

'I was a Stranger':¹ Creating a Campus-wide Commitment to Migration

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This article examines what it means when a university makes a multifaceted commitment to migration, taking note of both what can be accomplished through such a commitment and what tensions remain. At Fairfield University, engagement with migration is expressed in the curriculum, service-learning projects, faculty research, and in efforts to influence the national debate on immigration through the University's Center for Faith and Public Life. The philosophical context for this work on migration reflects, in part, the Jesuit Catholic tradition of the University. Service-learning courses across the curriculum involve work with immigrants. In a course on literacy, students assist children of immigrants at an adult literacy center.

From the path outside my office I can look over the campus to Long Island Sound. The campus spreads out before me: 200 acres of well-kept lawns, trees, classrooms, and dorms. A small, comprehensive university in the Jesuit Catholic tradition, Fairfield has an undergraduate student body that is largely white and middle-to upper-middle class. But if I turn a little and look to the west, I see the smokestacks from Bridgeport Resco, the waste treatment plant, pumping gray smoke into the sky. Railroad tracks run past the oil storage tanks. Just ten minutes from campus, Bridgeport is in some ways a world away. In the past four or five years, however, the campus has been linked to the city through a focus on migration.

With over a quarter of the population born outside the United States (U.S. Census Bureau), Bridgeport is a fertile place to consider immigration. Like many aging industrial centers in the Northeast, Bridgeport suffers from a declining tax base, poor housing stock, and high concentrations of poverty. Surrounded by one of the wealthiest counties in the United States, Bridgeport stands apart from its affluent neighbors in terms of race, economics, and ethnicity. The contrast between the town of Fairfield, where Fairfield University is located, and Bridgeport is sharp. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2007 the average household income in Fairfield was \$103,352; in Bridgeport it was less than half of that, only \$39,684. Three percent of Fairfield residents live below the poverty level; 19% of Bridgeport residents do. Forty-five percent of residents in Bridgeport speak a language other than English at home; in Fairfield, the number is twelve percent. The Connecticut Department of Education reports that over 95% of the children in Bridgeport's public schools qualify for free or reduced price lunch; in Fairfield, the figure is less than 5%. Recent immigrants make up a significant portion of those with greatest material needs in Bridgeport. For that reason, and others, Fairfield University has undertaken a range of service-learning projects, working with community partners in Bridgeport that serve immigrants.

In this article I want to examine what happens when an institution as a whole devotes itself to migration and the needs of immigrants. By "institution as a whole" I do not mean that every faculty member or office of the University is concerned with immigration or immigrants. Rather, I mean that there is a multifaceted commitment to migration that is revealed in the curriculum, service-learning projects, scholarship, and in efforts to influence public policy and debate. In this article, then, I will try to lay out the philosophical foundations for the University's involvement with migration, examine some of the forms that work takes in service-learning courses, and consider the problems that accompany the effort. In doing so, I will extend the work of Sondra Cuban and Jeffrey Anderson on service learning and the



Jesuit understanding of social justice. Migration is a place where the Jesuit Catholic mission of the University intersects with the politically progressive, but largely secular, inclination of many faculty members. As such, it offers a promising place to link two kinds of expertise.

At the same time, working with immigrants makes even more acute the familiar problem in service learning: how to provide service to the community without reinforcing students' (or faculty members') preconceptions of those being served. A decade ago, Ellen Cushman warned, "One limitation of service-learning courses can be students' perceptions of themselves as imparting to the poor and uneducated their greater knowledge and skills" (332). When some participants in the service-learning venture have limited speaking skills in English and uncertain immigration status, the gap between university and community partners becomes especially pronounced. If we ignore that gap, we risk "perpetuating the hierarchical and potentially dangerous relationship between campuses and their surrounding communities that service-learning implicitly seeks to remedy" (Vernon and Ward 30). Instead, as Linda Flower and Shirley Brice Heath caution, "a sustainable relationship with learning at its core must be built on a thoroughgoing respect for the knowledge of others—embodied in the social and literate practices that actively seek alternative ways of reading the world" (53). University partners who work with immigrants (or agencies that serve immigrants) need special sensitivity to create that kind of sustainable and mutual relationship.

Jesuit Commitments

One thing that distinguishes Fairfield University's work on immigration and service learning is the philosophical context in which it occurs. In his discussion of Jesuit pedagogy, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., former Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), identifies social justice as one of the primary goals of Jesuit education, saying: "The Jesuit ideal ... seeks to establish campus communities which



support the intellectual growth of all of its members while providing them with opportunities for spiritual growth and development and a lifelong commitment to social justice" ("Jesuit Education," para. 18). For that reason, he maintains, "Jesuit universities have stronger and different reasons, than many other academic and research institutions, for addressing the actual world as it unjustly exists and for helping to reshape it in the light of the Gospel" ("Service").

Indeed, this orientation toward action is, Kolvenbach maintains, a distinguishing characteristic of Jesuit pedagogy, an approach to learning with its roots in the sixteenth century. That approach is comprised of five key components: context (an understanding of the learner's situation), experience (direct engagement with the subject being studied), reflection, action, and evaluation ("Jesuit Education," para. 10-14). The commitment to social action makes Jesuit institutions such as Fairfield University productive sites for what Cuban and Anderson call the "political conceptualization" of service learning. Such an approach, they argue, "addresses both surface and underlying societal problems" and "entails correcting power imbalances, taking the perspective of and advocating for marginalized groups, and harnessing resources for social change" (145). Like Cushman, Cuban and Anderson advocate activist or action research as the means for creating social change. In such project, Cushman claims, "public intellectuals and community members can work together to identify and ameliorate local-level social issues" (334).

In 2005, Fairfield University established the Center for Faith and Public Life, a think-tank designed to explore faith and civic engagement through research, curriculum, and public events. A primary focus of the Center is migration, which Rick Ryscavage, S. J., Director of the Center, explains is a priority for the Jesuit order worldwide. "Our responsibility" he says, "is to connect that theme to the whole of the university."



That effort has taken a variety of forms. In 2005 the Center helped to create the Jesuit Migration Academic Network (JMAN) that links over 20 Jesuit universities, in the U.S., Mexico, and Central America, to study global migration. JMAN is designed to support curriculum development, research, advocacy, and service among participants involved with migration at these institutions. Its website is a clearinghouse, providing news and data for researchers. The Center for Faith and Public Life hosted a series on migration and the arts, as well as a conference on human trafficking, which brought together faculty members and social service agencies to examine the causes and consequences of forced, exploitative migration. Currently the Center is working on an initiative called “Strangers as Neighbors,” funded by the Carnegie Corporation, to reframe what Ryscavage characterizes as “the coarse and polarizing national debate over immigration in the U.S.” The project will bring together Jewish, Islamic, and Christian clergy, scholars, and public policy leaders for a series of workshops. The goal, Ryscavage says, is “for the faith communities to agree on some common language for speaking about migration, then to educate their believers in that common language, and together to enter the public national dialogue ... with the aim of ending the impasse on changing immigration law and policy (McCaffrey). While the grant uses the term “immigration” because it focuses on the U.S. context, the Center generally avoids the term “immigration” altogether because the term foregrounds the U.S. perspective on the issue by focusing on those who enter the country. Instead, Ryscavage says, “You have to deal with immigration in the context of global migration. ... Migration is deeply connected to globalization. It is one of the threads moving the whole thing.”

The Center’s focus on migration has its roots in Catholic theology and social teaching—something that both enriches and complicates its work on campus, particularly with faculty. In their statement on immigration, “Strangers No Longer,” the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops situates the debate on immigration in a Biblical context, citing Abraham, Moses, and others as prototypes of migrants. In a related



statement, the Conference identifies two key duties of governments regarding migration: “to welcome the foreigner out of charity and respect for the dignity and rights of the human person” and “to secure its border and enforce immigration law for the sake of the common good, including the safety and well-being of the nation’s inhabitants and the rule of law.” Both of these duties, the Conference notes, “must be carried out and neither ... can be ignored” (“Comprehensive”).

University Commitments

The University’s involvement in migration is connected to the curriculum in large part through the Office of Service Learning which supports and coordinates service-learning efforts on campus. Migration is a focus of many of the service-learning efforts, but certainly not all. As the first Director of Service Learning on campus explains, migration is “by no means a totalizing theme, but it is a coherent one ... If students are having a conversation about migration, and some of them are having those conversations in multiple classes, it makes sense” that students have opportunities to put that learning to use in the community (Crabtree). Many service-learning courses at the University have focused on immigration and immigrants, often in collaboration with the International Institute of Connecticut, a social service agency in Bridgeport that assists refugees and immigrants through “direct professional services, counseling, advocacy and the advancement of fair and humane public policy” (“International”).

Courses that involved service learning and migration have come from departments across the university and include:

- **Introduction to Immigration** (Sociology) which partnered with the International Institute on research about immigration trends in Bridgeport.
- **Challenges of Global Politics** (International Studies) in which students worked with both Mercy Learning Center, a literacy center



in Bridgeport which serves a largely immigrant student body, and the International Institute where they did research on trafficked women in the region.

- **Twentieth Century Russia** (History) in which students interviewed local Russian immigrants as part of their research on emigration in recent Russian history.
- **Financial Modeling** (Finance) which also worked with the International Institute, with upper-level business majors assisting immigrant entrepreneurs to develop sustainable business plans.
- **Economic Regional Development** (Economics) where students worked with both Connecticut Legal Aid and the International Institute, doing research on fair wages for immigrants and assisting day laborers with claims against employers for mistreatment.
- **Introduction to Feminist Theory** (Politics and Women's Studies) in which students helped create an awareness campaign on human trafficking in conjunction with the International Institute.
- **Health Promotion Center** (School of Nursing) Located in Bridgeport and facilitated by University's School of Nursing, the Health Promotion Center provides health education, screening, referral, and follow-up services to underserved populations, including a large number of immigrant clients.

These courses vary, not only in their subject matter and the nature of the service in which students are engaged, but also in the faculty members' impetus for undertaking their work on migration or with immigrants. In this respect, the projects at Fairfield are similar to those at other universities without specific faith commitments. The projects are designed to share intellectual resources of the campus with the surrounding community, increase students' learning through direct



experience, and reduce the psychic distance between students and community members.

Two features, however, distinguish these community/university partnerships from those at other universities. One is the deliberate, although not exclusive, focus on migration and immigrants. The focus on migration allows us to capitalize on intellectual resources on campus related to migration, at the same time as we respond to some pressing local needs. The other is an emphasis on reflection, an essential, if sometimes neglected, element of Jesuit education.

Classroom Commitments

I have been most closely involved in the university's work on migration through one of these service-learning partnerships, which involved "Literacy and Language," an intermediate-level English course which I teach, and Mercy Learning Center, a literacy center serving women in Bridgeport. Mercy Learning Center dominates a block on Park Avenue, one of Bridgeport's main streets. At the north end of the street, three or four miles from the Center, the houses are grand, with large porches and mature trees. As Park Avenue runs south towards the highway, the houses become smaller, and bodegas, bars, and storefront churches appear in their midst. By the time Park Avenue passes under I-95, the neighborhood shows the unmistakable signs of poverty.

The need for literacy education in Bridgeport is acute. Thirty-five percent of Bridgeport's 139,529 adults lack a high school diploma; five years earlier, that figure had been 28%. While 48,825 adults lacked high school diplomas, only 251 obtained a diploma or equivalent in 2005-2006 (CT Dept. of Ed.). In fact, according to the U.S. Census 2000, 15% of adults in Bridgeport report having less than a ninth-grade education and 3% report not having completed any schooling at all.

For 21 years Mercy Learning Center has provided "basic literacy skills training using a holistic approach within a compassionate, supportive



community to low-income women without regard for race, religion, color, or creed” (*MLC Annual Report*, 5). When it opened in 1987, the Center had three students. In 2007-08, the Center served over 500 students and more than 130 of their children. Today, most students at Mercy Learning Center are immigrants. They come from 42 countries and speak 25 different languages. In fact, 83% of students at the Center speak a language other than English as their primary language. Most are Hispanic—69% of the total student body (*MLC Annual Report*). My involvement with Mercy Learning Center began 10 years ago. During the past decade I have at different times taught a supplementary writing class, tutored a GED student, led an English conversation class for ESL students, and led a professional workshop for tutors. In those 10 years I have seen major changes in the Center, in both the makeup of the student body and the programs designed to meet their needs.

As the National Assessment of Adult Literacy makes clear, Hispanic adults are particularly at risk for literacy problems. Hispanics are the only racial or ethnic group whose literacy levels declined between 1993 and 2003, as measured by the National Adult Literacy Survey (1992) and the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (2003). In fact, prose literacy scores for Hispanic adults declined by 18% in that time and document literacy by 14%. The changes are likely to be the result of increased immigration from countries where access to education was limited. Altogether, 44 % of Hispanic adults nationwide have below basic literacy in English. That means they are able to carry out “no more than the most simple and concrete literacy tasks” (U.S. Dept. of Ed., *NAAL* 4). Mercy Learning Center offers both individual tutoring and a full-day Intensive Study program in English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE) I, ABE II, and General Educational Development (GED) preparation. Altogether, 516 women participated in either tutoring or Intensive Study classes in 2007-08. The Center offers an array of supplementary services—educational childcare, a social worker, a part-time nurse—to support students in their education.



For the past two years, students in “Literacy and Language” have assisted in the childcare program. The service is not a requirement in the course, but it has been popular. This year 20 of the 25 students in the course participated, spending an hour and a half each week for 12 weeks of the semester, a total of approximately 360 hours at the Center. My contact at the Center, Sharon, and I have tried to design a project that meets two real needs: my students’ need to test what they are learning about literacy acquisition by applying it to real children, and the Center’s need for volunteers to supplement the paid childcare staff so as to meet state staffing regulations. For my students, working in the early childhood education program gave them a chance to observe children’s development in literacy and apply what they had read for class—by Clay, Heath, Morrow, Purcell-Gates, Scribner, and others—to their experiences at the Center. In the final section of the course, devoted to adult literacy, students read material on the national context for literacy, including reports from the National Center for Education Statistics, and the local context of Fairfield County. As a result, when each one sat in on an adult literacy class, they understood some of the factors that shaped the adult learners’ experiences.

Although it was tempting to ask for my students to work directly with adult learners, both Sharon and I knew that that arrangement would serve the university students more than the adult learners who need at least a year-long commitment from a tutor and are likely to feel self-conscious with a tutor who is both younger and better educated. As Vernon and Ward point out, in such an arrangement, “agencies train students who accrue cultural capital for their resumes and move on to the next course, leaving the community services agencies with a labor shortage” (147). Instead, we arranged for each of my students to sit in on one adult class, after they had been working in the childcare program for several weeks and were familiar to the mothers whose children were in the program. In addition, I invited Sharon and one of the adult students from the ABE I class, whom I had taught that summer in an ESL class at the Center, to speak to my students as we



introduced the project. We wanted the college students to see one of the adult literacy students as an expert, in this case on her children, not just a person in need of basic literacy instruction.

Throughout the semester students worked with children at the Center, talked about what they saw, and wrote about the intersection between readings for the course and their experiences with literacy at the Center. Their written reflections on the service learning showed me that they could move easily between what they read for class and what they observed at the Center. It seemed clear that working with children had enriched their experience in the course. But if that had been the only goal of this service learning project we might have accomplished it much more easily by having students observe at the University's own Early Learning Center, which serves the children of faculty and staff members and is located right on campus.

The community/university partnership had additional goals, ones that could not be met by experience on campus. One goal was to meet a need at the Center for volunteers to staff the infant and toddler rooms. Without volunteers, the program would not satisfy state requirements for staffing. And, certainly, my students gained knowledge relevant to the course, particularly about second language acquisition and adult literacy, that they could not have learned without their time at the Center.

In addition, I wanted the course to provide students with opportunities to be "men and women for others," as it is commonly described at Jesuit schools. Christina, for example, noted what she gained through her service: "Taking part in such an important program not only made me feel important in the sense that I was making a difference in the lives of others, but in my own as well. ... [This] is the first class I have engaged in at Fairfield that allowed me to feel constant gratification as I was able to witness my knowledge put to use instantly." ²



The students gained, too, in learning more about Bridgeport and immigration. Several were apprehensive when they began. Before her first visit to the Center, one student wrote, "I have never been to Bridgeport, but from what I hear it is a poverty- stricken town that has many hungry women and children, and a rather high violence rate." Some of the students recognized that their own experiences with economic or linguistic difference were limited. In the first week of the project Kerri wrote:

After my first visit to the Center, I felt that my eyes had been opened to something that I hadn't witnessed ever before. The majority of the students in the classroom, about 95%, were Hispanic. They all seemed to speak Spanish to some degree, and all three teachers working in the classroom spoke both Spanish and English fluently. The neighborhood was very urban, and showed many signs of being culturally diverse, something that I am not used to.

At the same time, her phrase "I felt that my eyes had been opened" suggests a risk in service-learning ventures of this kind, the risk of the unearned epiphany. As much as I hoped that my students would be changed by the experience of service learning, I also worried about their accounts of quick reversals of assumptions. Several students, for instance, drew on their own experience studying a foreign language to identify with the ESL students at the Center. After sitting in on the adult ESL class, for instance, one student wrote, "I saw a similarity between the women before me and myself. They sounded just like I had while I was first learning my second language, Spanish. In my introductory courses to the language I would try to conjugate verbs and many times end up using the wrong endings." One student, however, noted the profound difference between a college student studying a language and an adult literacy student coping with English. She wrote:

As I sat in the class I tried to imagine what it would be like for me to be in that situation or how I could compare it to my life. The only way



I could slightly relate was with my German class. I sit in class and I'm very confused, I don't know what the teacher is saying and the rest of the kids in the class are the same way. But then I realized that I can leave that class and function normally in society.

I have come to worry less that my students are overlooking essential differences when they identify with adult literacy students in the way that Kerri did. Instead, I see this as a process of development in which a first step is empathy and identification, and a second, which Brittany expresses, is identification with the awareness of differences.

It is not enough that my students benefit from this service-learning experience; a community/university partnership needs to be rewarding for participants at both sites. Now that the semester has ended, my counterpart at the Center and I need to consider how we might change the project to make it a more deeply reciprocal endeavor. In one sense, the project is already reciprocal: both partners benefit; together they accomplish things that neither could accomplish alone. As such, it meets the standard that Vernon and Ward propose—that service-learning collaborations be mutually beneficial. But other scholars call us to a more ambitious standard, such as the one Flower and Heath suggest in their description of a community project: “The premise ... is that the university serves the community by becoming a working partner in a project that not only acknowledges and nurtures community expertise but commits us to an extended, strategic effort to draw on that expertise in the pursuit of transformative understanding” (53). Or, more simply, as Ellen Cushman puts it, “a central goal ... is to make knowledge *with* individuals” (332, emphasis in original).

Clearly, the goal of nurturing community expertise or making knowledge with individuals needs to be adjusted when the half the individuals involved in the project are less than five years old. It was satisfying, therefore, when I saw evidence that the university students had learned *from* the children and adults at Mercy Learning Center,



not just *about* them. Throughout the semester I saw my students recognize that they were learning from participants at the Center. Before beginning work at the Center, Katelyn wrote: “I expect to learn a great deal from these children that I will encounter.” Christina's final response for the semester shows evidence of something deeper, what she calls “solidarity”:

Aside from being able to relate what we learned in class to my time volunteering at the Center, one of the most important aspects that I took away from this experience was the importance of solidarity. “Faced with the seriousness of the living conditions of our brothers and sisters who are kept at a distance from modern culture, we have a duty to show them our complete solidarity” (1995 Lenten Message, Pope John Paul II). ... In my opinion, it was amazing how 20-year-old college students could work side-by-side with older women who had struggled with learning English at one point in their own lives, to better the future of Bridgeport families through promoting and teaching literacy.

Her comments demonstrate much of what I hoped for in this partnership—respect for those she worked with, the ability to link readings to experience, and the deep satisfaction of collaborating with others for the common good.

Conflicts and Convergences

Several questions emerge from this analysis of the University's involvement with migration. First, is the University's work with community partners different because of this institutional context? More specifically, does the University's multifaceted commitment to migration help members of the University and community organizations work together to bring about social change? If so, what elements of this approach might be useful to other universities and the community organizations with which they work?



In many respects, no doubt, Fairfield University's partnerships with community organizations resemble those at other universities with a moderate to strong investment in service learning. The Office of Service Learning provides both intellectual and practical resources, including course development stipends, to those interested in service learning. Its Advisory Board brings together faculty members, student services personnel, student representatives, and community partners to coordinate service-learning efforts, many of which involve immigrants or migration. The Office of Service Learning also cultivates connections with local organizations and social service organizations to identify potential community partners. In addition, with assistance from the Center for Faith and Public Life and academic departments, the Office of Service Learning provides intellectual support, including visiting speakers and readings, to help faculty and student services personnel develop more sophisticated understandings of service learning and social justice.

This Catholic foundation for the University's work with migration may have an additional, and unexpectedly practical, benefit. I believe it has helped the University overcome the resistance that is often directed at educational institutions that engage with complex social problems such as migration. It is hard to criticize work with day laborers or other immigrants when the University can align that work with values that its alumni and, to some extent, the general public share. It is worth noting, however, that even this foundation has not eliminated all controversy from service-learning projects involving migration. Students who worked with the International Institute of Connecticut to create an awareness campaign on human trafficking designed for local Catholic churches learned that the Diocese of Bridgeport did not want the material made available in the churches because diocesan administrators felt that human trafficking was too controversial a subject for many in their congregations.



At the same time, the model that Fairfield provides also entails some drawbacks. First, any time a college or university focuses on a theme—whether is global citizenship, migration, or something else—some faculty members will feel left out, even disenfranchised. Their research interests, disciplines, or even family situations make them less likely to participate in those targeted efforts and less likely to receive funding for their projects in other areas.

Fairfield University's approach poses additional drawbacks. For some faculty members, the Catholic frame of reference of the Center for Faith and Public Life is irrelevant, or even alienating. Although disposed toward social activism and social justice, they are uncomfortable with any effort associated so closely with the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the University. That discomfort with an explicitly Catholic identity was evident in the controversy that accompanied the administration's decision to locate the Office of Service Learning in the newly-launched Center for Faith and Public Life. For many years before this, service-learning projects had taken place on campus with few resources and little institutional attention. Then, spurred by the example of other Jesuit universities, Fairfield committed itself to creating an Office of Service Learning, designed to give service-learning efforts greater support, coherence, and recognition. Faculty involved in the creation of the Office knew it would be disadvantageous to have it located in either the Office of Student Services or Campus Ministry, both entities that had, in their own ways, supported community involvement by students. To be credible with faculty, the Office needed to be located in the Academic Division and report to the Academic Vice-President. That might have meant being organized as an independent office or becoming part of the University's generally well-respected Center for Academic Excellence. Instead, the Office of Service Learning was placed in the Center for Faith and Public Life, a decision that the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and first Director of the Office for Service Learning describes as "strategic, but not necessarily logical" (Crabtree).



The arrangement had several advantages for the Office of Service Learning, providing financial stability, since the Center was endowed, and institutional prominence. At the same time, it meant that service learning was specifically associated with the University's Jesuit Catholic mission. It would not surprise me if some faculty members or community partners feel like outsiders when they come into the Center where the Office of Service Learning is located. Thus, one cost of a strong philosophical foundation for work on migration may be the risk of deterring those who do not share its premises or its vocabulary. For Melissa Quan, the current Director of the Office of Service Learning, negotiating the place of service learning in the University has meant being careful about the language used to describe the office and its mission. In drafting a mission statement, she said, the Advisory Board of the Office of Service Learning drew on Jesuit values and traditions but was careful, she said, not to "ground it in that faith language too specifically." That makes the Office of Service Learning somewhat different from the Center for Faith and Public Life, of which it is a part, where that "faith language" is fundamental.

Even if faculty members do become involved in community/university partnerships involving migration that aspire towards social change, some difficulties remain. As Cuban and Anderson note, "a social justice approach would assume that faculty had competencies in social analysis and activism" (147). Few faculty members have been trained in activism. As Cushman points out, "because university representatives tend to esteem their own brand of knowledge more than popular forms of knowledge" (334), we may fail to understand the needs and goals of the immigrants and agencies with whom we work, even as we try to assist them.

Finally, we are challenged to live out this commitment to migrants on our own campus where the University has the dual role of educator and employer. One story illustrates the complexity of that challenge. Several years ago, in a cost-saving measure, the University outsourced



its custodial services to a subcontractor. The goal, keeping costs down so as to avoid raising tuition excessively, was desirable, but a consequence was harmful. Because the custodial workers, a largely immigrant workforce, were no longer university employees, they were no longer eligible for tuition benefits that all university employees are offered. The decision to outsource the custodial work led to considerable controversy on campus, including a hunger strike by a small group of faculty and students, and resulted eventually in new guidelines to govern future subcontracting. It would be easy to see this decision to outsource custodial work as evidence of hypocrisy, but I think it reveals how deeply complicated it is for an institution, no matter how well intentioned, to reach the standards of justice that it aspires to.

It seems fitting, then, that I am completing this article on the eve of National Migration Week 2009, sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more than twenty-five years, the USCCB has dedicated the first week of January to publicizing the needs of migrants, both in the U.S. and overseas. Their reflection for the week states that our task is "to welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs"/ "A acoger a los migrantes y refugiados con alegría y generosidad, y a la vez respondiendo a sus muchas necesidades" (USCCB, National Migration Week). In community/university partnerships involved with migration, that task of understanding and responding to the community's needs is both complex and compelling.³

Endnotes

- ¹ The phrase comes from Matthew 25: 35, "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (The New Oxford Annotated Bible).
- ² All excerpts of students' work are used with written permission of the students.
- ³ My thanks to Fairfield University which supported this research with a summer research stipend. Additional thanks to Melissa Quan, Director of the Office of Service Learning, for her advice and assistance, and to Campus Ministry for lending cars to students in the project.

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Moving Out/Moving In

Mirta Tocci, Emerson College

"Moving Out/Moving In: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of the Immigrant Experience" is a service-learning course created and taught by Mirta Tocci in the Institute for Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies at Emerson College in Boston, MA. Tocci describes the five-year history of her collaboration with community partner, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, focusing on how Emerson students' study of the psychosocial effects of the immigrant experience inspires art projects created by Emerson students and Latino children aged 5-12 enrolled in IBA's Cacique after-school program.

I am a visual artist and I know how to be an immigrant. In the late 1970s I fled the Dirty War of my native Buenos Aires, Argentina, and moved to Barcelona, Spain. In 1994, I left Barcelona to exhibit work and teach in the United States. From my own experience, I know what it is to move to a new country, how my body responds to living in a land that is not my own, to speak a language that is not my mother tongue, to experience a dominant culture that has no connection to my past. I know what it means to be invisible. And the force that it takes to become visible. This experience has been the subject of many artworks I have created and shown in museums and galleries in Argentina, Europe and the United States. For these reasons, I believe I am ready to explore this subject with Emerson students and with members of the Latino immigrant community here in Boston. (Tocci)