Facilitating a Dialog of Catholic Mission and Integrating Best Practices

Craig B. Mousin
Gary Miller, DePaul University
See and Rome's pontifical universities.

If you are a president, provost, dean or senior administrator, please consider being a part of our delegation in 2009.

**Business Education Initiative: Irish American Scholars Program**

The Business Education Initiative (BEI) is a successful, innovative program aimed at offering undergraduate Catholic and Protestant students from Northern Ireland the opportunity to study in a U.S. college/university. Two of the goals for the young adult participants are the development of business knowledge and community building skills.

As a means of thanking our U.S. Colleges and Universities for hosting BEI students, the Northern Ireland Institutions offer a limited number of study places on the *Irish American Scholars Program* each year. Presidents who offered to host a BEI student for the academic year 2008-2009 are eligible to send one of their students to a Northern Ireland university tuition free for the 2009-2010 academic year. Please note the early spring semester application date.

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Please click on the links below for more information about the *Irish American Scholars Program*:

- **Requirements**
- **Nomination Form**
- **Application Form**

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**HR Management Forum**

Facilitating a Dialog of Integrating Catholic Mission and Best Business Practices for Those who Serve Management, Faculty and Staff

*Gary Miller and Craig Mousin*

Having failed to meet the deadline for enrolling new family members, an associate professor just received a denial of group medical insurance coverage for her premature baby. The error was clearly on the professor’s side. Your benefits department issued the denial in accord with the insurance policy’s provisions and all applicable state and federal regulations. The professor should have known better since she just received an updated Summary Plan Description three months ago and HR recently hosted a faculty benefits workshop emphasizing the basics of eligibility and enrollment. She visits the University Ombudsperson to ask what possible relief could the university provide while acknowledging her tardiness in enrolling.

In resolving issues such as these, Human Resources shares an important role with the university’s management. Through a myriad of programs, services and workrules, such as rules around benefit plan enrollment, HR works to maintain a healthy employer – employee relationship. This healthy relationship hinges on these HR functions being compliant with all applicable regulations, clearly and accurately communicated, effective relative to goals and objectives, financially sustainable and administered in an efficient, equitable and consistent manner. Equally important, HR, like other business units such as accounting and information systems, should seek to design and administer these functions in accord with the organization’s mission as well as its goals and objectives.

All of these mission and business considerations should weigh heavily in policy and program design. So, for instance, if the staff and faculty councils have both requested that the tuition waiver program be extended to part-time staff and adjuncts, the mission and business model should be taken into consideration in formulating a solid informed response. Other factors that may be pertinent include the number of...
part-time employees and the number of classes that are already filled to capacity. Perhaps some HR managers would survey other institutions to uncover common or “best” practices.

In commencing publication of this column, we intend to explore how mission and business considerations influence the design and administration of HR programs, services and workrules. But then, we plan to go a significant step farther by exploring if any core Catholic principles and social teachings should receive equal weight, or even trump business considerations. What would Catholic teaching versus business considerations say in regard to the denial of medical insurance for a premature baby? To what extent and how would Catholic principles be incorporated into HR program design and daily administrative practices, especially in the light of religiously diverse workforces? How does HR collaborate effectively with faculty and staff councils for the larger benefit of the university while respecting the university’s mission as well as Catholic principles and social teaching?

For those professionals who wonder about questions like these while listening to employees and addressing their issues or designing and implementing HR programs, we offer this column. Our purpose is simply to facilitate a dialog of integrating Catholic mission with best practices among those who serve management, faculty and staff. We seek to explore the implications of John Paul II’s vision of Catholic universities when he wrote: “A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character.”*

We, the authors of this column, Gary Miller and Craig Mousin, both currently work for DePaul University in Chicago. Craig is a member of the Office of Mission and Values and Gary works in HR. Gary has been at DePaul for roughly 5 years. He has over 25 years of HR experience, 10 of which have been in senior management roles. Craig, an attorney, teaches at DePaul and serves as the University’s Ombudsperson.

As an organizational ombudsperson, Craig is an independent, neutral and confidential employee. He does not formulate, implement, or enforce policy. Through his office, he frequently meets with employees who raise issues of whether mission and business conflict in the implementation of programs and policies, and therefore, must grapple with the dovetailing of mission and administration. The opinions expressed in this column are ours alone and do not represent DePaul University.

Through our respective professional experiences and shared desire to fulfill the mission of our institution, we will raise questions, seek resources, and explore how to successfully live the institution’s mission. We envision our role as starting the conversation. We invite you to enter this dialogue and share your practical and effective solutions. We welcome your ideas and stories of your experiences. Our first few columns will focus on benefit plan design and administration in light of Catholic Social Teaching and mission and then move into other areas of Human Resources Management. Your ideas and suggestions will also help focus our direction.

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