Faith Integration October Update

Azusa Pacific University

The Changing Faces of Faith Integration

Faith Integration, as we know, is a dynamic process replete with change. Evidence of Faith Integration's "Changing Faces" is found in the various definitions of Faith Integration. The following is the latest definition approved by the University Senate on October 13, 2010:

"Faith Integration is informed reflection on and discovery of Christian faith within the academic disciplines, professional programs, and lived practice, resulting in the articulation of Christian perspectives on truth and life in order to advance the work of God in the world."

With the dynamic nature of Faith Integration in mind here are some changes which have transpired lately. The former Institute of Faith Integration is now the Office of Faith Integration. APU now has a new team of Faculty Fellows, including a Coordinator, in the place of one Director overseeing Faith Integration. The Fellows are enthusiastic to be working in a collaborative partnership in order to offer the faculty strategic and helpful ways to approach and implement Faith Integration.

Other changes include the Faith Integration Newsletter and the faculty seminars. The newsletter will be released monthly and will be geared more toward faculty development in Faith Integration. The faculty seminars will provide more interaction between presenter and participant and will be offered in October, November, January, February, and March. To face Faith Integration frontally, let us be willing to face change! Shalom.

— Bennett Nworie Ph.D. 
Faith Integration Coordinator

FAITH INTEGRATION “FOUNDATIONS” SEMINAR SERIES TITLED: FAITH-LEARNING INTEGRATION: AN OVERVIEW AND MODELS

At the Institute of Faith Integration, a new team of fellows is in sync and progressing thoughtfully into 2010/2011. Having APU's new faculty as our front-burner priority, we also understand that veteran faculty - including APU's large team of adjunct professors - must also be kept in focus. The FOUNDATIONS Series on Faith Integration is meant to serve both groups in a basic, useful, and meaningful way. Open to all faculty, FOUNDATIONS is five 1-hour sessions devoted to building a ground-level understanding of what faith integration is - and isn't - and how it can be carried out at APU.

FOUNDATIONS gives a particular and practical focus on the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. The objective is to inform our thinking with an approach that is rooted in our theological heritage, specifically the life and teachings of John Wesley. Here we are encouraged toward thoughtful and faith-based use of Scripture, Tradition(s), Reason, and Experience.

Each of the five sessions will integrate helpful presentations from the Faith Integration Faculty Development fellows and dialogue with faculty colleagues. These foundational understandings will be linked to syllabi development, classroom pedagogy, and ways to think about disciplinary scholarship. Prior to each session, attendees will be given a core reading that will prepare them for the dialogue and participants will also receive helpful materials at the session itself.

* See event calendar on the next page for details.
Desiring the Kingdom comes from a new generation of books that challenge the adequacy of cognitive or worldview approaches to faith integration. James K. A. Smith, a philosopher from Calvin College, argues that most attempts to frame a coherent view of Christian higher education get off on the wrong foot because they start from a faulty anthropology. In contrast to the modernist assumption that humans are primarily thinking beings, Smith argues that both the biblical witness and our experience reveal that we are essentially lovers.

This anthropology requires that we view education, first and foremost, as a matter of what we desire, not what we know. It is more about formation than information. Such a paradigm requires that we recognize that the modernist ideal of a value-free education is a myth. Instead, we are formed by what Smith calls liturgies, cultural practices that shape us, often in unrecognized ways. The university is just such a place, where desires are shaped by what is said (and not said) in the classroom as well as by values communicated through sports programs, freshman orientation week, and the entire array of institutional structures.

While Smith still envisions the university as a place where learning is vigorously pursued, he offers a new frame of reference for our educational goals. Rather than conceiving of the Christian university as an institution geared toward churning out workers with marketable skills, it is seen as a community that forms disciples with a calling to serve the Church and the world.

Desiring the Kingdom throws down the gauntlet. Can a university rightly call itself Christian by simply adding a “Christian perspective” to a body of knowledge that we can find in any other college, or does it demand a radically different culture with a unique anthropology and philosophy of education? In a season when we have been challenged to consider what it means for APU to identify itself as an evangelical Christian university, Smith’s book offers a thought-provoking place to begin the discussion.


FAITH INTEGRATION-RELATED EVENTS AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Science, Faith, and Culture Lecture
Tuesday, October 19th For faculty who want exposure to someone who is linking good thinking, faith, and real world service. Keynote speaker: Doug Satre. Join us in Wyant Lecture Hall in Wilden. 6:30pm.
Contact: Leslie Wickman LWickman@apu.edu

Faith Integration FOUNDATIONS Series
October 20th We are offering each of the five sessions twice in expectation of being joined by all new faculty and in hopes that those who have been around for a while, but need a Faith integration refresher, might also join us. Session #1: 11:30 am – 12:30 pm in West Campus Bldg. #1, room 170 OR Session #2: 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm in Darling 411.
* Remember to read the following article by W. Hasker, “Faith-Learning Integration: An Overview” before the seminar. There will be a link on the Faith Integration website for you to access the article before the seminar. The Website link is: http://www.apu.edu/faithintegration/

Future Dates: Faith Integration FOUNDATIONS Series
Thursday, November 18th Session #1: 11:30 am – 12:30 pm in the VIP room. OR Session #2: 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm in the VIP room.
* More information to follow.