
THE UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION (UCCE): A RESPONSE TO SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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This article examines the current and potential contributions of the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE) to both K-12 and higher Catholic education. In order to situate the development of alternative teacher preparation programs, a history of Catholic teacher formation is addressed followed by a brief summary of the existing programs that comprise the UCCE. Attention is given to the essential nature of a Catholic educator's responsibility to deepen Catholic identity through authentic education in collaboration with the family and how recent college graduates who matriculate in UCCE programs are formed to respond to this task.

The Second Vatican Council exhorts the faithful “to assist to their utmost in finding suitable methods of education and programs of study and in forming teachers who can give youth a true education” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §6). One manifestation of this exhortation has been the University Consortium for Catholic Education, a collaboration of 13 programs at colleges and universities across the country which receive and form recent college graduates to teach and serve in K-12 Catholic and parochial schools (see Figure 1; Tables 1 and 2). Since its beginnings in the late 1990s, the consortium supports primarily Catholic colleges and universities as they design and implement graduate level teaching service programs for the purpose of service to Catholic and parochial schools in the United States.

To explore the contributions of the UCCE, we begin by reflecting briefly on the history of Catholic teacher preparation, particularly in the context of religious communities. We then explore the shift that took place in the latter part of the 20th century from a teaching population in Catholic schools of predominantly vowed religious to laity and how this transformation has contributed to the rise of alternative teacher preparation programs. Such a historical discussion enables a deeper probing into the essential task of Catholic

Figure 1: Map of UCCE Member Programs

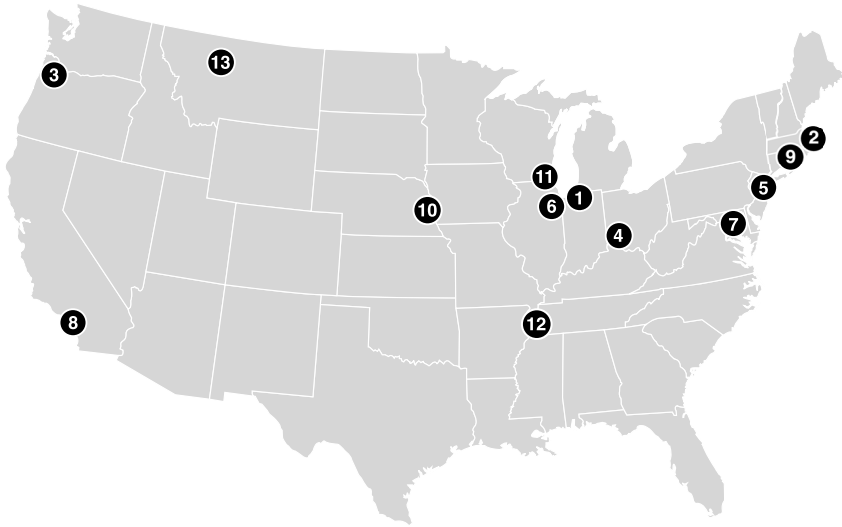


Table 1: UCCE Member Programs Map Key

Acronym	Program Name
1. ACE	Alliance for Catholic Education
2. UCTC	Urban Catholic Teacher Corps
3. PACE	Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education
4.	Lalanne
5. EPICS	Educational Partners in Catholic Schools
6. LEAPS	Lutheran Educational Alliance for Parochial Schools
7. Operation TEACH	Operation Teachers Enlisted to Advance Catholic Heritage
8. PLACE Corps.	Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education
9. PACT	Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers
10. MAGIS	Mentoring Academic Gifts in Service
11. LU-CHOICE	Loyola University-Chicago Opportunities in Catholic Education
12. LANCE	LaSallian Association for New Catholic Educators
13. LUMEN	Learning Through Understanding by Mentoring and Engaging New Teachers

Table 2: UCCE Member Institutions and Program Inception Date

Program	Institution	Year
ACE	University of Notre Dame	1993
UCTC	Boston College	1997
PACE	University of Portland	1998
Lalanne	University of Dayton	1999
EPICS	Seton Hall University	2000
LEAPS	Valparaiso University	2001
Operation TEACH	College of Notre Dame of Maryland	2001
PLACE Corps.	Loyola Marymount University	2001
PACT	Providence College	2001
MAGIS	Creighton University	2001
LU-CHOICE	Loyola University-Chicago	2003
LANCE	Christian Brothers University	2003
LUMEN	University of Great Falls	2005

education and the spiritual role of those involved at every level to create communities “animated by the Gospel...and illumined by faith” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §8). In short, an understanding of what it means to be an educator imbued with an authentic Catholic identity will be posited. Finally, we will touch upon the mutual gift of Catholic schools and the family and what this suggests about the manner in which we should engage in future research and responsible stewardship of the Church and her resources.

HISTORY OF CATHOLIC TEACHER PREPARATION

Like the core of the Catholic faith, the origins of the American Catholic school system can be attributed to sacrifice; most notably, the sacrifice of vowed women religious who faced the challenges of serving in parish schools throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th century (Jacobs, 2000; Walch, 1996). Hostility toward Catholics began to breathe forth from Protestant pulpits beginning in the 1830s; however, concurrently the Holy Spirit was preparing new vessels to imbue with its grace: the Catholic school (Walch, 1996).

Between 1820 and 1870 the wave of European immigrants to the United States numbered over 5 million. The children of these immigrants were being schooled in anti-Catholic environments; Catholic schools began to combat

the dangers of public schools which Americanized children through Protestant ideals. This gave rise to Catholic communities that banded together in ethnic neighborhoods to preserve their Catholic identity and protect their children's faith development, a dynamic that supported the building of Catholic parochial schools (Walch, 1996). These communities were strengthened by their common adversary—publicly funded Protestant schools which aggressively formed children contrary to the culture of their heritage.

At the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, the bishops, responding to the ardent desire for Catholic schools, commanded that a Catholic school be founded at every parish in the United States (Gibbons, 1884/1954). A new challenge naturally followed this well-intended mandate; who will serve to staff Catholic schools with qualified Catholic educators?

Women religious had been teaching in Catholic schools throughout the 19th century often having left their home countries to serve in the missions of the United States (Walch, 1996). Their preparation for teaching largely took place in the context of their religious communities where they were mentored by older, experienced sisters. This allowed their teaching apostolate to be fully integrated with their vocation. Their prayer life and community living centered around service to their students, the school, and ultimately their response to God. During postulancy and novitiate, sisters were formed to respond to their vocation to the religious life rather than merely to prepare professionally for classroom experience. Pedagogical preparation came as a result of the authentic living and formation in the religious community which was manifested through prayer and daily interaction with a sister-mentor who assisted with the challenges of lesson planning and managing classrooms of up to 100 students (Jacobs, 2000; Riley, 2004). Formal teacher training was of little importance in the face of profound "confidence in the vocation itself and in God's divine assistance" (Walch, 1996, p. 136).

FROM EVANGELICAL COUNSELS TO THREE PILLARS

Young lay men and women teaching through the UCCE are not members of a religious community. They do not take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Neither are they formally subscribing themselves to a specified religious community or spirituality less broad than the universal magisterial teachings of the Church. (The UCCE does not exclude non-Catholics from its programs; however, the majority of its participants are Catholic. One of its programs is at a Lutheran university and serves both Lutheran and Catholic parochial schools.) As a result, these programs have participants from varied formation experiences and personal faith histories. The formation they experience through the UCCE is of both a professional and spiritual nature.

Despite the distances the UCCE teachers are from the lives of their religious predecessors and colleagues, they remain inextricably linked to them. In an attempt to narrow an identification as being Catholic to a specified common mission, the bond that unites all members of the UCCE are the three pillars of professional preparation for teaching, community, and spirituality seen through the lens of service. One example of the UCCE teachers' connection to vowed religious lies in their financial limitations: "Sisters were elevated spiritually in the eyes of their parishioners, their lack of financial security enabled them to empathize with the people they served" (Coburn & Smith, 1999, p. 9). While the young teachers of the UCCE are not bound by a vow of poverty, their commitment to service marked by simple living likewise allows them to approach a solidarity with students and families they serve in under-resourced Catholic schools. Released from financial preoccupations that often burden lay teachers who must support a family, teachers within the UCCE are able to offer monetary sacrifices with greater freedom (Jacobs, 2000). Similar to the spiritual elevation seen in sisters, UCCE teachers are often elevated by their youth, enthusiasm, and an initial otherness as strangers in a new community.

ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT CHALLENGES FACED

While the American Church would seem to be in a drastically different place than it was 50 years ago, challenges in teacher staffing persist. Although perspective has shifted, the question remains: Who will serve to staff Catholic schools with qualified Catholic educators? The UCCE is part of the courageous renewal and prudent innovation that echoes the affirmation that the Catholic school is at the heart of the Church (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998; Vatican Council II, 1965). The UCCE has positioned itself to respond to the dramatic transition in the staffing of K-12 Catholic schools that has taken place over the past 50 years. With the decrease of vowed religious, schools face an ever-increasing need for lay men and women to serve in Catholic education. The UCCE's unique response to this transition has been to recruit energetic recent college graduates who are poised for vocation and ministry and give them the education, skills, and support needed to teach in under-resourced Catholic schools.

The need for dedicated people to continue teaching in Catholic schools in this country is acute. Reports of closing schools continue, and while 400 new schools have opened since 1990, there has likewise been a net decline of 850 schools (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005, §3). The UCCE is a sensitive response to the current age within the Church which is always seeking "to discern in the events, needs and hopes of our era, the most insistent demands which she must answer if she is to carry out God's plan" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §10).

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION

Part of the current insistent demands placed on Catholic schools today result from a decrease in the number of vowed religious working in schools as well as a lack of enthusiasm on behalf of many Catholic college and university departments of education to prepare teachers for an intentionally Catholic mission. As a result, the first program of the UCCE, the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), attempted to shape a new landscape for teacher preparation.

THE ALLIANCE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

History of Teacher Preparation at Notre Dame

Relative to the history of Catholic education in this country, ACE's beginning in 1993 would seem a long overdue response to the perilous climate of Catholic education. The University of Notre Dame's commitment to K-12 Catholic education, however, began nearly 80 years before the inception of the Alliance for Catholic Education through a summer institute that invited women religious from orders throughout the United States to pursue their studies on campus. The program, founded in 1918, conferred 4,600 degrees on women religious by 1971. The sisters' participation and presence created a mutual exchange of gift and opportunity for both the university—which was experiencing a decreased summer enrollment due to war and the Great Depression—and the orders called to serve the Church's children through Catholic education as teachers and administrators in parochial schools (Ganey, 2003).

When the university closed the Department of Education in the early 1970s, president Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., was convinced that the time would come when Notre Dame would become reinvested in the field of education. The mission of education was an integral part of the life of the university, and preparing future leaders in education was too great a service to abandon. Subsequently, in the early 1990s, Notre Dame recommitted itself to playing a major role in the revitalization of America's Catholic schools through the Alliance for Catholic Education.

In 1993, the Rev. Timothy R. Scully, C.S.C., and Rev. Sean D. McGraw, C.S.C., founded the Alliance for Catholic Education at the University of Notre Dame to form recent college graduates and expose them to the riches of Catholic education as teachers in under-resourced Catholic schools across the country. Undeterred by the absence of a department of education at the university, the first participants studied at Notre Dame's campus to receive a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree through an academic program administered by the University of Portland.

In 1998, as the program expanded and achieved national recognition, the academic administration was newly housed at the Institute for Educational Initiatives at Notre Dame giving way to the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE) to continue through the University of Portland. Since 1998, ACE teachers have received a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Providing professional preparation through the Institute for Educational Initiatives rather than a school or department of education has given the ACE program greater freedom to design an innovative program particular to the alternative nature of teacher preparation for Catholic under-resourced schools. As a result, the ACE program is an initial licensure program while many other UCCE programs are able to confer specialized degrees to students who received education degrees as undergraduates.

As it enters into its 13th year, the model of ACE has historically proven to be highly successful; its presence forged the path for the UCCE to enter into being and gain momentum in support of Catholic education at a national level. The commitment of ACE, and likewise the UCCE, stands on the shoulders of the thousands of vowed men and women who gained professional expertise at Notre Dame and other institutions in the middle part of the last century to sustain and strengthen K-12 Catholic education in the United States.

Decision to Replicate

Despite continuing requests from dioceses for teachers, ACE made a programmatic decision in 1999 not to expand its model beyond 90 teachers per cohort so as not to compromise the personal, professional, and pastoral attention given to each of its participants. In the spring of 1999, Notre Dame received a grant for the pilot replication of ACE at Seton Hall University, and in the fall of 1999, received a 54-month grant to replicate the ACE program at four other colleges and universities: University of Portland, Valparaiso University, Loyola Marymount University, and Providence College. Funding from other foundations soon followed, allowing the UCCE to grow to its current membership of 13 colleges and universities.

While Notre Dame's ACE program is the largest and oldest program of its kind, it is inaccurate to view it as the sole avant-garde foot soldier in the alternative teacher preparation movement. Some programs did come to birth with ACE's decision to replicate, while many others had already been forming before the partnership that would become the UCCE was established. These programs are all a model learning community for the teachers they form. The prudence of ACE's decision to replicate broadened and furthered its mission giving way to the successful collaborative relationships found in

the UCCE, which are marked by respect, humility, and diversity, characteristics that are likewise instilled in the teachers they place in Catholic school classrooms across the country.

THE UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Clearly, the service of the UCCE touches Catholic education nationwide; in the 2005-2006 school year 426 UCCE teachers served in over 200 Catholic schools throughout 51 (arch)dioceses in the United States (see Figure 2; Tables 3 and 4). The 13 programs of the UCCE each offer an accredited graduate degree in education through concurrent coursework and a multi-year teaching experience (in most cases 2 summers and 2 academic years). The shared mission of each program within the UCCE places the consortium of universities and colleges in the position to be national agents of change and gives volume to a unified voice in support of Catholic education.

The Director

The success and growth of the program largely rests with the director who is its ultimate human advocate and leader. The director handles the overall program development and administration including responsibilities of pastoral

Figure 2: Map of States Served by the UCCE, 2005-2006

**black states are those served*

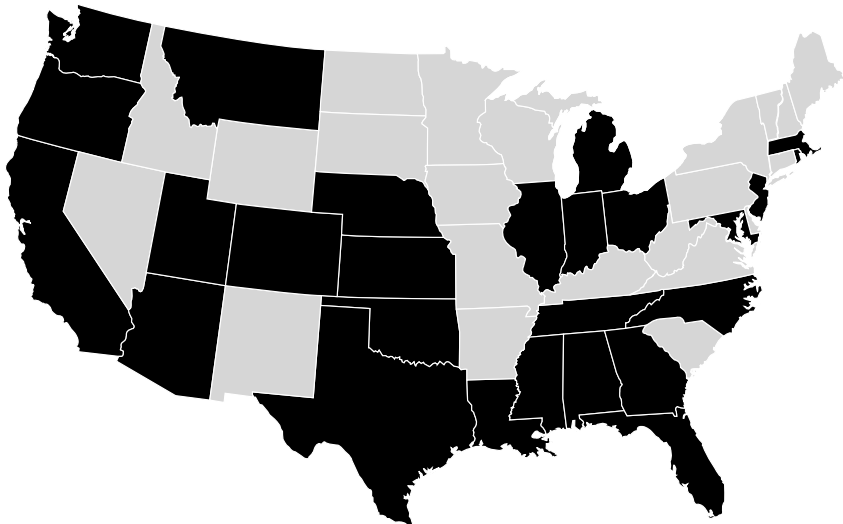


Table 3: Dioceses Served by the UCCE, 2005-2006

Program	ARCHDIOCESE/Diocese
ACE	ATLANTA, Austin, Baton Rouge, Biloxi, Birmingham, Brownsville, Charlotte, Dallas, DENVER, Fort Worth, Jackson, St. Augustine, KANSAS CITY, LOS ANGELES, Memphis, MOBILE, Nashville, OKLAHOMA CITY, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Phoenix, SAN ANTONIO, Savannah, Fort Wayne-South Bend, St. Petersburg, Tucson, Tulsa
UCTC	BOSTON
PACE	PORTLAND, Salt Lake City, Yakima
Lalanne	CINCINNATI, INDIANAPOLIS, Cleveland
EPICS	NEWARK, Camden, Metuchen, Paterson, Trenton
LEAPS	CHICAGO, DETROIT, Gary, Cleveland, Chicago Lutheran Schools
Operation TEACH	BALTIMORE
PLACE Corps.	LOS ANGELES
PACT	Fall River, Providence, Springfield, Worcester
MAGIS	OMAHA, Grand Island, Lincoln
LU-CHOICE	CHICAGO
LANCE	Memphis
LUMEN	Cheyenne
TOTAL	51

formation, personnel and office overview, relations with university organizations and departments, overseeing of budget, financial analysis and planning, building and maintaining diocesan relations and expansion, chairing recruitment and selection committees, overseeing housing procurement, maintenance of community communication, pursuing development opportunities, overseeing and establishing the development of academic, community, and spirituality pillars, building and maintaining relations with the UCCE, NCEA, alumni clubs, and other institutions, and coordinating advisory board relations. While this appears to be a job description for a complete staff, in most cases, the director of a UCCE program completes these tasks on his or her own, sometimes with the help of one assistant director or administrative assistant. Even more, some directors have other responsibilities within their department and are expected to allocate merely a percentage of their time to that described above.

Table 4: Participants and Graduates of the UCCE, 2005-2006

Program	Current participants	Graduates	Graduates teaching	Graduates teaching in Catholic schools
ACE	173	640	386	264
UCTC	12	33	16	6
PACE	15	41	32	26
Lalanne	21	45	41	28
EPICS	47	99	70	60
LEAPS	28	32	25	13
Operation TEACH	20	13	13	10
PLACE Corps.	51	54	42	31
PACT	38	48	42	19
MAGIS	7	12	10	9
LU-CHOICE	20	15	11	5
LANCE	8	7	6	6
LUMEN	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	441	1039	694	477

Current Structure

The UCCE has and continues to make a significant contribution to Catholic education by preparing and placing faith-filled teachers in K-12 Catholic schools, supporting the outreach of Catholic higher education to K-12 schools, and forming young men and women to be lifelong advocates and leaders in Catholic education. Its contribution is integral to Catholic education and the Church's evangelical mission. While the organization is relatively new as the UCCE (until 2002 the programs referred to themselves as the Consortium of Catholic Partnering Universities), it is showing signs of sustained strength and longitudinal force as a movement in Catholic education. In 2006, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) awarded the UCCE the C. Albert Koob Award which honors distinguished Catholic educators who have made extraordinary contributions on a regional and national level. In fall 2005, the UCCE developed a constitution as an autonomous body and has plans for a website that will link its directors and participants (www.ucceconnect.com).

Each program has been a witness to the fruits of the collaboration now inherent in the UCCE (Vatican Council II, 1965). The UCCE plans two formal conferences a year at which members gather to share experiences, receive support from one another, and strategize for a growing presence of alternative teacher preparation through continued UCCE activity. While ACE once served as the mentoring program, the programs are now on equal footing. Locations of UCCE conferences are rotated between colleges and universities, and planning and leadership are shared while directed by an elected chair and co-chair as stipulated by the UCCE's recently ratified constitution.

Participants and Alumni

In its support of Catholic educators, the UCCE views its program participants as an integral part of its mission. The UCCE encourages and supports its alumni which to date number nearly 1,000 (see Table 4). As a result, the work of the UCCE has truly become more than a group of programs but a lay movement that will continue to transform and strengthen the face of Catholic education. Participants' experiences in UCCE programs help form them into passionate advocates of Catholic education committed to working to sustain Catholic education beyond their initial 2 years of service. As evidenced in each program's description, the consortium nationally connects people with a shared mission and dedication to supporting one another as a community in service of the Church through Catholic schools.

CURRENT UCCE PROGRAMS

Urban Catholic Teacher Corps (UCTC)

Founded in 1995 by Boston College and the Archdiocese of Boston, UCTC welcomed its first class in 1997 with the support of trustees Thomas J. Flatley and Peter Lynch. Unlike other programs in the UCCE, UCTC is limited to applicants who have teaching degrees or to those who have taught successfully for at least 1 year with supervision. UCTC teachers are not required to pursue an advanced degree, but may do so through Boston College's Lynch School of Education. Master of Education (M.Ed.) or Master of Arts (M.A.) degree tracks are available in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Secondary Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Specialist, and Developmental and Educational Psychology. UCTC is comprised of one, 12-member community that lives in an urban home in Boston.

Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE)

Students in the PACE program can pursue an M.A.T., M.A., or M.Ed. track.

Unlike other UCCE programs, PACE is comprised of 2 years of teaching and 3 summer sessions that allow time for participants to complete a second level of authorization. Participants' community living experience begins in the first summer session providing a firm foundation in the program's commitment to this pillar. The University of Portland's academic support of the ACE program from its beginning is an eminent example of the UCCE's enduring collaboration.

Lalanne

As a Marianist program offered at the University of Dayton, Lalanne is named for Jean Baptiste Lalanne, one of the original members of the Society of Mary. Lalanne welcomes candidates with or without a teaching license. If participants have a teaching license, they can be placed at the grade level that matches their license; participants working toward an initial license are placed at the secondary level. Students may pursue an M.Ed. as well as an M.A. in pastoral ministry or theological studies.

Educational Partners in Catholic Schools (EPICS)

The EPICS program at Seton Hall University has Master degree tracks for students who enter the program with teaching certification as well as those who do not. Open to both single and married students, EPICS participants live both in teaching communities and on their own. Regardless of their living situation, the larger EPICS community regularly gathers at Seton Hall's campus for spiritual and prayer experiences in support of their unified ministry.

Lutheran Educational Alliance in Parochial Schools (LEAPS)

The LEAPS program at Valparaiso University serves both Lutheran and Catholic schools and welcomes students with a degree in any field to study toward an M.Ed., while teaching at the elementary or secondary level. Housed at a Lutheran university, LEAPS provides an ecumenical perspective in support of education for the common good.

Teachers Enlisted to Advance Catholic Heritage (Operation TEACH)

Operation TEACH offers participants licensure at the K-12 levels with teaching experience in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Students pursue an M.A.T. in conjunction with the College of Notre Dame of Maryland's department of education while developing spiritually in the context of community to make a lasting impact on Catholic culture and heritage providentially in this country's first diocese.

Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education Corporation (PLACE Corps.)

A program founded on the Jesuit tradition, PLACE Corps. serves the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Participants earn an M.A. in Education or Literacy. To support development, each PLACE community is assigned a community advisor and chaplain. As a program committed to one diocese, its communities of teachers are able to gather monthly to experience support and fellowship through museum trips, movies, sports tournaments, and semi-annual retreats to the San Bernardino Mountains and a coastal Southern California mission.

Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers (PACT)

Serving schools in New England, PACT offers participants without education experience a secondary certification tract along with an M.Ed. Previously certified elementary students have the opportunity to study for a Master in Special Education, Literacy, or School Leadership. True to the founders of Providence College, the work of PACT helps fulfill the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the Dominican Order.

Mentoring Academic Gifts in Service (MAGIS)

As a program at Creighton University, the MAGIS program continues the Jesuit tradition through teacher formation. Teaching placements are offered at the secondary level for licensure and an M.Ed. degree. During the academic year, courses are web-based allowing the program to serve (arch)dioceses throughout the state of Nebraska. An additional layer of support provided in the program is a MAGIS graduate who serves as the community advisor for the group, a living resource who has experienced the challenges and triumphs of alternative teacher preparation and service.

Loyola University-Chicago Opportunities in Catholic Education (LU-CHOICE)

LU-CHOICE is focused on Catholic K-8 schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago offering an M.Ed. and teaching certification at the elementary level. Participants enroll in three graduate courses for 2 consecutive summers and one course each semester of teaching within Loyola's School of Education. LU-CHOICE is committed to its Jesuit tradition which is manifested in each of the program's three pillars.

LaSallian Association for New Catholic Educators (LANCE)

The LANCE program offers teacher preparation at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, in the LaSallian tradition, with a history of support of Catholic education at all levels through the contribution of the

Christian Brothers community. The LANCE program continues the tradition of the University's commitment to teaching as a vocation, teaching as service to the poor, and teaching as a focus for formation in faith, community, and zeal.

This program overlaps with ACE in serving the Diocese of Memphis; such collaboration became fruitful at a time when the diocese was choosing to reopen previously closed schools as Jubilee Schools, an initiative to provide educational opportunities to the poorest neighborhoods of Memphis. LANCE teachers may pursue an M.A.T. or M.Ed. along with elementary or secondary licensure.

Learning Through Understanding by Mentoring and Engaging New Teachers (LUMEN)

As the UCCE's newest program, LUMEN began at the University of Great Falls in response to the Montana superintendents' desire for a replicating program after a presentation at the Chief Administrators for Catholic Education (CACE) conference in 2004. The online M.A.T. at the University of Great Falls gives it the ability to serve distant dioceses in the Western United States. In its first year, it welcomed one participant who served at a Catholic school on an Indian reservation in Montana.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The UCCE currently is poised for growth and further development. In the recent years since its inception, it has come to know itself and its mission substantially so as to now respond to ever-growing national needs. The hopes and potential of the UCCE, however, are limited by lack of funding. The grants that were received for initial replication have run their course and now that the individual programs have proven their self-sustaining ability, further support is needed to continue their development and impact. Funding is needed to provide for travel and presentations at conferences, additional staff to provide administrative support, as well as support of alumni to continue the mission of advocacy for Catholic education. In time, new colleges and universities are expected to be added to the UCCE as this movement of alternative teacher preparation continues to serve more and more dioceses across the country.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE UCCE

Effectiveness of Preparation

The development of alternative teacher preparation programs has been received with skepticism compared to traditional 4- to 5-year undergraduate

and/or graduate teacher education programs. Studies conducted to engage this debate have found alternative Catholic teacher preparation programs to respond effectively to the task while programs such as Teach for America (TFA) have been found to send its recruits to the classroom “unprepared for many of the core tasks of teaching” (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002, p. 291).

Not only do UCCE programs prepare its teachers with academic rigor, they do so with an unapologetic Catholic mission. UCCE programs know what they are. This commitment to a Catholic identity enables the preparation to extend to all school contexts rather than being limited to TFA’s outreach to inner-city public schools after a few weeks of summer training (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Watzke, 2002). The graduate school context present in UCCE programs increases its teachers’ perceptions of their competence in classroom instruction across professional dimensions (Watzke, 2002).

Graduate School Contexts

Teacher preparation in the context of graduate level coursework provides an advanced experience for teachers to learn in preparation of their classroom experience. Teachers enter the programs with a degree in a content area already earned which deepens the ability to come to education with unique perspectives. This provides fertile ground for further research in specifically Catholic education that can take place at the national level as a result of the many grade levels and demographic locations of teachers prepared and available for collaborative action research to add to a field that is often neglected and under studied.

Such study is increasingly continued beyond matriculation in UCCE programs. The importance of professional preparedness emphasized through graduate coursework in the UCCE supports the development of commitment to academic pursuit as a lifelong task (see Table 5). Following their initial 2 years of service in which a Master’s degree is earned, many graduates continue to receive terminal degrees in education as well as law, medicine, and business. Graduate level work begun through alternative preparation in Catholic education inspires work in a multitude of fields enabling graduates of the UCCE to be advocates for Catholic education in their service to the common good in all sectors of public life.

Table 5: Degree Programs Pursued by Participants Beyond Matriculation in UCCE Programs, 2005-2006

Degree program	Number of graduates with degree
Education, Ph.D./Ed.D.	41
Content Area, Ph.D.	9
Law	47
Medicine	13
M.B.A.	7
M.Div.	11
Master's outside Education	44
Second Master's in Education	22
School Administration	45
Catholic School Administration	36
TOTAL	275

Bridging the Schism

The consortium also serves as a significant reminder to Catholic colleges and universities of their responsibility to support K-12 Catholic education through their efforts of K-12 educational outreach and the design of teacher preparation programs. The UCCE helps repair the schism that is often felt between teacher preparation programs and K-12 Catholic schools by taking seriously the mission to integrate what it means to be a Catholic educator into its pedagogical programs (Watzke, 2002).

The Catholic university, in its most authentic endeavors, "prepares men and women who, inspired by Christian principles and helped to live their Christian vocation in a mature and responsible manner, will be able to assume positions of responsibility in the Church" (John Paul II, 1990, §31). Catholic higher education, regardless of its students' field of study, touches K-12 Catholic education; to attend a Catholic school at any level is at the very least a subtle formation in the importance of such an education. Elementary, secondary, and university level Catholic schools should not function in isolation, but rather be intimately connected by mission and purpose in theory and practice. The programs of the UCCE are no exception. They show the power and potential of the collaboration of Catholic universities working with dioceses in support of each other by forming Catholic educators to serve in K-12 Catholic schools. However, a school of education, a small percentage of a university's population, is not the only way a Catholic

university should reach out to schools.

The responsibility and need to support Catholic education should be systematic, broad, and in propinquity to a student's experience at a Catholic university. If the Catholic school's graduates do not go on to be teachers or administrators in Catholic schools, if the school has had any success at all, its students will be formed in the Catholic intellectual tradition and therefore be advocates for the educational ministry of the Church. They will grow up to be parents who send their children to Catholic schools, lay men and women who generously tithe in support of their parish school, and sisters, priests, and bishops who will continue the legacy of the American charism for Catholic education (Heft, 2001). Such an authentic collaboration deepens Catholic identity and responds to the realization that Catholic schools and their graduates are the body of Christ.

The UCCE initiates a dialogue between schools of higher education, K-12 Catholic schools, dioceses, and young men and women who desire to serve, placing dedicated and professionally prepared teachers with the ability to be licensed in Catholic schools that otherwise might not be there.

Confluent Dispositions of UCCE Teachers

Portier (2004) considers the dissolution of American Catholic subculture as the defining factor in the development of what he terms "evangelical Catholics" (p. 39) in contemporary American society. These Catholic young adults "are eager to act and yet intent on contemplation" (Vatican Council II, 1963, §2); they have an insatiable hunger for theological inquiry combined with a devotion to social justice (Portier, 2004). Many of the teachers who serve in the programs of the UCCE are characterized likewise to the extent that these programs have organically formed a national subculture of young lay men and women dedicated to the Church through Catholic education. Central to this paradigm is Christ the Teacher, a Christocentric emphasis profoundly attractive to "evangelical Catholics who have never known a subculture they want to be freed from" (Portier, 2004, p. 48). Because the teaching and administrative force in Catholic education has shifted from predominantly religious men and women to the laity, it is vital that those who work in Catholic schools have a solid theological and spiritual formation. It is imperative to invest in the formation of lay leadership in the way that in the past the Catholic culture and family invested in the formation of priests and religious (Heft, 2001).

PREPARING DISTINCTLY CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

Being a Catholic educator is more than a list of functional tasks; it is a disposition of the soul and fruition of the interior life. The Catholic teacher is

not simply one who grades papers, pins up bulletin boards, and keeps meticulous records of absences and behavior. Neither does a Catholic teacher attain his or her end in developing creative and intricate units of instruction curricularly aligned to meet diocesan benchmarks and state standards. Being a Catholic educator is to care for souls and help form them to one day meet the beatific vision. As articulated by the Congregation for Catholic Education: “Teaching has extraordinary moral depth and is one of man’s most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings” (1998, §19).

What goes on in a Catholic classroom is a participation in the divine pedagogy and contribution to American history and culture, an endeavor which reveals the need for Catholic educators to be spirit-filled through full participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

THE SPIRITUALITY PILLAR

The spirituality pillar lived out by every participant in the UCCE strives to make such participation possible. Knee knocking shiverings of grace often overwhelm a peaceful confidence in the call to serve the common good in the first years of teaching. Improvements in theological preparedness are vital for “lay teachers and administrators...to accept apostolic co-responsibility for the integral formation of students” (Jacobs, 2000, p. 43). An authentic Catholic formation makes possible the capacity for the children of UCCE teachers to discover truth. The transmission of the Gospel depends on teachers (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). Nevertheless, the educating community is most essentially lived out not in the classroom but in the family through a “solicitous commitment to education” by a mother and father (John Paul II, 1982, §25; Vatican Council II, 1966, §52).

CATHOLIC EDUCATION BY WAY OF THE FAMILY

“Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents in fulfilling their duties and who, as representatives of the human community, undertake the task of education in schools” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §5). In *The Catholic Character of Catholic Schools*, Walch (2000) cites the changing structure of the American family as a major factor in the landscape of Catholic education. As indicated by the research of Portier (2004) among others, families no longer live in neighborhoods of an ethnic subculture; children often experience a single parent household or one in which both parents work. The Catholic school and parish are no longer central to the family’s culture and activity. As a result, in some cases, the presence of parents in schools is sometimes limited to back-to-school night and parent-teacher con-

ferences, if at all. Despite these, the role of parents must be approached with reverence. The education of the young “belongs in the first place to those who began the work of nature by giving them birth... forbidden to leave unfinished this work and so expose it to certain ruin” (Pius XI, 1930, §16). Parents are entrusted to care for the soul of a child for a lifetime while a teacher’s care is limited to the span of a school year. Teachers should cultivate a disposition of respect and knowledge of “the preeminent value of the family, the primary unit of every human culture” (John Paul II, 1990, §45).

Duties of Catholic Parents

As the primary educating agency in society, the family has a divine mission and responsibility in the education of children (Gibbons, 1884/1954; Nevins, 1963). The Code of Canon Law states parents are

bound by the obligation and possess the right of educating their offspring. Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children. (Beal, Coriden, & Green, 2000, Canon 793, §1)

Schools receive their right to educate children from parents who send them there (Nevins, 1963).

Duties of Catholic Teachers

Strong Catholic schools, composed of a strong faculty and staff, enable parents to respond to their duty to send their children to a Catholic school (Vatican II, 1965). At the same time, an education by parents is “irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated” to the Catholic school (John Paul II, 1982, §36). Teachers should approach their service with self-giving love, profoundly modeled by directors of UCCE programs in their approach to UCCE teachers in their care, and a reverence for the parents of the children they teach. Collaboration of teachers with parents is demanded by Canon Law: “parents must cooperate closely with the teachers of the schools to which they entrust their children to be educated; moreover, teachers in fulfilling their duty are to collaborate very closely with parents, who are to be heard willingly” (Beal et al., 2000, Canon 796, §2).

Parental Involvement and Student Success

Parents have the primary role in a child’s social, moral, and cognitive development (Frabutt, 2001). Relationships experienced in the home are the first lessons for relating to communities found at school, the workplace, and the Church itself. As the domestic church, the “daily experienced closeness that is proper to love...is above all the family community” (Benedict XVI, 2005,

para. 37; Vatican Council II, 1964, §11). The relationships between children and their parents directly affect student achievement in school.

Creating a culture of education in the home correlates to positive attitudes toward learning in the classroom. Homes rich in accessible reading and language experiences correlate to academic success. Modeling reading and writing behaviors as adults has a powerful impact on children's attitudes toward learning. A parent attentive to the expectations of a child at school which are also upheld at home creates a self-fulfilling prophesy of being supported through all educational enterprises undertaken from the early years through post-secondary study (Frabutt, 2001). Parents and the schools should work together for the whole human society; "whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my name, receiveth me" (Mk 9:37; Pius XI, 1929, §9).

Sustaining Collaboration

It is from parents that educators can understand the norm for teaching to enrich their work "with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruits of love" (John Paul II, 1982, §36). Viewed in collaboration with the family, Catholic education essentially promotes the Gospel of Life as fundamental to its self-understanding. Catholic schools and families are called to mutual service of one another. If "the future of the world and of the Church passes through the family" so too does the future of Catholic education (John Paul II, 1982, §86).

FURTHER RESEARCH

An empirical exploration of the spiritual dispositions of UCCE teachers, much like the work done by Portier (2004) with attention to young Catholics upon the dissolution of ethnic subcultures, would provide a worthwhile picture of this current Catholic educational work force. Data collection from schools served by UCCE programs would also give a more complete understanding of the UCCE's impact and provide insight to the needs unique to these. Additional studies on the impact of alternative teacher preparation programs on existing schools and departments of education at the college and university level would serve to strengthen the Catholic identity of teacher preparation as well as further connect the responsibility of Catholic higher education to that of K-12 education. Connections between schools and the family also need to be explored.

The UCCE is in its infancy, a climate that provides great promise for study. It is an untapped treasure for substantial research ready to be engaged. Further and systematic research regarding the UCCE would undoubtedly further reveal the gift of Catholic education and the continued need and privilege for it to be sustained and strengthened.

CONCLUSION

These programs do not purport to be the answer to the challenges in Catholic education today; however, they are a substantial and valid contribution to the overall educational mission of the Church carried out by Christians living out the universal call to holiness (Vatican Council II, 1965). Approached with the disposition of a humble fiat, the model of alternative Catholic teacher formation implemented by the University Consortium for Catholic Education inspires every member who contributes to this movement—university administrators and faculty, program directors, pastors, principals, parents, and teachers—to learn from those entrusted to their care. “And a child shall lead them” (Is 11:6).

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