

ASSOCIATION OF OBLATE INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING

Elements of a Vision for an Oblate Catholic Institution of Higher Learning

Introduction :

Two centuries of Missionary Oblate history teach us that higher education is one of several paths of evangelizing the poor taken by our Congregation. However, institutions of higher learning are not our primary means of awakening or reawakening the faith of the people to whom we are sent (C 7). ... There is no ministry, however, which is the most abandoned (R 7b). When the needs of the poor and most abandoned are at stake, Oblates are ready to give of their best, embracing full human development as integral to redemption. The missionary quality of their service in higher education depends on commitment to:

1. Academic Excellence

Oblate higher education excels when we learn from the best practices of the academic and professional community, submitting to public standards and peer review of research, teaching, programs, and professors; since our mission focusses on the practical interest we seek to educate people who are both competent and professional. In every field of learning we promote the standards of professional ethics, as well as administrative best practices, from a Christian perspective.

2. Dialogue with Human Sciences

In the spirit of Gaudium et Spes we are missionaries who love the world. Q5<aG [(ua0(ar)(e)-20(t)-3(he w)15(o)6h ET 1)5(e)5(e1(a/n74)5fe()5fa2 Tf /)5(e)(o)-ff time we learn from the world. We welcome every academic discipline

others.

3. Listening ... signs of the times

Beyond what is formally analysed from texts, studies, and research of all kinds, education is all about what is encountered through the senses. The Gospel is all

6. Formation of Christian Disciples and Leaders

Saint Eugene de Mazenod is known as a passionné du Christ et un
L Q F R Q G L W L R Q E P R E S I O N S U C H A S A R D E N
the good of the Church

a privileged way of promoting stronger ecclesiastical studies. Sharing thus allows Oblate higher learning to benefit from the public standards of professional associations, while remaining accountable to stakeholders - the poor and most abandoned, church and civil leaders and professionals.

10. Training for Dialogue with Other Religions and Cultures.

Dialogue is the imperative of the future, if peace is to prevail in the global village where many religions and spiritual movements are long established. Dialogue is the condition of learning from one another. Shared critical reflection is needed to overcome ageold animosity, prejudices, crass ignorance, fear and distrust. Discernment is the only route to determine eventually what is good and bad in the mix of collective memory, and emerging trends. Wisdom and critical thinking are the twin servants of liberating dialogue.

Conclusion:

These categories provide a sketch of Oblate higher education. Far from closing discussion, they invite ongoing conversation and debate among all who work in Oblate institutes of higher learning. They call for a style of leadership that exists to serve and not to be served, that is welcoming and open, that trusts reason, and befriends faith. They seek confirmation in the flow of history, and from the collaboration of fellow pilgrims. Speaking of ongoing formation/education, the Oblate Rule notes:

God is ever at work in the world; his living Word seeks to transform humankind, to build his People. We are instruments of that Word. We have thus to be open and flexible, learning how to respond better to new needs, how to find answers to new questions, discerning all the while the movement of the Spirit who renews the face of the earth (cf. Ps 104: 30).

Approved by the executive of the Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning,
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