



# Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education

Chantal Jouannet  
Luis Arocha  
María Nieves Tapia  
Andrés Peregalli  
Andrew Furco  
Montserrat Alom Bartrolí  
Jay Brandenberger  
James Frabutt  
Bárbara Humphrey  
Donald R. McCrabb  
Amelia Blanton  
Pedro Pablo Rosso  
Sahaya G. Selvam  
Miguel Adasme

Alin Burgos  
Manuel Caire  
Rocío Fontana  
José Sepúlveda  
Maaïke Mottart  
Nicolas Standaert  
Almudena Eizaguirre  
Ariane Díaz-Iso  
Marian Aláez  
María García-Feijoo  
Marta Roldán  
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Judith Pete  
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Leticia López Villarreal  
Howard Rosing  
Irwin W. Steans  
Anna Escofet  
Laura Rubio  
Miquel Martínez  
Karen Venter  
Carol Ma Hok-ka  
Alfred Chan Cheung-ming  
Fanny Mak Mui-fong  
Alice Liu Cheng

Taking a future look at the Service-Learning  
Institutionalization Self-Assessment Rubric

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Director: María Nieves Tapia

Coordination of Uniservitate Program: María Rosa Tapia

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Coordinator of this volume: Chantal Jouannet Valderrama and Luis Arocha

Proofreading and editing of texts in Spanish: Licy Miranda

Translation and editing of texts in English: Alejandra Linares

Design of the collection and of this volume: Adrián Goldfrid

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Andrew Furco

*University of Minnesota, EEUU*





## Andrew Furco

*Is Associate Vice President for Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota, where he also serves as Professor of Higher Education. At the University of Minnesota, he has worked since 2008 to elevate the centrality of community engagement across the institution's research, teaching, and outreach activities as a strategy for building a more engaged university that serves and advances the public good. His research and scholarly work focus on examining the role of service-learning and community engagement in primary, secondary, and higher education systems in the U.S. and abroad. He has led or co-led more than 30 research studies that have explored*

*various issues regarding the implementation, impacts, and institutionalization of service-learning community engagement within educational systems. His publications include several books and more 90 journal articles and book chapters on service-learning and community engagement, several of which have been translated into multiple languages.*

*Prior to arriving to Minnesota, he spent 14 years at the University of California-Berkeley as the founding director of the Service-Learning Research and Development Center and as a faculty member in the Graduate School of Education. Over the years, he has been a partner and collaborator on various service-learning efforts in more than 25 countries. He is an active member of various international boards and committees, including the Revista Iberoamericana de Aprendizaje-Servicio (RIDAS), the Red Iberoamericana de Aprendizaje Servicio, and the Scientific Committee for Pope Francis's Scholas Chairs Chairs International initiative.*

### 3. TAKING A FUTURE LOOK AT THE SERVICE-LEARNING INSTITUTIONALIZATION SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Andrew Furco

University of Minnesota, USA

#### Abstract

The *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education* (Rubric) was designed in 1998 to provide a mechanism for measuring the level at which service-learning is embedded within the practices, culture, and *ethos* of higher education institutions. Organized by 22 elements embedded within five dimensions that research studies have found to be essential for advancing service-learning's institutionalization, the rubric has proved useful to both practitioners and scholars of service-learning in assessing the extent to which service-learning is a core feature of an institution's academic fabric.

Originating in the United States, the rubric has naturally relied on Northern and Western perspectives regarding the advancement and institutionalization of service-learning practice. As the rubric has been applied more broadly to higher education institutions in other countries over the years, several variations of the instrument have emerged. These variations have been designed to adapt and align the instrument more closely with the terminology, purposes, and institutional structures that prevail within particular national, regional and cultural contexts. These adaptations have revealed important nuances regarding the purposes, focuses, and definitions of service-learning across the globe as well as the ways in which service-learning and broader community engagement practices are viewed and conceptualized within different cultural settings. They have also helped bring a deeper understanding of the elements and dimensions of service-learning institutionalization that are universal, regardless of situational cultures or contexts.

#### Introduction

This chapter offers a glimpse into how the 20+ year old institutionalization rubric has evolved over the years, with an eye toward the ways in which new versions of the instrument are highlighting important features of service-learning institutionalization that are important in contemporary practice. In particular, the chapter explores the implications of these emergent features to the practice of service-learning in Catholic higher education.

As service-learning continues to advance across the globe, the discussion presented in this chapter can inform educators, practitioners, and researchers within Catholic universities and beyond who seek to understand better the process of service-learning institutionalization.

Following a summary of the history of the origins and development of the instrument and the various ways in which it has been applied to the assessment of service-learning institutionalization, the chapter inquiries into several themes emerging in contemporary service-learning practice and the significance they have for the application of the rubric for measuring institutionalization within Catholic higher education and other types of higher education institutions.

## Sustainability versus Institutionalization

The *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education* (Rubric) was an outgrowth of two research studies conducted in the United States in the late 1990s as service-learning was gaining popularity in the country's post-secondary institutions. A frequently-heard refrain at the time was that service-learning was just another educational fad, and that like many other educational reforms before it, it would lack staying power as a valued component within higher education (Gardner, 1997). The national, government-funded initiative, Learn and Serve, which was initiated in 1993 had catalyzed interest and support for the advancement of service-learning in primary, secondary, and higher education. However, as a counter-normative educational practice, service-learning faced an uphill battle in gaining academic legitimacy as some educational leaders resisted using precious classroom instructional time to engage students in community-based service activities. Their argument was that such activities are not academically rigorous or educationally valuable (Astin *et al.*, 2000). Indeed, much of the early literature on service-learning focused on making the case for service-learning's pedagogical strength and academic legitimacy (Zlotkowski, 1996).

Proponets of service-learning worked to elevate the centrality of the practice within higher education institutions in order to ensure its survival amid competing educational reform efforts. In particular, they focused on identifying the levers to pull to strengthen the academic case for service-learning and to ensure its long-term viability. This meant ensuring that service-learning would not only be sustained over time, but that it would be more fully embedded within an institution's core values, culture, structures, and policies. The focus, therefore, was to avoid making service-learning a *sustained* practice that operated only on the margins without much institutional attention or investment. Rather,

supporters sought to find ways to fully *institutionalize* service-learning. This meant that in order to advance from *sustainability status* to *institutionalization status*, service-learning had to move from the margins to the mainstream of an institution's core academic work (Pickeral & Peters, 1996).

The construct of institutionalization as it pertains to service-learning is perhaps best captured by Michael Kramer (2000), who in his treatise *Make it Last Forever: The Institutionalization of Service-Learning in America*, presents the following comparison of marginalized and institutionalized educational practices (See Table 1):

**TABLE 1.** Institutionalized Versus Marginalized Practices (Kramer, 2000, p. 17)

AN INSTITUTIONALIZED PRACTICE IS:	A MARGINALIZED PRACTICE IS
Routine	Occasional
Widespread	Isolated
Legitimized	Unaccepted
Expected	Uncertain
Supported	Weak
Permanent	Temporary
Resilient	At-Risk

As Kramer's comparison table suggests, the construct of institutionalization goes beyond achieving the stability and longevity of programs or practices. Rather, institutionalization is about fully embedding a practice into the *ethos* and values that are prioritized, elevated, and rewarded within the institution.

This idea of embeddedness was at the core of the early studies that sought to examine the components or components that promote the full institutionalization of service-learning in higher education. These investigations focused on teasing out which of the many "best practices" promoted at the time were actually making a difference in institutionalizing service-learning. For example, in their respective multi-site studies, Muller and Furco (1998) and Bell *et al.* (2000) found that service-learning institutionalization was highest among institutions that had a clear definition of service-learning, had aligned the goals of service-learning to the institutional mission, had secured student and faculty involvement and support for service-learning, had promoted reciprocal community partnerships and community voice, and had provided adequate institutional funding and staffing for ser-

vice-learning. Bringle and Hatcher (2000), in their study, also found that institutions that had a centralized office to coordinate service-learning, funding support for a centralized office, and an administrative position to lead the advancement of service-learning achieved high levels of service-learning institutionalization for participating teachers, the community, and the institution. In addition, Holland (1999, 2000), Furco (2002), and Prentice (2002) found that among a broad range of components that are put in place to advance service-learning, having strong faculty member involvement and support for service-learning was the strongest predictor for fully institutionalizing service-learning. These and other investigations proved helpful in verifying and providing support for what many service-learning practitioners and supporters had been advocating for over the years. These studies also were important in clarifying the particular dimensions and overall process of service-learning institutionalization.

*Kramer described the service-learning institutionalization process as featuring three phases: “a beginning phase” through which people create agreement and a common understanding of service-learning’s important, “the intermediate phase(s)” focused on building the quality of service-learning, and the “final phase” which infuses the strategy in the system.*

Drawing from these and other studies, Kramer (2000) described the service-learning institutionalization process as featuring three phases: “a beginning phase” through which people create agreement and a common understanding of service-learning’s important, “the intermediate phase(s)” focused on building the quality of service-learning,

and the “final phase” which infuses the strategy in the system (p. 16).

Kramer’s characterization of service-learning institutionalization as operating across a series of stages was similar to the service-learning institutionalization stages that Kevin Kecskes and Julie Muyliaert (1997) had proposed a few years earlier. Their work found that that service-learning institutionalization progresses along a continuum defined by three institutionalization levels: *critical mass building*, which is characterized by efforts to secure more service-learning activities, participation, involvement, and support; *quality building*, which is characterized by efforts and activities focused on building and strengthening the quality of service-learning programming in order to optimize benefits and positive outcomes; and *sustained institutionalization*, which focuses on advancing institutional efforts and activities that help embed service-learning more fully into the core academic work of the institution in order that it endures as the institutional policies, priorities, and administrations change.



## Constructing the Rubric

Kecskes and Muyliaert's (1997) three-stage institutionalization continuum provided the scaffold for organizing and building the Self-Assessment Rubric for Institutionalizing Service-Learning in Higher Education (Rubric) (Furco, 1998). The Rubric was designed to articulate guideposts for 21 components that research study findings suggest are critical for advancing service-learning institutionalization (Kecskes & Muyliaert, 1997; Muller & Furco, 1998). The 21 components—which include elements such as the presence of a clear definition for service-learning, faculty support for service-learning, a coordinating entity, etc.—were categorized into five thematic dimensions: philosophy and mission of service-learning (4 components); faculty support for and involvement in service-learning (4 components); student support for and involvement in service-learning (4 components); community participation and partnerships (3 components); and institutional support for service-learning (6 components).

The original version of the Rubric was first published in English in 1998 through the Service-Learning Research and Development Center at the University of California, Berkeley. The terms and language used in the original, pilot version of the rubric were revised and finalized following feedback received from structured pilot sessions at eight diverse higher education campuses, resulting in an updated version of the Rubric in 1999. A revised version of the Rubric was then applied across a wide range of postsecondary institutions that participated in a set of regional Service-Learning Institutionalization Institutes facilitated by Campus Compact, a United States-based national organization of higher education presidents who support service-learning and civic engagement. These institutes brought together representatives from different postsecondary institutions from across the United States to measure their respective institutions' level of service-learning institutionalization using the Rubric, and then, based on the results of the self-assessment, identify action steps and strategies to advance the level of service-learning institutionalization at their respective sites.

Over the years, the Rubric has undergone several revisions as more research data and information about service-learning institutionalization has come to the fore. For example, in 2003, with the emergence of new research on the important role that academic departments (faculties) play in the institutionalization of service-learning, “department support” was added as an additional component (Battistoni *et al.*, 2003; Keckes, 2006). These particular study findings were further extended by Kevin Kecskes, who later developed a self-assessment tool focused specifically on institutionalizing service-learning within academic departments (faculties) (Kecskes, 2008). With more than 200 universities having applied

the Rubric by 2006, much constructive feedback regarding the Rubric's structure, utility, terminology and dimensions was garnered. In addition, new service-learning research studies that incorporated the Rubric were published, which offered additional, useful findings on the institutionalization process (Anderson & Callahan, 2005; Greene, 2004; Hudson, 2016; Lewing & Shehane, 2013).

For example, some research findings suggest that it takes five to seven years of dedicated institution-wide effort for service-learning institutionalization to advance from one level to the next along the Rubric's three-level continuum (i.e., moving from the critical mass building stage to the quality building stage) (Furco, 2002; Furco & Holland, 2012). Consequently, when the Rubric would be applied to assess an institution's annual progress of service-learning institutionalization, the assessment results would show institutions at the same institutionalization level as the prior year, despite the institution having made substantial advancements. Therefore, in order to be able to capture institutionalization advancements over shorter periods of time (i.e., one or two years), the scale of the Rubric was revised in 2009 to include to a ten-point scale (0-9) that was spread across the three institutionalization levels. This 10-point scale provided a means to measure

*Over the years, new findings from research studies have provided (and continue to provide) useful feedback that have helped improve and refine the Rubric.*

incremental growth and progress for each of the institutionalization components. Over the years, new findings from research studies have provided (and continue to provide) useful feedback that have helped improve and refine the Rubric.

## The Institutionalization Score

One of the initial goals in establishing the Rubric was to find a means to establish quantitative data to measure service-learning institutionalization levels. Much of the extant data on service-learning institutionalization in the early years of the service-learning movement were qualitative descriptions of particular components that had been found to be influential and important in institutionalizing service-learning. While informative, these data did not provide a means to track the level of institutionalization over time nor to be able to compare levels of service-learning institutionalization across institutions. By establishing a quantitative measure that produce a service-learning institutionalization score, such multi-year tracking and cross-instructional comparisons could be conducted.

The Rubric's institutionalization score is calculated by simply summing up the levels for each of the 22 components of the Rubric. Prior to the inclusion of the 10-point (0-9) scale, the each component was rated at level 1 (critical mass building), 2 (quality building), or 3 (sustained institutionalization). The overall institutionalization score could range from a minimum of 22 (all components at critical mass building level) to a maximum of 66 (all components at sustained institutionalization level). With the addition of the 10-point scale, the overall institutionalization score could range from 0 to 198, with 0 to 77 representing critical mass building (level 1), 77 to 143 representing quality building (level 2), and 143 to 198 representing sustained institutionalization (level 3). A score of 77 or 143 are considered "transition scores" which indicate that the level of institution is on the precipice of moving to the next institutionalization level. The addition of the 10-point scoring has allowed for more nuanced and precise annual tracking as well as the ability to conduct systematic comparisons between institutions.

Beyond calculating the overall score, those who have used the Rubric have used the scoring feature in different ways. For example, some have developed an "average dimension score" by calculating a score for each of the Rubric's five dimensions (i.e., Philosophy and Mission, Faculty Involvement and Support, Student Involvement and Support, etc.). This average dimension score is calculated by adding up the levels for each of the components within the dimension and then dividing that total by the number of components. This allows users to see which dimension is further along the continuum and which is less advanced, and in turn, provides a means to help decide on which dimension more effort and resources should be placed.

More recently, in applying the ten-point scale of the Rubric, institutional teams have used the scale to compare team members' scores for individual components. For example, members of an institution's team each complete the Rubric based on their experiences at the institution. Then, for each of the 22 components, each team member's score is shared and compared with the score of their team members. The team members discuss why they selected a particular. This often leads to important discussions regarding how different members at the same institution might view service-learning and the level of service-learning institutionalization in diverse and distinct ways.

Recent uses of the Rubric reveal users within different institutional contexts may place different weights on the components and dimension. The 22 components of the Rubric are presented as independent components having equal weight. However, in some institutional contexts, certain components (e.g., definition of service-learning) or dimensions (e.g., faculty involvement and support) may be more important and valued than others, and therefore, those components are considered and deliberated on more carefully and

are may be larger weights in the scoring process. In addition, as several studies of service-learning have suggested, the institutionalization components may not be independent, but rather, have some type of interaction effect or relationship among them (Furco, 2002; Hudson, 2016). For example, in his analyses, Furco (2002) found that institutions that had higher faculty involvement and support were more likely to garner greater institutional support (funding, etc.) than institutions that did not have such faculty support.

## Rubric Applications

Over the years, the Rubric has been applied to serve a variety of purposes. Among the most common are the following:

*Single institution point-in-time assessment.* For this purpose, the Rubric is used to assess the level of institutionalization for each of the 22 components to take stock of which components are at a higher institutionalization level, and which are at a lower level a particular point in time. The results are often used for strategic planning and implementation as well as to help target limited resources on the institutionalization components that need the most attention.

*Single institution pre-post assessment.* For this purpose, the Rubric is applied at two (or more) different points in time using the same scoring approach for each application. The first application is used to establish a baseline score for the institutionalization components, either individually (a score for each component) or collectively (an overall institutionalization score). Subsequent applications use the same scoring procedures to derive another set or sets of scores for the components. The subsequent score(s) are then compared to the baseline score to assess progress on each component, each dimension, or overall institutionalization.

*Multi-institutional comparisons.* For this purpose, the Rubric is applied at two or more institutions using the same scoring procedures. This can allow for comparisons of institutions across components, dimensions, and overall institutions to determine which institutions have more institutionalized efforts or to determine if certain institution characteristics or strategies are correlated with higher service-learning institutionalization for particular institutionalization components or dimensions.

*Targeted assessment.* For this purpose, only a portion of Rubric is applied to assess service-learning institutionalization on a particular component or dimension. For example, an institution might be interested in assessing where along the institutionalization continuum the overall Philosophy and Mission of Service-Learning is situated. Therefore, only

the components that are in the Philosophy and Mission of Service-Learning (Dimension I) would be scored.

*Triangulated assessment.* For this purpose, the Rubric is just one of a series of diagnostics and measures that are used to assess the level of service-learning institutionalization. The results of the Rubric are compared to and triangulated with results from other data sources, which might include institutional documents, transcripts from faculty or students interviews or focus groups, letters from community partners, among other sources.

*Planning template (non-assessment).* For this purpose, the Rubric is not used to derive a score or level of institutionalization. Rather it is used solely as a discussion guide to facilitate strategic planning focused on implementing strategies to further institutionalization. For example, the process might involve reviewing the *Sustained Institutionalization* (Level 3) language for each component and then establishing goals to be achieved for embeddings service-learning more fully into the institution's academic agenda.

## Rubric Adaptations

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Beyond supporting institutions in the advancement of their service-learning initiative, the Rubric has also been used as an instrument to guide several studies focused on building greater understanding of the service-learning institutionalization process.

While most of the investigations have examined the institutionalization within higher education institutions in the United States, the Rubric has been applied more recently to service-learning contexts in other countries.

Within the United States, the Rubric has been used in a variety of ways to investigate various questions and issues pertaining to service-learning institutionalization. Greene (2004) used an early version of the Rubric to compare the extent of service-learning institutionalization between public institutions of higher education and private ones. More recently, Lewing & Shehane (2013) used an updated and revised version of the Rubric (2009) to measure the level of service-learning institutionalization among 17 independent, private Christian institutions of higher education, based on the perspectives of the institu-

tions' chief academic officers.

Other researchers have applied the Rubric in various ways to focus on specific types of programs or units within or across institutions. For example, Anderson and Callahan (2005) used the Rubric to assess the level of service-learning institutionalization within teacher education programs across five higher education institutions. In another study, Hancock (2016) applied the Rubric to measure institutionalization levels among three distinct service-learning programs that operated within a single University. Davis and Dempsey (2018) applied the Rubric to assess service-learning institutionalization with an academic medical center's occupational therapy program. In all these cases, some modifications to the language and terms used in the Rubric were made to align more fully with the contexts of the studies. However, the overarching framework, components, dimensions, and levels of service-learning institutionalization remained generally intact.

Modified versions of the Rubric have also been found in service-learning institutionalization research studies situated in other countries. In their international comparison of service-learning institutionalization across three higher education institutions located in Canada, South Africa, and the United States, Gelmon *et al.* (2005) incorporated additional items into the rubric that allowed for cross-national comparisons. They included elements that took into account budget constraints and gave attention to the advancement of service-learning in the midst of competing institutional priorities.

Also, for their study of service-learning institutionalization of service-learning at 20 universities in Spain, Heras-Colàs, Masgrau-Juanola, and Soler-Masó (2017) made several adaptations to the Rubric and noted the importance of contextualizing the instrument to align with institutional and cultural contexts as well the limitations of using the Rubric in contexts that are different than those in which it was originally developed and standardized. They state:

*Adapting an existing institutionalization instrument to different contexts to wield universal indicators for the institutionalization of SL makes it possible to compare such contexts. On the other hand, it does not accurately reflect the emerging stage of SL in the context of Spanish universities. For instance, in the case of Spain, we believe that applying an earlier stage (stage 0) to Furco's rubric would have been helpful to describe a phase in the process characterized by incipient knowledge and implementation of SL. This would have allowed us to determine, in later studies, if some universities are evolving from this stage 0 to stage 1. (p. 93)*

Similarly, for their service-learning institutionalization study situated in Singapore, Ti,

Tang-Wong, and Bringle (2021) sought to provide respondents to the Rubric more options beyond three institutionalization levels. In response, they modified the Rubric to allow respondents the option of selecting an intermediate institutionalization level between the three established institutionalization levels (i.e., between critical mass building, quality building, and sustained institutionalization).

*These studies and other such studies have not only provided useful findings to advance the field, but they have also brought to fore particular limitations of the Rubric when it is applied in particular contexts or to address particular research questions.*

These studies and other such studies have not only provided useful findings to advance the field, but they have also brought to fore particular limitations of the Rubric when it is applied in particular contexts or to address particular research questions (Heras-Colàs, Masgrau-Juanola, and Soler-Masó, 2017).

The various modifications that have been made to Rubric speak to the importance of adapting the instrument to the institutional, cultural, and educational contexts in which service-learning operates. For the collected data to be valid and useful, the Rubric (like any other assessment tool or instrument) needs to have contextual resonance and applicability. However, such modifications and adaptations of the Rubric are not without limitations and challenges. While expansions and revisions of the instrument provide opportunities to test and reconceptualize issues of service-learning institutionalization, over-modification can affect the overall validity of the instrument as well as create mission creep that might veer the instrument too far from the research-based components, dimensions, and levels of institutionalization on which the tool has been built. Balancing contextual needs with instrument integrity requires careful thought. At the very least, justifications for each modification should be provided.

One of the more common challenges regarding instrument modification in applications of the Rubric is found in translation of the United States-based, English-language version of the instrument to other languages. The challenges are found not only in translating the meanings and intentions of particular terms such as service-learning, coordinating entity, staff, etc., but also in the different ways in which higher education systems are organized across the globe. This issue arose when a Spanish-language (Castellano) version of the Rubric was produced by Sebastian Zulueta in 2005, which has since been used in Spanish-language research studies (Soler Masó *et al.*, 2014). Questions arose whether the term “service-learning” should be translated literally (*aprendizaje-servicio*) or might there a better term to capture the essence of the pedagogy (perhaps *servicio solidario*)? In ad-

dition, the Rubric's dimension of "faculty" involvement and support refers to the support of instructors and teachers. However, the term "faculty" (or *facultad* in Spanish) in many other countries refers to academic units and departments, rather than the instructors. In Zulueta's Spanish version of the Rubric, several word modifications were made when it was deemed that using literal translations of certain terms would only distort the original meaning and intention of a component or dimension of the instrument. This Spanish-language version of the Rubric has been applied to several service-learning institutionalization research studies in Chile and Spain (in Catalan) (Maulén, 2021; Soler Masó *et al.*, 2014).

In many cases, to reflect better the specific terms used at an institution, the term "service-learning" has been replaced by other related terms such as "academic service-learning" and "community service-learning". In these instances, the primary intention and focus of the Rubric have remained intact. However, in other cases, the Rubric has been modified to the point where it no longer measures levels of institutionalization or focuses on service-learning. For example, Kott (2017) used the Rubric to develop the *Self-Assessment Rubric for Development of Service-Learning Programs for Academic Libraries*. Modeled after the Rubric, this rubric presents "a framework for academic libraries to use as they build and assess serving learning programs." (Kott, 2017, p. 1). The New England Resource Center for Higher Education adapted portions of the Rubric to establish the NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education, which has identifies 32 components across six dimensions that move along a three-level continuum composed of three stages: emerging, developing, and transforming (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2016).

## The Rubric and Catholic Higher Education

The Rubric was designed to serve as a generic tool that could be applied universally across higher education institutions of different types, with different histories, and in different cultural and geographic contexts. To this end, it is intentionally devoid of issues that might be applicable to only some institutions of higher education, but not others. The 22 components across the five dimensions are, in theory, applicable to all institutions in which there is interest to institutionalize service-learning. In addition, these components are ones that research studies have found to be present at higher education institutions (of all types) in which service-learning is highly institutionalized.

However, institutions of higher education do not operate in a vacuum. Each institution has a history, a personality, a set of values, an *ethos* that distinguishes it from other institutions. Given that service-learning is a highly contextualized practice, the particular



character or each institution ultimately shapes the intentions, purposes, and practices of service-learning within a particular setting. Therefore, as a diagnostic for assessing the level of service-learning institutionalization, the Rubric provides an assessment of only the *fundamental* components of service-learning; the fundamental components are those aspects that *all* institutions of higher education need to attend to for further the institutionalization of service-learning. However, to fully institutionalize service-learning, other components that are essential for the advancement of particular brands of service-learning require consideration. This is done by incorporating in to the self-assessment process additional components that capture the character of the institution and the specific ways in which service-learning is practiced.

By design, the 22 components of the rubric are given equal weight in regard to their importance to furthering the institutionalization of service-learning. However as was previously mentioned, some studies have found that certain components (e.g., those within the faculty dimension) may have more influence in advancing service-learning than others (Furco, 2002; Prentice, 2002). How much particular components influence the institutionalization process is likely due to institutional context (e.g., type of institution, nature of students, type of communities, etc.).

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Indeed, several studies of service-learning institutionalization have revealed that in particular contexts, some components are likely to be more predictive of institutionalization than other components. For example, in a study

of 70 community colleges in the United States (i.e., two-year postsecondary institutions that grant associate degrees), Prentice (2002) found that across four issue areas of institutionalization (institutional, faculty, student, community partner), faculty (instructor) issues were significantly higher in institutionalization scores than the other the other three areas. Prentice explains this by stating, “Perhaps the role of community colleges as being solely one of teaching makes faculty stakeholders and faculty issues around service-learning more crucial to institutionalizing a service-learning program at a community college” (online). In contrast, in their study of 16 private, independent faith-based institutions of higher education, Lewing and Shehane (2017) found that the components pertaining to the philosophy and mission domain (not faculty involvement and support) was highest among the institutions. In their analysis, Lewing and Shehane state “An institutional philosophy that supports service-learning is a key component of institutionalizing the prac-

tice,” suggesting that “an institutional mission that promotes faith-based service provides organizational rationale for the expansion of service-learning specifically within Christian colleges and universities” (p. 271).

Such studies reveal that, when the Rubric is applied to specific contexts, one should consider whether all of the components and dimensions should be given equal weight, or if particular certain components and dimensions are likely to be stronger predictors for service-learning institutionalization, and therefore, should be given greater emphasis and attention. Such judgements should be made with justification and, whenever possible, should be supported by the literature and research data. Otherwise, one runs the risk of de-emphasizing certain components that in the long run may provide critical and core to the overall institutionalization process.

As was mentioned previously, the Rubric has been modified to adapt to the needs of specific contexts and situations. However, rather than modifying the Rubric (and potentially reduce its construct validity), some have sought to keep the Rubric intact but add to the Rubric supplement components and/or dimensions that account for particular aspects of service-learning that are important and essential for the specific context. Such additions are usually based on findings from studies that reveal that within certain cultural or institutional contexts, there are particular important components that are not present in the Rubric. For example, in studying the institutionalization of higher education service-learning within the Arab context, Shalabi (2012) found service-learning institutionalization advances when there is a broad top-down and bottom-up involvement and support from a broad range of stakeholders (beyond faculty members and institutional leaders). His study found that service-learning institutionalization occurs when there is involvement of university governance (i.e., university senate), alumni (graduates of the institution), foreign groups (students and scholars), and chief administrators. Shalabi (2012) suggests that these stakeholders are especially influential within Arab higher education, and the western literature on service-learning has not given much attention to important role that they play in advancing the institutionalization of service-learning. Therefore, within the Arab context, the involvement and support of these stakeholders should be part of any instrument or diagnostic designed to measure service-learning institutionalization. At this time, the Rubric does not make any reference to alumni or foreign groups and the role they play in advancing the institutionalization of service-learning.

In other contexts, new instruments to measure service-learning institutionalization have been developed to more fully reflect the values, culture, and needs of particular institutions. For example, in recent years, service-learning has grown substantially within higher education institutions throughout Latin American. (Tapia, 2017). The growth of service-learning has

been especially strong among several Catholic universities in Argentina and Chile, such as the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (UC) in Santiago, Chile. UC was founded in 1888 by Santiago's Archbishop Monsignor Mariano Casanova as an institution focused on blending academic excellence and training based on the Catholic doctrine. Since 2004, the university has sought to live out the institution's mission more fully by working with academic departments to integrate service-learning into the curriculum (Caire, González, & Jouannet, 2019). This effort has brought to the fore the importance of working with each academic department to explore strategic ways to make a service-learning an integral and institutionalized component of each department's core academic agenda.

To accomplish this, a team from UC developed a guide for academic departments that articulates strategies and action steps for making service-learning a more integral part of the units' academic curricula. Contained within this guide is a self-assessment instrument designed to measure the level of service-learning institutionalization within a particular academic department ("*carrera*") (Caire, González, Jouannet, Montalva, & Ponce, 2018). To design the instrument, the team members considered and selected elements from the Rubric as well as from Jouannet, Salas, and Contreras's (2013) assessment model (Modelo A+S en la UC) that address administrative and management support for service-learning within academic departments. They then incorporated these and other elements into a newly designed self-assessment instrument that is specifically focused on measuring the level of service-learning institutionalization within UC's academic departments. Unlike the more generic, department-focused rubric that Kecskes (2008) had developed in the United States, Caire *et al.*'s tool incorporates contextualized elements that align with UC's particular brand of service-learning and academic goals. These goals include training upstanding, enterprising, and supportive professions who generate new knowledge and contribute solutions to Chile's societal challenges (Caire *et al.*, 2018).

With these goals in mind, Caire *et al.*'s (2018) institutionalization instrument is composed of 19 elements that target departments' academic goals and agendas and academic units' administrative support. Their self-assessment instrument is organized by five dimensions that include: incorporation of service-learning from a curricular approach; service-learning teachers; work with community partners; student leadership; and support and management of the implementation of service-learning within the academic unit. The components within these dimensions are scored on a three-point institutionalization-level scale ranging from beginning (level 1) to in-process (level 2) to consolidated (level 3) (Caire *et al.*, 2018). Like the Rubric, this instrument is used as a mechanism for action planning and continuous improvement. However, unlike the Rubric, it focuses on academic departments rather than the institution as a whole, and in turn, provides a useful tool for cultivating the advancement of service-learning within and across diverse

academic programs. Caire *et al.*'s (2018; 2019) research and experiences not only offer an excellent example of how the Rubric has informed the development of new service-learning institutionalization instruments that align more specifically with the unique traditions and needs of institutions, but it also brings to the fore the Rubric's limitations in regard to its overall generalizability and applicability.

The broader literature on service-learning, community engagement, and social responsibility within Catholic universities suggests that there are institutionalization elements that may not be important for most institutions but are essential for faith-based institutions. For example, in their review of the advancement of social responsibility within Catholic universities, Mabile *et al.* (2018) identify several issues that are central to deepening the Catholic universities' commitment to social responsibility. These issues include overt and intentional commitment to environmental stewardship, moral sensitivity, care for humankind, increased inter-faith collaboration, and a resignification of harmony with creation and God (Mabile *et al.*, 2018). While these components might not necessarily be essential for advancing service-learning at all higher education institutions, their presence within the philosophy and mission of Catholic universities' service-learning agendas will likely influence service-learning's advancement and institutionalization. Therefore, when considering the nature of Catholic higher education and implications for service-learning practice, it is important to take stock of any measure of service-learning institutionalization and either add components or modify it so that it includes the values, elements, and components that reflect the central tenets of service-learning practice within Catholic education.

In *Educating to Fraternal Humanism: Building a 'Civilization of Love' 50 Years after Populorum Progressio* (2017), Pope Francis presents a set of guidelines for the future of Catholic Education. This future calls for Catholic education to attend to greater social integration across cultures in ways that acknowledge a coexistence of different beliefs and serve to address the prevalent societal inequities. He states, "Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society, and our relationship with nature." (Pope Francis, 2017, p. 1). Therefore, for service-learning to play a central role in Catholic education, there will need to be intentional efforts to implement the pedagogy in ways that promote Pope Francis's educational goals and values. To this end, assessments of service-learning institutionalization within Catholic education should take stock of how much these goals and values are advancing at the institution. This could be done by changing some of the language of the existing components in the Rubric (i.e., changing the wording for the different levels of the "Alignment with Institutional Mission" and/or "Alignment with Educational Reform Efforts" components) in order to draw a more explicit and direct connection between service-learning and the values and goals of Catholic education. Another option is to add

components to the Rubric (in one or more of the dimensions) that respond directly to Pope Francis's call.

Other issues within the broader service-learning field that have come to fore and that will likely intersect with efforts to advance service-learning within Catholic education include issues of ensuring more community voice and reciprocity, having greater emphasis on issues of equity and inclusion, acknowledging and honoring the native and indigenous histories of communities, and situating service-learning advancement within broader frames of community engagement and social responsibility. When these and other emerging issues in the field are central to an institution's advancement of service-learning, changes and additions to the Rubric should be considered in order to reflect the importance and essential nature of these core values.

When revising and adding items to the Rubric, it is important to keep in mind that the Rubric is designed to incorporate internal components that are within the purview and control of the institution. The Rubric is not intended to account for external issues or components (i.e., changes in national laws; situations in the community) that are known to influence the direction or advancement of an institution's service-learning agenda. Therefore, as an assessment instrument to measure the institutionalization of service-learning, the Rubric should only include components that an institution of higher education has some control over. Lastly, when making changes to the language or components of the Rubric, it is also important to keep in mind that changes and revisions to the Rubric can change the validity of the instrument in terms of the extent it is measuring the level at which the universal, foundational elements of service-learning institutionalization are present. Therefore, all changes should be made with careful consideration and justification.

The next section offers some strategies and best practices when using the Rubric in different context and under special or unique circumstances.

## Conducting a Self-Assessment

Over the years, much of the focus on the *Self-Assessment Rubric for Institutionalizing Service-Learning in Higher Education* has centered on the Rubric instrument itself and the quantitative scoring mechanism it provides. However, the self-assessment tool was designed as a *system* that includes both a Rubric instrument and a Planning Guide. *The Planning Guide (Self-Assessment Planning Guide for Institutionalizing Service-Learning in Higher Education)* provides a step by step process for members of an institution to work together, as a team, in measuring the level of service-learning institutionalization at their site. *The Planning Guide* serves to guide those involved in the self-assessment process in unpacking the various

components of service-learning institutionalization at their institution(s) in order to accurately score the Rubric. *The Planning Guides* offers suggestions on how to form a campus team, whom to include on the team, how to approach various components and items of the Rubric instrument, how to score the Rubric and interpret the results. The final step of Planning Guide articulates the most important step of this self-assessment system, which is to “Develop a set of action steps that will help advance the campus along the continuum of service-learning institutionalization” (Furco, 1998, p. 2).

*In addition, the Planning Guide offers a set of reflection questions for each component of the Rubric. The questions are intended to engage those who are conducting the self-assessment to consider, examine, and discuss particular issues associated with each component of the Rubric.*

In addition, the *Planning Guide* offers a set of reflection questions for each component of the Rubric. The questions are intended to engage those who are conducting the self-assessment to consider, examine, and discuss particular issues associated with each component of the Rubric. For example, as the

Rubric suggests, having a clear, widely-accepted definition of service-learning is essential for service-learning institutionalization to advance. For the Rubric component (Definition of Service-Learning), the Planning Guide asks those who are conducting the self-assessment to consider these questions:

- ▶ What is the definition of “service-learning” for our campus?
- ▶ What are other terms, if any, that are being used synonymously with service-learning?
- ▶ What are at least five criteria that define a service-learning experience?
- ▶ Who on our campus can articulate the definition of service-learning?

By answering these questions, and comparing the perspectives and responses among members of the self-assessment team, the level of institutionalization for this component (Definition of Service-Learning) can be determined:

*There is no campus-wide definition for service-learning. The term service-learning is used inconsistently to describe a variety of experiential and service activities (Critical Mass Building).*

*There is an operationalized definition for service-learning on the campus, but there is some variance and inconsistency in the use of the term (Quality Building).*

*The institution has a formal, universally accepted definition for high quality service-learning that is used consistently to operationalize many or most aspects of service-learning on campus (Sustained Institutionalization).*

(Furco, 1998, p. 5)

As another example, the Rubric component on Faculty Leadership (Dimension II) suggests that having a substantial number of influential faculty members at the institution participating in and supporting service-learning is key to furthering the institutionalization of service-learning. *The Planning Guide* asks those conducting the self-assessment to “Identify five or more of the most influential faculty members on campus” and then identify “How many of them provide leadership for service-learning on the campus?” (p. 15). By reflecting on this, those conducting the self-assessment can better determine where this component lies on the service-learning institutionalization continuum:

*None of the most influential faculty members on campus serve as leaders for advancing service-learning on the campus. (Critical Mass Building).*

*There are only one or two influential faculty members who provide leadership to the campus’ service-learning effort. (Quality Building).*

*A highly respected, influential group of faculty members serves as the campus’ service-learning leaders and/or advocates. (Sustained Institutionalization).*

(Furco, 1998, p. 7)

*The Planning Guide* is important in that it provides guidance in making informed judgements when deciding where along the institutionalization continuum each component lies. Reflecting on the questions and statements posed in the *Planning Guide* help bring to the fore data, details, and other information that provide justification for how the Rubric is scored. Also, when conducting the self-assessment in teams, the *Planning Guide* can bring out important differences in perspectives and understandings among team members that can influence the score that each component receives.

For example, on several occasions when teams have discussed the definition of service-learning, teams members have agreed that there is a common understanding of service-learning because the institution has an official and well-promoted definition for service-learning. However, when considering some of the questions from the *Planning Guide* (*What is the definition of “service-learning” for our campus? What are at least five criteria that define a service-learning experience?*), there often emerge differences of opinions as to what the definition of service-learning is or whether a particular criterion is an essential component of service-learning. Therefore, without careful consideration, it may appear on the surface that there is a formal, universally accepted definition for service-learning that is used consistently to operationalize service-learning on at the institution (sustained

institutionalization). But, in reality, there likely may be a lack of mutual understanding of what service-learning is and how it is defined (critical mass building). Giving attention to the questions in the *Planning Guide* can help ensure that the quantitative results of the Rubric are justifiable and accurate, and that any strategic action steps that are taken target the components of institutionalization that are most in need of further development.

Therefore, the self-assessment process is not just about completing the rubric and calculating an institutionalization score. Rather, the self-assessment process is composed of three parts:

**Reflection and Data Gathering:** This part entails reflecting on each service-learning institutionalization component (using the *Planning Guide*) and gathering the information, data, and other details that provide evidence and justification for how each component of the Rubric will be scored.

**Rubric Scoring:** This part entails indicating where each of 22 components associated with high levels of service-learning institutionalization are situated along the continuum of institutionalization (using the Rubric).

**Action Planning:** This part entails articulating a set of action steps that will be taken to move particular service-learning institutionalization components along the institutionalization continuum.

A full self-assessment of the institutionalization of service-learning occurs when all three parts of the process are completed. While the Rubric can be used on its own for diagnostic purposes, the self-assessment process is most robust and valuable when the all parts of the process are completed.

## Rubric Best Practices

Over the years, several best practices for using the Rubric have emerged. Adherence to the following tips and best practices can help optimize the intended purpose of the instrument.

## Making adjustments to the Rubric

As was described previously, adjustments to the language and terms used in the Rubric are encouraged to better align them with the context and culture of the institution. However, modifications should be as minimal as possible given that even modest changes to an the instrument can alter its calibration, limit its ability to provide a valid or accurate mea-



sure, and make it more difficult to measure change over time or compare results across samples. When using the Rubric to establish a quantitative institutionalization score, modifications should focus on issues of terminology and not on alterations that might affect the meaning of the component. For example, one should proceed with changing the term “service-learning” to another term (i.e., community-based learning, *servicio solidario*, etc.) to better reflect the term(s) used at the institution. Similarly, changing terms such as “campus” to “university” or “faculty” to “instructor” to align with the language of the institutional context is also encouraged. Similarly, some of the examples given for incentives (e.g., minigrants, sabbaticals, etc.) in the Faculty Incentives and Rewards component can be changed to reflect actual incentives that faculty receive at the institution. In every case, there should be a compelling reason for all changes that are made.

However, changes that affect the level or participation in service-learning or extent of involvement in service-learning should be avoided. In using the Rubric, some have expressed feeling uncomfortable with the vagueness of some of the language in the Rubric. They have indicated that the vague language poses challenges to being able to calibrate where an institution is along the continuum for some components (Bell *et al.*, 2000). For example, in the Faculty Awareness component, the stages of the continuum move from “very few” faculty members know what service-learning is (critical mass building) to “an adequate number” of faculty members know what service-learning is (quality building), to “a substantial number” of faculty members what service-learning is (sustained institutionalization). Some who have used the Rubric have sought to replace “very few”, “an adequate number”, and “a substantial number” with percentages (i.e., less than 33%, 34%-66%, 67%-100%, respectively).

However, such changes are not appropriate for several reasons. Firstly, the percentages that are selected are often not based on any actual target goal or any evidence that a particular percentage creates a tipping point for moving to the next stage of institutionalization (i.e., moving from 66% to 67% of faculty members who know what service-learning). Secondly, and most importantly, the Rubric’s language regarding levels of participation, involvement, awareness, support, and the like is intentionally vague. The intention behind the vague language is to spur dialogue and conversation among members of the self-assessment team in defining and interpreting for themselves what terms such as “adequate”, “a substantial number”, “highly respected faculty”, “limited number”, “formally welcomed”, and other such terms mean for their institution. What might be considered an adequate number of faculty members who support service-learning at one institution may be considered inadequate at another institution. The vague language is intended to have those who conduct the self-assessment to give definition to the terms in ways that reflect the situation, expectations, and aspirations of their respective institution’s ser-

vice-learning agenda. To this end, modifications should not be made to the Rubric's language that might alter the meaning of such intentionally-placed terms and phrases.

## Expanding the Rubric

The Rubric contains components that are considered fundamental to all service-learning institutionalization efforts regardless of institutional type or context. However, as was noted previously, there are other components that are important for advancing the institutionalization of service-learning at particular types of higher education institution. Adding components to the Rubric that are considered essential for service-learning practice, particular community contexts, or the institution writ large is highly encouraged.

It is important to remind ourselves that the Rubric was developed from and normed on Western and Northern perspectives on higher education, student development, instructional pedagogy, and community engagement. If there are important cultural or institutional perspectives that are not found in the Rubric, those perspectives should be added as supplemental components. There is no limit to the number of components that can be added. However, it is important to keep in mind that the unit of analysis of the self-assessment process is the institution (as a whole) and not particular departments, faculties, or service-learning programs. Therefore, all components that are added to the Rubric should focus on issues that pertain to the institution writ large.

It is also important to keep in mind that the components of the Rubric represent factors associated with service-learning institutionalization that are within the control of the institution. For example, in some contexts, national or local governmental politics influence how much service-learning is able to advance within higher education institutions. While external policies and pressures certainly can play a role in furthering or hindering the advancement of an institution's service-learning agenda, they usually are not within the purview or control of the institution. Therefore, they represent a different unit of analysis and should not be added to the Rubric. They could be considered a part of a separate (supplemental) measure of *external* factors that contribute to the advancement of service-learning institutionalization, along with influences or pressures the institution feels from the community, funders, ranking systems, peers at other higher education institutions, and the like.

## Using the Rubric to Measure Change Over Time

*Increasingly, the Rubric is being used to measure the amount of progress in furthering the service-learning that has been made over time.*

Increasingly, the Rubric is being used to measure the amount of progress in furthering the service-learning that has been made over time. This assessment procedure usually involves having a team at the institution use the Rubric to benchmark and score the level of institutionalization at a particular point in time (a baseline assessment), and then repeat the process at a later point in time (e.g. a post-assessment). The results from the baseline assessment and the subsequent assessment are then compared to determine how much the institutionalization components have (or have not) progressed. When using the Rubric in this way, there are two issues in particular that should be taken into account.

Firstly, in order for the early and later scores to be comparable (e.g., test-retest reliability) and for the results of the comparison meaningful, it is important to use the same version of the Rubric, the same assessment process, and the same scoring procedures for each assessment. This also means that, to the extent possible, the team members who conduct the first and subsequent assessment(s) should be the same. While changes to the assessment team membership can bring new perspectives and insights regarding the institutions service-learning efforts, they also can alter the emphasis and focus of the assessment in substantial ways that may pose challenges to drawing conclusions regarding observed differences between the baseline data and subsequent scores.

However, there are also limitations when same individuals conduct assessments over time. Individuals involved in conducting an assessment the second time may be biased and influenced by their initial impressions and scores from first assessment and their responses on the second assessment may be qualitatively different from those who are approaching the assessment for the first time (Lau & Snell, 2020). To address this potential bias, some institutions have established a dual assessment structure when conducting second or third round assessments. The dual assessment structure involves forming and engaging two separate groups to conduct subsequent assessments. One group is composed of those who participated in the first assessment, and the other group is composed of individuals who did not. Each group conducts the assessment in the same manner, and then the groups come together to discuss their scores and work toward a group consensus score for each item. This dual assessment process not only provides an opportunity for broader institutional input by engaging a larger number of members, but it also provides

However, there are also limitations when same individuals conduct assessments over time. Individuals involved in conducting an assessment the second time may be biased and influenced by their initial impressions and scores from first assessment and their responses on the second assessment may be qualitatively different from those who are approaching the assessment for the first time (Lau & Snell, 2020). To address this potential bias, some institutions have established a dual assessment structure when conducting second or third round assessments. The dual assessment structure involves forming and engaging two separate groups to conduct subsequent assessments. One group is composed of those who participated in the first assessment, and the other group is composed of individuals who did not. Each group conducts the assessment in the same manner, and then the groups come together to discuss their scores and work toward a group consensus score for each item. This dual assessment process not only provides an opportunity for broader institutional input by engaging a larger number of members, but it also provides

a means to determine the inter-rated reliability of the scores. By comparing the scores of the two groups, it also helps bring to the fore any potential biases that the individuals who participated in the first assessment might have toward the institution's progress on service-learning institutionalization. More research on the advantages and limitations of using dual assessments is needed in order to draw conclusions on their utility and effectiveness in securing a strong and reliable overall assessment.

Secondly, when using the Rubric to assess the progress of institutionalization over time, it is important to ensure that enough time lapses between assessments. Repeating an assessment a few months after the initial one is unlikely to show much movement along the institutionalization continuum on any component of the Rubric. Findings from studies of service-learning institutionalization suggest it takes five to seven years of concerted efforts to move from one institutionalization level to the next (Furco, 2002; Furco & Holland, 2012). As was noted previously, it is one of the reasons that a ten-point scale (0-9) was added to the Rubric. The ten-point scale offers a means to help capture more incremental changes in service-learning institutionalization over shorter periods of time. It is important to allow for sufficient time to elapse for the various components and dimensions of service-learning development and institutionalization to manifest and take hold (Lau & Snell, 2020). While annual assessments can be conducted, comparisons following three or more years are likely to provide a more accurate and reliable picture of an institution's service-learning institutionalization progress and trajectory.

## Preparing for the Spiral

The Rubric's three-stage continuum (critical mass building, quality building, sustained institutionalization) suggests that the progression of service-learning progresses institutionalization is linear. However, findings from applications of the Rubric in various institutional contexts and settings suggest that this may not be the case. Bell *et al.* (2000) and Furco (2002) found that when comparing institutionalization scores taken annually over a three-year period, several service-learning institutionalization components were at a lower stage in the third year of assessment when compared to the first year. One explanation for observed drops in institutionalization levels over time may be that when there is less experience with service-learning, there may also be less familiarity with the kinds and desired amount of faculty, student, community, and institutional support that are needed to advance service-learning. In turn, when conducting the initial assessment, raters tend to view the institutionalization components favorably and give more generous scores regarding the level of institutionalization. However, as they are provided more data about the breadth, depth, and scope of service-learning at the institution, and potential

gaps in faculty, student, and institutional support for service-learning are revealed, their scores for particular components of the Rubric may be lower in subsequent assessments. The lower score does not necessarily mean that the advancement of service-learning is waning. Rather, it likely reflects a score adjustment intended to provide a more precise data-informed assessment of the conditions at the institution.

Another explanation for lower scores in later assessments of service-learning institutionalization is due to the fact that, as mentioned previously, service-learning does not operate in a vacuum. The advancement of service-learning is influenced by the conditions within the broader institutional and societal ecosystems in which it is situated. As Furco (2002) suggests, service-learning institutionalization “involves the complex interplay of a broad set of multi-faceted dimensions that converge with an ever-evolving set of institutional, academic, and social factors” (p. 60). The conditions that surround service-learning are not static and, therefore, comparing Rubric scores from an assessment conducted at different points in time may be unwise, especially if the institutional and societal conditions have changed substantially between assessments.

For example, among the many factors that promote the advancement of service-learning, service-learning needs to be aligned with the institution’s educational reforms, there need to be highly respected and influential faculty members who advocate for it, and there need to be academically-integrated curricular options for students to participate. At a particular point in time, these factors may indeed be in place and service-learning may be on a promising trajectory for full institutionalization. However, over time, the institution’s educational reform priorities may shift, the respected and influential faculty members who advocate for service-learning may retire, and the curricular course options for students may change. Consequently, under these new conditions, service-learning may appear to be less institutionalized even though, in reality, it is advancing at the institution.

Therefore, it is best to think of the institutionalization of service-learning not as a linear process but rather as a spiral whereby service-learning advances along the institutionalization continuum, then as institutional and community conditions change, the level of service-learning institutionalization regresses to some degree. As the service-learning agenda is recalibrated and adjusted in order to realign it to the changed conditions, the institutionalization process once again advances until the ever-changing institutional conditions are such in that that the service-learning agenda requires recalibration. Then again, as the spiral continues, some regression in institutionalization occurs, further recalibration of the service-learning plan is conducted, and advances in institutionalization are made. It is important to note over the 15 to 20 years it takes for achieve the level of sustained institutionalization, the coil of institutionalization spiral gets thicker and stronger with each

cycle of regression and advancement. This spiral image can serve as a visual metaphor for understanding the overall institutionalization process and can be useful when interpreting the results of Rubric assessments conducted over time.

## Looking to the Future

*This chapter has offered a glimpse into how the 20+ year old institutionalization Rubric has evolved over the years and the ways in which new versions of the instrument are highlighting institutionalization features that are important in contemporary service-learning practice.*

This chapter has offered a glimpse into how the 20+ year old institutionalization Rubric has evolved over the years and the ways in which new versions of the instrument are highlighting institutionalization features that are important in contemporary service-learning practice. As service-learning

continues to grow within Catholic universities, more research is needed to investigate the aspects of service-learning institutionalization that are relevant and unique to Catholic education. Investigations that test the Rubric's applicability and usefulness within Catholic education are also needed to determine what adaptations to the Rubric should be made (if any) to best reflect the nature and focus of service-learning in Catholic universities. It is likely that as the service-learning within Catholic education continues to advance and mature, a more precise set of institutionalization components that apply specifically to Catholic higher education will emerge. These components are likely to include direct links between service-learning and the values and doctrines of the faith.

Originating in the United States, the Rubric has naturally relied on Northern and Western perspectives regarding service-learning practice and institutionalization. As the Rubric has been applied globally to assess service-learning institutionalization across various types of higher education institutions, several revisions and adaptations of the Rubric have been produced to reflect the prevailing terminology, purposes, and structures within particular national, regional and cultural contexts of the institutions being assessed. These adaptations have revealed important nuances regarding service-learning practice and institutionalization across the globe as well as the ways in which service-learning and broader community engagement practices are viewed and conceptualized within different cultural settings. They have also helped confirm the importance and value of the components and dimensions of service-learning institutionalization that are universal, regardless of situational cultures or contexts.

*While the Rubric provides a means to calculate an institutionalization score, it is most valuable when it is used in conjunction with the planning guide and post-assessment action planning.*

While the Rubric provides a means to calculate an institutionalization score, it is most valuable when it is used in conjunction with the *Planning Guide* and post-assessment action planning. In the end, what is most important

is not where along the institutionalization continuum service-learning is, but rather what strategic action steps will be taken to further advance service-learning. It is also important to remember that the Rubric focuses only on influences on service-learning institutionalization that are internal to higher education institutions. The Rubric does not address or account for the many forces external to the institution that influence service-learning institutionalization. As a community-based practice, service-learning operates within an hierarchical social ecosystem composed of various dimensions—communities, governments, faith-based systems, cultural settings, among others—each of which influences the nature of service-learning practice. Therefore, the development of mechanisms that can capture the influence of these external forces on the advancement of service-learning should be considered. Such mechanisms can help paint a more clear and complete picture of the status of service-learning institutionalization across different institutional and cultural contexts.

Measuring the institutionalization of service-learning remains an iterative and evolving process as new developments in service-learning emerge across the globe. With the global growth of service-learning, there is likely to be continued interest in exploring ways to measure institutions' levels of service-learning institutionalization. Therefore, additional research on the ways in which service-learning advances within different types institutions, including Catholic institutions of higher education, can help deepen our understanding of the particular features of institutionalization that are universal and those that are unique to particular types of institutions. Such findings can also serve as a means to guide improvements and further development of the Rubric as well as other assessment instruments and measures that provide important data to support the advancement of service-learning in higher education.

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*Uniservitate* is a global programme for the promotion of service-learning in Catholic Higher Education. Its objective is to generate a systemic change in Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) through the institutionalisation of service-learning (SL) as a tool to achieve its mission of offering an integral education and training of agents of change committed to their community.

***“We will not change the world, if we do not change education”***

*Pope Francis*

## **4** Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education

This work aims to discover and highlight all the wealth within the perspectives of the different actors participating in the institutionalization processes of service-learning in Higher Education. Through the description of various global cases of service-learning institutionalization, the book presents reflections, actions and experiences that outline conceptual elements and key features, seeking to contribute to the great global debate on how and to which purpose processes allowing for the integration of service-learning into the identity and culture of Higher Education institutions are launched and developed.

We introduce this fourth volume of the Uniservitate collection with the firm intention of allowing readers to experience, through its pages, a journey across the different continents and cultures, exploring stories as diverse as the contexts and actors behind them, and to take on the challenges and dreams that we believe the book suggests, with a forward-looking approach, for those interested in a Higher Education that is more engaged with the world in which it unfolds its actions.

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