Social Justice Minor and Program

Departmental Assessment and Implementation Plan of Student Learning

October 31, 2011 (Revised)

1. Mission of Program

The Social Justice Program (SJP) of Saint Peter’s College includes a minor degree in social justice, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – Kairos Social Justice House, and extracurricular peace and justice activities. The mission of its minor degree and its extracurricular peace and justice activities is primarily to engage in the work of conscientization. Conscientization, the ability to know the reality of the world, particularly, the reality of injustice, poverty, environmental degradation, the destructiveness of war, the scourges of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. is achieved through, what Pedro Arrupe, S.J., calls the “dialectical unity of action-reflection.”

From conscientization, the academic and extracurricular work of the Program moves to the work of liberation, the work of seeking justice in an unjust world and peace in a world wracked by violence. This work includes the study of and participation in policy analysis, conflict resolution, social movements, non-violent direct action, etc. Following in the tradition of the University of Central America, El Salvador (where six Jesuits were killed for their commitment to truth and justice in November of 1989), the SJP will “pursue truth about the national and global reality” by means of “teaching, research, and social projection,” or the means by which the SJP projects the truth it discovers directly into the social world outside campus in order to help shape social consciousness.” (Dean Brackley, S.J., “Higher Standards for Higher Education: The Christian University and Solidarity.”)

The mission of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Kairos Social Justice House (King-Kairos House) is to create a place where we build community as we work to make social justice a reality, and where we welcome a diversity of ideas and cultures. We work to deepen our own inner peace in our relationships with colleagues and friends, expand our knowledge base of social responsibility, and show our respect for living things and the environment. We seek to partner with other peace communities and join with them in non-violent activism.

2. Goals of the Program

(a) Through its “Introduction to Social Justice” course, a basic requirement for all minors, the SJP will give its students a base knowledge of what social justice is,
critical understanding of the multiple ways in which the term “social justice” is defined, and the analytical skills needed to engage in the intellectual work of conscientization.

(b) Through its service learning or urban fieldwork requirement, the SJP will enable its minors to apply practically the theoretical skills introduced, developed, and honed in the “Introduction to Social Justice” course.

(c) Through its four electives (one course from the following categories: “faith and justice;” “politics, economics, and the environment;” “social diversity and stratification;” and, “social movements and change.”), in the minor curriculum the SJP will foster multi-disciplinary thinking and cross-disciplinary dialogue about social justice and conscientization. Further, and given its requirement of a course selected from the category of “Faith and Justice,” the SJP will instill in its students that they are to be, in the words of poet Carolyn Forche, “people of conscience, infinitely obligated to each other across time and space.” Finally, courses from the other three categories will place a special emphasis upon the learning about and preservation of civil rights, civil liberties, economic justice, and equality.

(d) Through the development of new courses, the SJP will encourage the study of emerging fields, such as environmental justice, gay and lesbian studies, etc. It will also offer courses in peace studies, nonviolent conflict resolution, etc., to ensure a balanced approach between conscientization and liberation.

(e) Through its extensive extra-curricular programming – which includes lectures, workshops, exhibits, seminars, field experience, teach-ins, etc. – the SJP seeks to continually refresh and sharpen the “dialectical unity of action-reflection” that is the basic element in the work of conscientization. Further, its extracurricular programs, particularly those which encourage political and community engagement, the SJP will remind its students that we are each global citizens not global consumers.

(f) Through the community life created and sustained in the King-Kairos House, the SJP begins the works of peacemaking on a local and one-to-one basis by means of directed activities geared to the development of nonviolent communication, community building, and friend/fellowship. Further, given the Jesuit emphasis (GC 34) emphasis upon “learning and taking up the traditions of others,” the diversity of the House’s community will be considered to be a particularly valued asset.

(g) Through the Fr. Coman Brady-Marc DiNardo garden (located in the backyard of the King-Kairos House), the SJP will teach the skills of earth stewardship, sustainability, and ecological sensitivity. Through its partnership with the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary, the SJP will foster heightened awareness of
the harm of industrial farming and meat production and will teach alternative ways of living, such as organic farming, Community Sustained Agriculture, and animal husbandry. Through its monthly vegan meals, the SJP will teach its students how and why to prepare vegan meals and, as suggested by a recent United Nations Environment Report, move toward veganism as an earth and health sustaining way of life.

(h) Through the seminars, workshops, and skills training sessions sponsored in the King-Kairos House and the development of its base community, the SJP will teach its students to become leaders in the work of social justice.

(i) Through its special seminars in nonviolence, and given the College’s awarding of an honorary degree to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the SJP will ensure that the theory and practice of nonviolence is at the center of its liberatory studies and practices. Our students will understand the causes of war, the political and economic structural imperative toward war making, and about the devastating consequences of war so that they might be better citizens who are intent upon helping to create a world that does not wage war.

3. Relationship of Mission and Goals of Program to that of the College

According to its mission statement, Saint Peter’s college is a liberal arts college in an urban setting intent upon education the whole person for a lifetime of learning, leadership, and service. In addition, the College’s most recent strategic plan, Vision 2015, intends for the College to create a learning environment and community that will prepare our students to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately, and promote justice.” Finally, in their 32nd General Congregational documents (and reaffirmed in GC 34), the Jesuits themselves claimed “the service of faith and the promotion of justice cannot be for us simply one ministry among others. It must be the integrating factor of all of our ministries.” The SJP well embodies the imperatives of the College’s mission, its strategic plan, and the Jesuit General Congregational directives.

Dean Brackely, S.J., author and educator at the University of Central America, El Salvador, in his article, “Higher Standards for Higher Education: The Christian University and Solidarity,” cites the work of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., theologian and philosopher, when it comes to understanding what we mean by the “education of the whole person.” In short, “he argues that the search for truth involves the whole person in a process of ongoing conversion – intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Knowing reality embraces four interconnected activities: experience, understanding, judgment, and response. That translates into four imperatives: First, be attentive to reality. Second, be intelligent, that is, think and understand. Third, be reasonable, that is distinguish between the genuine insights that correspond to reality and those bright
ideas that do not. Finally, be responsible. This last step includes evaluating the situation morally, discerning, deciding, and acting.” Brackley also notes, as the title of his article suggests, that a liberal arts education steeped in social justice (which is a substantive element of the Jesuit mission) actually holds its students to rigorous academic standards. According to Brackley, “This ‘kind of education’ requires more than bare intellectual training. It also requires moral conversion and conscientization.”

With its emphasis upon academic excellence, conscientization, and social projection, a well rounded and multi-disciplinary curriculum, opportunities for practical and community based engagement, building of diverse student-based community, etc., the SJP instantiates the principles and guidelines of the College’s mission and strategic plan. Further, the SJP well adheres to the “higher academic standards” articulated by Brackley.

4. **Narrative and Chart: Timeline, Responsibility Chain, Systematic Plan for Review**

**Narrative**

Assessment requires frequent review to ensure department commitment to institutional goals and outcomes are being met. As defined by both the Social Justice Program and the College’s goals and objective, and through a review of strategic and unit documents, the approved rubrics are being used to assess the program and social justice minor for both learning outcomes and formation of student as both scholar and activist. This all occurs within the context of critical thinking, programs, curriculum and the overall success of students at Saint Peter’s College.

To arrive as insightful correlation of data as proof of learning within the confines of the rubrics presented, the Social Justice program and minor, as a entity to build both student citizenship and ensure learning, based their input of current teaching methods as well as social programming to raise awareness and the campus’s consciousness regarding social and political issues of the day, some of which are timeless.

Data collected from the program and minor’s stated rubrics (attached) form the basis of our acknowledgement of our success and where both the minor and program need to improve to meet both student needs and institutional success. Whenever possible, the program and minor go outside to other college departments who may study student learning outcomes and needs. This allows us to ensure that our collection of data and analysis uses the broad scope of campus quality of life and learning, as well as the narrow brush of our own social justice students. to monitor programmatic, minor and student success.
Because the social justice program has limited people resources, those responsible for monitoring the assessment plan; its implementation and analysis include the program director and those who the College and program director may choose to help support the program.

The formal implementation plan is to systematically assess and use our learning outcomes to improve social justice curriculum as well as programming for social justice. For instance, in the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 terms, internal college consultant were and are being utilized (pro bono) to begin to both question and redefine what the students and program meant by “social justice” and also what the goals and objectives of the program should be as the curriculum and department move forward. This may lead to a redefinition of the mission as well as new and expanded programming, which has yet to be analyzed for efficiency or effectiveness.

**Brief Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Time Line</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Basis of Systematic Review</th>
<th>Review for Evaluation of Survey Instruments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ongoing and Annually, 2010-2015</td>
<td>Social Justice Program Director</td>
<td>Attached Rubric Instrument(s)</td>
<td>Bi-Annual</td>
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5. **Program Objectives in Terms of Desired Student Outcomes**

(a) Social justice minors will know what social justice is and will appreciate its multiple definitions. Further, the minors will be able to critically analyze competing definitions and understandings of social justice. They will be able to analyze the effectiveness or not of public policies in embodying social justice. Our students will be knowledgeable in political and economic structures and systems, both national and global, and will have the skills necessary to judge whether or not these structure and systems are just or unjust.

(b) Social justice minors will complete at least one course that requires their direct engagement in service work or in urban fieldwork. They will gain the intellectual skills necessary to discern “what’s different” about this course, e.g., what does practical engagement add, in terms of insight or a new understanding, to an otherwise purely theoretical course. They will be introduced to conscientization and be shown how a service course or fieldwork course gets them thinking along the lines of the “action-reflection dialectic” and why this dialectic is necessary if we are to fully comprehend social justice.

(c) Social justice minors will be knowledgeable and conversant in the multi-disciplinary contributions to this field of study. They will read substantive selections from social justice literatures. They will understand the moral and ethical ground of social justice and will be knowledgeable of a practical ethics. They will be well versed in the study and application of civil rights, civil liberties, equality, etc. and of the social movements responsible for the full instantiation of these political and economic concepts and virtues. They will be able to synthesize what they have read in order to generate original thinking about social justice.

(d) Social justice minors will be knowledgeable about new areas of study in social Justice, about newly emerging social movements, and about particular and contemporary manifestations of injustice. Further, social justice minors will study and be conversant in theories and practices of liberation.

(e) Social justice minors are required to attend at least three extracurricular programs sponsored by the SJP per semester. Students involved in the SJP but who are not minors will be encouraged to attend extracurricular SJP programs.

(f) Social justice minors and students involved in the SJP or activities of the King-Kairos House are required to participate in a workshop on developing nonviolent communication skills and community building offered at the beginning of each academic term. In addition, they are required to develop and offer programs that
either celebrate diversity or focus on issues pertaining to building positive relationships in diverse communities.

(g) Social justice minors and students involved in the SJP are required to help care for the Brady-DiNardo garden. They are required to attend one program per academic semester on earth stewardship and sustainability. They are required to attend at least one vegan lunch per term, to help in the preparation of that meal, and in the discussion about environmental justice that follows each meal.

(h) SJP are expected to hold leadership positions and exemplify leadership skills in social justice student activities and in the local community. This could range from organizing a particular student event, holding a leadership position in a student social justice club, organizing students to attends social justice academic conferences, to holding a student leadership position in local peace communities, such as the War Resisters League, the American Friends Service Committee, the Catholic Worker, etc.

(i) SJP students are knowledgeable and conversant in the writings and life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. SJP students sponsor King reading circles, write and present papers on King and nonviolence for essay contests, journals, blogs, academic conferences, etc. SJP students are engaged in nonviolent direct action around matters of war and peace.

6. Links Desired Student Objectives to Specific Courses

(a) Introduction to Social Justice explicates what the term “social justice means;” considers its multiple definitions and academic debates about its usage; familiarizes students with the field’s literature; discusses the moral and ethical ground of social justice; examines case studies of leading figures in social justice and peace movements; takes seriously the theory and practices of nonviolence; and, teaches the critical skills necessary to evaluate public policies, political and economic systems and structures in terms of “just” and “unjust.”

(b) Courses in urban fieldwork or service learning encourage thinking through the tension generated by the reflection-action dialectic; defines “conscientization” and focuses upon the practical application of the term; discusses contemporary and local examples of injustice and efforts to bring about justice; and, provides the set-up needed for community engagement and work.

(c) The minor’s Faith and Justice courses encourage more in-depth thought about the moral and ethical ground of social justice; examines case studies of those figures and social movements that have been compelled to act for justice for moral/ethical reasons;
considers the teachings and examples set by the world’s faith traditions on matters of justice; and, ensures that SJP students are familiar with and conversant in the faith and justice literature.

(d) The minor’s Politics, Economics, and Environment courses enable students to critically analyze political and economic systems and structures and to evaluate these structures and systems in accord the definition(s) of social justice. These courses, which are local, national, and global in scope, demand that students are steeped in the literature of the field, are familiar with methodologies particular to the fields of comparative politics and economics and international relations, and are able to evaluate the effectiveness of public policies in alleviating injustice. They are also knowledgeable about the political philosophy and theory with regard to a particular political and economic system, thus allowing for a better informed evaluation of whether or not that system is just. Given the widespread nature of current global environmental crisis, this set of courses provides a cross-disciplinary understanding of how environmental crises are defined, why they occur, debates about the nature of the crisis, and the skills needed to critically analyze proposed solutions to an environmental crisis. In addition, students will be versed in an understanding of the newly emerging fields of environmental justice, environmental social movements, and earth/animal stewardship.

(e) The minor’s Social Diversity and Stratification courses examine the histories of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, etc., and the social efforts made to eradicate this kind of oppression; explores the literature of diversity; considers why such oppression exists and what the value of a diverse and non-stratified society is; and, ensure that students are familiar with the field’s multi-disciplinary literatures. Within in each course particular to a certain discipline, the methodological means of analysis are also to be taught and understood by the student.

(f) The minor’s Social Movements and Change courses ensure student knowledge of the critical role that social movements have played with regard to progressive political, economic, and social change. In courses that are both national and global in scope, students will analyze situations of injustice, the dynamics of change, the role of community organizing and its tactics, examples of successful and unsuccessful social movements, and the use of violence and nonviolence in social movements. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the courses, students will gain knowledge of movements concerning class, race, gender, sexual orientation, the environment, disabilities, peace, etc.

7. Methods Useful for Measuring Attainment of Objectives/Outcomes

(a) Please see attached rubric which may be used to measure attainment of outcomes both in lecture-based classes and in service learning/urban fieldwork classes.
(b) For the attainment of objectives and outcomes in social justice extra curricular activities, surveys and questionnaires handed out at end of each event will be used to rate effectiveness of event.

(c) For the attainment of objectives and outcomes in the King-Kairos House, surveys, questionnaires, and guided discussion circles will be used to rate viability of the House and activities within the House.

8. Timeline for the Evaluation of Objectives/Outcomes

(a) Dr. Anna J. Brown, director of the Social Justice minor and program, will be responsible for the collection of data and for the evaluation of data.

(b) The attached rubric (which may be adapted for each class) will be used for assignments within the class as well as for the final grade given in the class. Data for each class will be collected and evaluated at the end of the academic term.

(c) Surveys for extra-curricular activities will be handed out, collected, and evaluated at the beginning and end of each academic term. Questionnaires will be handed out, collected, and evaluated at the end of each activity.

(c) Surveys for activities in the King-Kairos House will be handed out, collected, and evaluated at the beginning and end of each academic term. Questionnaires will be handed out, collected, and evaluated at the end of each activity. Guided discussion circles, used to gage community life, will be utilized twice each academic term and evaluated accordingly.

9. Procedures to Use Data to Improve Student Learning

(a) Review SJP’s goals and objective to ensure that they are neither “aiming-too-low” nor “aiming-too-high.”

(b) Review syllabus, readings, and assignments of each class to ensure that course content is tailored to goals, objectives, and desired outcomes for the SJP.

(c) Director of SJP meets with each SJ minor to ensure that he/she understands what is required of each minor, what the nature of the SJP is, what the goals and objectives of the SJP are, etc.

(d) Review offerings of extra-curricular activities to ensure that they meet the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes of the SJP. Change offerings, if need be, to better meet the goals and objectives of the SJP.

(e) Review community life in the King-Kairos House and check for its viability, diversity, commitment to the work of social justice, etc. Seek outside group facilitator to help with building of community life in accord with goals and objectives of SJP.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SJ Student Outcomes</th>
<th>Grade F - Unacceptable</th>
<th>Grade D - Emerging</th>
<th>Grade C - Developing</th>
<th>Grade B - Competent</th>
<th>Grade A - Outstanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values Inquiry - Discuss and debate issues related to SJ</td>
<td>Cannot or does not exhibit ability to seek information related to any aspect of Social Justice; discourages inquiry</td>
<td>Generates appropriate questions only when prompted; does not discourage inquiry in others</td>
<td>Generates appropriate questions without being prompted; answers inconsistently</td>
<td>Can actively formulate a question or line of inquiry; generates and follows through with questions; asks for help and/or clarification</td>
<td>Fosters and engages in higher level of inquiry, seeks new information and develops strategies to actively pursue inquiry, debate and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and Evaluates SJ literature</td>
<td>Cannot or does not show any ability to find, read or synthesize any concepts regarding SJ found in the academic literature; no process of discovery</td>
<td>Partially integrates literature into coherent project(s) with review from faculty member; requires frequent in class support</td>
<td>Meets all course objectives without support or direction; actively synthesizes literature to form or bridge concepts within field; independent worker</td>
<td>Effectively integrates all literature into original and persuasive final projects or products; fully systesizes meaning, concepts, trends and actively takes readings and forms new directions in thinking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performs community service/social action</td>
<td>Cannot or does not exhibit any ability to build community or involve oneself in the work of SJ. No support for others who seek to build community or work on projects or other group work in support of SJ.</td>
<td>Exhibits interest in community building when prompted; will attend programs and offer time or volunteer for projects on an infrequent basis.</td>
<td>Exhibits interest in community building without prompting; frequently attends programs and offers time or volunteer; does not take on leadership role</td>
<td>Supports those in leadership roles or will co-chair programs and/or projects related to SJ. Will bring ideas and brainstorm to create new initiatives; takes a leadership role in groups once assigned and will follow mandates</td>
<td>Takes a leadership role in the formation of and planning of social action; community development or other programs or projects in support of SJ. Actively meets with other motivated community leaders to work on multi-faceted and/or long term projects</td>
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