

Strategic Plan 2014-2018

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I. Mission & Vision

Mission

The mission of the O’Pake Institute is to foster and promote ethical leadership and public service, both at Alvernia University and within the broader community. The Institute is envisioned as a catalyst for creating strategic community partnerships, supporting the broader community in developing leadership capacity and promoting dialogue on important civic issues and fostering public engagement. The ambition is that the Institute will establish Alvernia as a leader in community-based learning and research. In addition, the Institute will promote the inclusion of concepts such as leadership, ethics, civic engagement, dialogue, social entrepreneurship and public service into the curriculum and co-curriculum of the university.

Vision

The O’Pake Institute will:

- Foster the development of “ethical leaders with moral courage” both within the university and in the broader community;
- Foster and promote the concepts of civic engagement and public service on campus and within the community;
- Inform and help form an understanding of and response to the needs and issues in the broader community;
- Promote the concept of dialogue and encourage understanding about important civic and campus issues, and assist in providing tools for the campus and the community to mediate disagreements, appreciate cultural differences and resolve conflicts;
- Initiate strategic partnerships that support and enhance Alvernia's mission, leverage campus and community expertise and resources, in order to address important community needs and issues, while serving the interests of the university in order to produce mutually beneficial results;
- Serve as an important point of access for the community to campus resources and serve as an incubator and catalyst for projects that address community needs.

II. History

Creation of Centers

The concept of “centers” at Alvernia emerged in President Flynn’s inaugural address in April 2006, when he announced that Alvernia would develop two centers: the Center for Community Engagement and the Center for Ethics and Leadership. In 2007 the Center for Ethics and Leadership was created. During the period from its founding into 2011, the center was headed first by Theology Professor Gerald Vigna and then by Biology Professor Spencer Stober. In late 2010, Alvernia Trustee State Senator Michael O’Pake died leaving a generous bequest to the university. That bequest was invested to support the center, which was renamed in Senator O’Pake’s honor as the O’Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership and Public Service. The scope of the institute was expanded to include a focus on public service and public policy and its orientation was adjusted to include an additional emphasis on the broader community outside of Alvernia.

Community Engagement

In its inaugural year, the Institute was actively engaged with the broader community. The Director participated in a trip to Detroit organized by the Berks County Community Foundation and the Wyomissing Foundation for community and governmental leaders. Following the trip, the director provided comments and suggestions which the city is using to create a strategic redevelopment plan. The director served as the moderator for the Berks County Crime Summit, in which the Governor, both U. S. Senators, four Congressmen and numerous other civic leaders discussed was to address issues related to crime in the region. Again, the notes of the director were instrumental in developing the follow-up strategy to the summit. In the Fall of 2013, Institute sponsored the Inaugural O’Pake Lecture, featuring United States Senator Robert Casey, honoring the memory of Senator O’Pake and recognizing the contributions of the Senator’s staff. In addition the Institute has sponsored a film series, using feature length movies and experts from town and gown to focus on issues related to the mission of the institute; initiated a seminar on business ethics and leadership and co-hosted a program on “Leaders, Legends and Visionaries” with Leadership Berks. The O’Pake Institute will continue to serve as a focal point for university engagement with the broader community.

III. Environmental Scan

Challenges and Opportunities

External Challenges

1. A “culture of uncertainty” in substantial parts of the community, sometimes making it difficult to form lasting partnerships with local organizations.
2. Declining resources available to community partners and sometimes fractious relationship between and within civil institutions.
3. Barriers between institutions and programs that inhibit collaboration and leveraging resources.
4. A lack of knowledge and understanding about Alvernia and/or the O’Pake Institute
5. The need to expand the existing pool and develop new community leaders.

Internal Challenges

1. Struggle to gain visibility on a campus with a lot of activities going on simultaneously.
2. Some confusion about which campus organizations play what roles, particularly in regards to the O’Pake Institute, the Holleran Center and Campus Ministry.
3. Time resources are often stretched thin for students, staff and faculty, resulting in lower than desired levels of participation in institute activities.
4. Limits on the financial resources that are available to support new initiatives and programs
5. A reluctance to seek opportunities to collaborate and leverage resources.

Opportunities

- The strong relationship between the purposes of the Institute and the mission and values of the University,
- The active support of the leadership of the university.
- Alvernia’s Franciscan commitment to teaching ethics and leadership.
- The resources provided by the O’Pake bequest.
- The relative absence of other resources or entities in the community to provide community based research, leadership development and a neutral site to discuss controversial issues and topics.

Current Curricular and Co-Curricular Activity Related to Institute

The O’Pake Institute has the opportunity to build on a number of significant efforts already underway on campus that support activities focused on Ethics, Leadership and Public Service. Perhaps most significant is the commitment that the university has historically expressed to service and to promoting ethical behavior. By requiring all students to participate in community service and to complete at least one course in ethics, the university has established the importance of these concepts. First year students learn and practice the core values of service, peacemaking, collegiality, humility and contemplation in the first semester seminar. In addition there are a number of structured programs that support the university’s interest in ethics, leadership and service, which can service as a support network for the work of the O’Pake Institute.

Leadership PhD Program

In **2009**, Alvernia received approval from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to offer a PhD in Leadership. The goal of the program in Leadership leading to a Doctor of Philosophy is to provide an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary focus that requires a critical examination of contemporary theories of leadership, within a value based framework. The program demands academic rigor that engages students in the systematic analysis of research and current theories of leadership; it will also prepare individuals to contribute to the knowledge of leadership and function as agents of change in a contemporary and diverse society. The Leadership program seeks to develop a cadre of talented leaders who aspire to or currently hold positions with leadership responsibilities in educational, community or corporate organizations.

The Masters of Liberal Studies in Community Leadership

The MALS program is evolving to intentionally focus upon leadership growth for tomorrow’s communities. A recent evaluation will facilitate efforts of the program coordinator and deans to mold the program to function as a training ground for change agents in communities and a bridge to the PhD program.

Leadership Berks

Leadership Berks is a program dedicated to developing, supporting and connecting leaders in the Berks County community. Participants in a year-long training program develop their talents for leadership through both educational and experiential programming. Graduates go on to assume leadership roles in non-profit community organizations and use their newly developed talents to foster their careers. Leadership Berks has been affiliated with Alvernia since 2006.

Athletics Progressive Leadership Model

During the 2012-13 academic year, Alvernia's Athletics programs developed and implemented a progressive model for student-athlete leaders. The program provides these students with the training to assume increasingly responsible leadership roles not only on their respective teams but within Alvernia's Athletics program and beyond.

University Life Progressive Leadership Model

The Office of University Life is in the process of developing a similar model for student leaders that includes education and experiential programming designed to support students who want to assume leadership roles in student organizations on campus. This program will progressively develop the skills of student leaders, allowing them to help train succeeding generations of student leaders, while forming the leadership talents that will support them in their future careers.

NetVUE Grant

Alvernia received a grant from the E. I. Lilly Foundation through the Council of Independent Colleges to enhance academic programming around the concept of "vocation" or "calling." This concept is perhaps best explained by the following quote:

"The word *vocation* implies more than earning a living or having a career. The word vocation implies having a calling: knowing who one is, what one believes, what one values, and where one stands in the world. . . Vocation is not simply about an individual calling. It is also about one's calling within one's society and, increasingly, across different societies around the world."

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, Charles Warren Professor of the History of American Education, Harvard University.

Over the next several years, the University will be working to incorporate more comprehensively the concept that Alvernia students are "called to become ethical leaders with moral courage" into the curriculum of the university.

General Education Reform

The University is in the process of reforming its General Education curriculum for undergraduate education, which will retain the current emphasis on ethics while increasing the intentional focus on leadership development. The proposed General Education Requirements will continue the university's historical requirement for students to understand ethics; create

an interdisciplinary program focused on leadership education and foster more intentional coordination of curricular and co-curricular programming.

Strategic Plan for Service and Civic Engagement

In 2013, with input from the O’Pake Institute, the University adopted a Vision for Service and Civic Engagement which shapes how the university as an institution will focus on service and engagement with the broader community. In 2014, the University will introduce a number of tactics and programs designed to give further shape to this vision. This strategic plan envisions a significant role for the O’Pake Institute both on campus and in the community.

IV. Organizational Structure

Reporting Relationship

The Director of the O'Pake Institute reports to the President and Provost.

Staff Organization

Permanent Staff

Director: background or experience in public service and higher education, full-time.

Associate Director: Academic, focused on Leadership, from Professional School Faculty, part-time.

Associate Director: Academic, focused on Ethics, from Liberal Arts Faculty, part-time.

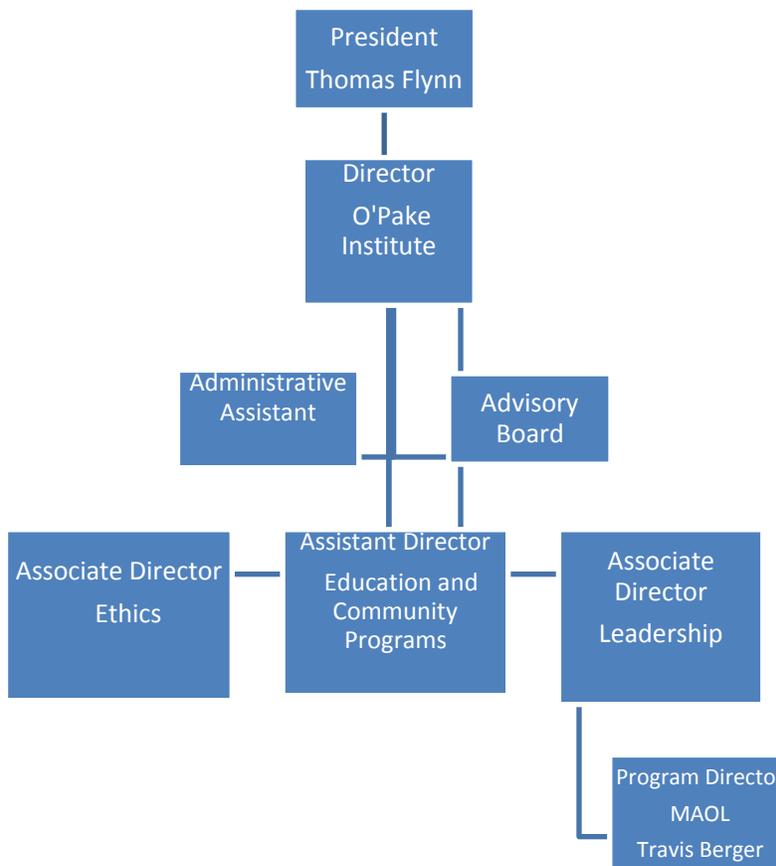
Potential Additional Staff

Assistant Director: focused on Education and Community Programs, full-time. Vacant.

Program Manager/Administrator: provides support services for the institute staff, full-time. Currently provided part-time by Monica Naugle.

Graduate Assistants: As appropriate and needed. Currently the Institute shares a Graduate Assistant with the Dean of Professional Programs.

O’Pake Institute
Organization Chart



The Leadership Berks program will ultimately come under the jurisdiction of the O’Pake Institute.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board for the O’Pake Institute is composed of campus and community representatives, comprising both an external and an internal board that will function individually and in plenary session. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to assist the Institute staff in developing and implementing the strategic plan for the institute; advise the Institute staff on programming goals, objectives and evaluation; and to identify and solicit internal and external experts to support institute programs and initiatives. The board also advises the

Institute on grant opportunities and applications. The external board will assist the institute in its fundraising efforts and business relationships in the region.

The internal board is composed of two units: a faculty and staff group and a student group. The faculty and staff group will assist in identifying programming opportunities for the institute; developing linkages between curricular and co-curricular programming particularly in the areas of ethics, leadership and service and community based research and experiential and service learning opportunities. The student group will focus on student oriented programming, leadership development and community based research opportunities and assisting with board meetings and institute programs.

The full board would meet once annually. The faculty and staff/student board and the external boards would meet twice a year as separate organizations. The external board would be composed of 12 members. The faculty and staff board would be comprised of 9 members and the student board would be comprised of 8 members.

Board members were appointed during the summer of 2013 and the first meeting of the advisory board was held in October 2013.

Film Series Advisory Board

In 2012, the O’Pake Institute established a series that uses feature films to explore issues related to Ethics, Leadership and Public Service. In 2012-13, the series focused on “Citizenship”. In 2013-2014 the series focuses on “Leadership”. Each succeeding year a theme will be selected for the film series. Following each screening a panel discusses the film as it relates to the theme for that year. In 2013, the O’Pake Institute established an advisory board for the film series that includes representatives from Alvernia University, Albright College, the Reading Area Community College, Penn State Berks and the community at large. The advisory board assists in the selection of films, identifying and recruiting panelists and moderators and promoting the film series.

Other Resources as funds become available:

- Depending on faculty appointments, additional part-time staff could be appointed to focus on public policy, community development assessment, public opinion techniques and analysis, Geographic Information Systems and/or statistics, part-time, as Associate or Assistant Directors or Faculty Fellows.
- Scholars in Residence—academic experts who spend short-term residencies with the Institute. They can offer lectures and seminars, participate in courses and offer faculty workshops.
- Experts in Residence—leaders for business, government and academia who spend short-term residencies with the Institute. They can offer lectures, seminars, participate

in courses, mentor students, offer community workshops and provide consulting services.

- Graduate Assistants—graduate students who can support community based research programs, consulting efforts and other Institute programming.
- Work Study Students—undergraduate students who can assist with program logistics, consulting efforts and other Institute programming.

V. Goals and Objectives of the O’Pake Institute

- Support and nurture the mission of the University to develop “Ethical Leaders with Moral Courage.”
- Develop and leverage the capacity within the university to support community based research and help coordinate and focus the use of the University’s resources in ways that engage the community and responds to important community and civic needs.
- Foster discussion of important community and civic issues, in a way that supports enhanced understanding of differences, promotes civility and social justice and provides the tools and skills that diminish the impact of conflict and disagreement.
- Encourage and support service and civic engagement.
- Develop intentional educational programming in the classroom, in the co-curricular life of the university and in the community to support development and analysis of ethics, leadership and service.

VI. Operational Structure

The Goals and Objectives of the O’Pake Institute inform and shape the operations of the organization. Specifically, the O’Pake Institute will be organized into three operational programs:

“Academics in Action.”

- Coordinating and using the resources of the University to address issues and concerns in the larger community. These activities can provide benefit not only for the community, but also for the university.

“Dialogue.”

- Promoting civil discourse about important and often controversial issues, including fostering methods to resolve conflicts, as well as promoting understanding.

“Educational Empowerment.”

- Offering intentional educational programming about leadership and leadership development, ethics and moral leadership, social justice and public service.

Examples of Programs within each Operational Division of the Institute

Academics in Action	Dialogue	Educational Empowerment
Community Based Research	Lectures and Symposia	Leadership Education
Community Partnerships	Mediation Program	Ethics Education
Opinion Research	Film Series	Reading Collegiate Scholars
Social Entrepreneurship		

There obviously can and will be some overlap between these program areas. For example, the Institute is working with the Berks County Community Foundation to update and expand their Berks County Community Indicators publication. At the same time, a member of the faculty is working with a group of students to develop programming for Berks County Community Access Television (BCTV) on critical issues, which will focus on some of the topics introduced in the Community Indicators Publication. In addition, a formal course or series of courses could be offered around the concept of Community Dialogue that teaches students about concepts of dialogue, mediation and dispute resolution that uses the programming developed by the faculty project with BCTV.

The operational focus for the O’Pake Institute is not precisely mirrored in the organizational structure. The organization is formed around areas of expertise—Leadership, Ethics, Educational Programming—but the operations of the Institute will necessarily depend on the

engagement of each of these areas. In many ways, this makes the Institute a model for interdisciplinary collaboration. It also positions the Institute not only as the primary agency for program development, but as a service agency for other entities within the university involved in these areas.

VII. Target Initiatives

Academics in Action. The Institute will focus on three primary areas of programming: community based research, developing opinion research capacity and activities and supporting social entrepreneurship within the community. The recent Community Indicators Project for the Berks County Community Foundation displayed that there is capacity within the university in both community based research and opinion research. Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship offers an additional opportunity for the university to use resources to support community development.

Community Based Research—The Institute will assist in identifying partnerships and projects that could involve university faculty, staff and students. The criteria for selecting these projects will be that the project makes use of resources and talents within the university, it could create service or experiential learning opportunities for our students and that there are clear measures of success for the project. The first projects will include the Reading Housing Authority (RHA) Health Services Project and follow-up research for the Berks County Community Foundation Community Indicators Project.

- The RHA project will involve a series of community partners developing a feasibility study for delivering health services at two RHA low income housing developments. The O’Pake Institute will take the lead in developing the feasibility study. If the project appears feasible, the Institute will guide the development of a business plan, infrastructure plan and strategic plan for the project, using university resources for each phase. If the project is launched it will provide an opportunity for service and experiential learning programs for Alvernia undergraduates.
- The Community Foundation has indicated its interest in exploring more detailed analysis of the issues identified in the Community Indicators Report. The institute will coordinate any follow-up research and analysis.

Opinion Research—The Community Indicators Project also highlighted the existing capacity within the university to conduct opinion research. The institute will build on that capacity in several ways.

- The Institute will develop a series of workshops and training programs for faculty and their students in Opinion Research Education and Training, using both internal and external experts focused on topics such as survey design, survey administration and survey interpretation and analysis; and

- The institute will do survey research on issues related to the primary mission in the areas of leadership, ethics and public service as well as conducting occasional surveys on community issues and concerns

Dialogue. In addition to focusing on the concept of dialogue and the related principles of conflict resolution and mediation, the institute will also serve as an agency for discussing important community and civic issues.

The Process of Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Resolution—The institute will support the development of education and training programs related to this area. The initial focus will be on three initiatives.

- Incorporating Dispute Resolution Training in the University’s Diversity Training Program;
- Creating an undergraduate course on mediation; and
- Developing a certification program on Mediation and Dispute Resolution.

Community and Civic Issues—The institute will sponsor lectures, programs and seminars that focus on important community and civic issues, including:

- The Annual O’Pake Lecture will involve a prominent public leader addressing issues related to compromise, civility and public service;
- The annual film series which will use feature films to focus on issues related to ethics, leadership and citizenship;
- Seminars which will focus on important community issues such as corporate environmental stewardship or genetic testing; and
- A national speaker on important ethical issues of civic interest.

Educational Empowerment. The institute will support the enhancement of the academic life of the university, particularly in areas related to the core mission of the university to develop ethical leaders with moral courage. The initial focus of these efforts will be in three core areas.

Leadership Education—The institute will develop programming designed to enhance leadership education programs at the university, both those in the curriculum and those involved with co-curricular or extra-curricular programming. The initial activities in this area will include:

- Inventorying the classes and faculty currently involved with leadership education;

- Establishing a faculty workshop on leadership education using both internal and external academic experts to augment the existing capacity in this area; and
- Link academic based leadership education to co-curricular and extra-curricular leadership training programs.

Ethics Education—The institute will focus on teaching ethics in the undergraduate curriculum. The initial activities in this area will include:

- Creating a campus repository of syllabi for courses focused on ethics education for undergraduates;
- Sponsoring a faculty workshop on teaching ethics to undergraduates; and
- Hosting a conference for Franciscan university faculty on teaching ethics in the undergraduate curriculum.

The Reading Collegiate Scholars Program—The institute is responsible for programming for Reading Collegiate Scholars once they have graduated from high school and have been accepted at Alvernia. The components of this program will include:

- Leadership education;
- Team building for each cohort of scholars;
- Cross cultural competency and dispute resolution;
- Integration into college for both the student and their family; and
- Identifying, training and supporting community and faculty mentors.

VIII. Program Development Criteria

As important as the individual initiatives are, it is also important, particularly in the early years of the institute, to establish the criteria by which the Institute will make programming decisions. In developing new programming in each of the three areas of focus (Academics in Action, Dialogue and Educational Empowerment), the Institute should evaluate if and how each new initiative supports the constituencies of the Institute, namely the Alvernia Students, Faculty and Staff, the University itself and the Local Community. The matrix below will be used to evaluate overall value of program options and guide program decisions by the Institute.

Academics in Action

Alvernia Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers opportunities for student researchers • Offers opportunities for experiential or service learning
Alvernia Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers opportunities for faculty research • Can be incorporated into curriculum • Enhances academic programming • Supports faculty scholarship
Alvernia Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers opportunities for staff involvement
The University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances visibility and reputation of the university • Is sustainable
The Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results can be clearly communicated • Addresses important community concerns or issues

Dialogue

Alvernia Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers programming of interest to students • Can support co-curricular activities
Alvernia Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers opportunities for faculty engagement • Can be incorporated into the curriculum • Enhances academic programming
Alvernia Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers opportunities for staff involvement • Can support co-curricular activities
The University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports university goals and interests • Enhances the visibility and reputation of the university • Addresses important campus concerns
The Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses important community concerns or issues • Provides support for discussion and change

Educational Empowerment

Alvernia Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances academic programming • Addresses student interests • Addresses academic requirements
Alvernia Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports faculty professional development • Supports faculty scholarship, research and teaching
Alvernia Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides educational programming for staff • Supports co-curricular programming
The University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings outside expertise to campus

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps fulfill university mission• Serves as a branding opportunity
The Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides educational program, including degree and certificate programs and training desired by the community

IX. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessing and evaluating program success is an essential aspect of the work of the institute. Depending on the program initiative, the institute will evaluate each program based on the following:

- The level of faculty, staff and student participation in the program;
- Attendance at the program;
- Evaluations and surveys of program participants;
- Ability to secure outside financial and program support;
- The quality of speakers and outside experts; and
- The impact of related programming.

X. Branding the Institution—Challenges and Opportunities

As a relatively new agency of Alvernia, the O’Pake Institute needs to develop its identity both on campus and within the community. The mission of the Institute, as outlined at the opening of this plan, is clear. But the institute needs to define and identify its role and function so that the campus understands it. In discussion with campus groups and the Institute Advisory Board the issue of branding came up repeatedly.

One area that clearly needs to be addressed is differentiating between the O’Pake Institute and the Holleran Center. Clarity delineating not only the differences between the two organizations, but also in identifying those areas where their missions and interests coincide, will be critical to fostering collaboration while avoiding duplication of effort.

The O’Pake Institute will offer both programming and services to the campus and the community. Through this strategic plan, the Institute is attempting to clearly define the programming that it will offer. But it serves a second role as a service agency, supporting other organizations or agencies within the university. It is important that the institute clarify this role and how and when it provides support for other departments. For example, in the area of Leadership, the institute will offer programs that investigate issues related to leadership development and education, such as the film series or the business seminars. But at the same time, through efforts such as the inventory of and workshop on Leadership Education, the institute functions to support other agencies of the university, expanding their programming and enhancing their efforts. The concept of partnership and collaboration is inherent in the work of the institute. So a critical part of branding the institute is to develop an understanding of the function and importance of a service agency.

Fostering the development of “ethical leaders with moral courage” is a core element of mission of Alvernia. The O’Pake Institute, if it is successful, will support this mission and enhance the perception of the university in the broader community.