

Educate for Service, Justice, and Peace

As part of its mission the library is dedicated to fulfilling the information needs of the Chaminade community and fostering a commitment to service, justice, and peace. Someone in another University department confided recently that he thought that libraries and librarians were boring until he got to know me. I freely admit that this librarian is really staid and serious. However, even in the relatively controlled and stolid environment of a library we can strive to promote justice by instituting policies to serve the majority without neglecting the needs of the minority. A common complaint I hear, and not only in the library, is that the University is geared towards the day undergraduate program. The librarians work to incorporate the services we offer the day undergraduates into similar programs we can provide for the graduates and the online and evening students. So for students who have difficulty commuting to the physical library, we endeavor to subscribe to an equivalent amount of electronic services so that books and journals are available online. We give synchronous instruction face to face for the classes on ground and create online video tutorials of the same types of instruction. Because there are students who only take classes once a week, we have increased some loan periods so those students can return library material on time. During these challenging economic times, we have also made some difficult decisions such as remaining loyal to the library vendors instead of purchasing used books or searching for cheaper prices elsewhere.

This perspective on service and justice extends not only to the University library but is also personal. This week I heard again the familiar criticism of university faculty who supposedly live in ivory towers of theory and research and forgo accomplishing anything in the real world. Part of my personal ethic is to take my knowledge and skills and use these to help engage others in the Chaminade community and beyond. For this reason, I was very impressed with the service-learning accomplished by students under the guidance of their professors. Students take what they learn in class and apply their skills in the community, for example, working in tax clinics for the poor or teaching high school students to fill out the dreaded FAFSA form for federal student aid. I became involved with the service-learning program when I offered to assist in publicizing their remarkable accomplishments and worked with them for months to develop a service-learning section on the Chaminade website.

In consideration of my native Hawaiian background, I sit on the board of one of the Hawaiian civic clubs as the information technology representative and attempt to aid the membership in coping with the technology demands of this century. But because there are so many elderly in the club I am also working on the newsletter template and a brochure for those who prefer not to communicate electronically. As part of my dedication to the library profession I am also a member of the board for the Hawaii Library Association and offer an internship for library students from the University of Hawaii who want to experience working at a small academic institution.

I strive for justice in my commitment to service, to do what is good for the broadest constituency, while not forgetting the marginalized. In the struggle for justice I do believe that at the end of the road lies the ultimate capacity for peace.

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