FUSING CURRICULUM TO MAXIMIZE LEARNING: THE IMPACT OF MERGING BUSINESS SCHOOL STRATEGIES WITH SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

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Abstract

While there is a substantial amount of academic literature that strives to address the merger of business strategies to inform social entrepreneurship education, very little has been written about merging graduate school business school curriculum with graduate social work curriculum, to educate future global social entrepreneurs.

Saint Leo University (SLU) is a liberal arts Catholic university located in southwest Florida (USA). The University offers graduate and undergraduate courses in both national and international locations and through a variety of delivery methods. Saint Leo promotes a model of preferred pedagogy for all courses including online, blended and face-to-face classes. Our model of preferred pedagogy challenges traditional pedagogical models of curriculum delivery.

The Graduate School of Social Work utilizes a model of synchronous live web streamed classes and asynchronous online classes. A Leadership course related to social entrepreneurship is offered in a blended synchronous live web streamed format combined with an on campus format. The Graduate School of Business offers a course in entrepreneurship in both the online and on ground delivery methods.

Specifically unique about this social entrepreneurship project was that this is now the second year in a two year study that followed approximately five weeks of asynchronous and synchronous online learning. The purpose of this course was to help students become more effective leaders in social entrepreneurship programs and to better understand the demands of leadership in social entrepreneurship settings. The students’ goals were to learn the requisite leadership knowledge and skills required to succeed in social entrepreneurship settings. The students engaged in self-assessment of their social entrepreneurship leadership and ethical decision making skills in advanced social work practice. The course defined leadership as a process of influencing an organized group to accomplish its goals.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, graduate social work, blended learning, business school strategies.