

Catholic Theological Union - Project Summary

Project name and key objectives:

Name: Theological School Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers

1. Gather information about the economic status of our graduates and current students
2. Improve institutional strategies and practices concerning financial aid and financial counseling
3. Promote financial literacy and economic well-being for students and graduates
4. Mobilize and expand our key partnerships to help provide financial support and employment opportunities for our students and graduates

The most significant activities concerning our project:

The current student/alumni surveys will be used to inform our process going forward. The surveys have helped us to gather information regarding the economic status of our students/alumni; it has also been instrumental in gathering information regarding current and past employment, cost of education, debt levels, and preparedness for employment in the ministerial field. The surveys provide material for our focus groups and will assess needs for future strategies, practices, and programming.

The Ministry Showcase is our yearly event that provides our students, community organizations and the greater community an environment to share information, resources and develop relationships. The hope is that the program will allow greater prospects for internships, field education, and future positions. It provides us an opportunity to develop new relationships while strengthening existing ones. It has provided us the chance to work on key partnerships in the hopes of assisting our students.

Important resources:

One of the most important resources we have discovered is the students. Everyone working with survey development was surprised at the amount of feedback from our student body. They have been frank while being thoughtful and honest, providing the type of information we need to make use of their responses in a fruitful way.

Another equally important resource has been our affiliation with DePaul University. Without Dr. Joe Filkins, Associate Director for the Institutional Research and Market Analytics, and the resources (consultative services as well as use of the Qualtrics Software System) that DePaul provided, completing the data collection would have been infinitely more challenging. The accessibility of their resources allowed us additional time to focus on analysis. This was another opportunity within the implementation of the grant in which we mobilized a key partnership within our community.

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