Progress Report for the Micah Center for Business Ethics at the Stillman School of Business

Seton Hall University

August 30, 2013

The Micah Center for Business Ethics was launched at the Stillman School of Business in January 2013 with a grant of $75,000 from an anonymous Foundation. Additional funding support came from the Carvel Foundation in early February for $30,000. These funds are being used to found the Center and engage in accomplishing its mission. The overall objective of the Center is to assist faculty in incorporating insights from Catholic social teaching and other human, religious and ethical traditions into the ethos and curriculum of the Stillman School of Business. This is rooted in the prophet Micah’s call “to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6, 8).” The focus is on the positive, life-enhancing dimensions of business as well as the recognition of business’s obligation to contribute to the global human good. The ultimate goal is to graduate students who can effectively:

1) Identify the positive humanistic dimensions of business,

2) Identify and address ethical dilemmas, and

3) Incorporate their solutions into their business leadership and decision-making practice.

The Dean of the Stillman School of Business appointed Henry Amoroso, J.D. as the Director of the Center in late February. Henry is an associate professor in the Department of Economics and Legal Studies. He holds a law degree from Widener University. Dr. Amoroso’s research interests center on contributions to the practice and the scholarship of teaching. In his memorandum to faculty on March 1 of this year, Henry encouraged his faculty colleagues to support Seton Hall University’s mission “to create servant leaders within a global context.” He further explained that “The first aspect of this project [Micah Center for Business Ethics] will be completed in three concurrent overlapping phases in the calendar years 2013 to 2015. During the first phase, we will be focusing on curricula enhancement and development. Herein lies an exciting opportunity for each of us as we work to include business ethics in our individual class curricula as well as in our own individual research.”

The first faculty development workshop was held on March 15, 2013. Jaime Price, Ph.D., George Mason University, The Sargent Shriver Peace Institute, presented on The Foundations of Ethics, Public Policy and Social Change. This development workshop was scheduled in conjunction with the Center’s partner, The Center for Catholic Studies. The second faculty development workshop was held on April 19, and the speaker was Prof. Michael Naughton, Director, John A Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought and Alan W. Moss Endowed Chair in Catholic Social Thought, University of St. Thomas. Dr. Naughton spoke on The Vocation of the Business Leader, addressing the importance and mechanism for including business ethics into the Stillman business curriculum. A cadre of 10 to 12 faculty members participated in these workshops.
As a direct follow on to the Naughton workshop, an extensive half day summer faculty workshop was held on July 24th. The faculty met to discuss how best to deploy certain baselines consistent with Catholic social teaching into the School’s curricula. The workshop included participants from the Micah Institute for Business and Economics at the Center of Catholic Studies consistent with our collaboration as well as the Dean of the Stillman School. Two articles were used as pre-reading for this workshop: John C. Cassidy, “A Pedagogy for Integrating Catholic Social Ethics into the Business Ethics Course”, Journal of Business Ethics Education, 3:35-54, 2006; Andre Atan Ujan, “Back to Golden Rule and a Need for a Transformational Approach”, responding paper presented at International Conference on Business Education at Catholic Universities.

Moreover, the Stillman School’s Micah Center for Business Ethics has joined with the University of St. Thomas and Ave Maria University in collaboratively planning an ethics conference to take place January 2-4, 2014 on the very issue of instruction of business ethics consistent with Catholic Social teaching. This seminar, Curricular Project on Catholic Business Education Examining the Uniquely Catholic Dimension of Undergraduate Business Education, is very specifically aimed at in depth discussions on how best to develop Syllabi and teaching notes in the specific areas of expertise. It is anticipated that some faculty members of the Stillman School will be presenting papers in conjunction with their research associated with the Micah Center. We also expect colleagues from St. Joseph’s University, Marquette University, Notre Dame, St. Norbert College, St. John’s University, Pepperdine University and the University of Dayton to participate.

The three universities will also be working on developing a common website to share sample syllabi, research, conference findings and additional support through the community of scholars who will be incorporating business ethics into their various business school disciplines. The extent of this collaboration would not have been possible without the support of our generous grant funders.

Additionally, a fall public program tentatively scheduled for November 12, as a business leaders’ breakfast meeting focused on Ethical decision making in the conduct of business, will be hosted on campus and supported by Investors Bank. This will be the first outreach of the Center beyond the academic community.

We are happy with the progress and accomplishments since the beginning of 2013, and we are excited about the journey that we are on. We are also focused on engaging funders in supporting this work so that we can maintain our momentum and achieve our objectives with a sustainable impact. It is our goal to raise approximately $2.5 million dollars to endow the Center.

We are very grateful for the important launch support received from our founding funders.