. Interview, Aphiwat Moonwong, July 6, 2019; Interview, anonymous student, July 1, 2019.

42. Interview, Suwanni Bunyuenkunk.

43. Interview, Nopparat Ruankool, S.J.


45. Interview, Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul.

46. Interview, Angusumalee Samerporn.

47. Interview, Weeradat Kawinekruithip, July 8, 2019; Interview, Chaichana Chana, July 8, 2019.

48. Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

49. Interview, John McConville.

50. Interview, Peter Pichet Saengthien, S.J.

51. Interview, Teresia Trisutami.

52. Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

53. Ibid.

54. Interview, anonymous student.

55. Interview, Chaichana Chana.

56. Interview, Nopparat Ruankool, S.J.

57. Interview, Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul; Interview, Suwanni Bunyuenkunk.

58. Interview, anonymous student.

59. Interview, anonymous student.

60. Interview, John McConville.

61. Interview, anonymous student.

62. Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

63. Interview, Nopparat Ruankool, S.J.

64. Interview, anonymous student.

65. Interview, Chaichana Chana.


67. Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

68. Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.; Interview, Peter Pichet Saengthien, S.J.

69. Interview, Rungniga Keerectroekkong.

70. Ibid; Interview, anonymous student; Interview, Napaporn Dongsanan.

71. Interview, Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul; Interview, Thomas Michel, S.J.

72. Interview, Chaiwat Sukdenchaikul.

73. Interview, anonymous student.

74. Interview, anonymous student.

75. Interview, anonymous student.

76. Interview, anonymous student.

77. Interview, anonymous student.

78. Interview, Sri Maryati.

79. Interview, anonymous student.