UNCC100 MODULE 3:
Living the mission: Personal and professional challenges

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Module 3: Living the mission: Personal and professional challenges

Activities and materials in this module will help you to meet:

Learning Outcome 4: analyse and assess how the common good and social justice may be part of your personal and professional practice now and in the future;

Graduate Attribute 2: recognise your responsibility to the common good, the environment and society;

Graduate Attribute 4: think critically and reflectively;

Graduate Attribute 5: demonstrate values, knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the discipline and/or profession.

Graduate Attributes? Go to a new version of the reflective tool on the home page of your LEO unit in Module 3: 📘 Graduate Attributes: Where are you now? to assess your progress during this unit.

This unit will have given you the chance to start attaining well-developed skills in the targeted graduate attributes. As you progress through your studies at ACU, you will need to continue developing these and other graduate attributes so as to maximise your study outcomes and professional capacities.

Warning

Topics considered in UNCC LEO materials and in class discussions may be disturbing for some students.

If you are affected, please contact your Campus Leader and/or the University Counselling Service.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are advised that this site may include voices or images of people who have passed away. It may also contain links to sites that may use images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased.
3.1 The Vision

Robert Francis (Bobby) Kennedy, younger brother of “JFK”—US President John F. Kennedy—served both as Attorney General in the Kennedy administration in the 1960s and as a United States Senator, prior to his assassination. He was a strong defender of human rights. In his Day of Affirmation Address at Cape Town University in 1966—“A Tiny Ripple of Hope”—he observes:

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

In this final module we return to the ACU Mission Statement to see how the University puts its mission and vision into action. We will look at how some other institutions and individuals have taken up the challenge of living the principles that we have studied, and made a difference in the world.

We aim to assist you in identifying your own values and those underpinning the profession you may be preparing or hoping to enter. We also hope to help you identify the challenges to living the mission of ACU that you may experience in your future life and career path.
3.2 How ACU lives its mission

At the beginning of this unit, we highlighted the Mission and Profile of ACU and its expectation of its graduates. Here we identify some of the ways in which ACU staff and students live that mission and foster the principles which promote human flourishing.

Australian Catholic University expresses its commitment to the common good and a number of other principles we have been studying, in its Mission and Profile statement. A key difference between ACU and some of the other organizations, however, is that the mission and profile of ACU is closely related to its identity as Catholic. Its values come from a distinctly Christian understanding of the common good, and they explicitly give direction to all its work.

3.2.1 ACTIVITY

**Task 1:** Reread the Mission and Profile of ACU.

Think critically

Identify the core values that underpin the University’s understanding of its call to engage with others in the community and to promote justice, the common good and human dignity. The University carries out this task in numerous ways.

The Mission and Profile of ACU requires the University “contributes to its local, national and international communities.” Let’s look at an example of how this work is actually carried out by the students, staff, alumni or programs of the University. The following resources detail the work done by ACU with the people of the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border.


OR the video on the Thai-Burma border program.

**Task 2:**

1. Analyse the connections between the principles of human flourishing and this particular ACU program.
2. Assess the potential impact of this program in terms of ACU’s commitment to national and global communities.
3.2.2 ACTIVITY

Graduate Attribute 2 at ACU requires that our students “recognise their responsibility to the common good, the environment and society.” Look at the following links to programs run by ACU students and staff. Choose two that appeal to you. Identify how these programs serve the common good and which principles are being fostered by these programs.

- Action on Climate Change
- Giving to Cricket in Bangladesh
- Hearts in harmony
- Homeless but not Forgotten
- Homework Study Program Fitzroy
- Immersion in an Ancient Land
- Nursing Students Make a Difference in Vanuatu
- Building Capacity: Empowering Women
- Global School Partners Program
- Cagliero Project

3.2.3 SOMETHING CHALLENGING TO PURSUE IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST

Interested in how ACU understands its mission? Review the following resources.

Read the inaugural address, “The Idea of an Australian Catholic University,” given by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Greg Craven, on his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of ACU. Take particular note of what he sees as the ten components or characteristics of an ‘authentically Australian Catholic university.’ What is the essential difference between a Catholic university and other universities?

Compare and contrast the Craven article with the short reflection from David Hollenbach: “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition, Social Justice, and the University.” What do the two writers have in common? Are there any points on which they differ, or where they have a different emphasis? What do you think might be some of the cultural differences between Australia and the United States, which might impact on their understandings?
3.3 Making a difference

"It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but you are not free to desist from it either."

Rabbi Tarfon, *Pirke Avot* 2:21

Of course, ACU is not alone in its work to foster justice and the common good. When we consider all the injustices and big issues of the world, we can feel powerless to do anything about them. Yet we should never give into the temptation to feel this way and so to do nothing. **One person can make a difference.**

Here is one example of how something great can grow from something small and have a real impact on improving the lives of the most vulnerable.

3.3 ACTIVITY

Consider the story of the young Australian woman, Nikki Lovell. She has worked extensively in Uganda and has established a foundation called One Village. She was only the same age as our students at ACU when she began.

You can listen to her being interviewed or explore the [One Village website](http://www.ouverture.org) to gain an understanding of how the common good is served in this project.

**Task:** As you review this resource, consider the power of one person to make a difference.

1. What motivates people to try to change the way things are?
2. How are the principles of human flourishing evident (or not evident) in this example?
3. How effective are attempts to change the world? How would we measure effectiveness in different instances? Might there be different types of effectiveness? (Think about different contributions that people might make: advocacy; financial aid; consciousness-raising; solidarity; practical assistance through the contribution of professional skills such as teaching, nursing, or building, and so on.)
4. There are many aid organisations and charities operative in the world. What sorts of activities best respect the dignity of the persons who are being assisted? What sorts of activities by such organisations and charities might undermine that dignity? If you support one of these bodies, how do you ensure that you are helping to bring about the common good and respecting human dignity?
5. ACU offers a number of volunteer opportunities for students. What difference will you make to better serve the common good?
3.4 The principles at work

3.4 ACTIVITY

Many organisations and corporate bodies identify strongly with the principles we have been investigating. Look at three of the following websites to identify how they bring the principles to bear in their governance and work. What principles are specifically named by these companies?

One well known example of a company that espouses these principles is *The Body Shop*. Look for the values they claim and the campaigns they endorse.

The *Cotton On* clothing chain is another example of a global company – first established in Geelong, Australia – that takes good global citizenship very seriously. Look for their overseas development programs.

*The Westpac Foundation* is a charitable trust that provides grants to not-for-profit organisations. They express a strong belief in sustainability and stewardship.

*KPMG Australia* is part of a global network of companies providing accountancy, auditing, tax and financial services.

*Henry Davis York* is a Law firm that does *pro bono* work, and engages in student mentoring programs and community partnerships such as with Open Family Australia on homelessness and young people at risk.

A final example comes from *Staples*, an office supply company.

As you can see, many different types of organisations espouse these principles. This is just a small sample. You can find more examples of organisations and corporate bodies that publically articulate a commitment to the principles promoting human flourishing. Of course, you always need to ask yourself about how well these principles are actually lived out in practice…
3.5 Core values—me and my profession

As you complete your studies and move into a profession, you will come across many situations where you will need to consider your values and those of your profession before making a decision and moving forward. Most of the time your values and those of your profession might be similar, but there may also be times when these values are in conflict. At times you may be asked to compromise your own values, or put them aside for the benefit of the company or profession you work for. Consider, for example, the case presented here by New York Times Ethics Columnist, Jeffrey Seglin (read transcript). In this case, the owner of the company chose to compromise his values in order to maximise company profits and, ultimately, he was unhappy with his decision.

Consider these questions in relation to the above example:

- Why do you think the company owner was ultimately unhappy with his decision?
- What role did the owner’s values play in his decision-making process?
- What role did the values of the profession play in the owner’s decision-making process?
- Do considerations of the common good come into play here?
- Was his decision the best course of action to bring about the common good?
- How might the common good have been realised in this situation?

At the end of this section of the module, you will be asked to think about the role of the common good in your personal and professional life and to consider how making the common good a priority might form a particular personal or professional challenge for you.
3.5 ACTIVITY

The following exercise is designed to assist you to identify your own values and compare them with the profession to which you aspire, so that you can come to understand the important role that values play in decision-making for the common good.

In this activity you will bring together the values and principles of ACU, your own personal values and those of the profession you aspire to join. You will need to map your values and those of your profession. This activity will consist of several parts, and is particularly relevant to the demonstration that you have acquired graduate attributes 2 and 5.

Before you start, look again at the reflection guide to see how you process parallel values leading to the synthesis/evaluation of Parts 4 and 5 below.

1. The values of ACU

You have already identified the core values embodied in ACU’s Mission and Profile and lived out in the programs it sponsors. Have this material in front of you as you complete the activities below.

2. Your personal values

The Oxford Dictionary defines “values” as “principles or standards of behaviour; one’s judgement of what is important in life.”

According to the Business Dictionary, values can be defined as:

...important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person’s behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. Some common business values are fairness, innovation and community involvement.

Keeping these definitions in mind, complete this activity from MindTools to help you identify your own values. Make notes and keep them nearby for the rest of Activity 3.5.

3. The values of your profession

Do a web search for the professional regulatory body for the career path you aspire to (eg. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership; The Institute of Chartered Accountants; Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency; Nursing and Midwifery Board, etc.).

Locate the vision or values statement or ethical standards information on the website that best represents the field in which you will be seeking employment. Take careful notes on the values articulated and the principles that are outlined as ethical standards required. You will need these notes to complete the activity.

4. A synthesis

You now have material on ACU’s values, your own values and the values of your profession.

Print this Venn diagram. Use it to compare your own values (current and ideal) with those of your professional body and of ACU. Note the similarities and differences between the three areas and complete the diagram accordingly.
5. Reflecting on core values

The reflection which follows is the most important part of this activity. These questions will assist you to critically evaluate your completed Venn diagram and help you to prepare thoroughly for part of your assessment.

Use the boxes around the Venn diagram to record your thoughts on the following questions:

MISSING FROM PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Do you think there are any values missing from a particular area? What might these be? Why do you think they were omitted?
- Do these values reflect the common good? Why/ why not?

ESSENTIAL VALUES IN MY PROFESSION

- What values do you deem essential in your chosen field? Are these values explicit in the document from your professional body?
- What role does the common good play in the articulation of these professional values? Which values enhance the common good? Which values conflict with the common good?

CHALLENGES

- What personal challenges can you see for yourself in light of the values of your professional body and ACU?
- What professional challenges can you see for yourself in light of the values of your professional body and ACU? How might these challenges be overcome?
- Do any of your values conflict with those in your chosen field? How might this be overcome?

MY PROFESSION AND ME

- How might your values enhance your professionalism in your chosen field?
- How might your values allow you to work towards and enhance the common good within your profession?

ACU AND ME

- How might ACU assist you in the development of personal and professional values consistent with your chosen field?
- How might ACU assist you in the development of personal and professional values consistent with the common good?


3.6 Where have we come from and where are we going?

In this unit so far, you have explored the principles of human flourishing, the common good and the role advocacy for the vulnerable. You have identified the extent to which these concepts are made present in the values of the profession you hope to enter, and you have identified the ways in which your own values support or conflict with these concepts and the values of your profession. In module 4, you will be asked to explore particular issues, or “Hot Topics”, which present a challenge for the achievement of the common good. You will explore the various perspectives in play and discuss the ways in which the common good might best be served. As you work through these “Hot Topics” keep in mind the values of ACU, your values and those of your profession, and consider the role these values play in your analysis of the issue.