Character Formation at Seattle Pacific University

A Report from Provost Van Duzer's Character Formation Initiative Committee

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2002, Seattle Pacific University's (SPU) mission statement has explicitly named the formation of "competence and character" as a core aim, and a focus on student character development has arguably been implicit since the founding of the institution. Nonetheless, important central questions remain with regard to what this charge means at SPU. Namely, how ought we to define character and character formation in terms of the specific heritage and calling of SPU? What particular character virtues ought students, staff, faculty, and administration to cultivate? How do individuals or communities cultivate such virtues and how well have we created opportunities to do so?

The purpose of the present document is to reexamine these sorts of questions as part of the Character Formation Initiative at SPU. The Character Formation task force was charged with five primary foci (see Charter document in Appendix A for full elaboration):

(1) Development of a theologically informed working definition of "character" and "character formation" as such words are used in the SPU mission statement and the related vision statement and strategic plan.
(2) Identification of 6-10 specific key character virtues which, if cultivated, would contribute to "character formation."
(3) Exploration of best practices for assessment and formation practices at other universities and in the scholarly literature.
(4) Assessment of whether student opportunities for character formation are already present at SPU.
(5) Development of a preliminary list of potential next steps toward strengthening character formation at SPU.

Accordingly, we present in this document the results of the work of the task force addressing the foregoing questions. First, Chapter 1 provides a *theological understanding of character virtue* in the context of both Wesleyan formulations and a broadly Christian narrative. Chapter 2 reviews *conceptual frameworks for character virtues* (addressing the question of which virtues to consider)*,* integrating across theological and social scientific conceptual models. Chapter 3 summarizes *best practices in character assessment and formation "interventions"* from other institutions of higher education as well as contemporary psychological science. Chapter 4 summarizes pilot data that speak to *analysis of character formation at SPU.* Lastly, we conclude with an executive summary of our results and recommendations.

CHAPTER 1: A THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF CHARACTER AND VIRTUE

Etymologically, the English word *character* derives from the Greek verb *karassein,* "to engrave, to etch, to stamp," which is itself rooted in the noun *karax,* "pointed stake, stick, or pole." From these the –*ter* suffix was added to denote agency, producing the noun *karakter*: an "engraved mark," an "instrument for engraving," or an "engraver." These ancient roots have produced a rather wide semantic range in contemporary English. The *Oxford English Dictionary* divides these into literal and figurative senses. Literal senses refer, unsurprisingly, to a visible mark or sign. Major uses include (1) a distinctive mark impressed or engraved (e.g., a brand or stamp); (2) a symbolic sign or emblem (e.g. the astrological symbol of a planet); and (3) letters, signs, or symbols used to express the speech sounds of a language.

Figurative uses are manifold, but can be divided into the two major types of *role* and *quality*. Character as *role* typically refers to a person portrayed in a play or a film, but it can also be used to describe a personality in general terms (e.g., a "suspicious looking character"). Character as *quality* can refer impersonally to style and distinctive features, or *personally* as "the sum of the moral and mental qualities which distinguish an individual or a people, viewed as a homogeneous whole," i.e. their "individuality deriving from environment, culture, experience, etc." Thus, character is described as pertaining not merely to discrete behaviors, but rather to the whole of one's self and personal narrative over time, in an integrative fashion.

Most discussions of character relate the word to *virtue*, which derives from the French *verteu* and enters Middle English as *virtū,* "strength," "power," "skill" or "vitality," especially in reference to desirable human qualities. The notion is itself rooted in the ancient Greek *aretē,* a noun form of the adjectives *agathos* ("good") and *aristos* ("best"), and was used perhaps most famously by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* to describe the various moral strengths or excellences of character which enable *eudaimonia* or human flourishing. On this basis we might begin this study by saying that character is that which names the particular arrangement of virtues and vices in one's life (James, 2007). Alternatively, if we distinguish between cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, we can say that *character refers to morally valued habits of mind, heart, and embodied action that promote flourishing in oneself and others*. Accordingly, *character formation* might be said to refer to *deliberate practice of situational, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and relational processes by which moral virtue is cultivated.*

Much more must be said, for this preliminary definition leaves too much undefined. How is "human flourishing" to be understood, and what sort of actions and dispositions help us to arrive at that end? What excellences of character are morally valued, and why, and by whom? We noted above that figurative definitions of the word *character* may be divided into *role* and *quality*; psychological accounts of character have tended to emphasize the latter, working in descriptive mode in an attempt to designate a relatively value-free, neutral assessment of an individual's traits and dispositions. While Christian reflection on character can certainly speak in this more descriptive manner, the figurative use of character as *role* emerges as somewhat more prominent. Christians aren't simply interested in character *qua* character, but instead focus quite intensely on *the* character of Christ Jesus and the associated character of those who follow him as their Lord.

Character Formation in the Broader Christian Tradition

The name "Christian" itself means "belonging to Christ." In response to Jesus' call to follow him as master, early Christians took on the role of Christ's "slaves" who strove to emulate his character by following his commands in every area of their lives. Christian reflection on character therefore requires us to focus our attention *not* on the cultivation of a neutrally defined "character" but on the emulation of a *particular* character: we must attend to the mental, moral, and emotional qualities required of those who would call Jesus Lord. Indeed, if we think of virtues as excellences of character, and of character as that which names the particular arrangement of virtues in one's life, then Christians must think quite carefully about what sort of virtues are inculcated in a life that reflects the character of Christ.

Christianity emerged at the confluence of ancient Jewish and Greek worlds, both of which had by the time of Christ developed extensive traditions of thought on the beliefs and practices of a life rightly lived. When the Creator God brought the people of Israel into existence, it came in the form of a call: "if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples" (Ex 19:5).[1] This call to be God's own was cast as distinctly *imitational* in nature: the phrase, "You shall be holy, for I am holy," proclaimed in various ways throughout Israel's legal code,[2] makes it plain that this is an identity that is received through the revelation of God's identity. Thus, to take on the role of a person who belongs to God, one must take up (or better, be taken up by) *God's* life of holiness, a distinctive life that is "set apart" by God for God's purposes in the world.

This life of holiness is passed down in the form of a robust tradition of key practices or "commandments" (*halakhah,* literally "way of walking") that find their meaningfulness in the stories and aphorisms (*haggadah*, literally "telling") to which they were inextricably linked. These stories and practices combine to reveal who God is, what God does, and how a "godly" human life should be oriented as a result. It is unsurprising, then, that God's *torah* (literally "instruction"; the first five books of the Jewish and Christian Bibles) includes legal code and narrative intertwined. In it, Israelite parents are instructed:

> When your children ask you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?" then you shall say to your children, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The LORD displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household. He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors. Then the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive, as is now the case" (Deut 6:20-24).

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all scripture passages are quoted from *The New Revised Standard Version.*
[2] This is especially the case in Leviticus, the "priests' manual"; see e.g. Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26.

The warrant for a particular behavior is mediated through a particular story, an identity-forming narrative where conduct is explicitly attached to identity through the utilization of a distinctive account of a people's origin and purpose.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the life and call of the Jewish Messiah Jesus re-instantiates this pattern. For example, Jesus commands his followers, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," because in doing so they will take up their appointed role as "children of your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:44-45); that is, there will be a "family resemblance" between them and God; they will be holy as God is holy. This command is accompanied by a range of stories and aphorisms illustrating the particular manner and outcomes of this godly love, all of which are embedded in the larger story of Jesus' own loving, holy submission to the enemies who persecuted him. When Jesus says "follow me," then, he is calling his disciples to a life devoted to the imitation of the love embodied in his person and work. Indeed, the Gospel story as a whole can be read as a narrative explication of the command to love as God loves. Thus the witnesses to earliest Christianity proclaim the call to holiness in a manner that is *revelatory* (because it derives from God's graceful self-disclosure)*, narratival* (it is rooted in a *story* about human origin and purpose), *imitational* (in its call to love as God loves), and therefore unavoidably *teleological:* the life of holiness aims us toward a sort of *shalom,* blessedness (*makarios),* or wholeness (*teleios*) that involves right relationships with God and the things that God has made (Pennington & Hackney, 2017).

As the story progresses it becomes plain that holiness is also necessarily *pneumatological*— it is entirely dependent on the empowering presence of God's Spirit. In the first Christian sermon of the Bible, Peter begins by telling the story of what God has done in Christ Jesus:

> "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:22-24).

Those who hear this story of God's work in their midst immediately recognize the gravity of its claims: *the story calls forth a life-response*. They therefore reply by asking, "Brothers, what should we *do*?" (Acts 2:37, emphasis mine). What sort of life-change is required in light of the truth the story relates? Peter replies that they must "repent"; that is, they must change their habits of mind and action. This change begins by being "baptized" into the life of Jesus, so that they would "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38). Baptism is a communal ritual of initiation that the Holy Spirit uses to bring about the death of the old self and its subsequent spiritual rebirth as a new creation set apart for God's holy purposes. This spirit-empowered enculturation will draw them out of their old lives and into a new and different set of life practices designed to enable a particular end, namely, their deliverance from the socially alienating and spiritually deadening effects of life in "this corrupt generation" (2:40).

The Acts narrative summarizes this new life practice in a few short verses (2:42-45): Christ followers must carefully attend to the story of God's work in the world ("they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching"); they must live together in harmony and hospitality, caring for each other as God had cared

for them ("fellowship"). They must practice radical generosity ("they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need"), and they must engage in communal devotional practices designed to keep their hearts and minds set on God's work and their role in it ("the breaking of bread and the prayers"). By this means they would be set apart for God's work in the world; they would be holy as God is holy.

It is crucially important at this point to grasp the necessarily pneumatological element of holiness. The embrace of this faith-forming story is not reducible to the intellectual reception of some easily agreed upon "official version" imposed by the humans who happen to be ruling at the time; neither is it embraced by assent to a simple, straightforward test of "timeless orthodoxy." No, the reception of God's revelation is always communal and contextual, embodied and mimetic; it is something that is both discerned and performed in the workshop of the Holy Spirit (Spener, 1675/1964), where communities of diverse people gather prayerfully around scripture and sacrament as apprentices in the service of the one Lord to discern their common call.

The *revelatory, narratival, imitational, teleological,* and *pneumatological* nature of Christian faith is perhaps described most succinctly in the opening "exordium" of 2 Peter. Peter begins by affirming,

> His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature (1:3-4).

The story of God's work of call and empowerment – God's "promises" – provides us with what we need to know about leaving off our "worldly" selves and joining in a new life with God. But these promises are not merely informative and instructive, for they bear within them a power that enables believers to actually participate in God's life and work: In Christ and the Holy Spirit, God provides both a *model of obedience* and *empowerment for obedience.*

Going on, we see that the promise of participation involves the inculcation of particular virtues:

> For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness [*areté,* "excellence" or "virtue"], and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love (1:5-7).

Note that the chain of virtues begins with faith and ends with love. Our faith (or "trust") in the revealed good news of what God has done does not magically transform us into holy people; on the contrary, we must "make every effort" to take up the sort of life-habits that transform the faith-filled, over time, into the sort of people who embody the character of God's love, which is the telos of the Christian life. Indeed,

> …if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never

stumble. For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will
be richly provided for you (1:8-11).

In all this we see that Christian faith requires us to consider what sort of life patterns will best
enable us to embrace the story-promise of God's gospel, so that we might be empowered to
perform this imitation of Christ, in order that the Spirit might guide us to our divinely appointed
end in the love of God. Christian life is purposeful; it is a life designed to be effective and fruitful
for God through the Spirit-empowered practice of a way of life fit for citizenship in the kingdom
of God. Members of that divine society are "dressed" in the uniform of those who have died to
their old life and have risen to a new life in Christ (Col 3:1-4, 12-14) so that they may produce a
distinctive sort of "fruit" in the world—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal.5:22-23). Note that these are all *community
building virtues*; they enable people to live and work together even though they are not all the
same and not always in agreement. They describe a community of people who are empowered
by God to be different without being divided, to maintain true unity without an expectation of
uniformity.

While our Jewish inheritance provides innumerable riches of wisdom on this account, we also hear in 2
Peter the strong influence of Greek moral philosophy. Indeed, so-called "pagan" conventions of virtue
and vice appear to have been a part of Christian ethical tradition from the very beginning. Scholars have
long noted, for instance, that the language of "putting on" particular virtues and "putting off" vices, so
frequent in the NT (e.g. Rom 13:12; Eph 6:11, 14; Col 3:12), is also quite common in contemporary non-
Christian Greek moral philosophy (see e.g., Lincoln, 1990).[3] In like manner, ancient and medieval
Christian reflection on virtue often embraced the tradition of the four "Platonic" virtues (wisdom,
courage, temperance, and justice) as available to all humanity by right of their common creation in the
image of God. However, they renamed these the "Cardinal Virtues" and added to them the three
"Theological Virtues" of faith, hope, and love (1Cor 13:13), virtues that are gifts of God and therefore
not attainable by human agency alone.

As we have already shown, this is the case because these latter three are determined by God's loving
self-disclosure. That is to say, they are *theo*-logical virtues, focused on the revealed narrative of what
God has done, is doing, and will do in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, the story of a
particular people's origin and purpose interprets and promotes specific practices for those whose lives
are to be so shaped. To claim that these virtues are not attainable by human agency is not to claim that
non-Christians are somehow incapable of being "loving" or "hopeful" or even "faithful"; *it simply
recognizes that an inexplicitly Christian use of these terms are informed by other stories, which bear
different values, find embodiment in different habits and practices, and aim us toward different ends.*
Words like "hope" and "love" bear no essential, abstract meaning— they gain their meaning by their use
in particular contexts. Thus, while non-Christians are clearly capable of exhibiting "faith" of some sort,
they do not exhibit *faith in Christ*; while they may "hope" for any number of valuable and worthy ends,

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[3] To cite but one example, Lincoln's commentary on Ephesians (WBC 42, Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1990, p.284)
finds parallels in Lucian, *Dial. Mort*. 10.8, 9; *Ep. Arist*. 122; Plutarch, *Cor*. 19.4; Philo, *De Conf. Ling*. 31; *Corpus
Hermeticum* 13:8, 9.

they do not knowingly hope for the *particularities of God's salvation*; and while they no doubt "love" others in one way or another, they do not *actively and intentionally seek to love as God loves*, for our clearest understanding of God's love is derived by contemplating the depths of God's love as revealed in the incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Thomas Aquinas formalized this logic by distinguishing between virtues that are *acquired* and virtues that are *infused* supernaturally into the believer by grace of God (Herdt, 2014; Pinches, 2000). Following the work of Aristotle (whose *Nicomachian Ethics* set the standard for reflection on the virtues) and Augustine (whose work formalized insights from Greek philosophy for Christian theology), Aquinas argued that *acquired virtues* are character traits developed by habit. Though our reason may understand what God has revealed as good, our desires or "appetites" resist our capacity to pursue those goods. Nevertheless, we can train our appetites to seek good by the performance of repeated actions that, over time, strengthen our capacity not only to *know* what is good but to actually *desire* the good so that we might actually *act* in good ways.

Because of God's graceful self-disclosure, however, we also know that we are creatures who are entirely dependent on the loving direction of our Creator. God must therefore *infuse* us with virtues that will enable us to live as God intends us to live. As Jennifer Herdt describes it, "Infused moral virtues are needed so that each of the moral virtues may be directed appropriately to the final end of fellowship with God, and not simply to the end of happiness as grasped by human reason" (Herdt, 2014, p.235). In this way Christians find that *all* the virtues of the moral life are reshaped and redirected. As Augustine put it centuries earlier, the infusion of divine love enables us to recognize that all the virtues gathered into a whole "is nothing other than perfect love of God." He goes on to say,

> Now, when it is said that virtue has a fourfold division, as I understand it, this is said according to the various movements of love… We may, therefore, define these virtues as follows: temperance is love preserving itself entire and incorrupt for God; courage is love readily bearing all things for the sake of God; justice is love serving only God, and therefore ruling well everything else that is subject to the human person; prudence is love discerning well between what helps it toward God and what hinders it (*On the Morals of the Catholic Church,* XV.25).

Aquinas believed humans receive these infused virtues primarily through participation in Christian worship— in Baptism, Scripture, Prayer and Eucharist— for it is in these communal practices that the story of God's love, God's call, and God's purpose for creation is repeatedly proclaimed and enacted communally so that, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, it might become embodied day-to-day lives of holiness.

It is the infusion of theological virtues, then, that keeps Christians from being able to speak of character in general terms. A Christian character is a character developed in dependence on God. While it is not an otherworldly character entirely detached from non-Christian reflection, it cannot be uncritically conflated with non-theological views. Indeed, even those virtue conceptions that are shared broadly are viewed differently through the lens of Christian faith. Michael Austin and Douglas Geivett's recent book on Christian virtues offer the following three points in support of such a claim (Austin & Geivett, 2011). First, they note that Christians have historically *ranked* the virtues differently: while love is arguably the

greatest of the Christian virtues, others might give pride of place to another. Stoic philosophers, for instance, who feared the negative impact of emotions on self-control, subordinated love to the virtue of equanimity. Christians also *understand* particular virtues in ways different than non-Christians: one's conception of hope, for instance, will be embodied differently according to one's beliefs about whether or not there is life after biological death. Similarly, discernment of what action is prudent in a given situation is re-shaped by a distinctively Christian account of love as sacrificial and self-giving. Finally, Christians often *evaluate* character traits differently, seeing vice where others might see virtue and virtue where some may see vice. For example, while Christians will call humility a virtue, Nietzsche considered it vice. Conversely, Christians will call greed and acquisitiveness vice, while many in our capitalist society might consider such traits to be virtuous.

Character and Virtue in the Wesleyan Tradition

Many theologians since Aquinas have contributed in one way or another to our larger conception of Christian character formation. This is no less true for our patron John Wesley, to whom we wish to pay particularly close attention.[4] While Wesley spoke frequently of Christian virtue and even wrote a pamphlet on "The Character of a Methodist" (1766), he preferred to use the more common 18th century language of Christian "affections" and "tempers," terminology which makes space for a fuller range of embodied human experience to counter the more rationalist emphases of his Western inheritance.

According to Wesleyan theologian Randy Maddox, human affections can be understood to be "the motivating dispositions of the person" which "integrate the rational and emotional dimensions of human life into a holistic inclination toward particular choices or actions" (Maddox, 1994, p.69).[5] Affections are transient inclinations that drive human action toward particular ends; in Wesley's own words, they are simply "the will exerting itself various ways" ("The End of Christ's Coming," Sermon 62, I.4; Collins, 1998). Tempers, by contrast, refer to the way in which one's affections are developed over time into the stable, trait-like aspects we have associated thus far with character: Tempers are the "enduring or habitual disposition of a person" (Maddox, p.69). The distinction between the two is clear in Wesley's comment on 1 Thessalonians 2:17, where Paul says he "longed with great eagerness" to see his readers.

> In this verse we have a remarkable instance, not so much of the *transient affections* of holy grief, desire, or joy, as of that *abiding tenderness, that loving temper,* which is so apparent in all St. Paul's writings, towards those he styles his children in the faith. This is the more carefully to be observed, because the *passions occasionally exercising themselves, and flowing like a torrent*, in the apostle, are observable to every reader; whereas it requires a nicer attention to discern those *calm standing tempers, that fixed posture of his soul, from whence the others only flow out, and which more peculiarly distinguish his character* (*Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, 1 Thessalonians 2:17, emphasis mine).

Note in this case that particular affections are seen to "flow out" from particular tempers. Like the virtues, tempers can be understood to be "muscles" that are developed in order to *direct* human

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[4] All Wesley citations come from the 1872 Thomas Jackson edition of *The Works of John Wesley*.
[5] Most of the comments that follow on Wesleyan theology are informed by Maddox's work.

affections (and thus the feelings, thoughts and actions that affections produce) toward proper ends. As Maddox puts it, "The capacity for affections is part of the image of God" common to all humanity. "The proper orientation of these affections," however, "would constitute the Christian tempers (or inward holiness) which is the likeness of God. From the motivating disposition of these tempers would then flow holy words and actions" (Maddox, p.69).

Like Aquinas before him, and in keeping with the larger Christian tradition, Wesley made it plain that the development of distinctively Christian tempers and their associated affections is dependent on the work of God's grace in the life of the believer. But Wesley's view of grace sets him apart from other theologians in at least two ways relevant to our concerns here. First, Wesley clearly believed that Christian tempers were developed by means of God's graceful empowerment of human participation. Humans in Wesleyan thought are not passive recipients of a grace that simply pardons sin in order to grant forgiveness and secure eternal salvation; humans are recipients of a *restoring* grace designed to heal humanity of the ravages of sin, transforming them over time into holy people to serve God's holy purposes. This grace both calls forth and enables an active *response* on the part of the human recipient.

Wesley rejected all forms of determinism as an offense against God's creational design. Humans are created for "liberty," which he understood to be the God-given ability to control our desires and inclinations. At creation Adam was

> endued with understanding; with a will including various affections; and with liberty, a power of using them in a right or wrong manner, of choosing good or evil. Otherwise neither his understanding nor his will would have been to any purpose; for he must have been as incapable of virtue or holiness as the stock of a tree ("On the Fall of Man," Sermon 57, II.6).

It is on this basis that Wesley was able to embrace the crucial role of habit and education in Christian life. Maddox notes that "Wesley took for granted a virtue psychology that emphasizes the role of habituated actions in motivating and guiding authentic human actions" (Maddox, 132). Indeed, the very name "Methodist" derived from the recognition that Wesley promoted particular *methods* of practicing "the means of grace" which God has provided to enable Christian growth in love of God and neighbor.

The second distinctive of a Wesleyan understanding of God's grace has to do with grace's *prevenience.* Along with many other theological traditions, Wesley affirmed that all Christian action, including one's initial conversion to faith, is empowered by God's grace. This grace "comes before" (*praevenire*) to make possible human response: as Jesus himself said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). What sets Wesley apart, however, is his insistence that God's grace is operative in *all* humans *before* they are justified in Christ. To be clear, this prevenient grace is *not* a remnant of our being created in the image of God; Wesley stood with the Protestant Reformers, insisting that humans are truly and entirely lost in sin without the power of God's saving help. No, this prevenient grace is the active work of the Holy Spirit, who is constantly drawing all people into God's loving embrace. In fact, Wesley often spoke of God's grace and God's love as one and the same thing. Thus, because God's grace is God's relational love in action, Wesley conceived of grace neither as something given to some people and not to others, nor as a force that operates independently of human involvement. For Wesley, God's grace is preveniently available to *everyone*, though it is *resistible*. As Maddox puts it,

Wesley "understood grace to be responsible—it empowers our response, but does not coerce that response" (Maddox, p.86). And this grace comes to us before we admit sin, before we recognize our need for salvation, for God's grace was poured out into the world prior to any human acknowledgment: as Paul puts it, "while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (Rom.5:8).

It is on the basis of God's prevenient grace that the unbelieving human might nevertheless be empowered to respond to God before they come to believe (and—by extension—one of the primary reasons why SPU happily admits non-Christian students). Because of Christ's work in his incarnation, death, and resurrection, all humans "receive a capacity of spiritual life" and "an actual spark or seed thereof" (*Minutes,* 25 June 1744, Q.16). Wesley conceived of salvation as a "way," a process, which begins before we become consciously aware of what God has done for us and for our salvation:

> Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) 'preventing grace'; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight, transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation, the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by 'convincing grace', usually in Scripture termed 'repentance', which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation, whereby 'through grace' we are 'saved by faith'… ("On Working Out Our Own Salvation," Sermon 85, II.1).

Thus, "Men may have many good tempers, and a blameless life, (speaking in a loose sense,) by nature and habit, with preventing grace; and yet not have faith and the love of God" (*Minutes,* 16 June 1747, Q.10). This allowed Wesley to happily acknowledge what he sometimes called "heathen virtues" as authentic expressions of God's grace; they are "the fledgling effects of the Holy Spirit's initial restored Presence among humanity." These are to be distinguished from Christian tempers, however, as these latter are "the more vigorous effects of the deepened Presence of the Spirit in those who welcome God's overtures" (Maddox, p.132).

Two important questions remain unanswered at this point, namely: What specific Christian tempers and affections did Wesley expect to see when the Holy Spirit drew a human more deeply into God's salvation in Christ, and how were these to be cultivated? We'll save this discussion for the next chapter, where we will consider Wesley again alongside other specific conceptual frameworks for character and virtue formation.

The Decline of Virtue in Modernity

It must be acknowledged that we in contemporary U.S. society do not live in a culture that promotes and supports the broadly Christian conception of character, virtue, and human flourishing just described. If we are to think carefully about the place of character and virtue in the university, we need to reflect a bit on some of the forces that have shaped western society in recent centuries.

The Protestant Reformation, which revealed the abuses of institutional authority and the extent of Christian disagreement over the content and claims of the Christian gospel, eventuated in the collapse of ecclesial authority in Europe. Secular authorities took advantage of the situation to wrest power from

the Church and reconfigure conceptions of human existence on non-theological grounds (Cavanaugh, 1995; MacIntyre, 1989, 2008). The horrors of the religious wars and the concomitant rise of rationalist philosophy led European thinkers to seek a means by which moral behavior could be established on a more universal, theoretical grounding. Questions of character could thus no longer be determined by the communal embrace of a revealed narrative with distinctive (and therefore contestable) claims to make about the virtues required to arrive at a particular end. The Christian story of humanity and its purpose would be distilled with other ingredients to produce an altogether different story— one that would seek to maximize individual freedom and flourishing while keeping political authority firmly in the grasp of the secular nation state.

Following Descartes' establishment of human existence on rationalist terms (*"I think therefore I am"*), Europeans began to narrate human life in a manner that emphasized individual autonomy and the trustworthiness of human rationality over against the larger, normative claims of communal traditions. According to this *new* story, humans are to be thought of as autonomous individuals who make free rational choices in pursuit of their own self-interest. Because the pursuit of individual self-interest creates the very real possibility of social conflict, however, individuals would have to submit themselves to a secular government that would commit itself to the maximization of individual freedom whilst applying its limited authority to the protection of said individuals from anything that would threaten that freedom. This careful balance of power between the individual and the secular state (a.k.a. "Liberalism") required one's understanding of human existence to be split in two: Individual life would necessarily be divided between a public, more "objective" self that submits to majority will enforced by the nation-state, and a private, more "subjective" self that would pursue self-interest to the extent that it did not compromise the public authority of secular rule.

Under this narrative regime, no other story of human existence could be allowed ultimate determinative power over the course of human existence. Right action would no longer be determined by a communal tradition of reflection on the distinctive habits and virtues of a particular people empowered by a living God, but by the application of rational thought in the pursuit of universal moral norms. Hence, the nature and reach of Christian faith had to be reconfigured according to the new rules. It was determined that Christianity was a particular instantiation of a human phenomenon called "religion." Religions, it was argued, are privately held expressions of the universal human tendency to develop a system of beliefs (that is, claims that cannot be confirmed by rational thought) by which individuals might be helped to make sense of their experience. Conceived in this way, "Religion is no longer a matter of certain bodily practices within the Body of Christ, but is limited to the realm of the 'soul,' and the body is handed over to the state" (Cavanaugh, 405). In this communal configuration the Church's job is to be little more than a "chaplain" for secular society— it supports the ruling "bodily" powers of the state by providing "spiritual" peace and comfort in the form of lightly Christianized explanations for "the way things are" in a world ordered to benefit those at the top of the socio-political ladder.

The bifurcation of human experience into public and private, objective and subjective, bodily and spiritual, had the effect of intensifying an understanding of human beings as *individuals* caught up within larger, more powerful communal systems. Increased focus on individual experience eventually led to the rise of more romantic notions of the self as not simply a rational, thinking being, but also a feeling,

imagining, and emotional being—a being that demanded freedom and liberty from the constraints of philosophical, theological, and political systems and institutions in order to flourish. This radical anthropological shift birthed a number of changes in the structure of human society in 18th and 19th century Western culture, from political revolutions in France and the American colonies to the "evangelical" great awakenings that encouraged Christians to encounter God through subjective, emotional experiences obtained outside the walls of the historic institution of the Church. Indeed, it is this shift that gave birth to the great 20th century liberation movements for those whose minds and bodies had been long subjugated by the hierarchical, colonizing powers of Europe.

We must be unambiguously clear at this point: the western liberating vision of the dignity of human beings endowed with universal rights has been a gift of emancipation to those without power in the world. Put sharply, political Liberalism has stepped up to promote the liberating work a western, privatized, culturally-captive Christianity failed to do.

At the same time, this attempt to form a "common-ground humanism," rooted in but abstracted from Christian theology and practice, has resulted in a functionally secular posture in Western societies—a posture taken up by Christian and non-Christian alike. Charles Taylor (2007) characterizes this secular shift as a process of "immanentization" wherein our concept of the world and our place in it becomes entirely encapsulated by our own material experience (see also Smith, 2018). With the self at the center, the notion of a greater good that transcends individual human flourishing is eclipsed. Now the *telos* of human life is not necessarily framed by the revealed call of God in Christ (a call which, we have seen, places very real constraints on individual liberty), but by the more immediate experience of the individual self in the world it inhabits. Thus, our conception of God's providence easily shifts from a teleological ordering of the whole cosmos (within which individuals play a small and perhaps even tragic role) to a more immediate ordering of this world toward the end of maximizing individual human flourishing. As James K.A. Smith puts it, "We lose a sense that humanity's end transcends its current configurations—and thus lose a sense of 'participation' in God's nature… as the *telos* for humanity" (Smith, 2018, p. 314). "The good" toward which we are teleologically ordered is constantly at risk of being reduced to whatever enables the self to pursue "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (the latter now largely conceived of in terms of self-actualization) within the confines of the secular political and economic system within which one finds oneself.

The Effect on the Christian University

Protestantism's prioritization of individual interiority over communally-traditioned practices of embodiment is due (at least in part) to its adaptation to these Western cultural patterns. But such adaptation bears along with it significant loss to Christian witness in the world. Indeed, to remain relevant in such a context, the church had to develop an abstracted, generalized vision of Christian ethics—a "civil" version of Christianity reshaped according to the liberal democratic values assumed by its cultural context (Bellah, 1967; Gardella, 2013; Wilsey, 2015). As we have already described, the church in such a setting plays mostly a supporting role; its job is to enable people to find peace and meaning to the extent that it does not subvert the core commitments of liberal society. A good American Christian is expected to be a good citizen, a loyal patriot, an honest taxpayer, and a faithful

participant in the consumer economy. Expressions of Christianity that challenge these expectations of American citizenship have typically been designated "sectarian"—i.e. deviant religious organizations that undermine or fail in some way to support the good of society as determined by the state.

Like the church, so also the modern university is expected to serve the good of secular society. Many scholars have described the impact of Enlightenment rationality on the development of the European research university, where a focus on forming the whole student became increasingly marginalized in favor of producing knowledge within strictly defined areas of expertise. Perry Glanzer notes that this shift from forming students of character to producing experts for society was intensified with the advent of the American state university in the mid-1800's. "Prior to the Civil War," Glanzer writes, "church-related colleges educated 90% of undergraduates in America… Today, public universities educate over 73%" (Glanzer, 2012, p. 20). These schools were formed by state governments to produce skilled civil servants, not virtuous humans *per se*. Add to that the constraint of the Establishment Clause and universities become gatherings of discipline-specific research, what Glanzer dubs "multiversities" – "institutions with no unifying core of knowledge or identity that can provide students moral wisdom for life. Without agreement on life's purposes, any rationale for character development disappears" (Ibid.).

Church-related colleges and universities are in no way immune to this "de-characterization" of education (Budde & Wright, 2004; Glanzer & Ream, 2009). While most mission statements express the desire to produce faithful and wise Christians, such institutions gain their educational legitimacy through secular academic guilds, and their accreditation through secular agencies that hold all schools to the similar standards of legitimacy. Thus, the "Christian" element of a liberal arts education is constantly at risk of being reduced to a "value-added" component of a degree program that may just as easily be pursued at a secular school. In such a setting, Christian convictions can easily shift away from the center of an institution's mission and programs to operate solely within the confines of departments of theology and whatever student development and ministry programs remain mandated by the Christian mission of the university. In such a setting, general education programs are often not centered on "an explicit vision of human flourishing" but "more upon the disciplinary categories that have evolved in the contemporary university and the perceived needs of employers and the country" (Glanzer, 2010, p. 385).

For Christian educational institutions seeking wider cultural legitimacy, the sort of commitments required to center the task around an explicit vision of human flourishing are easily perceived to be an "obstacle to preparing its students for service within the liberal structures at large" (Glanzer, 2012, p. 23). Formed by a secular society which places highest value on programs that promote economic flourishing, members of such a community begin to feel the pinch and may indeed end up *de*-valuing the explicitly Christian vision that has been "added" to their liberal arts education—especially when economic pressure on the university is increased due to declining enrollments! That is, students, staff, faculty, and administrators alike may struggle to understand, much less articulate, the value of *commitments* that place moral constraints on lifestyles, *convictions* that require payment of tuition for required courses in Christian theology, and *practices* that may put them at odds with the guilds that approve their programs for secular audiences.

Conclusion

What are Christian colleges and universities to do? If they are to "sail under true colors" (Cavanaugh, 2011) and center the educational endeavor on a coherent Christian mission, it seems they must be ready to offer up a more explicit vision of human flourishing, one that is intentionally embodied in an integrated program of study and communal life. "If Christian universities hope to remain more than training grounds for narrow forms of competence," writes Glanzer,

> they must avoid the secular temptation to be satisfied with providing disciplinary expertise in a field of study. They must continue the grand quest to offer the world wisdom about what God's story of creation and redemption entails for the good life and a good world (Glanzer, 2012, 23).

In other words, Christian universities must become the sort of places where character formation is taken very seriously. And if that character formation is to be truly *Christian,* it would have to be ordered by a shared conception of human flourishing that is indexed according to the story of God's call in Christ as it is mediated to God's people by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Glanzer offers four suggestions for Christian universities who wish to pursue this end (2012, p. 21-23). First, since "wisdom, like salvation, comes from the triune God as a gift of grace," Christian institutions of higher education must recognize that God's wisdom is discerned through distinctive Christian practices and virtues. While the study of scripture, reflection on Christian tradition, and communal prayer and worship are arguably the most central practices for discerning God's wisdom, Glanzer especially highlights the function of the Christian university as "the mind of the church," making virtue habits like wonder, reverence, hope, and self-control primary tools for the task.

Second, university faculty must be capable of mentoring students to "help them understand what loving God looks like when engaged in a particular discipline." This requires (third) the capacity to introduce "students to complex theological, ethical, and academic discussions about what it means to be fully human." Obviously, if this is actually going to happen, "Christian universities must hire faculty and staff who demonstrate not only expertise and the willingness to sign a confessional statement, but also the thinking, heart, virtues, and practices related to a well-lived Christian life, and the willingness to commend these things to others."

For Glanzer, all this finally means that Christian professors, administrators, and staff must be able to "articulate what it means to place Christ and their Christian identity first in life." While it may seem obvious, Glanzer's insistence that student character formation cannot be addressed apart from the Christian commitment of university administration, faculty, and staff is worth emphasizing. How SPU is doing in this regard is the subject of another chapter.

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CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CHARACTER VIRTUES

Having affirmed the *revelatory, narratival, imitational, teleological,* and *pneumatological* features of a Christian conception of character and formation, as well as modern historical contexts that would undermine such affirmations, we now turn to further examination of specific virtues. The Character Initiative charter's second stated aim pertains to *the identification of a set of 6-10 personal characteristics which might reflect good character or targets of character formation for SPU students*. This preliminary list need not be complete or comprehensive, but rather a working set of characteristics subject to further discussion and revision over time, depending on context and cultural moment. In the present chapter, we provide a starting point (and conceptual framework) for discussion about these issues, considering the matter broadly here prior to discussion in the final chapter of which virtues may be most important to cultivate in SPU students at this time, in particular. Next, we reflect on virtue taxonomies, specific criteria that must be met**,** and a broadband conceptual framework for the virtues.

The Problem of Taxonomy

Since the time God invited humans to name the animals in Eden (Genesis 2), we have engaged in the process of making sense of the natural world by taxonomy—organizing phenomena into "kinds" or types. The attempt to enhance understanding (or at least reduce perceived complexity) by organization applies not only to living creatures (i.e., kingdom, phylum, class, order, etc.) and their diseases (e.g., International Classification of Diseases; Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), but may apply to the study of the virtues or character traits. The question of how to "cut nature at the joints" applies to the virtues, for many delineations remain possible, even within Christian communities such as universities. Related questions include how many virtues exist and which are the most important for human flourishing. For our purposes, we are concerned with these questions in the context of Christian higher education in the unique setting of SPU.

Questions to Consider While Selecting Candidate Virtues. Any taxonomy or list of virtues requires grappling with complex conceptual questions. For instance, do there exist distinct virtues that are important in their own right, in isolation, such that we might "cherry-pick" those which we deem most valuable, or might that result in a "grab-bag" of virtues that lack coherence? This question dovetails with the related questions about the relationships between virtues, and whether there may exist fundamental tensions between particular ones (e.g., virtues of "head" versus "heart"; Niemec, 2017). Aristotle posited the *unity of the virtues* such that each virtue needs the others; for instance, courage without love or compassion might result in impulsive or reckless behavior. Humility without courage might produce excessive self-abasement. The apostle Paul noted the emptiness of service without love (1 Corinthians 13:3). In response to the question of whether a "master virtue" is required to organize or adjudicate among the others, some thinkers have posited self-control because one can't pursue other goals without it (Baumeister & Exline, 2001), whereas Aristotle described *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and *megalopsychia* ("great-mindedness") as higher-order virtues binding the others together (Kristjansson, 2010). In the Christian tradition, and for Wesley (as noted), love constitutes the "greatest of these" (1 Corinthians 13:13), enacted as loving God and people (Matthew 22:38).

Moreover, the relationships and boundaries between character virtue versus "non-moral" personality traits require clarification. In early attempt to develop an early science of personality, Gordon Allport sought to distinguish personality from character, with the latter implying the addition of personal effort or volition and moral evaluation or standards; character was thus "personality evaluated" (Nicholson, 1998). Descending from this tradition, decades of research suggests that substantial variation in how people describe themselves and others can be reduced to the "Big Five" dimensions of extraversion (i.e., gregariousness, social dominance), agreeableness (i.e., friendliness, trusting others), conscientiousness (orderliness, responsibility), openness to experience (i.e., preference for novelty, artistic interests), and negative emotionality (i.e., proneness toward sadness, anxiety, and anger; Saucier, 2015). Some of these personality traits (alongside personal characteristics such as talent and intelligence) appear to be non-moral. For instance, some teachers might prefer students to be extraverted, but we would not likely teach that they "ought" to be—whereas we would hold that they ought to cultivate gratitude or compassion, regardless of sociability or verbal reasoning ability. The relationships between these traits and the virtues, as well as between virtues and spiritual wellbeing or Christian formation, require clarification.

Other persistent questions pertain to context and culture. Peterson and Seligman (2004) and Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) compiled a broad working list of virtues by attempting to identify morally valued characteristics that appear across a variety of cultures and historical epochs. However, others have noted that there may exist no culture-free virtues, warranting critique and reflection on cultural assumptions about "the good life" (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008; Kristjansson, 2010). In response, we acknowledge that a Christian, Wesleyan theologically-informed conception will be unavoidably particularistic, especially as it emphasizes particular narratives over others. Additionally, developmental context may determine which virtues are most salient at different life phases. For instance, Erikson (1988) theorized particular virtues associated with satisfactory resolution of conflicts at each psychosocial developmental stage (e.g., fidelity and love during adolescence and young adulthood, respectively). Furthermore, the question of whether virtues operate as psychological and/or spiritual "modules" in the human person that function similarly regardless of particular theological content remains open. For instance, psychological research suggests the existence of neurodevelopmental social attachment and caregiving systems with predictable situational triggers, such that particular perceptions (e.g., distress in one's infant) elicit predictable emotions (e.g., distress, compassion) and behavior (e.g., proximity-seeking, soothing), and have been posited as relatively species-universal (Fraley & Shaver, 2009). Analogously, the psychological elicitors and actions associated with a virtue such as humility might operate similarly in Christians and non-Christians. Alternatively, Christian virtue may require particular features, narrative content, or even supernatural action by God in order to be fully realized.

Our initial strategy in response to such questions was to start by identifying what we view as *a priori* requirements for any list of virtues important for SPU students. The following criteria provide an initial set of criteria (adapted from Peterson & Seligman, 2004):

• Trait-like, and relatively stable/generalizable across situations.

• Measurable (ideally by multiple methods such as self-report and report by knowledgeable informants such as friends or mentors).

• Present across many cultures.

• Unidimensional and not decomposable into other, more basic virtues.

• Contributing to flourishing for both self and others in the community.

• Intrinsically morally valued in their own right (even in absence of beneficial outcomes).

• Morally elevating or uplifting to others (rather than triggering envy or debasement).

• Recognizable in individuals who represent paragons of particular virtues.

• Amenable to practice or simulations by larger societal institutions, for cultivation of virtues.

In addition, we added the following criteria:

• Consistent with core Christian theological commitments, and in particular with SPU's faith statement (e.g., orthodox, evangelical, ecumenical, Wesleyan).

• Appropriate to SPU students given diverse faith commitments (i.e., not only Protestant and Catholic, but also Muslim, agnostic students, etc.; we presumably must transparently, explicitly seek to cultivate love for Christ in all students while offering hospitality that respects student autonomy for believers and nonbelievers alike).

• Appropriate to the developmental context of college students in general and SPU students in particular.

• Appropriate to the racial and cultural diversity of SPU students.

• Amenable to normative prescription vs. mere description, which also implies being under at least partial responsibility or volition.

Thus, we would expect virtues to meet a range of key criteria. Next, we review extant virtue lists to aid in identifying those which might meet the foregoing criteria.

Sample Virtue Taxonomies

Ancient Greek and Roman thought figure prominently in formulations of virtue and virtue taxonomies, from pre-Christian ideas to their integration in patristic, medieval, and modern Christian traditions. As noted in chapter 1, Plato emphasized the so-called *cardinal* virtues of wisdom, courage, self-restraint or temperance, and justice. Aristotle also described other virtues including generosity, wit, friendliness, truthfulness, magnificence, and greatness of soul (magnanimity; Aristotle, trans. 2011). In agreement with church fathers who drew heavily from classical sources (e.g., Augustine, Aquinas), we believe that the cardinal or "pagan" virtues are important but incomplete, requiring consideration of explicitly *theological* virtues such as the apostle Paul's list of "faith, hope, and love" (1 Cor. 13).

Other lists of virtues in scripture are evident. In the Old Testament, one finds repeated references to the fear of the Lord (e.g., Proverbs 9:12), loving God (Deuteronomy 11:1), and generosity to the marginalized (Leviticus 19:10). The New Testament includes many virtue lists. For instance, the beatitudes, when conceptualized not simply as situational states (e.g., poverty) but as key virtues

(Guinness, 2000; Pennington & Hackney, 2017), include being poor in spirit (humility), mourning (compassion), meek or gentle-hearted, hungry for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peace-making, and persistent under persecution. Analogously, one might note lists of leadership (elder) qualifications in Pauline letters. 1 Timothy 3 describes such individuals as above reproach, monogamous, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness (temperate), gentle rather than violent, not quarrelsome, and not lovers of money. Titus 1:5-9 emphasizes being blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drink, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain, hospitable, loving the good, self-controlled, upright, holy, disciplined, holding firmly to the message. Titus 2:2-4 likewise exhorts older men toward temperance, respect, self-control, and sound faith, love, and endurance, whereas older women receive exhortation toward reverence, avoidance of slander and addiction, and teaching the good. Other lists include pursuit of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness (1 Timothy 6), readiness for doing good, avoiding slandering, and being peaceable, considerate, and humble (Titus 3), or being quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry (James 1). 2 Peter 1:5-7 references faith, goodness (*areté* or "virtue"), knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, mutual affection, and love. Lastly, as we will describe later in this chapter, Wesley focused on the *fruits of the spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) as virtue-like qualities (i.e., love, joy, peace, patience/forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control), emphasizing righteousness, peace, joy, and love in particular. The list of virtues could easily run into the dozens, which raises questions about the proper level of specificity. Perhaps one might simplify the list by identifying overlap between virtues and creating meta-frameworks that identify higher-order clusters (e.g., loving the Lord with one's heart, mind, and strength [Deut. 6:5] might imply virtues of heart, head, and hands).

Whereas the foregoing lists emerged from theological reflection, inspiration, and lived experience in ecclesial contexts, modern social scientists have also generated clusters of virtues based on theoretical formulations. These, too, seem to vary not only in the number of virtues but also in level of specificity. For instance, Goodwin et al. (2014) refer to "morality" as a global social cognitive dimension people use when forming impressions of others, independently of standard social cognitive dimensions of competence (is a person capable and assertive?) and warmth (is a person sociable and friendly?); this would suggest a single, global dimension of character. In contrast, Walker and Hennig (2004) focused on justice, bravery, and kindness as core virtue dimensions. Similarly, based on both empirical research and theory about factors on which individuals make judgments about whether an issue is moral or not (i.e., "moral foundations"), Graham et al. (2011) wrote about care (versus harm), fairness/autonomy, ingroup loyalty, respect for authority, and purity/sanctity. Thus, like theological formulations, psychological frameworks vary in the number of purported key virtues.

Selecting Among Taxonomies

Although theological considerations may constrain the number of virtues, empirical and statistical strategies represent another way to determine an appropriate number of virtues, and therefore deserve mention. Statistical factor analysis techniques are relatively atheoretical, relying only on patterns of covariance between responses to self-reported behaviors or tendencies. For instance, although there

exist more than 18,000 English adjectives referring to individual differences in personality traits (e.g., warm, thoughtful, cranky), factor analysis and related techniques have been used to show that five underlying dimensions capture much of the important variation in these adjectives (the so-called "Big Five" personality traits; Saucier, 2015). Although personality research largely neglected the study of moral character during the twentieth century to create a purportedly more "objective" science (Nicholson, 1998; Saucier, 2015), social scientists have recently applied factor analytic strategies to self-reported virtues. The first notable attempt yielded four dimensions (underlying sources of covariance or overlap between particular traits) which the authors termed empathy (e.g., compassion), order (self-control, discipline), resourcefulness (perseverance, confidence), and serenity (patience, mercifulness, forgiveness; Cawley, Martin & Johnson, 2000).

More recently, Peterson and Seligman's (2004) attempt to identify virtues with relatively universal cross-cultural features led them to posit that their 24 specific virtues can be captured in six overarching factors, which subsequently underwent factor analyses (see Table 1). In this framework, *wisdom and knowledge* represent higher-order intellectual virtues that encompass lower-order character strengths of creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, and wisdom. Virtues of *courage* include bravery, persistence (i.e., grit), honesty/integrity, and "zest" (the courage to live in the moment and seize the day). *Humanity* encompasses love (defined here as mutual relatedness and intimacy), kindness (e.g., prosocial behavior, compassion, service, altruism, generosity), and social intelligence (ability to understand others' mental states in the service of facilitating social interaction). *Justice/fairness* includes lower-order characteristics of citizenship/loyalty, teamwork, fairness, and leadership. *Temperance* reflects character strengths that inhibit excess; forgiveness/mercy restrains vengeance, humility/modesty restrains hubris, prudence (caution) restrains acting without thinking, and self-regulation (self-control, discipline) restrains focusing on present-moment desire or emotion at the expense of longer-term well-being. Lastly, *transcendence* pertains to character strengths that help individuals see or live beyond the confines of momentary circumstances (appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality).

Table 1. Values in Action (VIA) virtue framework

Higher-Order Virtues	Lower-Order Character Strengths (Synonyms or elaborations denoted by bullets)				
WISDOM	**Creativity** • Originality, ingenuity	**Curiosity** • Interest, exploration, openness	**Judgment** • Critical thinking	**Love of Learning** • Mastering new skills, systematically adding to knowledge	**Perspective** • Wisdom, wise counsel, holistic thinking
COURAGE	**Bravery** • Valor, speaking up for what is right	**Perseverance** • Persistence, finishing what one starts	**Honesty** • Integrity, authenticity	**Zest** • Vitality, enthusiasm, feeling alive	
HUMANITY	**Love** • Loving and being loved, valuing closeness	**Kindness** • Generosity, nurturance, compassion, altruism	**Social Intelligence** • Awareness of motives/feelings of self/others		
JUSTICE	**Teamwork** • Citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty	**Fairness** • Justice, not letting one's own whims bias how one treats others	**Leadership** • Organizing social activities, encouraging others to accomplish goals		
TEMPERANCE	**Forgiveness** • Mercy, accepting others' limitations, giving second chances	**Humility** • Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves	**Prudence** • Being careful, cautious, not taking undue risks	**Self-Regulation** • Self-control, discipline, managing one's impulses	
TRANSCENDENCE	**Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** • Proneness to awe, wonder, moral elevation (feeling uplifted)	**Gratitude** • Thankfulness, expressing thanks, feeling blessed	**Hope** • Optimism, future-mindedness	**Humor** • Playfulness, making others smile, lighthearted	**Spirituality** • Faith, purpose, meaning

Factor analyses have yielded partial support for these six distinct dimensions. Some studies have found stronger evidence for four dimensions (i.e., intellectual strengths, interpersonal strengths, transcendence, and temperance, e.g., McGrath, 2013; Shryack et al., 2010). Studies with much larger samples have supported the six-factor model (Ng et al., 2017), as well as the notion that they can be collapsed into three meta-factors of virtues related to *caring*, *self-control*, and *inquisitiveness* (McGrath et al., 2015; 2017).

These discrepant results suggest that empirical considerations inform but do not dictate how many factors to retain because there exists a hierarchy of nested, mutually compatible frameworks that each fit the data, *varying in level of specificity.* For instance, using all six factors would retain greater specificity and nuance when assessing virtue, whereas a lower-specificity solution would collapse these six factors into three factors (for instance, a higher-order "caring" factor would subsume both *humanity* and *fairness/justice* in the six-factor framework, suggesting that individuals who tend to score highly on kindness also score highly on fairness. This is one possible response to concerns about lack of clarity in the relationship between the VIA's higher-order virtues and lower-order character strengths (Stichter & Saunders, 2018). Thus, the appropriate number of key virtues varies depending on prioritizing parsimony versus breadth, a finding that has been documented for general personality traits as well

(Saucier, 2015). Thus, although not all lists of virtues would fit the available self-report data, a range of virtues is empirically defensible, requiring external considerations.

Initially, we planned to select key virtues early in the project, but further reflection suggested the wisdom of instead selecting a broad conceptual framework to organize our search, and moving toward recommendation of particular key virtues *after* literature review, surveying faculty and staff, and discussion (see final chapter of this document). Thus, we adopted the VIA framework as a broad conceptual working taxonomy for our process of identifying with key virtues to emphasize, for several reasons. One consideration was practical: we wished to limit burden and cognitive load when assessing SPU programs and students. Second, we wanted to ensure broad coverage of the most important higher-order virtue domains; the VIA framework was developed to capture a broad range of virtues noted across cultures and time, yielding a set of non-redundant domains with which to compare explicitly Christian virtue lists. Its constructs can be assessed at a high level of specificity (e.g., individual virtues of kindness) or as broadly as six higher-order factors. Third, published research has examined VIA measures for over a decade, with millions of individuals providing data. Indeed, the VIA framework represents the most well-researched measures that explicitly targets character virtues.

Additionally, we attempted to align selected scriptural virtue lists and psychological taxonomies in light of the VIA's six higher-order virtues based on theoretical overlap (see Table 2). Admittedly, not all concepts from each list are present in every case, but examination suggests substantial overlap of broad domains across philosophical, theological, and even "non-moral" personality frameworks. Thus, it seems wise to attempt to retain virtues (at least representative ones) from all six VIA domains, to ensure broad applicability to students from varying cultural contexts. Inspection of the table also reveals that some lists omit coverage of domains. For instance, Plato's list lacks those related to humanity/love and transcendence, and Cawley et al. (2000) omits justice/fairness. Similarly, the fruits of the Spirit do not explicitly reference wisdom, courage, or justice/fairness. Even the Big 5 personality traits implicitly contain morally valenced behaviors (e.g., agreeableness overlaps with humanity, and conscientiousness overlaps with temperance), in line with findings of 25% overlap (Noftle, Schnitker, & Robins, 2011).

Table 2. Comparison of Character Taxonomies Vis-à-vis VIA Framework

SYSTEM	CHARACTER/VIRTUE CONTENT						REPRESENTATIVE STUDIES
VIA (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)	**Wisdom & Knowledge** [creativity, curiosity judgment, love of learning, wisdom]	**Courage** [bravery, persistence, honesty/integrity, vitality]	**Humanity** [love, kindness/altruism generosity, social intelligence]	**Justice/Fairness** [Citizenship/loyalty teamwork, fairness, leadership]	**Transcendence** [appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality]	**Temperance** [forgiveness/mercy, humility/modesty, prudence, self-control]	Ng et al. 2017
VIA (empirical reexaminations finding four factors)	**Intellectual strengths** [creativity, curiosity, perspective, judgment, learning, bravery, zest, hope, engagement with beauty]		**Interpersonal strengths** [kindness, love, social intelligence, leadership, fairness, teamwork, forgiveness, gratitude, humor]		**Transcendence strengths** [spirituality, forgiveness, modesty]	**Temperance Strengths** [Prudence, self-regulation, honesty perseverance]	Shryack et al., 2010
Virtues Scale	**Resourceful** [perseverance, confidence, sagacity, fortitude, intelligence, zealous…]		**Empathy** [charity, compassion, gracious, friendly, liberal…]		**Serenity** [meek, forgiveness, patient, forbearance, merciful]	**Order** [discipline, self-control, self-denial, obedient, austere, order, conservative]	Cawley et al., 2000
Social impressions		**Honesty/Truthfulness**	Kindness/Compassion	Justice/Fairness		**Self-control/discipline**	Goodwin et al., 2014
Walker & Hennig (2004)		**Bravery**	**Kindness**	**Justice**			Walker & Hennig, 2004
Moral foundations			**Compassion/Care**	Loyalty Fairness		**Respect for Authority**	Graham et al., 2011
Fowers (2005)	**Wisdom**	**Courage, Honesty**	**Generosity** [includes forgiveness]	**Loyalty, Justice**			
Plato	**Wisdom**	**Courage**		**Justice**		**Self-Restraint**	
Aristotle	**Wisdom**	**Courage, Truthfulness**	**Generosity**	**Justice**	**Magnanimity (?)**	**Self-Restraint**	

SAMPLE THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL TAXONOMIES							
Aquinas (Aristotle + 3 theological virtues*)	Wisdom	Courage, Truthfulness	Generosity *LOVE	Justice	(Magnanimity?) *FAITH, *HOPE	Self-Restraint	
Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)			Love		Joy, Peace, Patience, Forbearance, Faithfulness	Self-Control	
Beatitudes		Persistence under persecution	Merciful, peacemakers/ gentleness	Mourning/celebrating with others	Hunger for righteousness, pure in heart	Meek/poor in spirit (humility)	
Elder qualifications (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1:5-9)	Able to teach	Holding firmly to the message. Sound in faith, endurance.	Hospitable, gentle vs. violent, not quarrelsome	Not overbearing, Not pursuing dishonest gain,	Not a lover of money. Lover of the good.	Temperate, self-controlled, not drunk, not quick-tempered, disciplined.	
1 Timothy 6		Endurance	Love		Faith	Pursue righteousness, godliness	
"Being Good" book (Ausin & Gievett, 2011)	Wisdom, open-minded	Zeal (courage)	Love [Love, compassion, forgiveness humility]		[faith, hope, contentment]	Humility	
OVERLAP WITH "NON-MORAL" PERSONALITY TRAITS							
Big Five / Five Factor Model of personality	Openness to Experience / Intellect	Extraversion	Agreeableness		(lack of) Negative Emotionality	Conscientiousness	(e.g., Saucier, 2015)
HEXACO model of personality	Openness	Extraversion Honesty-Humility (explicitly moral)	Agreeableness Honesty-Humility	Honesty-Humility	(low negative) Emotionality Honesty-Humility	Conscientiousness Honesty-Humility	(Ashton & Lee, 2009)

Although the VIA framework is not explicitly Christian, it was developed with an eye to broad historically important virtues, many of which were informed by the Christian tradition. Indeed, one can easily imagine biblical warrant for all six VIA domains. Still, given our conclusions from chapter 1, we want to make it clear that the VIA virtues function for us as a starting point and cannot ultimately operate as a stand-in for a properly articulated set of distinctively Christian virtues. In particular, the VIA Love construct does not fully capture Christ-like sacrificial "agape" love; the Hope construct does not incorporate a Christian eschatology that grounds hope in expectation of God's bringing shalom to all creation (Pennington & Hackney, 2017); and the relatively sterile VIA "Spirituality" virtue hardly maps onto a robust biblical conception of faith in and love for God. Other criticisms can be leveled against the VIA framework: some have noted its cultural boundedness despite its aspirations to articulate a universal, "common ground" humanism, along with the challenges of assessing character via self-report (Stichter & Saunders, 2018).

Nevertheless, given the limited scope of our project, it made sense for us to retain the six VIA domains as a usefully broad, though not final, conceptual framework/taxonomy for our literature review and survey data collection. Clearly other things need to be taken into consideration if we are to assess specifically *Christian* character in a particular place like SPU.

The Witness of John Wesley

What specific Christian virtues— what *tempers* and *affections*, in his parlance—did Wesley expect to see exhibited in the Christian life, and how were these to be cultivated? The first question is not difficult to answer, for Wesley repeatedly directed his hearers to the *fruits of the Spirit* described in Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control), and often appealed specifically to Paul's saying in Romans 14:17, "the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Joseph Cunningham (2011) has argued on this basis that *love, righteousness, peace,* and *joy* are Wesley's preeminent signs of the Spirit's work in Christian life.

Like most Christians before him, Wesley looked to love as the master virtue, the ruling temper, "the root of all the rest" (*Explanatory notes on the New Testament,* Galatians 5:22). "My scheme of religion is this," he wrote to an opponent, "love is the fulfilling of the law. From the true love of God and man [i.e., all persons; male terms and pronouns in Wesley refer to humanity], directly flows every Christian grace, every holy and happy temper" ("Letter to the Rev. Mr. Bailey," 1750). Elsewhere he proclaimed, "Very excellent things are spoken of love; it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great command, but it is all the commandments in one" ("Circumcision of the Heart," Sermon 17, I.11). As we noted earlier, Wesley often spoke of God's grace and God's love as one and the same thing. It would be impossible, therefore, to cultivate the other fruit of the Spirit without love.

But this direct association of love with God's grace also makes it plain that "love" cannot be defined for the Christian in generic human terms, but specifically according to *God's* love as revealed in the self-giving grace of Christ. This is a divine, "pure and universal love," known through the work of Christ and

extended to all, "whatever his opinions or mode of worship be, purely because he is the child, and bears the image, of God… A bigot only loves those who embrace his opinions, and receive his way of worship; and he loves them for that, and not for Christ's sake" (*Explanatory notes on New Testament*, 1 John 4:21). As Cunningham puts it, "The entirety of the Spirit's mission within the economy of salvation tends toward this end [of love]… To the extent that believers express God's love through active virtue, we resemble the perfect nature of Christ and his Spirit" (Cunningham, 2011, p. 281).

Wesley appears to have used the term "righteousness" to refer to the fullness of all that is morally good. "Whatever virtues are recommended to us by reason," he wrote, "especially as assisted by revelation, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure—in a word, *the whole of our duty both towards God, ourselves, and our neighbor*—are here included in the word 'righteousness'" ("Seek First the Kingdom," Sermon, 1725, italics mine). In this we should sense Wesley's recognition of the deeper, more fully biblical understanding of righteousness as referring to God's desire to make "right" all our relationships, that is, to bring *justice* to an unjust world. Indeed, Wesley would likely celebrate Cornel West's famous dictum, "Justice is what love looks like in public" (West, 2010).

At the same time Wesley was well aware of how the zeal for righteousness in an unjust world could actually have the effect of hardening the heart and making Christian love grow cold. For this reason he insisted, "peace and joy should never be separated from righteousness, being the divine means both of preserving and increasing it" ("An Extract of a Letter to the Reverend Mr. Law," 4). As breathing in and out are each fundamental to sustaining life, the "inbreathing" virtues of love, peace and joy are required to sustain the "outbreathing" virtues of righteousness and justice; each are essential, providing fuel for the other (Dahlstrom, 2018).

By "peace" Wesley appears to refer to the assurance, confidence and tranquility one gains from faith in Christ.

> This is that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," that serenity of soul which it hath not entered into the heart of a natural man to conceive, and which it is not possible for even the spiritual man to utter. And it is a peace which all the powers of earth and hell are unable to take from him. Waves and storms beat upon it, but they shake it not; for it is founded upon a rock. It keepeth the hearts and minds of the children of God, at all times and in all places. Whether they are in ease or in pain, in sickness or health, in abundance or want, they are happy in God. In every state they have learned to be content ("Marks of the New Birth, Sermon 18, I.7).

Indeed, as Cunningham puts it, for Wesley, "Peace is learned contentment, a practical virtue as well as a feeling of the soul, implanted in the heart by God's graciousness, and nurtured continually by faith in Christ" (p. 283). This sense of contentment and stable tranquility is precisely what enables Christians to extend true hospitality to those with whom they disagree. In his *Short History of the People Called Methodists* (1781), Wesley wrote, "This is our point. We leave every man to enjoy… his own mode of worship, desiring only that the love of God and his neighbor be the ruling principle in his heart, and show itself in his life by an uniform practice of justice, mercy, and truth. And, accordingly, we give the right hand of fellowship to every lover of God and man, whatever his opinion or mode of worship be, of

which he is to give an account to God only." In this we see that peace, like all the tempers and affections, is a feeling that can be cultivated as a spiritual virtue through the habitual practice of intentionally embracing others as God has embraced them.

Joy is for Wesley a close companion of peace. On the one hand, the joy of the Holy Spirit is the result of an awareness of the benefits of God's reconciliation:

> With this peace of God, wherever it is fixed in the soul, there is also "joy in the Holy Ghost;" joy wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, by the ever-blessed Spirit of God. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in God, through Christ Jesus, "by whom we have now received the atonement," *katallage*, the reconciliation with God… He it is that inspires the Christian soul with that even, solid joy, which arises from the testimony of the Spirit that he is a child of God; and that gives him to "rejoice with joy unspeakable, in hope of the glory of God"; hope both of the glorious image of God, which is in part and shall be fully "revealed in him;" and of that crown of glory which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him ("The Way to the Kingdom," Sermon 7, I.11).

This joy is not simply a matter of cognitive reflection; it also arises from the *experience* of those benefits in one's own life:

> I rejoice, because his spirit beareth witness to my spirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb; and that, believing in him, "I am a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." I rejoice, because the sense of God's love to me hath, by the same Spirit, wrought in me to love him, and to love for his sake every child of man, every soul that hath made… I rejoice, because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea, and that it is He who worketh all my works in me. I rejoice in seeing through the light of God, which shines in my heart, that I have power to walk in his ways; and that, through his grace, I turn not therefrom, to the right hand or to the left ("The Witness of Our Own Spirit," Sermon 12, I.16.

The experience of joy is one of the results of seeing that the Spirit actually accomplishes what God has promised. This in turn increases one's love for God, and "what is it to love God, but to delight in him, to rejoice in his will, to desire continually to please him, to seek and find our happiness in him, and to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of him" ("On Love," Sermon 139, II)? Of course, the feeling of joy comes and goes, but Wesley did not believe that should keep believers from pursuing the *practice* of being joyful—which, we have seen, arises when believers reflect on the love of God and externalize that love onto one's neighbors.

But how were these essential Christian virtues to be cultivated? One of the most memorable formulations of Wesley's conception of the place of tempers in the Christian life comes from a sermon he gave near the end of his career entitled "On Zeal."

> In a Christian believer *love* sits upon the throne which is erected in the inmost soul; namely, love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne are all holy tempers— longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, fidelity, temperance; and if any other

were comprised in "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." In an exterior circle are all the *works of mercy,* whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers; by these we continually improve them, so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed *works of* piety— reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord's Supper, fasting or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the Church, dispersed all over the earth; a little emblem of which, of the Church universal, we have in every particular Christian congregation ("On Zeal," Sermon 92, II.5).

In this image, the fruit of the Spirit, which are arrayed around the throne of the believer's soul, are attended to by what are frequently labeled the "Wesleyan means of grace" – *works of mercy* (active concern and care for the welfare of others, especially the poor and the vulnerable) and *works of piety* (scripture reading, prayer, corporate worship, sacraments, and other spiritual disciplines), all of which are promoted and promulgated by a community of people gathered together with the intention to see the Kingdom of God emerge in their midst.

Through these graceful means, the transformation God intends reaches beyond external behavioral expressions to reshape the moral motives of the heart (Leffel, 2007). The means of grace are Christian exercises, given to us by God, that work the muscles of our tempers so that God might develop in us the character of Christ. They are the established places where God has promised to meet us in order to nourish us with grace; they are divinely-ordained "methods," habitually practiced, by which Christians grow into the sort of people God intends them to be.

Preliminary Conclusion

In summary, many lists or taxonomies of virtues have emerged, but consideration of both empirical research on how virtues "hang together" and consulting our own Wesleyan tradition lead to a few preliminary conclusions about which virtues may be most important to emphasize at SPU. First, given that the VIA framework was derived with reference to diverse cultural traditions, incorporates the classical virtues, and has been shown to cover of broad range of higher-order virtues, it may be worthwhile to retain virtues (at least representative ones) from all six VIA domains to ensure broad applicability.

Second, the apparent universalizing tendency of the VIA framework (which can seem like a grab-bag of virtues without a coherent "story" to ground them) can be balanced by owning our Christian narrative (which redeems and contextualizes the classical virtues) as well as our own particular Wesleyan heritage. As noted, Wesley emphasized the fruits of the spirit (particularly love, peace, and joy) as well as "righteousness" (Romans 14:17) in the formation of Christian character. Although the fruits of the Spirit map conceptually to only three of the VIA domains (Humanity, Temperance, Transcendence), Wesley's conception of Christian righteousness arguably extends into the other domains of Courage, Justice, and Wisdom, providing breadth of virtues that evidence the work of the Spirit in one's life. And

yet *agape* love (the love God and neighbor taught and modeled by Christ Jesus) rules and orders the other virtues.

Finally, we believe that the question of which virtues may be most important for SPU must also take stock of the particular strengths and weaknesses the current generation of SPU students, given the natural flux in cultural values and norms. Thus, we report findings of pilot data germane to this issue in chapter 4 (Analysis of Character Formation at SPU), with concomitant recommendations presented in chapter 5.

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CHAPTER 3: BEST PRACTICES IN CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND FORMATION INTERVENTION

Our next task was *to identify best practices with regard to assessment and formation of character in college students*. After (1) a brief opening affirmation of God's work in and through human processes, we (2) review the practices of a range of sister institutions for comparison, (3) provide an overview of ways to assess virtue in college students, (4) propose a framework for organizing formation interventions, and (5) review selected relevant research on character interventions.

As discussed in chapter 1, early modern shifts in European philosophy demanded the separation of human existence into a variety of dualities: objective versus subjective, public versus private, science versus faith, natural versus supernatural, etc. This way of thinking persists in the Western tendency to distinguish sharply between "normal" human processes and "divine intervention" or miracles, as if God cannot work via everyday processes and human activity precludes God's activity.

This way of conceiving the world has created significant problems for Christian interpretation of human existence. Childbirth, in this way of thinking, is *not* thought of as a miracle in a scientific worldview; neither is breathing, friendship, or eating and digesting food. Conversely, we're encouraged to view depression and poverty *not* as spiritual problems, but issues deriving entirely from biological and/or social influences. When a loved one is stricken with disease, we may wonder whether or not God will "do a miracle" and heal the person, but we may be less likely to recognize divine intervention in the comforting presence of loved ones or the curative skills of the physician.

Likewise, some Christians may find themselves troubled over whether character formation is something accomplished through "natural" human means, or something God does in us "supernaturally" apart from human participation. We argue that this more deistic understanding of God is unscriptural and forces too great a wedge between creature and Creator. Indeed, a more orthodox Trinitarian understanding of God recognizes that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God" (Hopkins, 1877/1996), for God is the one "in whom we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The distinction between God's transcendence and immanence is loose rather than absolute, for in the Father's "hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being" (Job 12:10). By the Spirit's power there is no portion of creation that exists apart from God's presence (Ps. 139:7-8). Indeed, all things were created through Christ (John 1:3), hold together in Christ (Col. 1:17) and are continually upheld by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3). It is therefore right and good to view our "natural" creaturely existence as itself a miracle of God. God may certainly elect to circumvent normal creaturely processes now and again (to show forth God's power and glory in surprising ways, to shock us out of slumber, or to call us to greater heights of devotion). However, both the witness of scripture as well as historical reflection on God's work in human existence suggest that God's preference is to work within and through creation, not apart from or in spite of creation. The Triune God, who formed, redeemed, and continues to sustain creation, seeks to infuse us with grace not to save us from our humanity, but to restore it and perfect it.

Thus we join with John Wesley in affirming that God has ordained various reliable "means of grace"—predictable, "normal" human processes (like prayer, worship, community, service, study, and

celebration)—which are infused with God's power to form humans over time into people of faith. We are therefore unsurprised to find that most Christian colleges and universities employ a variety of such means as they seek to fulfill their mission to shape the Christian character of students. We note that some Christian institutions of higher education employ the language of *spiritual formation* when referring to these practices, rather than the language of character and character formation, which might in some cases imply dualism of spiritual versus natural aspects of character. However, we consider it important to consider specific virtues and to situate our reflections in the broad, historical Christian traditions on the virtues. Nonetheless, because we understand virtue formation in the context of explicitly Christian traditions (i.e., revelatory, narratival, pneumatological, etc.), we assume that both nomenclatures can refer to the same underlying processes.

Best Practices at Sister Institutions

It is worth noting at the outset that evidence exists to show that private, religious liberal arts schools *in general* take character formation more seriously than secular institutions (Glanzer & Ream, 2009). Surveys from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) have shown that under half of the faculty at public universities rated students' development of moral character as important or essential, compared to roughly 75 percent of faculty at Catholic or other religious (largely Protestant) institutions (HERI, 2005). Another study showed that 100% of Evangelical schools, but only 48.3 of religiously non-affiliated schools emphasized moral values (Fisher, 1995). A study of sexual ethics on secular, Catholic, and Evangelical campuses found that Evangelical institutions seemed far more successful at protecting students from the dangers of "hook-up culture" (Freitas, 2008). Likewise, whereas three-quarters of alumni from 290 church-affiliated schools recalled integration of values and ethics in the classroom, only 40% of alumni from 112 flagship universities could say the same (Hardwick Day, 2011). Similarly, 82% of alumni from Catholic institutions and 74% from other religiously affiliated schools believed their college experience helped them develop moral principles to guide their life actions, while only 49% of alumni from flagship universities could say the same. Finally, in the John Templeton Foundation's "honor roll" list of schools that encourage character development, over 70% are church-related institutions, even though such schools make up less than one-third of American institutions of higher education. This general trend makes sense, given that privately funded religious universities can appeal to a shared religious tradition to secure agreement around issues of character and values.

But what about *intentional* reflection on specific elements of Christian character? Which institutions, if any, intentionally integrate reflection on character and virtue into their curricular and co-curricular programs? Our task force members received from the Provost a list of "sister schools" which may serve as useful comparisons as Private Christian and secular institutions, largely in the western U.S. We also included several Christian institutions out of our region as well as Jesuit schools for comparison. Our task force reviewed websites (e.g., mission statements and program descriptions) and contacted representative administrators or faculty at these institutions. Discussion of results yielded led to a rubric to categorize the degree of development of character formation practices. Specifically, we described the first level (1) as *explicit reference to or valuing character formation as part of an institution's mission*. The second level (2) *involved identification of specific virtues to be cultivated*, beyond general

abstractions. A third, higher level of formulation (3) featured reference to an *integrated conceptual framework* for understanding and forming virtues. Lastly (4), a fourth level referenced evidence that such formulations are *operationalized via specific institutional strategies, programs, or curricula*. We note here that our search centered upon "low-hanging fruit" (i.e., materials available on institutional websites) and thus these universities may in fact feature relevant programs of which we are unaware.

The results of this informal research (see table in Appendix B) suggested several themes. First, whereas not all universities espouse the goal of character formation, all of those we reviewed made explicit reference to formation (i.e., level 1), although many did so under the nomenclature of *spiritual formation*. Institutions that appeared to meet this level without explicit reference to particular virtues and programs included Whitworth University, Azusa Pacific University, and Santa Clara University. Universities that referenced particular virtues (level 2) included Pepperdine, Wheaton (reference to particular "loves"), George Fox ("fruits of the Spirit"), and Houghton.

Loyola Marymount and Loyola of Baltimore illustrated the tendency for Jesuit schools to explicitly espouse character formation integrated into a conceptual framework (level 3) of Ignatian pedagogical philosophy about educating the whole person, although these provided only limited evidence of mapping their philosophy to programs. Some institutions provided evidence of robust character formation practices in isolated units or departments, but not at a broader level. For instance, Point Loma Nazarene University's psychology department provides an experiential course on the science of character formation, requires their majors to complete a character assessment, and provides two faculty mentors to evaluate graduating majors on particular character domains (e.g., service and caring). Similarly, the University of Portland offers an institute to sponsor student-faculty character research and events, as well as a Character Project weekly course team taught by faculty and administrators, although the latter is limited to 30 students per year.

Lastly, few universities mapped their conceptual frameworks to specific programs (level 4). Biola described formulating character along lines of Patterns of Thought, Patterns of Heart, and Patterns of Action, and reported ties to university learning outcomes. Westmont's materials feature a similar tripartite schemas of "Loving to learn" (i.e., cognitive strengths such as curiosity), "Learning to live" (affective/personal response to learning, developing in community), and "Living to love" (serving others), as well as offerings related to leadership training, formation small groups, and a spiritual formation center on campus. However, even the schools that articulated such programs generally did so in a limited fashion.

In addition to the aforementioned institutions, we note an example of one sister school, Calvin College, whose work in this area has been held up as an exemplary level 4 school in our categorization. In a comprehensive survey of 156 different Christian colleges and universities (Glanzer & Ream, 2009), the authors sought to determine which gave significant attention to what they identified as hallmarks of a "moral education." These hallmarks included the following evidences: (1) A clear moral mission; (2) the prevalence of appeals to moral ideals in marketing the school; (3) the integration of ethics into the curricular realm; (4) the integration of ethical ideals and language into the co-curricular realm; and (5)

the integration of efforts being made in the curricular and co-curricular realms. While a handful of schools are identified as exemplary (including Seattle Pacific!), Calvin is highlighted because it "used the most particular and comprehensive theological language" in relation to its Reformed heritage. As the authors note, "One finds [the] Christian narrative and Calvin's Reformed identity woven throughout Calvin's official documents" (p. 148). But Calvin has gone beyond aspirational statements by fully integrating their vision of Reformed higher education in general (and character formation in particular) into their core curriculum.

A late 1990's review of their core curriculum resulted in the publication of the document, "An Engagement with God's World: The Core Curriculum at Calvin College" (Calvin College, 2006). After a ten-page description of their mission as an explicitly Reformed Christian institution, the document turns to a discussion of the nature and purpose of a core curriculum in such a place. This leads them to divide the content of their curriculum into the broad areas of *knowledge, skills*, and *virtues* (see Table 3, below), with clear statements of how each shapes their curricular and pedagogical objectives.

Table 3. Calvin College's Virtue Framework in Context

Core Knowledge	Core Skills	Core Virtues
Knowledge of God	Skills of Reasoning	Diligence
The Christian Faith	General Art of Reasoning	Patience
The Reformed Tradition	Quantitative and Empirical Reasoning	Honesty
Other Religious Traditions	Cultural Discernment	Courage
Knowledge of our world:		Charity
World Structure	Skills of Communication	Creativity
Formal and Quantitative Structures	Rhetoric of the Written Word	Empathy
The Natural World	Rhetoric of the Spoken Word	Humility
Human Society	Rhetoric of the Image	Stewardship
The Arts	Discipline of Reading	Compassion
Historical Development	Discipline of Listening	Justice
Knowledge of ourselves	Disciple of Seeing	Faith
Our Identities	Competence in a Foreign Language	Hope
Our Bodies	Art of Cross-Cultural Communication	Wisdom
Our Emotions		
Our Minds	Technical Skills	
Our Hearts	Use of information technology	
Our Gifts and Callings		
	Research Skills	
	Executing a Research Project	
	Physical Skills	
	The Exercise of the Body	

Glanzer and Ream point out that this theologically-driven moral vision extends outside the classroom to find appropriate expression in co-curricular realm. They conclude, "Facilitating such a common voice is a well-cultivated appreciation for the Reformed tradition and its narrative of creation, fall, and redemption. Regardless of whether one reads their printed materials, is in the classroom, or in the residence hall, this framework provides a theological foundation for the moral idea embodied by the Calvin College community" (p. 151).

As we have already noted, Calvin appears to be an outlier. The general theme among institutions is that many espouse character formation without clear articulation of particular virtues, a conceptual framework, or links to programs/outcomes. Additionally, we assume that at all of these institutions, character formation occurs continually and in many contexts, with or without explicit identification of the process. However, it behooves us to strive to clarify and operationalize our communal identity and values at SPU with regard to character formation.

Specific Assessments of Character

Measurement of character virtues poses several challenges. In particular, some might think that virtue remains ineffable and unmeasurable. However, the biases that beset virtue assessment similarly impact measurement of other phenomena (e.g., personality or illnesses), and we know of no reason to demarcate character from other forms of human experience. Thus, assessment may occur through four primary methods by which other individual difference variables are investigated.

Namely, we might assess relevant traits via (1) *self-report*, (2) *observer reports*—whether by knowledgeable informants or strangers trained to make ratings, (3) *test data* reflecting cognitive, emotional, or behavioral responses to a standardized task or situation, and (4) *life-data* from publicly available outcomes assumed to reflect underlying behavioral consistencies (e.g., driving records indirectly assess self-control; and documented cheating behavior may speak to honesty). Self-reports are vulnerable to self-perception biases, socially desirable responding (both self-deception and deliberate impression management), and response sets (i.e., a tendency to acquiesce or deny across all items); however, they are inexpensive, convenient, and generally predict meaningful outcomes. Moreover, self-report measures of character are no more correlated with socially desirable responding than are standard personality trait measures (e.g., McDonald, Bore, & Munro, 2008), and virtue items are not uniformly associated with globally positive self-perceptions (Ng et al., 2017). Observer reports are vulnerable to perceiver biases of the observer (e.g., idealizing the target person), but are invulnerable to the biases of the target person.

Test and life-data provide more "behavioral" data and limit perception biases, but are harder to obtain and, like other assessments, assess the target constructs indirectly. Test data examples relevant to character may include the Defining Issues Test (Rest, 1979), which measures moral reasoning in response to moral dilemma stories, or the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Hill, Raste, & Plumb, 2001), which assesses processes related to social intelligence (e.g., capacity to understand others' mental and emotional states) when viewing sets of eyes without the rest

of the face. However, such tests are rarely used as direct assessments of character in the research literature. Moreover, life data outcomes such as grades, number of club commitments, chapel attendance do not provide a fine-grained measurement of the cognitive or motivational features behind behavior. For that reason, we emphasize self-report methods here, although observer reports (e.g., reports by one's roommate or advisor) may be of interest.

Self-Report Inventories

The majority of the self-report scales that assess virtue constructs tap a single trait. For instance, the Curiosity and Exploration Inventory-II (Kashdan et al., 2009) assesses the cognitive strength of curiosity, Norton and Weiss (2009) developed a brief courage scale that predicted approach behavior in a fear task, and the Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (Emmons & McCullough, 2000) and "compassionate goals" (Crocker & Canevello, 2008) are germane to "humanity" (for more examples, see Lopez & Snyder, 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Several omnibus (or multiple-construct) instruments have been developed for assessing self-report variables related to character or virtue, each having strengths as well as features that detract from it. The creators of the *Clifton Strengthsfinder* purport that it taps inherent talents that, with deliberate cultivation, can become personal strengths (Lopez, 2005). Some scales (e.g., pertaining to ability to adapt, to analyze, and to connect with others) might tap domains related to virtue, but others seem less relevant to character. Similarly, the *Interpersonal Strengths Inventory* (Hatcher & Rogers, 2009) assesses strengths that pertain to the entire range of the interpersonal domain (all possibility combinations of assertiveness versus yielding and affiliativeness versus coldness). Some interpersonal strengths may parallel virtues (e.g., affiliative-submissive strengths may overlap with humility). However, this measure is limited to the interpersonal domains and thus neglects other domains (e.g., intellectual virtues). Thus, such scales, though useful, lack a coherent framework that integrates virtues, and do not explicitly reference character as defined in classical and Christian thought.

In contrast, the *Virtues Scale* (Cawley, Martin, & Johnson, 2000) was empirically derived from a larger pool of virtue items, yielding factors labeled as Empathy, Order, Resourcefulness, and Serenity. The original study found preliminary evidence of internal consistency reliability as well as validity, reporting moderate correlations with well-known personality dimensions (but low enough to rule out redundancy). However, relatively little research has used this measure.

As we have already noted, the *Values in Action* scales represent the most well-studied measures that explicitly target character virtues. Several versions exist, varying in length, response options, and target age range of youth versus adults. VIA scales assess the six aforementioned over-arching virtues that are each comprised of multiple character strengths: Wisdom, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance, and Transcendence. This measure was developed based on an attempt to identify virtues which emerged in a variety of cultures and historical epochs, with subsequent empirical development strategies to confirm these six categories. Large-scale studies have shown that the pattern (rank-ordering) of VIA scales is relatively consistent across many cultures (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006; McGrath, 2015). As noted

in Chapter 2, the items may be grouped into between three and six broader virtues, depending on desired level of specificity. Criticisms include the fact that the VIA framework lacks a deep theory of "the good," emphasizes description over prescription, and despite cross-cultural relevance, is likely not universal (Kinghorn, 2017).

Other measures were developed expressly for higher education contexts. SPU has already utilized some of these instruments, some of which may tap virtue-relevant constructs amid less relevant ones. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE; Kuh et al., 2001), completed at the end of college sophomore and senior years, assesses some virtue-relevant constructs (e.g., civic engagement), but also non-moral domains (e.g., experiences with information literacy). The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey (e.g., Hurtado, Eagan, Pryor, Whang, & Tran, 2012) assesses faculty ratings of the importance of various domains including some with moral relevance (e.g., students' moral character, civic-minded values and practice, commitment to diversity), but does not assess students directly, parallel to the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE; e.g., Kuh, 2009), which targets faculty teaching strategies (social interactions, engaging diverse perspectives). The College Students' Beliefs and Values survey (from the HERI Spirituality in Higher Education Project), mixes measures of spirituality (spiritual identification, religious commitment) with character-relevant scales (e.g., equanimity, ethic of caring, compassionate self-concept).

We also note that the *Thriving Quotient* (see Schreiner, 2010) self-report inventory was developed to assess thriving in college students, and its scales may overlap conceptually with the six aforementioned, broad virtue domains. Specifically, factors include *engaged learning, academic determination, positive perspective, diverse citizenship, and social connectedness* (suggesting potential overlap with wisdom, self-control, transcendence, fairness, and humanity, respectively). Although the measure has predicted academic outcomes, several concerns may be noted. The items were culled from existing psychological measures (some of which may not pertain to virtues). The scale has not be well-researched as of yet, and it remains unclear to what extent the scales are supposed to measure processes (e.g., virtues) versus outcomes related to well-being.

Most of the available measures for higher education are comprised of a mix of constructs varying in relevance to character. However, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Value rubric (https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics) incorporates a few relevant outcomes (Teamwork, Personal and Social Responsibility, Ethical Reasoning). One particular measure, the Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI; Knefelkamp & O'Neill, 2010), was developed by the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) at Iowa State University, in partnership with the AAC&U. It assesses five domains that appear to overlap conceptually with the broad virtue domains identified by the VIA. *Striving for Excellence* pertains to strong work ethic and consciously doing one's best in college (i.e., VIA Courage facet of Perseverance, Wisdom facet of Love of Learning). *Cultivating Academic Integrity* emphasizes recognizing and acting in line with honesty, fairness and respect for others' work (i.e., Courage facets of Honesty, Justice/Fairness domain). *Contributing to a Larger Community* reflects recognizing and acting on one's responsibility to the academic and broader community (e.g., *Justice/Fairness* and *Humanity* domains). *Taking Seriously the Perspectives of Others* emphasizes

informing one's judgment with multiple, diverse perspectives (e.g., Wisdom and Humanity domains). Lastly, *Developing Competence in Ethical and Moral Reasoning and Action* centers upon reasoning that integrates the other four factors and their application to life (e.g., *Wisdom* domain). Thus, the PSRI is the higher education instrument most closely aligned with a focus on character issues, and has the benefit of both student and university professional (faculty, administrators, staff) versions. However, although it targets perceptions of how well the university fosters these abilities, it does not explicitly seek to assess student character *per se.* Nonetheless, because the VIA and PSRI seem most relevant to our purposes, we report available data from these measures in the SPU community in the next chapter.

Character Formation Programs and Strategies

In the context of higher education, there exists significant disagreement about character formation. Some thinkers have granted the need to foster character in college, but only for intellectual virtues, not other issues such as morality or sexuality (Rivers, 2004); this fits what one might expect in a liberal democratic context where intellectual competence is valued over moral character, which is deemed to be a private matter. Others espouse the notion that character education is warranted in elementary and secondary school but not in universities, where personal character is purportedly irrelevant to public and professional concerns (Carr, 2017). In contrast, others suggest the unique cultural value of character formation afforded by Christian higher education (Brooks, 2016). Some note that past attempts at college character formation failed to define character sufficiently, posing the need to situate character development in the broader narrative of a flourishing life (e.g., integrating Christian, virtue ethics, and positive psychology**;** Langer, Lewis Hall, McMartin, 2010), a focus on humanity in the *imago* dei, hope, and the common good (McEwen, Herman, & Himes, 2016), or Kingdom prospering that transcends economics and cultural/national borders (Carpenter, Glanzer, & Lantinga, 2014; Mannoia, 2015). As described in chapter 1, we believe that a Wesleyan understanding of how participation in the means of grace ("methods") in Christian community provides a call to character formation in SPU students.

Most of the research on *character education* has focused on K-12 educational settings. A report by the Social and Character Development Research Consortium (2010) found disappointingly scant evidence of improvement in behavior, social/emotional competence, and student and teacher perceptions of school climate, across a broad range of school intervention programs. Teachers reported perceptions of positive outcomes in students in the first two years but these effects tended to fade with time. However, it may be that effects of such programs depend on moderating factors (e.g., as when character education programs reduced the effects of risk factors such as large class size and economic markers to study behavioral problems; Parker, Nelson, & Burns, 2010). However, many of the existing studies have received critiques for methodological problems (Was, Woltz, & Drew, 2006), may be subject to cultural biases (e.g., the problem of equating courage with oral presentation comfort in Asian students: Stickney, 2010), and focus on specific behavioral outcomes (e.g., cheating, substance use, aggressive behavior) rather than formation of broad dispositions toward virtue.

Empirical Evidence of Change in Character

We agree that Christian higher education institutions should aspire to and contribute to student (and faculty/staff!) character development, but found surprisingly little relevant empirical data for programs explicitly targeting formation in such contexts, suggesting a noteworthy gap in the literature. Given that character formation reflects an intervention seeking to change students' patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior, we believe that any such strategies should be subjected to empirical scrutiny to determine their efficacy. Given that no such studies yet exist, we nonetheless sought to locate relevant research on whether there are reasons to expect that (1) college students' character can change over time, and (2) that specific interventions may facilitate that end.

First, although relatively scant research has examined change in virtue over time, recent research with the VIA framework may bear upon the question of which virtues are most relevant to college students. At a western liberal arts college, students on average endorsed no dramatic increases in virtues over their first two years, but noted slight increase in traits such as curiosity, empathy, and organization; increase in strivings for curiosity, fairness, industry (hard work), judgment, leadership, and originality, but not on 18 other character strivings (Noftle, 2015). These findings suggest reasons to not expect massive virtue change during college, but findings of change are consistent with the idea of emerging adulthood (age 18-25) as a developmental phase typified by the capacity for volitional change in identity (Arnett, 2000). They also fit with findings that many traits change less in adulthood, although individuals vary in their degree of change (Roberts & Mroczek, 2008). However, even relatively stable traits related to agreeableness and conscientiousness (which overlap partially with virtues of altruism and self-regulation) have evidenced malleability (small, but reliable changes) as a result of cognitive and behavioral interventions (Roberts et al., 2017). At the level of graduate education, the "Good Physician" project aims to study character development (virtues and moral intuitions) in physicians-to-be. Preliminary findings suggest that medical students scoring higher on a baseline measure of spirituality experienced relatively greater increases in empathic compassion and generosity (Shepherd et al., 2018).

In a study from the UCLA Spirituality and Higher Education Project (several thousand students from 46 institutions), from freshman to senior year, students at evangelical colleges increased on striving to promote fairness and help others (i.e., humanity and justice/fairness domains) and spiritual identification (i.e., spirituality domain); paradoxically, students in general decreased slightly on religious commitment and compassion (self-reported kindness/compassion/forgiveness/generosity) (Paredis-Collins & Collins, 2001). Importantly, although white students endorsed higher religious commitment, they scored lower than students of color on the ethic of caring. Given other studies showing that trajectories of change in spirituality during college vary based on the nature of the instutition (secular, Catholic, mainline, evangelical) and the student (religious majority vs. minority; Bowman & Small, 2010), we would be wise to attend to how cultural and religious status of students might shape their experience of character formation in colleges).

Selected Evidence of Narrow Virtue Intervention Effects

Examination of intervention research on all 24 virtues in the VIA system is beyond the scope of this document, but we found it useful to review selected representative findings that illustrate how particular strategies might foster virtue.

We are aware of no formal *courage* interventions, but several relevant strategies have been investigated. For instance, Finfgeld (1999) found that social modeling of bravery by close others was reported as fostering bravery in the context of terminal illness. Additionally, there exists a robust literature on exposure to feared situations and stimuli as a means for reducing fear. Individuals repeatedly deliberately approach rather than avoid feared places/situations/memories and remain in them (under the guidance and support of a therapist) until *extinction and habituation* occur (i.e., the situation no longer evokes fear). Although most research has measured fear reduction rather than courage *per se*, some studies have shown increase in ability to approach feared stimuli despite fear (Rachman, 2004), and self-reported courage has predicted ability to do so (Norton & Weiss, 2009). Also, going into nature (Ryan et al., 2010) and disclosing positive events with others (Lambert, Gwinn, Fincham, & Stillman, 2011) can increase zest.

Although few studies have directly targeted *wisdom* per se, many studies have shown that regular cognitive mindfulness practices increase one's ability to attend to current moment experiences with curiosity and nonjudgmental openness (e.g., Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011). Similarly, cultivating multiple perspectives rather than striving for the one "correct" answer fosters creativity (Scott, Leritz, & Mumford, 2004). Seeking counter-factual information rather than self-confirming information may foster better judgment (Hart et al., 2009). Seeking to learn from individuals hailing from different cultures, and conversing with wise others, may foster wisdom (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Many interventions have been shown to increase capacities related to *humanity*, although not always conceptualized as a virtue. For example, exposure to moral exemplars and uncommon acts of goodness (moral beauty) experimentally elicits the emotion of *moral elevation*, characterized by feeling uplifted (moved touched, inspired, etc.), sensations of warmth, and a strong increase in motivation to emulate the virtue displayed or otherwise engage in kindness or service to others (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). Studies have shown that exposing individuals (typically college students) to videos about morally exemplary behavior leads to elevation and associated shifts in prosocial motivation and behavior (e.g., Schnall, Roper, & Fessler, 2010). A recent study at SPU showed that repeated daily exposure to real-life or fictional narratives demonstrating virtues including courage led to increased daily positive emotions and goals related to compassionately helping others, as well as reduction of goals related to protecting one's self-image or ego (Erickson et al., 2018). Additionally, feeling morally elevated by the behavior of one's manager at work predicted a host of positive outcomes (Vienello, Galliani, & Haidt, 2010), implying that community members (faculty, staff, adminstrators, etc.) may inspire generosity and care by what they model. Similarly, fostering compassionate imagery and intentions (Jazaieri et al., 2012) reflects cognitive intervention, whereas behavioral engagement in service learning (see Bringle, Reeb, Brown, & Ruiz, 2015) and deliberate acts of kindness (Nelson, Layous, Cole, & Lyubomirsky, 2016) have been shown to increase prosocial motivations and outcomes relevant to control conditions.

Similarly, the other virtue domains can be cultivated. With regard to *justice/fairness,* sharing decision-making, providing a rationale for decisions, and permitting dissenting opinions can contribute to fairness (Kim & Mauborgne, 1997). Speaking positively about one's group or team rather than the self (i.e., "we can do hard things" can foster teamwork (Son, Jackson, Grove, & Feltz, 2011). In the domain of *temperance,* thinking or writing practices can cultivate forgiveness (Baskin & Enright, 2004), daily practice of restraint can increase self-control more broadly (Baumeister et al., 2006), and writing about genuine experiences of humility, without self-criticism, might engender humility (Exline & Geyer, 2004). Finally, many studies have demonstrated the possibility of increasing character strengths in the domain of *transcendence.* For instance, exposure to stories or cases of uncommon virtue in others promotes appreciation of moral beauty or elevation (Erickson et al., 2018), and nature walks with guided attention increases mindfulness of natural beauty (Diessner, Woodward, Stacy, & Mobasher, 2015). Regular counting of one's blessings promotes gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2000). Moreover, interventions that foster specific virtues tend to also foster increase in positive emotions and markers of flourishing (e.g., Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Erickson et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2016).

Integrative Framework for Character Formation Strategies

Despite the dearth of research examining character formation programs in college settings, the social sciences have much to say with regard to change processes, given decades of research into behavior change. Thus, a broad understanding of available literature might suggest that change in any relatively stable, internal or behavioral characteristic (including character) may occur via several pathways. Here, we provide a conceptual model for understanding proximal causes for any human behavior, including virtue-related processes.

Five broad domains should be noted. Namely, individuals are confronted by or seek out (1) *situations or stimuli in their environment* that (2) trigger *cognitions* (e.g., appraisals, interpretation, reasoning) and (3) concomitant *emotions and bodily/somatic states,* which often evoke (4) relevant *behaviors*. Furthermore (5), the *consequences* of a behavior make the associated states and behaviors more or less likely to occur again in the future. Of course, cause may flow in any direction between these elements (e.g., changing behavior leads to change in emotions, and change in emotions shifts behavior), but this formulation has heuristic value and these domains serve to organize possible change strategies that may be employed at the level of individuals or systems/institutions. In other words, character formation strategies may be organized by whether they prioritize changing what students are exposed to, inviting them to think differently, arousing emotion or particular embodied experiences, encouraging direct action, and/or provide motivational incentive by external reward or helping students connect to their intrinsic values.

The integration of our aforementioned conceptual framework for interventions (changing situations, thoughts, affect/body, behavior, and incentives) with intervention science and historic Christian formation practices suggests a range of possible formation strategies by which God may form our character. We note that none of these strategies are mutually exclusive or need function in isolation.

First, strategies that entail changing one's environment involve exposure to various *situational or environmental* factors. For instance, exposure to human-created art may play a role in formation (cf. the use of ikons in Russian orthodoxy); art in all its forms may play a role (e.g., visual art, architecture, music). Exposure to God's creation and natural beauty comprises another example. Exposure to solitude or silence—removing distracting stimuli from one's environment—has served character formation ends as well (e.g., silent retreats). In addition, Christians have long celebrated exposure to story or narratives (e.g., biblical narratives, hagiography), as well as exposure to other people (e.g., mentors as models to emulate, community engagement, and interacting with those seen as "other" with different perspectives). In addition, receiving feedback about oneself from others or from valid assessment procedures constitutes another "situation" to which exposure may provide opportunity for character development. Thus, modifying situations or moving into particular environments may prompt virtue-related experiences.

Deliberate *cognitive* processing of virtue-relevant information might include sustained reflection on particular content, including thinking exercises, study of scripture, or other forms of reading (e.g., *Lectio Divina*). Activities such as reading, writing, and verbalizing ideas represent strategies for shifting cognitive processes. Spiritual formation activities related to prayer (supplication, contemplation) and worship may also feature shifting attention to and cognition, as expressions of Wesley's *works of piety.* Lastly, developing or creating ideas, products, or artwork involves full engagement of attention and creative cognitive abilities, relevant to a suite of cognitive virtues (although creation may presumably also recruit affect, body, and behavior as well).

Some strategies directly aim to *elicit particular emotions* (e.g., mourning, or fostering feelings of compassion) or shift *body states*, and we grouped these together given that emotions are so often experienced in the body (i.e., gut sensations, muscle tension, chest warmth). Strategies that target emotions generally also involve cognition, but emotion-focused strategies uniquely strive to elicit emotion itself in order to facilitate downstream experiences (e.g., experiencing lament may lead to the behavioral change of repentance). Body-focused strategies include quieting or bringing attention to the body ("being in the body"), such as particular postures to facilitate prayer. Additionally, physical training, sports, and athletic competition have been proposed as a virtue-formation strategy since at least the time of the Greeks. Of course, these activities are behavioral in nature, but the behavioral focus often centers attention and efforts on the body.

Direct action or behavioral change comprises another intervention. Rehearsal and repetition may apply to behavioral expressions of many virtues, whether in interpersonal contexts or alone. In particular, practicing prosocial behavior has figured prominently the Christian tradition (service to one's neighbor and the poor, hospitality, and other expressions of what Wesley calls *works of mercy*), and would encompass service learning and co-curricular experiences related to volunteering. "Approach behavior" of moving toward challenges, uncomfortable (feared/dislocating) experiences, and deliberate vulnerability represent opportunities for virtues related to courage. Beyond the notion of exposure to exemplars or mentors as models, engaging in social activities (role-plays, dyadic/triadic/group-work) provides opportunities for behavior change in relational contexts. Additionally, in the Christian tradition,

engagement in celebration (feasts, Sabbaths, holy days) and in the Eucharist typically occurs in communal settings, whereas periods of practicing self-denial (fasting, abstaining from some activities or electronic devices) may play a role in some virtues. Incidentally, participation in communion and fasting both constitute *works of piety* that form us.

Lastly, any of the foregoing practices may be encouraged by *incentives and consequences*. These may include reward (whether tangible or symbolic, e.g., points and letter grades) as well as aversive consequences (e.g., having to publically own one's failings in a remediation or reconciliation process). However, not all virtue requires external consequences, as we expect higher levels of moral development to emphasize pursuing virtue for its own sake or for consistency with one's higher values. Thus, reminders of one's values and identity may elicit intrinsic motivation.

In this framework, *character formation* refers to deliberate practice of situational, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and relational processes by which moral character is cultivated.

Below (Table 4) we present an integrative list of the character formation strategies we identified from theological and social science perspectives. Morever, juxtaposing these strategies with the broad VIA virtue domains (Table 5) provides a way to conceptualize and organize many character formation strategies that might be utilized by particular departments, units, faculty, or staff. In a subsequent chapter, we provide exemplars of a number of these domains reported by faculty and staff as part of our campus assessment.

Table 4. Character Formation Strategies

Environmental/ Situational	Exposure to human creation / art / spaces
	Exposure to God's creation
	Exposure to solitude / silence
	Exposure to story (fiction, cases, moral exemplars)
	Exposure to people (mentoring, diverse others, community etc.)
Cognitive	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection, reading, writing, verbalization)
	Prayer
	Worship (note of course that worship involves all of the other domains as well)
	Scripture reading / study
	Creating (generating ideas or products)
Affective/ Somatic	Eliciting emotion
	Moving the body / posture
	Being in the body (attending to body, shifting arousal)
	Physical training / competition
Behavioral	Behavioral rehearsal
	Prosocial behavior / service (including generosity, hospitality, etc.)
	Approaching challenges / feared spaces
	Fasting / self-denial
	Teamwork, social engagement, role play
	Celebration / Sabbath / feasting
Incentives	Incentives via reward (e.g., grades, praise, attention etc.)
	Incentives via aversive consequence
	Incentives via reminders of intrinsic values or identity

Table 5. Matrix of intervention strategies and character virtue domains

	Environmental/ Situational	Cognitive	Affective/ Somatic	Behavioral	Incentives
Wisdom					
Courage					
Humanity/Love					
Fairness/Justice					
Temperance					
Transcendence					

Conclusion

In summary, our review suggested that despite long traditions of thinking about character formation, there exists relatively little systematic study of character formation in the context of higher education. Among Christian and secular sister schools, many refer in their materials to character formation in general, but few seem to identify specific virtues, and even fewer articulate conceptual frameworks and link these to student experiences or outcomes. With regard to virtue assessment the PRSI may provide indirect assessment of student character, but the VIA measure provides the most well-studied assessment of self-report character virtue (although not necessarily a fully orbed assessment of Christian understandings of some of the virtues).

With regard to character formation strategies, the empirical literature provides evidence that specific, narrow virtues (e.g., gratitude, compassion) can be cultivated by intentional means, but scant research has examined character formation "packages" broadly. Drawing upon available theory and research on human change efforts, we suggest that all available character formation methods map to intervention strategies in the meta-domains of targeting environment/situation, cognition, affect/body, behavior, and incentives/consequences. The next chapter will review pilot data speaking to student character assessments and opportunities for character formation at SPU.

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CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER FORMATION AT SPU

As the title indicates, this chapter will share details of our analysis of character formation at Seattle Pacific University. We begin with a brief overview of existing evidence from external constituencies to demonstrate how SPU has been honored in the past for its excellence in character formation. We'll then offer very brief comment on recent changes to our curricular and co-curricular programs before turning to a detailed analysis of the information we gathered from a survey of faculty and staff conducted over winter quarter 2018.

Prior Studies Indicating SPU Commitment to Student Character Formation

The 1999 Templeton Report

SPU was featured prominently in a John Templeton Foundation guidebook entitled *Colleges that Encourage Character Development: A Resource for Parents, Students, and Educators*. The study included "555 profiles of exemplary programs, presidents, and colleges and universities that inspire students to lead ethical and civic-minded lives" (Templeton, p. ix). SPU was commended for its student leadership programs, its spiritual growth programs, and the character-driven vision of its president. Most significantly, SPU made the guidebook's "honor roll" of "100 colleges and universities that exhibit a strong campus-wide ethos that articulates the expectation of personal and civic responsibility in all dimensions of college life" (xii). SPU was praised for its University Foundations and Core courses, its emphasis on volunteer service, its many avenues for supporting student spiritual growth, and its Center for Relationship Development, which "helps students build positive and meaningful relationships with their families, educators, employers, potential marriage partners, and each other" (p. 352).

The 2005 Glanzer and Ream Study

In the mid-2000's, Perry L. Glanzer and Todd C. Ream (2009) engaged in a comprehensive survey of 156 different Christian colleges and universities to determine which gave significant attention to what they identified as hallmarks of a "moral education" (p. 131-157). While they did not directly investigate the presence and practice of character formation *per se*, their conclusions remain useful for our study and deserve brief comment.

Glanzer and Ream searched for the following evidences: (1) A clear moral mission; (2) the prevalence of appeals to moral ideals in marketing the school; (3) the integration of ethics into the curricular realm; (4) the integration of ethical ideals and language into the co-curricular realm; and (5) the integration of efforts being made in the curricular and co-curricular realms (p. 133). The authors chose nine schools out of the 156 that showed clear evidence of a thoroughgoing concern for moral education. Those nine were Bethel University, Calvin College, Eastern Mennonite University, George Fox University, St. Olaf College, Seattle Pacific University, the University of Dallas, the University of St. Thomas, and Xavier University. SPU was especially commended for its mission statement, which expresses the clear intent

to graduate *people of competence and character, becoming people of wisdom, and modeling grace-filled community.* The researchers saw this intent particularly actualized in SPU's University Foundations and Core curriculum, as well as in its co-curricular programs in spiritual growth and service-learning. They also highlighted the fact that efforts to form student social conscience as well as our student disciplinary processes were specifically theologically-driven (p. 141).

SPU Today

Much of what Glanzer and Ream discovered in the mid-2000's holds true for SPU today. Our mission statement still places front and center our intent to graduate "people of competence and character, becoming people of wisdom, and modeling grace-filled community." A document approved by the faculty in 2005 expands this mission into a set of *Undergraduate Degree Learning Outcomes*. According to the purpose statement, "The entire SPU community of educators and professionals across the curricular and co-curricular programs joins in commitment to seek the achievement of these outcomes and to sow the seeds for their continuing development in the lives of our students after graduation." The specific outcomes unfold as follows:

COMPETENCE	MODEL GRACE-FILLED COMMUNITY	CHARACTER FORMATION
SPU graduates will articulate discipline-specific knowledge and apply essential skills enlivened by the liberal arts. Graduates should: 　Demonstrate knowledge of Christian narrative and beliefs. 　Demonstrate knowledge in disciplinary field as articulated by the departments. 　Integrate liberal arts and disciplinary knowledge. 　Apply knowledge, inquiry, and critical thinking skills in problem-solving. 　Demonstrate a global perspective. 　Communicate effectively.	*SPU graduates will cultivate a life of friendship, civility, and community through responsible discourse and respect for each other.* Graduates should: 　Demonstrate inter-personal skills necessary for effective personal and professional relationships. 　Engage with diverse others.	*SPU graduates will embody personal and professional integrity by serving the public good in doing what is right and doing so with an awareness of consequences.* Graduates should: 　Reflect upon ideas and actions through the lens of Christian faith and ethics. 　Balance interests of self, others, and the community in pursuit of the common good.

There is much to appreciate in this learning outcomes document. Clearly SPU faculty conceive of the educational task in moral and ethical terms; students who are able to demonstrate a global perspective, communicate effectively, engage with diverse others, and balance the interests of self, others, and community will be persons of high moral character. Nevertheless, we are struck by the lack of explicit reference to Christian character formation in this document. Much of what might be construed as character talk is indexed (as one would expect of any American university) according to the more skills-based "common good humanism" of modern liberal democracies: *friendship, civility, responsible discourse, respect, engagement with diverse others, integrity, serving the public good, do what is right, pursuit of the common good.* While these are unquestionably laudable traits, we imagine they could be

articulated in a way that does more to highlight the objective of character formation at a distinctively Christian university.

Indeed, the document reflects an occasionally awkward blending of Christian and secular social narrative. Note, for instance, that the overtly Christian notion of being a "grace-filled community" is interpreted to involve cultivating "a life of friendship, civility, and community through responsible discourse and respect for each other." Again, this is an unquestionably admirable goal for communal life in liberal democracy, but what's so "grace-filled" about it? How do such practices form *Christian* character? As it is, the two bullet points that do clearly point to Christian faith are generic, disembodied, and cerebral: students should "demonstrate knowledge of Christian narrative and beliefs," and "reflect upon ideas and actions through the lens of Christian faith and ethics." Such a formulation risks communicating the idea that Christianity is little more than a way of thinking about the world that enables a person to be a better American citizen.

A number of other changes have taken place since the Glanzer and Ream study in the mid-2000's, a thorough accounting of which extends far beyond the purpose of this study. Nevertheless, we highlight three specific areas for the sake of illustrating both what SPU is doing and what it could be doing better when it comes to the intentional character formation of its students. In particular, we highlight changes in the General Education curriculum, the development of the co-curricular vision for "Falcon Formation," and the professional development work being done in the New Faculty Seminar hosted by the Center for Faculty Scholarship and Development.

The General Education Curriculum

The GE curriculum has long been divided into Common and Exploratory Curricula, but revisions made to each have been rolled out over the 2013-18 academic years. Students are informed that the eight required Common Curriculum courses "are designed to help you develop critical academic skills, to understand and engage our multicultural and complex world, and to embrace the Christian story as you become biblically and theologically literate." The Exploratory curriculum requires students to choose six "Ways of Knowing" courses, which are designed to help them "articulate how disciplines know the world (epistemology) and how disciplinary ways of knowing compare and contrast." Many of the courses on the options list are in fact introductory courses for particular academic disciplines. Students then take one additional "Ways of Engaging" course, which is designed to "apply knowledge from 'Ways of Knowing' fields to significant social issues, so that through these classes you might engage our world thoughtfully, as befits people seeking wisdom."

Reading over the course descriptions (both on the main General Education web pages as well as the individual time schedule course descriptions) it seems that much of what is being taught and experienced might very well map on to various virtue streams, but that mapping is not made explicit. Presumably terms like "understand," "engage" and "embrace" aspire to actual changes in character formation, but none are made clear in the descriptions.

This is also the case in a context where one could expect to find overt language of character formation, that is, in the new Cultural Understanding and Engagement (CUE) requirement. This one-course

requirement "helps prepare students for a rapidly changing and increasingly culturally complex world." The available courses listed may address any of the following: (1) understanding patterns and histories of inequity; (2) understanding one or more cultures and the dynamics of cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender differences; (3) preparing students for vocations with cultivation of diverse workplaces, conflict resolution, peacemaking, and community development; or (4) articulating reconciliation as participation in God's reconciling work in the world. Here again the word "engage" seems to function as a cipher for learning activities that are formative of student character, but such outcomes aren't clearly articulated. Also, while one of the four categories is clearly rooted in the Christian narrative, the other three are not (note the "or" preceding the fourth, explicitly Christian category), and even that one is cognitive/verbal in orientation—"articulating reconciliation as participation in God's reconciling work in the world." The foregoing aims may, for instance, map onto higher-order virtues of Christian wisdom, justice, and humanity/love. Providing a more overtly theological rationale for the requirement as a whole would increase the coherence of its vision and purpose and more readily enable its mapping onto specific Christian virtues.

Character in the Co-Curricular Vision for Falcon Formation

Over the past few years the student life team has been working under the direction of Vice President Jeff Jordan to clarify how the *co-curricular* experience at SPU actualizes the university's mission to form student competence and character. The primary webpage includes the following graphic and description of "Falcon Formation."

> *"We think the work we are doing is changing the lives of our students, as well as our own. And when we talk about Falcon Formation, we mean the whole person, in a combination unique to the SPU experience. When you're a student at Seattle Pacific, whether you are attending class, participating in a club, leading a Bible study, playing on an intramural team, or setting up a meeting with a career counselor, you are participating in, and being shaped by, Falcon Formation. These concepts certainly aren't new to the life of Seattle Pacific University, but this is a way of defining what we have been doing for decades — the combination of these ways of learning and engaging are unique to the SPU experience."*

An "about" page delves deeper into this co-curricular vision, articulating its intent and goals to each major SPU constituency— prospective students, current students, parents, and faculty and staff. Subsequent pages then describe more precisely how each of the six contextual "nodes" of formative experience (1) shapes student self-awareness, (2) through experiential learning, which (3) results in particular demonstrable competencies. The following chart illustrates this vision and includes a list of co-curricular departments and programs charged with targeting each formative experience.

Table 6. Falcon Formation framework

	Community and Leadership Development	Cultural Understanding and Engagement	Faith Formation and Christian Service	Health and Wellness	Integrated Learning and Academic Success	Vocation and Calling
Awareness of Self in Context	Articulate awareness of the identity, values, attitudes, and expectations they bring to participation in the communities in which they live.	Demonstrate awareness of their personal and cultural lenses and describe significant contributors to their sense of ethnic, cultural, and gender identity.	Describe how the Christian story influences their choice-making and sense of vocation within God's work of reconciliation.	Demonstrate the ability to assess their levels of stress/distress and identify appropriate practices and resources for regular self-care and support.	Identify and be mindful of their strengths, weaknesses, patterns, and approaches in the learning process.	Identify their skills, gifts, strengths, and limitations and apply this knowledge to discernment and decision-making related to who they are becoming.
Experiential Learning	Explore and reflect on characteristics of healthy relationships and safe/inclusive groups, including appropriate communication and boundary setting.	Engage and reflect on experiences that familiarize them with reconciliation practices and issues related to ideas of privilege, systemic injustice, inclusivity, difference, and marginalization.	Engage and reflect on experiences that are formative to Christian faith, including corporate worship, small group discipleship, spiritual disciplines, and service in an urban context.	Engage and reflect on healthy practices related to fitness, nutrition and diet, sleep, substance use, sex, mental health, and personal safety.	Engage and reflect on experiences that foster intellectual curiosity, promote openness to new knowledge, and draw on multiple domains of learning.	Engage and reflect on various learning opportunities and experiences that cultivate and explore their sense of identity and purpose.
Competencies	Demonstrate the ability to positively influence and contribute to the communities in which they live.	Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to effectively navigate and engage a diverse and culturally complex global society.	Demonstrate practices for ongoing personal and communal faith development and faithful Christian witness in the world.	Demonstrate the ability to manage and make informed decisions regarding their mental, physical, and overall health and well-being.	Demonstrate the knowledge, strategies and attitudes that promote academic success.	Demonstrate proficiency in job and graduate school search skills and the ability to effectively communicate their vocational journeys and sense of calling.
Associated Departments and Programs	Associate Students of Seattle Pacific (ASSP) Campus Ministries Perkins Center for Reconciliation, Leadership Training, Community Dev. Multi-Ethnic Programs Residence Life Student Clubs Student Involvement and Leadership	Diversity, Justice, and Reconciliation Perkins Center for RLTCD Multi-Ethnic Programs Residence Life Student Involvement and Leadership Study Abroad VP for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Campus Ministries Center for Biblical and Theological Education Perkins Center for Reconciliation, Leadership Training, Community Dev. Student Ministry Coordinators University Chaplain	Disability Support Services Health Services International Students Intramurals Resources for Veterans and Dependents Student Counseling Center Student Support Team Wellness Initiative	Center for Learning Computer and Information Systems International Students Resources for Vets and Dependents Study Abroad Student Academic Svc Student Financial Svc Tutoring University Scholars Writing Program	Center for Applied Learning Center for Career and Calling Innovation Lab Mentor Program Student Employment Student Involvement and Leadership

We consider this to be an excellent step forward in SPU's articulation of a clear vision of human flourishing embodied in an intentional, well thought-out program. It may be that Community and Leadership Development, Cultural Understanding and Engagement, and Christian Service targets map to and blend the VIA domains of wisdom, justice, and humanity/love. We would recommend a slight extension of the framework by mapping its formative efforts in terms of the specific virtues each program area targets.

Character in the New Faculty Seminar

Our first chapter concluded with an emphasis on the important role faculty play in the formation of a university that seeks to be intentional about character formation. Perry Glanzer reminded us that faculty at a character-focused Christian school must be capable of mentoring students to "help them understand what loving God looks like when engaged in a particular discipline." This means that universities must hire people who "demonstrate not only expertise and the willingness to sign a confessional statement, but also the thinking, heart, virtues, and practices related to a well-lived Christian life, and the willingness to commend these things to others" (Glanzer, 2012, 21-23). While SPU faculty demonstrate the first two (expertise and the signing of a confessional statement) during their hiring process, the latter, more *owned* criterion is pressed through participation in the New Faculty Seminar, which is taken over winter quarter in the first year of full-time employment. For its part, the university demonstrates its commitment to this seminar by affording new faculty a course release that quarter to enable their full participation.

Among other things, the seminar is deeply rooted in helping new faculty understand SPU's Free Methodist heritage and how it shapes campus life and culture. Specifically, it targets

> the desire to honor God in the vocation of Christian Higher Education and, in the words of Charles Wesley, "to u*nite* the pair so long disjoined, *knowledge and vital piety*." Whether it is scholarly integration of Christian faith, scripture and theology with research and teaching or a pastoral heart in advising, mentoring and service, at SPU we seek to educate the whole person, developing wisdom and character along with competence and igniting a servant's heart that is willing to engage a calling to go out and change some part of world… The purpose of this seminar is to introduce you to the living legacy of these founders and what it means to be a University that is historically orthodox, clearly evangelical, genuinely ecumenical, and informed by our Wesleyan tradition" (*New Faculty Seminar Syllabus,* p.1)

Over ten weekly meetings, the seminar affords new faculty space to reflect intentionally on how their own faith and vocation is lived out in a place like SPU. Weekly topics include: (1) why Christian higher education matters and how it looks different than secular education; (2) the legacy of John and Charles Wesley and how their theology has shaped SPU; (3) an introduction to our founding denomination, Free Methodism, and its impact on SPU; (4) how to understand their career as a university teacher and scholar as a *Christian* vocation; (5) an exploration of their own Christian faith through a close analysis of SPU's faith statement; and (6) how they might bear their Christian faith in their work with students. Among the four major writing assignments, two are focused on helping faculty prepare crucially

important essays which are required for their tenure application files, that is, their expanded faith and vocation statements.

Once again, we commend SPU its work in this area, as it is precisely the sort of extended effort Glanzer recommends for a university that emphasizes the formation of Christian character. This program embodies the idea that continued formation of faculty and staff should coexist alongside efforts at student character formation.

Survey of SPU Faculty and Staff about Character Formation Strategies

One way to assess whether students at SPU receive opportunities for character formation is to examine the experiences provided to students by faculty and staff. We engaged in a pilot study with the aim of learning more about such opportunities, to address questions about the virtues pursued and strategizes targeting them. We initially met with various groups on campus (e.g., faculty senate, staff council) to provide an overview, then sent several rounds of emails with links to the survey, which we created on the Qualtrics online survey tool. We provided several concrete examples of ways in which faculty or staff might foster character in students, then invited participants to respond to six open-ended prompts (one for each of the six broad virtue domains):

1. What is a concrete example of how you help students develop wisdom and intellectual virtues (e.g., wisdom, good judgment, creativity, curiosity, love of learning)?

2. What is a concrete example of how you help students develop courage (e.g., bravery, persistence, honesty/integrity, and willingness to "seize the day" [zest])?

3. What is a concrete example of how you help students develop concern for others (e.g., kindness/altruism, generosity, selfless love, social intelligence, or ability to understand and relate to others)?

4. What is a concrete example of how you help students develop a commitment to justice/fairness (e.g., citizenship, teamwork, fairness, or just leadership)?

5. What is a concrete example of how you help students develop virtues of temperance or appropriate self-constraint (e.g., self-control or self-regulation, prudence or wise caution, humility, or forgiveness)?

6. What is a concrete example of how you help students develop virtues that help them transcend or see beyond the struggles of the moment (e.g., faith or reliance upon Christ, hope, gratitude, appreciation of beauty in the world, or humor)?

We reasoned that open-ended responses would yield a wealth of concrete examples of experiences available to students at SPU, as well as data that we might code into a range of categories related to our questions (*type of virtue, type of character formation strategy, method of delivering the strategy, and whether responses included relational and explicitly Christian reference*). Respondents were asked to respond to at least three of the virtue domains (to limit burden on participants while inviting diverse

responses). They were asked to provide examples that represented their regular practices (as opposed to a one-time experience).

Our aim was to receive representative responses from all major units across campus, with a target of at least 20% of faculty in each unit. The response rates (see Table 7) suggested that overall we heard from a substantial portion of the faculty (*N* = 75, 33% of faculty). Although faculty were represented across all schools, relatively fewer responses came from data from CAS-Sciences and the School of Business, Government, and Economics, whereas the School of Education and CAS-Arts and Humanities provided relatively more responses. We realize that faculty are busy and non-response is hard to interpret; however, we wondered whether the lower response rates from some schools might reflect faculty in some disciplines finding it more challenging to conceptualize their roles and pedagogy in terms of character formation.

Table 7. Faculty and Staff Response Rates to Pilot Survey of Student Opportunities for Character Formation

STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF DEPARTMENT/UNIT
Faculty		
CAS-A&H	23	43%
CAS-SCI	9	9%
Library	3	27%
SBGE	4	14%
SHS	4	22%
SOE	16	72%
SOT	6	27%
SPFC	10	27%
TOTAL	**75**	
Representative Staff Leaders (responding after consulting their staff teams)		
Athletics	1	
Campus Ministries & Perkins Center	2	
Center for Career & Calling	1	
Multi-Ethnic Programs	1	
Residence Life	1	
School of Education	1	
Total	**7**	

We received a much lower response rate from staff, but we should note that these numbers are misleading because staff leaders opted to consult with their team members as larger groups, discuss the survey questions together (i.e., during weekly meetings), and collate team responses. These leaders or representatives subsequently responded on behalf of their teams. This means that each staff response actually represented the perspectives of whole groups of staff members.

After collecting and cleaning the data, two of the task force members (Nienhuis and Erickson) broke faculty and staff verbatim responses into codable units and coded them into *a priori* categories (e.g., based on the aforementioned VIA virtue categories and character formation strategies), although some additional categories emerged during the process. Some codes were completed independently, with periodic review to limit rater drift, but all codes were ultimately reviewed for consensus. Over 900 responses were coded.

First, we examined the question of whether faculty and staff spontaneously provided *explicit reference to Christian theme*s in their responses. Interestingly, the responses were significantly more likely to omit explicitly Christian references (76.9%) than to incorporate them (23.1%), χ^2 (1, N = 321) = 93.24, p <.001. This suggests that a majority of respondents did not spontaneously articulate Christian themes or practices when generating virtue formation strategies.

With regard to *the context of character formation strategies*, respondents were only slightly more likely to report *interpersonal* contexts for formation (55.3%; defined as involving direct give-and-take social interaction, rather than passively receiving lectures) relative to non-interpersonal contexts (44.7%), χ^2 (1; N = 320) = 3.61, p = .057. This suggests that faculty and staff viewed both social and individual activities as relevant to character formation.

For *delivery of strategies*, nearly half entailed active-experiential learning (49.9%), whereas 36.9% featured passive reception of lecture or visual media and 13.2% featured readings, χ^2 (2; N = 439) = 91.08, p < .001. These percentages are consistent both with a diverse range of options as well as tendency for faculty and staff to emphasize hands-on activities rather than passive consumption of media, in line with recent shifts in academia toward problem-based, active learning and "flipped" pedagogy.

For *specific types of virtues* that faculty/staff reported cultivating, strategies to form wisdom and related intellectual virtues were disproportionally present compared to the other five higher-order virtue domains χ^2 (6; N = 968) = 286.07, p < .001 (see Figure 1). This is consistent with the idea of college experience as most directly targeting cognitive skills such as critical thinking and perspective-taking. Although respondents provided fewer examples from the other virtue domains, there appeared to be representation across all domains.

Inspection of the narrower, specific virtues that make up the higher-order virtue domains suggested that faculty and staff endorsed a wide range of virtues, but provided relatively more examples of ways to cultivate *judgment, fairness, kindness, and "spirituality"*— though it should be noted that we chose to code the VIA "spirituality" category in terms of whether the faculty or staff used explicitly spiritual

language (regardless of whether respondent conceived of the character formation effort in explicitly Christian terms).

By contrast, respondents endorsed relatively few examples depicting virtues such as *love (mutual relatedness), forgiveness, prudence, gratitude, zest, and humor*. This echoes findings from research across 75 countries suggesting that some virtues are consistently low across contexts (modesty, self-regulation, prudence, forgiveness) (McGrath et al., 2014). But it also dovetails with our anecdotal sense of many SPU students as valuing prosocial service and social justice, but also feeling relatively anxious and distressed—too infrequently experiencing internal states (i.e., zest) that might renew them and enable them to sustain such prosocial activities over the long haul. Our students appear to be doing more "out-breathing" than "in-breathing" (Dahlstrom, 2018), and our data implies that faculty and staff may be modeling or reinforcing this state of affairs. It is worth recalling that this imbalance correlates directly with Wesley's concern about the pursuit of "righteousness/justice" without pursuing love, joy, and peace, which are "the divine means both of preserving and increasing" righteousness.

Figure 1. Histograms of Virtues Coded in Faculty/Staff Responses (Broad and Specific Virtues)
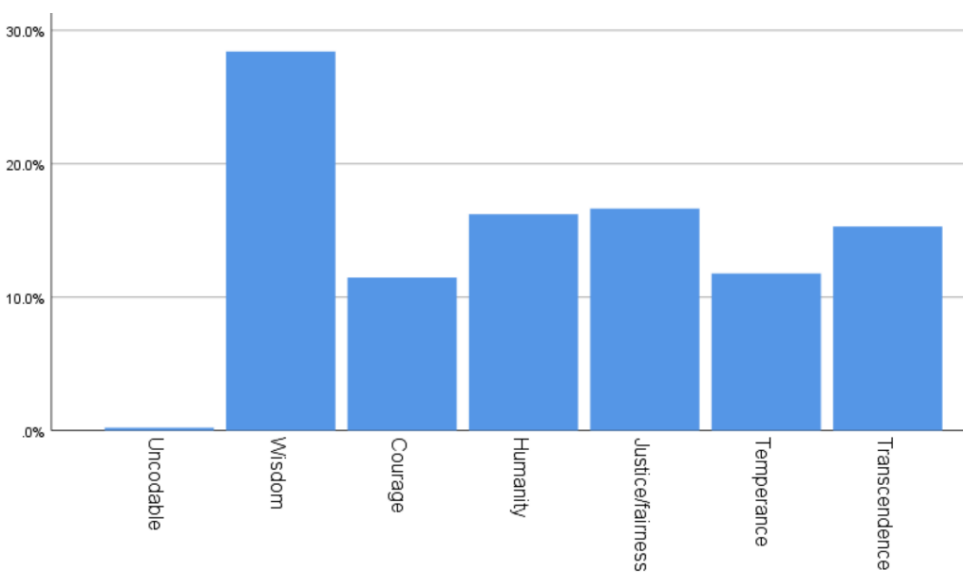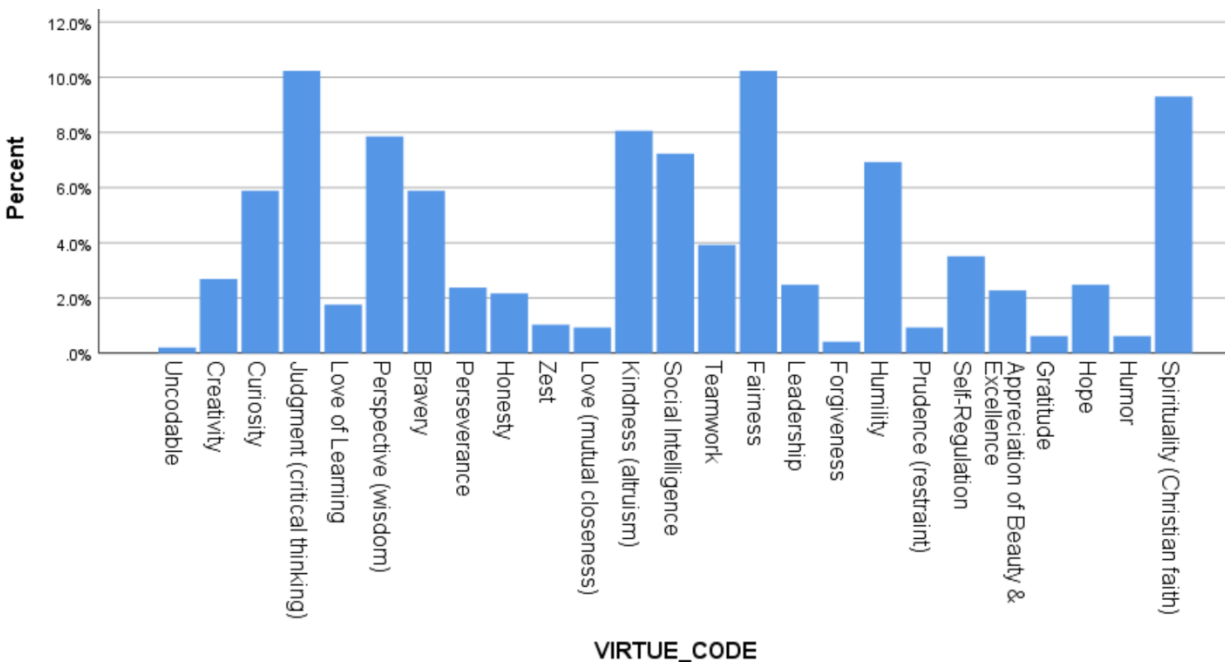
Breaking down the broad virtue categories *by major SPU schools and units* reveals that wisdom-related virtues were fairly consistent across most units, although several other patterns were evident (see Figure 2). Specifically, School of Business, Government, and Economics (SBGE), School of Health Sciences (SHS), and College of Arts and Sciences-Sciences (CAS-SCI) also frequently endorsed examples related to justice. Ministry/Perkins Center's most frequent virtue was justice as well, consistent with its mission. Residence Life, Multi-Ethnic Programs (MEP)/Health/Counseling Centers, and Librarians endorsed relatively higher humanity-related virtues, suggesting that these units may emphasize relational service. The Library and Center for Learning/Center for Career and Calling were unique in a relatively higher focus on transcendence virtues. Athletics' most frequent virtue noted was courage, which comports with the narrative that athletic training and competition foster persistence and embracing challenges. Thus, although many units targeted intellectual virtues, units identified some relative strengths commensurate with their roles or disciplines.
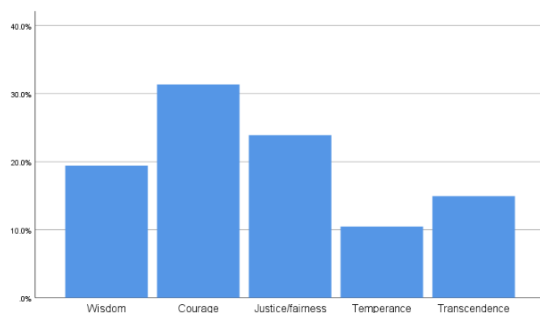
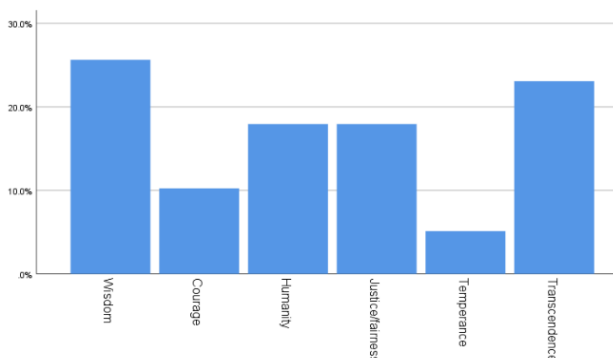**Figure 2. Virtue Domains by School/Unit**

Residence Life
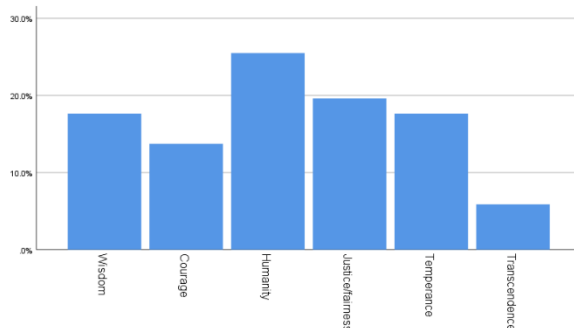
Multi-Ethnic Programs / Health Center / Counseling Center
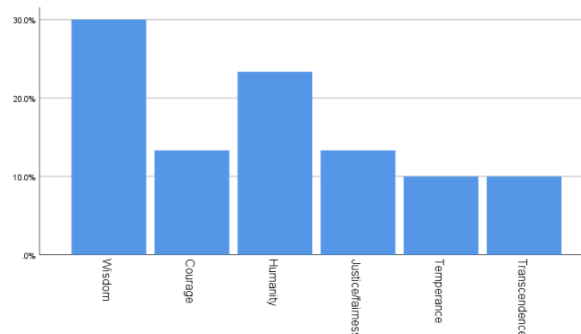
Student Involvement & Leadership/Athletics

Library

Center for Learning/Center for Career and Calling
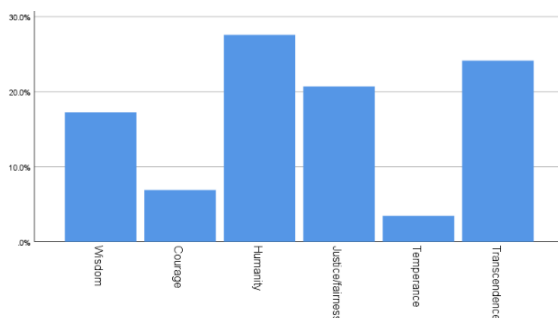
Ministries / Perkins Center
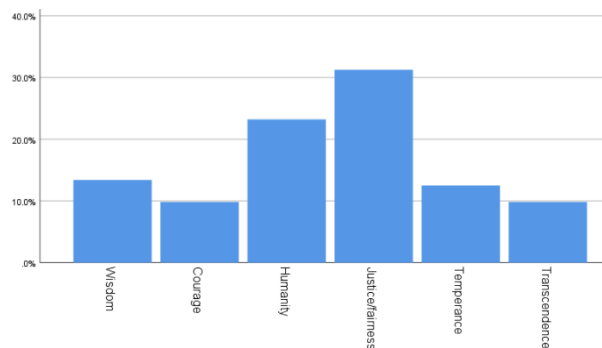
Turning to broad *character formation strategies*, faculty and staff most frequently described *cognitive* methods (i.e., encouraging students to think, read, or reflect) relative to all other activities χ^2 (5; $N =$ 736) = 434.29, p < .001 (see Figure 3). This finding remains consistent with our data showing a relative emphasis on wisdom-related virtues. Environmental and behavioral strategies were significantly more likely than use of incentives, which was significantly more likely than affective/somatic strategies (all differences significant at p <.001). These results suggest relatively broad use of strategies related to exposing students to new environments, challenging their thinking, and shifting behavior. However, relatively few examples referenced affective and somatic strategies, perhaps reflecting western, academic, and Protestant biases toward intellectual aspects of Christian life over emotion and the body. Also, relatively few examples provided information about incentives. Perhaps the use of incentives seems "unspiritual" and counter to the notion of virtues as their own rewards, but these findings might suggest the need to remind ourselves that incentives can shape any behavior (including those related to character), and to make exemplars of character formation strategies that target emotion and the body accessible and available to faculty and staff. We provide such examples from faculty/staff responses in Table 8, below.

Figure 3. Broad Character Formation Strategies Described by Faculty/Staff
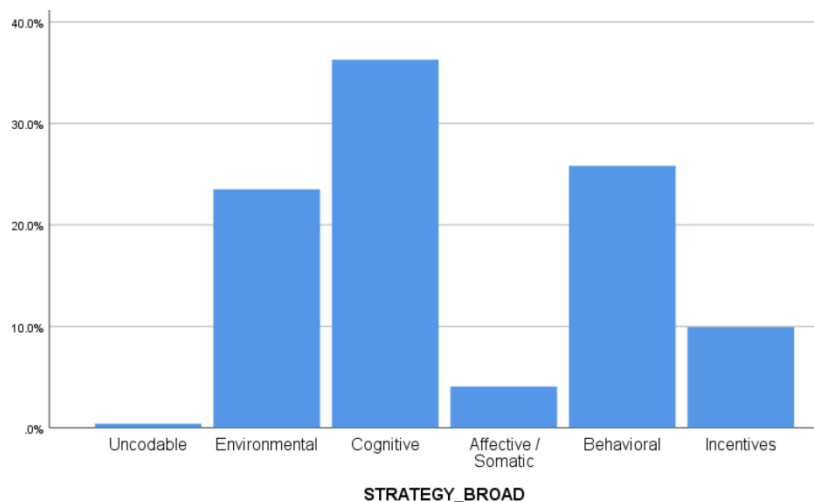
Examination of *specific character formation strategies* expands on the theme that fostering deliberate cognitive processing (e.g., via reflection, reading, writing, and oration) constituted the primary strategy reported (see Figure 4). Though reported at lower levels in general, other relatively frequent strategies endorsed included exposure to people (e.g., mentors or diverse others), approaching challenges or feared spaces, incentives via reward, prosocial behavior or service, teamwork, exposure to assessment feedback, exposure to story (cases, fiction, exemplars), and behavioral rehearsal. Very few entries pertained to other categories. Of note, almost no faculty and staff referenced exposure to God's creation, exposure to silence/solitude, worship, fasting/self-denial, celebration/feasting/Sabbath, which represent traditional Christian formation practices. Physical training/competition and aversive incentives were also infrequent.

Figure 4. Specific Character Formation Strategies Described by Faculty/Staff
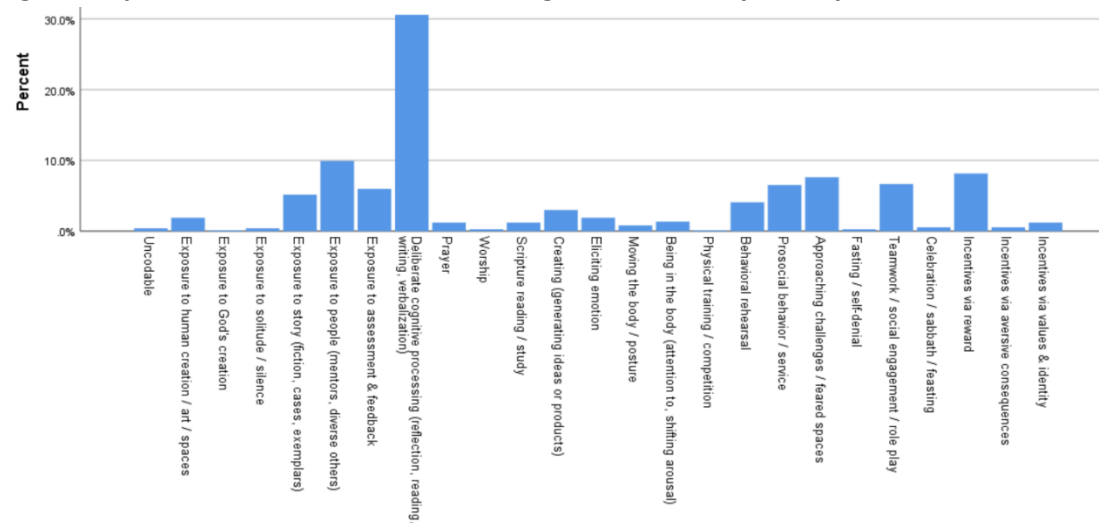
Lastly, we examined the intersection of virtue types with formation types (see Figure 5). These data further suggest broad use of a range of strategies across the virtues, implying that students have access to a host of opportunities for cultivating character.

Figure 5. Broad Virtue Domains Broken Down by Broad Character Formation Strategy
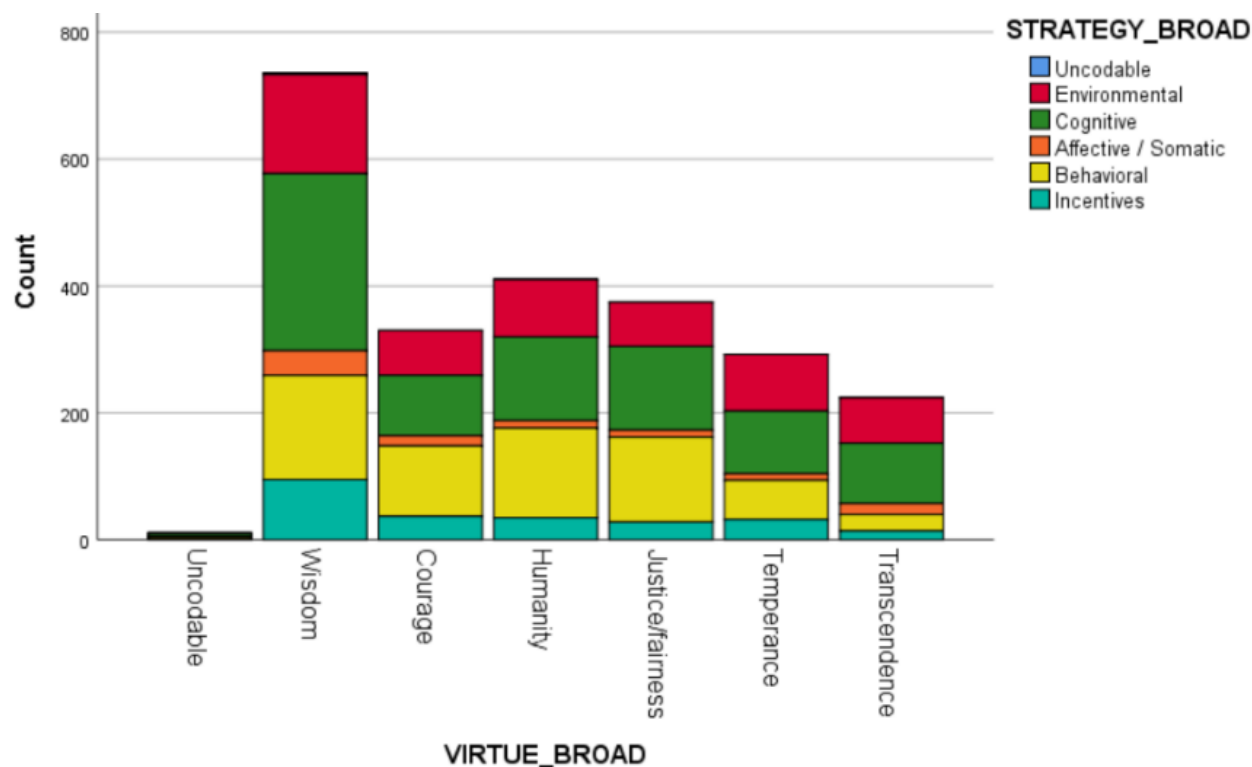
Anecdotally, during the process of coding faculty/staff responses we became aware of substantial variability in the concreteness and quality of answers, ranging from sparse, one-word offerings (e.g., "reflection," "testimony") to articulate, well-orbed rationales and strategies. Although we did not code for quality of responses, we believe that some less-developed responses serve as indicators that faculty/staff have not often had structured opportunities to consider their roles in terms of specific character formation strategies and virtues. Perhaps in some disciplines, for instance, faculty might not naturally conceptualize their roles as fostering particular virtues. Toward that end, we hope to provide a framework and concrete examples.

See Table 8 for representative, exemplary models of character formation opportunities described by SPU faculty and staff (see additional examples in the Appendix). Inspection of these examples suggests several interesting observations. First, when asked to share examples of opportunities that they provide for student character formation, faculty and staff tended to provide activities and experiences that could be coded as fostering multiple virtues or character strengths. For example, when asked to provide an example of eliciting courage, a member of the theatre department described activities that might provide occasion to exercise not only bravery but also perseverance, creativity, and humility. Second,

"interventions" presented can range from more complex and explicitly character-focused (theological assignment that fosters attention to justice) to simple pedagogical practices that we might not immediately recognize as forming character (incorporating strategically timed quizzes to foster temperance or self-regulation). Additionally, some interventions emphasized focus on virtue-related content, whereas others featured staff or faculty related to students in virtuous ways or modeling virtuous ways of being. Further examples from a broader range of staff and faculty units may be found in the appendix.

Table 8. Representative Exemplars of Faculty/Staff Character Formation Strategies

DEPARTMENT (of response provider)	VIRTUE PROMPT	RESPONSE	CODED VIRTUE	CODED STRATEGY
Family and Consumer Sciences	WISDOM	I present human development from a wellness model; there are multiple dimensions that speak to much more than physical health or simply the absence of disease. Because [this course] is a required course, I attempt to find an interesting angle to connect the various majors. On the first day of class I survey my students and ask if, at this point in time, they think they want to have children. I also ask them to list what they want to learn from this course. On the second day of class, I share with my students that percentage who want to be parents (overwhelming majority) and inform them that this our common ground--this course will provide evidence-based approaches to healthy development, including best practices for parents and those who have children/young adults in their sphere of influence. Showing my students how they can use this knowledge now and how they can transfer this knowledge in the future helps them stay engaged in the content. I also take their statements about what they want to learn in this course and put several of them up on a slide, one comment at a time, so that they can see what their peers are interested in learning. I remind my students that one major goal of education is to have piqued their curiosity about this subject so when the time comes, they will be interested in learning more about, for example, specific developmental milestones for their newborn child and know where to find the information. I believe this combination of finding a common teaching platform to reach a diverse student classroom and leveraging students' desire to learn how they may grow healthfully, including their future children, helps them make the connection between life-long learning and their long-term health and well-being.	Curiosity, Perspective, Love, Kindness, Leadership	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Exposure to story (media, fiction, saints, etc.)
Theatre	COURAGE	As we rehearse a play, students are invited to work from a place of courage over and over again. Every time we, as actors, step onto the rehearsal room floor we are taking a leap of faith and every time (if we are lucky) the Director provides us with feedback of what we can nuance and/or do better. There is always the possibility of failure, and there is always the necessity to persist. In fact, it is only by courageous persistence that a character becomes embodied and a play becomes audience-ready. At that point, a whole new level of courage is required to give the play away to an audience.	Bravery, Perseverance, Creativity, Humility	Direct behavioral rehearsal; Moving into challenge/discomfort; Self-assessment/feedback
English	HUMANITY	Again in [this course], we focus a lot of attention on reading generously. I see this as a matter of loving our neighbors. It does no one any good to read a text and assume the author is an incompetent fool. But it's quite hard to read the text generously, even when we disagree with it. This goes back to being able to say "no, but ..." to an author.	Kindness, Curiosity, Judgment, Self-Regulation	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Prosocial behavior/service
Theology	JUSTICE	Here is a midterm exam question for [this course], which begins with a study of the Reformations of the Sixteenth Century: The Seminarian as Reformer: You are a student at Seattle Pacific Seminary, and, if you choose to answer this question, you must stay in that role and formulate your answer accordingly. Your task is to write a letter either to the deans and faculty of SPS or to the pastor(s) and chief decision-making body of a church with which you are very familiar (e.g., one you grew up in or currently serve). You have identified certain "problem" in the school or congregation (theological error, ethical misconduct, spiritual malaise, programmatic inadequacy, liturgical aberration, cultural insensitivity, etc.) and you feel yourself conscience-bound both to formally express your disapproval of these problems and to map out concrete proposals for reform. It is not enough and indeed, it would not be proper to write an angry rant or threatening ultimatum, even if you are angry, and even if your anger is warranted by the circumstances. Rather, you must write a graciously worded, biblically grounded and theologically argued manifesto. You must give evidence that you have some understanding of both the cause(s) and effect(s) of the problem(s) you have identified, and you must display love and respect for all involved. You might model your answer on Martin Luther's Disputations (an itemized list of issues needing public discussion), or on John Calvin's Necessity of Reforming the Churches (a programmatic essay), or on the Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia (as an inventory of grievances). But other suitable formats might occur to you.	Prudence, Social Intelligence, Leadership, Judgment, Bravery	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.) Moving into challenge/discomfort; Exposure to story (media, fiction, saints, etc.); Incentives via reward
Psychology	TEMPERANCE	In [my courses], I have students write forgiveness letters. Importantly, they identify an individual in their life who has hurt them and write the first letter to themselves from the transgressor. The second letter they write is a response letter back to the transgressor. We discuss how these letters are not always appropriate to deliver, but students find that even having the forgiveness conversations written down with themselves from both perspectives is a transformative experience.	Perspective, Forgiveness, Social Intelligence, Humility, Bravery	Moving into challenge/discomfort; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Prosocial behavior/service; Incentives via reward
Communication	TRANSCENDENCE	In [this course], we study Phil 4:2-9 as a way to check our own hearts and take responsibility for the ways that we have contributed to a conflict. The 5 steps that come out of this passage are to 1) Rejoice in the Lord (look to God and rejoice in who He is and where we see Him in the conflict situation AND thank therapy), thanking God for all that is good (both in the conflict situation and outside of it) 2) responding with a Gentle tone of voice 3) replacing anxiety with prayer, 4) looking for the good in our opponent and 5) practicing these things. These steps help students to look to God, practice thankfulness and be intentional about looking for the good in other people.	Kindness, Humility, Self-Regulation, Gratitude, Hope, Spirituality	Being in one's body; Prayer; Scripture reading; Self-assessment/feedback

SPU Student Values in Action Survey Self-Report Data

Additionally, as a second form of pilot data, SPU students completed self-report measures of the VIA virtues, the Values in Action survey. A total of 244 students in psychology courses completed the measure as part of other research. They included a broad range of freshmen in General Psychology sections (i.e., a general education survey course), as well as Lifespan Development (typically freshmen and sophomores) and Senior Seminar (Psychology) classes. Thus, the sample is not representative of all SPU students, but nonetheless provides a snapshot of self-perceptions across a range of students.

Here (see Table 9), we report the standardized score for each virtue scale relative to the sample average and ranked them to inform questions of which strengths were most and least endorsed (standardized or z-scores = deviation from the sample mean, divided by standard deviation; positive scores indicate higher scores relative to the average level of the virtues, and negative scores indicate virtues scoring below the average level of virtue endorsement). On average, students reported *relatively high endorsement of characteristics related to honesty, kindness, fairness, appreciation of beauty/excellence, and love.* Conversely, their *lowest virtues reported included self-regulation, zest, forgiveness, creativity, bravery, and humility.* Students reported higher honesty and gratitude here compared to lower faculty/staff reports of opportunities to cultivate those virtues. The findings of relative strengths in kindness and justice, and relatively lower levels of zest, creativity, humor, love of learning, forgiveness, and self-regulation seem to mirror the faculty/staff data on virtues that faculty/staff reported fostering, in some ways. They paint a picture of students who focus on equality and service to others (and honesty, as a form of authenticity), but might under-develop the virtues that energize oneself and make one's endeavors sustainable in the longer term.

Table 9. Values in Action Student Self-Report, Ranked by Highest Virtues on Average

VIA Virtue	Z-score (higher numbers reflect relative frequency above the average level of virtues endorsed)
Honesty	1.89
Kindness	1.49
Fairness	1.05
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence	.97
Love	.69
Curiosity	.61
Gratitude	.57
Prudence	.49
Judgment	.45
Spirituality	.41
Perspective	.32
Teamwork	.20
Hope	.20

Love of Learning	.20
Social Intelligence	-.12
Humor	-.20
Leadership	-.28
Perseverance	-.56
Humility	-.96
Bravery	-1.04
Creativity	-1.25
Forgiveness	-1.36
Zest	-1.56
Self-Regulation	-2.21

SPU Personality and Social Responsibility (PSRI) Data

As an additional indicator of the character strengths of our students, we examined their scores on the Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI). In 2014, SPU students (N = 473 students [74 freshman, 94 sophomores, 148 juniors, 157 seniors]) and professional respondents (N =306 academic administrators, faculty, student affairs professionals) completed this survey. As already noted, this measure of university social climate assesses the five factors of *Striving for Excellence, Cultivating Academic Integrity, Contributing to a Larger Community, Taking Seriously the Perspectives of Others, and Developing Competence in Ethical and Moral Reasoning and Action*). Participants responded to all items on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale.

Although the PSRI factors overlap conceptually with VIA virtue domains, the PSRI does not directly assess student character. Nonetheless, one might view the extent to which individuals value virtue as one indicator of character. For instance, on average, students strongly endorsed that "it is important to develop a strong work ethic in my academic activities" (M = 4.72, SD = 0.60; vs. national M = 4.55, SD = 0.74), and "helping students to develop their ethical and moral reasoning should be a major focus of this campus" (M = 4.57, SD = 0.72). Nonetheless, most of the PSRI items target the social "climate" of the university, focusing on perceptions of campus values and whether the university fosters them. Thus, this measure is more germane to general perceptions of whether the university contributes to character formation rather than indexing student character *per se*.

Overall, students and professionals were slightly more likely to report student growth on the PSRI dimensions relative to national norms (Table 10 and 11). Some of these items may map onto the VIA virtue domains (e.g., work ethic may reflect courage and temperance, commitment to the greater good maps to humanity or justice, and ability to learn from diverse perspectives may map to justice and wisdom).

Table 10

	Student Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Students' perceptions of their growth on the dimensions	4.04	0.72	3.90	0.80
Students develop a stronger work ethic because of their experiences at this campus	3.92	0.91	3.81	1.00
My experiences at this campus have helped me to further develop my own work ethic	4.13	0.95	3.96	1.06
My experiences at this campus have helped me develop a better understanding of academic integrity	3.91	0.92	3.92	1.06
My experiences at this campus have helped expand my awareness of the importance of being involved in the community and contributing to the greater good	4.06	1.02	3.80	1.09
My experiences at this campus have helped me deepen my commitment to contribute to the greater good	4.02	1.07	3.73	1.11
My experiences at this campus have increased my ability to learn from diverse perspectives	4.23	0.88	4.15	0.92
My experiences at this campus have further developed my ability to consider the moral/ethical dimensions of issues	4.22	0.95	3.91	1.02

Table 11

	Professional Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Campus professionals' perceptions of students' growth on the dimensions	4.31	0.49	4.14	0.64
Students usually have an increased capacity for ethical and moral reasoning at graduation than they had at the beginning of college	4.45	0.67	4.09	0.85
Students usually have an expanded awareness of the importance of being involved in the community and contributing to the greater good at the end of their time on campus than they had at the beginning of college	4.54	0.63	4.18	1.04
Students here develop an increased ability to gather and thoughtfully use evidence to support their ideas during their studies on campus	4.27	0.67	4.17	0.82
During the time students are here, they develop an increased ability to understand evidence, analysis, and the perspectives of others even when they disagree	4.23	0.70	4.14	0.84
Students usually have an increased capacity to learn from diverse perspectives at graduation than they had at the beginning of college	4.34	0.69	4.25	0.81
Students usually have a better understanding of academic integrity when they graduate than they demonstrated at the beginning of college	4.25	0.72	4.15	0.87
Students have a stronger work ethic at the end of their studies here	4.15	0.76	3.98	0.87

With regard to specific findings of SPU strengths, students generally reported viewing the university as fostering *ethical and moral reasoning* to an extent higher than national norms (Table 12).

Table 12

	Student Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
General climate for ethical and moral reasoning	4.11	0.77	3.72	0.87
Helping students to develop their ethical and moral reasoning is a major focus of this campus	4.28	0.89	3.64	1.04
This campus helps students to develop their ethical and moral reasoning, including the ability to express and act upon personal values responsibly	4.10	0.96	3.71	1.00
The importance of developing a personal sense of ethical and moral reasoning is frequently communicated to students	3.98	1.03	3.61	1.07
This campus provides opportunities for students to develop their ethical and moral reasoning in their **academic work**	4.16	0.87	3.90	0.97
This campus provides opportunities for students to develop their ethical and moral reasoning in their **personal life**	4.05	0.97	3.74	1.01

Similarly, students viewed contributing to a larger community (i.e., humanity) as notably more important than was typical of the national norms (Table 13).

Table 13

	Student Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
General climate for contributing to a larger community	4.38	0.65	3.95	0.80
The importance of contributing to a larger community **is** a major focus of this campus	4.39	0.87	3.85	1.00
The importance of contributing to a larger community **should be** a major focus of this campus	4.56	0.72	4.21	0.89
Contributing to a larger community is a responsibility that this campus values and promotes	4.49	0.77	3.93	0.96
My experiences at this campus have helped expand my awareness of the importance of being involved in the community and contributing to the greater good	4.06	1.02	3.80	1.09

They endorsed moderately higher meaningful discussions about contributing to the greater good, but surprisingly were not appreciably higher on actually participating in relevant community based projects (Table 14).

Table 14

	Student Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Developing a commitment to contributing to a larger community	2.74	0.91	2.55	1.03
I participate in community-based projects that **are** officially connected to a course	2.36	1.14	2.33	1.24
I participate in community-based projects that are not officially connected to a course	2.61	1.19	2.53	1.26
I have meaningful discussions with other students about the need to contribute to the greater good	3.21	1.20	2.79	1.24

With regard to *academic integrity,* students reported a social climate of honesty at SPU (Table 15).

Table 15

	Student Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
General climate for academic integrity	4.13	0.72	3.87	0.82
Helping students develop a strong sense of academic integrity **is** a major focus of this institution	4.39	0.83	4.18	0.94
Students at this institution are academically honest	4.03	0.90	3.69	1.01
Students at this institution conduct themselves with respect for others	4.08	0.87	3.84	0.98
The campus academic honesty policies help stop cheating	3.96	1.05	3.79	1.14

They also viewed faculty as supporting these policies (Table 16), but interestingly were slightly less likely than students at other universities to view faculty as reinforcing policies (i.e., character formation strategies related to incentives).

Table 16

| | Student Respondents | | | |
| | Institutional | | National | |
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Faculty roles in academic integrity	4.54	0.59	4.41	0.68
Faculty at this institution understand the campus academic honesty policies	4.69	0.60	4.45	0.81
Faculty at this institution support the campus academic honesty policies	4.69	0.64	4.48	0.80
Faculty reinforce the campus academic honesty policies	3.98	1.13	4.12	0.97
Formal course syllabi define academic dishonesty (including such issues as plagiarism, improper citation of Internet sources, buying papers from others, cheating on assignments or tests, etc.)	4.75	0.66	4.58	0.80

Moreover, SPU students were relatively *less* likely than their counterparts to report meaningful discussions about academic integrity with SPU professionals (Table 17).

Table 17

| | Student Respondents | | | |
| | Institutional | | National | |
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Developing academic integrity	2.25	1.13	2.56	1.11
I have thought seriously about issues of academic integrity since I have been in college	3.09	1.28	3.51	1.24
I have had meaningful discussions about academic integrity with faculty members	2.00	1.18	2.51	1.34
I have had meaningful discussions about academic integrity with senior administrators	1.60	1.06	2.10	1.30
I have had meaningful discussions about academic integrity with student affairs professionals	1.60	1.06	2.12	1.31

SPU students reported similar perceptions of climates for excellence and perspective-taking (i.e., wisdom) relative to national norms (Table 18).

Table 18

| | Student Respondents | | | |
| | Institutional | | National | |
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Overall climate for excellence	3.76	0.88	3.75	0.92
Helping students develop a strong work ethic **is** a major focus of this campus	3.87	1.03	3.83	1.02
The characteristics of a strong work ethic are frequently emphasized and discussed in this campus community	3.48	1.03	3.62	1.05
This campus makes clear connections between having a strong work ethic and success in college	3.78	1.06	3.81	1.05
This campus makes clear connections between having a strong work ethic and success after college	3.84	1.09	3.81	1.06
The campus community has high expectations for students in terms of their personal work ethic in non-academic areas	3.80	1.08	3.70	1.09

We note that although students reported *perceiving senior administrators, student affairs professionals, and other students* as helping students to develop qualities such as strong work ethic, perspective-taking, and contributing to the greater good (averaging above 3 on the 5-point scale), they consistently rated *faculty* (Table 19) as the most helpful in developing such qualities (averaging above 4).

Table 19

	Student Respondents			
	Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
General climate for perspective taking	3.89	0.81	3.88	0.79
Helping students recognize the importance of taking seriously the perspectives of others **is** a major focus of this campus	3.98	1.06	3.81	1.00
This campus helps students understand the connections between appreciating various opinions and perspectives and being a well-informed citizen	3.91	1.05	3.82	1.01
It is safe to hold unpopular positions on this campus	3.36	1.22	3.70	1.09
Faculty at this institution teach about the importance of considering diverse intellectual viewpoints	4.03	0.97	3.99	0.98
Faculty at this institution help students think through new and challenging ideas or perspectives	4.22	0.92	4.08	0.94
Students at this institution are respectful of one another when discussing controversial issues or perspectives	3.79	1.07	3.89	1.02
This campus has high expectations for students in terms of their ability to take seriously the perspectives of others, especially those with whom they disagree	3.96	1.03	3.88	1.00

Lastly, below we present the general summary data including SPU student and professional data in comparison to national norms (Table 20).

Table 20

	Student Respondents				Professional Respondents			
	Institutional		National		Institutional		National	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Perceptions of Students' Growth on the Dimensions	4.04	0.72	3.90	0.80	4.31	0.49	4.14	0.64
Striving for Excellence								
Overall Climate for Excellence	3.76	0.88	3.75	0.92	3.89	0.86	3.72	0.96
Communicating Expectations about Excellence	4.00	0.73	3.68	0.96	4.12	0.82	3.99	0.96
Cultivating Academic Integrity								
General Climate for Academic Integrity	4.13	0.72	3.87	0.82	4.22	0.65	3.92	0.77
Faculty Roles in Academic Integrity	4.54	0.59	4.41	0.68	4.48	0.56	4.30	0.74
Contributing to a Larger Community								
General Climate for Contributing to a Larger Community	4.38	0.65	3.95	0.80	4.62	0.42	4.27	0.77
Advocating for Contributing to a Larger Community	3.63	0.86	3.37	0.95	4.04	0.64	3.83	0.94
Taking Seriously the Perspectives of Others								
General Climate for Perspective Taking	3.89	0.81	3.88	0.79	3.98	0.69	4.00	0.84
Advocating for Perspective Taking	3.67	0.84	3.60	0.87	3.82	0.70	3.89	0.82
Refining Ethical and Moral Reasoning and Action								
General Climate for Ethical and Moral Reasoning	4.11	0.77	3.72	0.87	4.44	0.61	3.93	0.83
Sources of Support for Ethical and Moral Reasoning	3.95	0.77	3.60	0.87	4.19	0.66	3.88	0.89

Conclusion

Clearly, SPU seeks to take student character formation very seriously. Much work has been put in over the years to actualize our mission to graduate students of competence and character, and these efforts have been lauded by outside observers who obviously consider our school to be a model institution in this regard. Our own research into SPU's formation of student character offers plenty of evidence to substantiate the conviction that our missional hopes are indeed actualized in some of our programs and practices. Nevertheless, we find that there is a good deal more work that could be done to clarify and strengthen our various character formation endeavors.

We note the following:

(1) As was noted in previous chapters, excellences of character are only intelligible within a shared conception of human flourishing. Character formation strategies are therefore dependent on a community's ability to gather together around a common story of human purpose in the world. Yet many of our official documents and statements reveal that we toggle back-and-forth between a distinctively Christian vision of institutional mission on the one hand, and the secular common ground humanism that undergirds all liberal arts education in American society on the other. An example of this is the 2005 Learning Outcomes document, which describes graduate modeling of "grace-filled community" as the cultivation of "a life of friendship, civility, and community through responsible discourse and respect for each other" demonstrated by the ability to "engage with diverse others" using the "interpersonal skills necessary for effective personal and professional relationships." These are obviously laudable goals; but since it is easy to imagine that any non-Christian liberal arts institution would hope for precisely these same outcomes, what makes our vision particularly "grace-filled"? Presumably being "grace-filled" describes a community that conceives of itself as being ordered by the gifts of God's presence and power to serve God's ends in the world, but the Learning Outcomes document suggests that God's desired end for our "grace-filled" students is that they be good contributing citizens of a liberal democracy. We thus risk communicating that some of the Christian language employed in our official documents and statements are little more than window dressing to what is essentially a secular education. Since there is plenty of evidence to the contrary—that indeed we *are* doing something distinctively Christian as an institution—it would seem right and good that we continue to expend effort reflecting on the language we use to describe our institutional identity and desired outcomes.

(2) In particular, it seems we could benefit from increased intentionality around the naming of specific virtues that are formed by the various elements of our communal life together. We noted the preponderance of catchwords like "engage" and "embrace" in our official documents and statements. This less tangible, *relational* terminology points more to evangelical sentiment than actual, demonstrable formation outcomes. Better to actually do the work of articulating a coherent, gospel-centered vision of human flourishing that calls for a discernable set of character excellences against which our curricular and co-curricular programs and procedures could then be indexed. Mapping our objectives onto specific virtue outcomes would provide greater integration of efforts across the curricular and co-curricular realms *and* help us to get our story straight as a Christian institution of higher education.

(3) Our survey of faculty and staff revealed a number of insights worthy of our reflection. We begin with a general note that all our faculty and staff would benefit from intentional, systematic reflection on their work with students in terms of character formation. Some faculty seemed unclear as to how their instruction was formative of student virtue. Many others *were* able to index their educational efforts in terms of virtues inculcated but relatively few were able to do so in distinctively Christian terms or by means of distinctively Christian practices. It seems clear that much good work is being done, but faculty and staff may lack the glossary and grammar required to articulate more precisely what is (and isn't) happening on campus when it comes to character formation.

(4) The survey results imply that though we appear to be forming character across the major virtue domains using a wide range of appropriate intervention strategies, there are some very real imbalances. For instance, while it is understandable that deliberate cognitive processing to develop wisdom and related intellectual virtues would dominate at an institution of higher education, we note the relative lack of affective and somatic strategies to develop more "embodied" virtues like courage and temperance, or more "affective" virtues like gratitude, hope, and zest. Is this why the PSRI data shows that our students endorsed moderately higher meaningful *discussions* about contributing to the greater good compared to the national average, but were not appreciably higher on actually *participating* in relevant community based projects?

(5) Finally, we noted that faculty and staff focused on the formation of other-oriented virtues like judgment, fairness, kindness, and humility but endorsed relatively few examples depicting virtues such as love (understood as mutual relatedness), forgiveness, prudence, gratitude, zest, and humor. This fits our anecdotal sense of many SPU students as valuing prosocial service and social justice, but also feeling relatively anxious and distressed, and less often experiencing the sort of internal states (like zest) that are required to sustain such activities over the long haul. Though the data is admittedly limited, it suggests our primary pedagogical strategies may be reinforcing this imbalanced state of affairs. The student survey was comparable, noting that on average students reported relatively high endorsement of characteristics related to honesty, kindness, fairness, appreciation of beauty/excellence, and love, but conversely reported lowest virtues as self-regulation, zest, forgiveness, creativity, bravery, and humility. The findings paint a picture of students who focus on equality and service to others but might under-develop the virtues that energize them to make those endeavors sustainable in the longer term.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How do we define character and character formation?

Character refers to acquired and infused, morally valued habits of mind, heart, and embodied action that promote flourishing in oneself and others. Character is that which names the particular arrangement of virtues and vices in a person's life. Virtues are moral strengths or excellences of character which a community recognizes as enabling human flourishing. Because character is directly tied to claims about what human flourishing involves, there is no objectively neutral place from which one might offer a "common ground," universally applicable description of the virtues in human life; virtues require a shared, coherent narrative of a life well lived in order to be meaningful.

A Christian understanding of character therefore requires us to attend to God's story, which reveals to us the mental, moral, and emotional qualities required of those who would call Jesus Lord. Because God is the Creator of the universe, and because the work of the Son and the Spirit have flooded the whole world with God's redeeming grace, we can expect to learn this "story" from God through means both general (available to all humans) and special (available to people of faith). The Christian tradition has always claimed that humans are creatures entirely dependent on the provision and guidance of their Creator. The Christian *narrative* of a life well lived is thus inherently *revelatory* (revealed to us by the Creator God in both special and general ways), *teleological* (directed toward a distinctive purpose for human existence), *imitational* (based on the model provided in God's Word made flesh, Jesus), and therefore necessarily *pneumatological* (requiring the empowerment of the Holy Spirit).

While there are virtues that may be acquired by anyone through habit and practice, others are only attainable by infusion through the Holy Spirit. These infused virtues— Christian faith, hope, and love— have the effect of reordering all the virtues into a distinctively Christian account. This is not to claim that non-Christians are somehow incapable of being faithful, hopeful, or loving; it simply recognizes that non-Christian use of virtue concepts are informed by other stories, which bear different values, find embodiment in different habits and practices, and target different ends.

In keeping with the larger Christian tradition, John Wesley made it plain that the development of Christian character is dependent on the work of God's grace in the life of the believer. But Wesley's view of grace sets him apart from other theologians. First, humans in Wesleyan thought are not passive recipients of a grace that simply pardons sin in order to grant forgiveness and secure salvation; humans are recipients of a *restoring* grace designed to heal humanity of the ravages of personal and social sin, transforming them over time into holy people who serve God's holy purposes. This grace both calls forth and enables an active *response* on the part of the human recipient. It is on this basis that Wesley was able to embrace the crucial role of habit and education in Christian life. In this spirit, we can affirm that Christian character formation refers to situational, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and relational processes by which Christian virtue is deliberately cultivated in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Second, Wesley affirmed that all Christian action, including one's initial conversion to faith, is empowered by God's grace, which "comes before" (*praevenire*) to make possible human response. What sets Wesley apart is his insistence that God's grace is operative in *all* humans *before* they are justified in Christ. This prevenient grace is the active work of the Holy Spirit, who is constantly drawing people into God's loving embrace. Thus, Wesley conceived of grace neither as something given to some people and not to others, nor as a force that operates independently of human involvement, but a grace that is available to *everyone*, though it is *resistible*. This allowed Wesley to happily acknowledge what

he sometimes called "heathen virtues" as authentic expressions of God's grace; they are "the fledgling effects of the Holy Spirit's initial restored Presence among humanity" distinguishable from distinctly Christian virtues which represent "the more vigorous effects of the deepened Presence of the Spirit in those who welcome God's overtures" (Maddox, 1994, p.132).

We believe that a distinctively Wesleyan conceptualization of the Christian story provides a coherent narrative and aim to give the virtues fuller meaning. Wesley's understanding of character integrates head, heart, and action, and accounts for both God-infused virtues and those acquired by human participation. On this basis, we think a more theologically explicit focus on character will help SPU apart and better enable us to identify, assess, and cultivate virtue.

Which virtues?

Although many virtue lists could be constructed, we find great utility in Seligman and Peterson's (2004) Values in Action (VIA) higher-order virtues framework. The six VIA domains encompass *Wisdom, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance,* and *Transcendence*. These categories are useful in that they incorporate the classical virtues, find some cross-cultural support, and have moderate empirical evidence. Moreover, the six categories ensure consideration of the breadth of character strengths across cognitive, affective, and interpersonal domains (consistent with a view of character as applying to the whole person, and the notion that each of the virtues needs the others).

Nonetheless, the VIA framework strives to be universally descriptive, so it lacks the narrative grounding required to aim us toward a distinctive telos. Because of that, its conceptions of the virtues are unavoidably anemic by Christian standards (especially "spirituality" conceived as transcendence, and "love" as a preference for close relationships). We have already argued that our understanding and arrangement of the virtues is dependent on a distinctive conception of human flourishing, one that derives from a particular account of human origin and purpose. We therefore recommend reformulating the VIA categories in response to God's revelation, which positions the virtues within the Christian narrative— a faith-forming story that orients us teleologically toward loving God and all of God's creation through the Spirit-empowered imitation of Christ. Integrating this approach would recast the six virtue domains into something like the following:

- **Christian love** of God and what/who God has made, as the "master-virtue" (recasting VIA Humanity).
- **Courage** to facilitate persistence in imitating the love of God and fellow creatures.
- **Justice** as the outward expression of righteousness motivated by love.
- **Wisdom** to balance the virtues and exercise them appropriately in the service of God.
- **Peace and Joy** (recasting VIA transcendence) to center and sustain our participation in God's work.
- **Self-control** (recasting VIA temperance) to protect us from excess and derailment from our aim.

The particular focus on peace and joy is especially apropos given Wesley's insistence on the *affective* fruit of the Spirit as markers of Christian flourishing, reminding us that in the Kingdom of God the pursuit of justice must be empowered by the cultivation of *"peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Rom. 14:17). In addition to this, our pilot data (see below) strongly suggests that we may be collectively

underemphasizing cultivation of the "sustaining" virtue domains that enable the domains oriented toward pro-social service.

We think it would be beneficial to share information about these six virtue domains with faculty and staff. This would provide an explicit conceptual framework for them to utilize— a lens by which to examine their vocational and pedagogical goals in order to discern which of the traits we aspire to cultivate are targeted by their work. It would also provide greater specificity for developing language around character formulation at SPU—beyond "character" as an unidentified side-kick to "competence."

What are best practices for assessment and formation of character?

Our task force members reviewed websites and spoke to representatives of a number of religious liberal arts colleges and universities to gain a sense of how character formation is approached at schools similar to SPU. Discussion of results yielded led to a rubric to categorize the degree of commitment to character formation practices. We described the first level as those that made *explicit reference to or valuing character formation as part of an institution's mission*. The second level of schools went further, *identifying specific virtues to be cultivated*. We found a third, higher level among those schools which witnessed to an *integrated conceptual framework* for understanding and forming students in virtue. Finally, a fourth level found evidence that such formulations were clearly *operationalized via specific institutional strategies, programs, or curricula*.

Unsurprisingly, all the schools we reviewed made it clear that they valued character formation as part of their mission (level 1). A handful had developed this aspiration further by naming particular virtues they sought to cultivate (level 2). Some others (mostly Jesuit schools) worked out of an integrated conceptual framework for student virtue formation (level 3). But very few indeed had gone so far as to clearly operationalize character formation at the level of specific institutional strategies, programs, or curricula (level 4), and even most of those had only done so in a limited fashion. One exception we discovered was Calvin College, whose general education curriculum is driven by a fully-orbed conception of human flourishing rooted in the Reformed theological tradition and operationalized by an integrated set of core knowledge, skills, and associated virtues.

With regard to best practices in character formation, the available literature suggests a *lack* of best practices. There exist long traditions of thought about character formation in philosophy and ethics, as well as in the Christian tradition, and these remain of interest. However, insufficient empirical research has examined character formation in a systematic fashion. Available reviews suggest that character education programs in school contexts have largely been confined to primary or secondary education, and have often lacked strong research designs to permit causal inference, and college-level programs remain to be developed and tested. Recent psychological science on character interventions has generally focused narrowly on specific character traits or strengths (e.g., daily exercises to cultivate gratitude; empathy or compassion training). These studies do provide evidence consistent with the position that deliberate cognitive or behavioral activities lend themselves to character formation. However, we were unable to find any studies testing integrated programs to foster the full suite of character virtues.

Nonetheless, consideration of broader fields of intervention science suggests a set of domains in which human change is possible, and we contend that these domains apply to character formation as well.

Specifically, some interventions or strategies involve targeting the *environments or situations* to which people are exposed (in the case of character, for instance, exposure to stories of moral exemplars, mentorship, or virtue-eliciting environments may be of use). *Cognitive* strategies entail deliberate efforts to shift how people think. For instance, the Psalmist deliberately recalls memories of the Lord working in the history of Israel, which may cultivate gratitude). *Affective/somatic* strategies specifically attempt to cultivate virtue by evoking particular emotions or body states, such as practicing relaxation exercises to calm the body and thereby the mind, or evoking feelings of moral inspiration to motivate compassionate or generous behaviors. *Behavioral* strategies entail direct action, which often causes changes in other domains (e.g., practicing hospitality or serving others may shift one's own beliefs about others). Lastly, many studies have shown that shifting *incentives* (whether via external consequences or intrinsic motivation) can reinforce and maintain desirable habits, and therefore may serve as a powerful tool in the service of character formation. We view this framework as a useful way to organize the full range of character formation strategies available to faculty and stuff. When combined with the six broad virtue domains described above, a matrix of strategies by virtues emerges, providing a means for faculty and staff to reflect on the ways in which might strive toward character formation in students.

How is SPU doing?

Like many of our sister institutions, SPU mentions character and character formation in our materials in a relatively general way, without clear definition, conceptual framework, operationalization or links to curriculum, and explicit strategies. While significant exceptions exist here and there, generally speaking SPU is "in good company" among Christian colleges and universities in its need for greater explicitness in character formation endeavors.

Broadly speaking, our pilot data suggested a number of positive findings. Specifically, when asked to articulate concrete examples of character formation broken down by the six VIA virtue categories, faculty and staff appear to provide a broad range of opportunities for character formation, especially in the domain of *wisdom* (as befits an institution of higher learning). Coded responses suggest that staff and faculty provide a broad range of strategies for character formation, especially related to intervening at the level of environments, cognition, and behavior. Similarly, PSRI data from recent years shows that SPU students and professionals see SPU as helping them develop skills that are suggestive of character formation (although the measure does not explicitly address character).

With regard to specific areas of strength in our pilot data, faculty and staff collectively endorsed providing robust opportunities for developing judgment (critical thinking/wisdom), justice/fairness orientation, kindness/prosocial behavior, and spirituality. In parallel, a sample of general education course students self-reported that they see themselves, on average, as high in honesty, kindness, and fairness.

Despite such indicators that we are doing a decent job (relative strengths on outward focus of kindness and justice, though arguably more can be accomplished there), the pilot data also suggest that we may be providing relatively fewer opportunities to cultivate the inner resources that *energize* service— i.e. we place less emphasis on developing the *affective* virtues of gratitude, zest, humor; less emphasis on virtues that promote protecting current and future relationships, such as mutual relatedness, forgiveness, prudence; and less emphasis on cultivating the kind of hope-filled courage and bravery needed to flourish in a threatening world. Students' self-perceptions of relatively lower zest, humor,

love of learning, self-regulation, and forgiveness, remain consistent with this idea. Moreover, staff and faculty rarely mentioned drawing upon strategies that work at the level of affect/emotion/bodies and by creating incentives via values affirmations or explicit rewards or consequences.

In addition, although we found evidence that, collectively, SPU may provide a broad range of opportunities for character formation, we also note that students do not work with all faculty and staff, and therefore the extent to which they receive focused character-formation opportunities remains relatively random. Also, some respondents were able to provide rich and nuanced descriptions of how they attempt to contribute to student formation, but many faculty and staff reported strategies that did not necessarily fit with the specific virtue category asked, and we found sizeable variability in respondents' ability to articulate formation strategies. In many cases, it appeared that faculty or staff were sometimes at a loss as to how they might conceptualize their work in terms of character formation, as if they simply have not had enough explicit practice. This suggests potential room for faculty and staff to grow in viewing their work through the lens of character and character formation.

Recommendations

Consideration of scripture, tradition, and experience suggests that the transcendent God works incarnationally in and though creation. We suggest that language about character formation as involving active cultivation or habit formation is consistent with a Wesleyan understanding, which rightly implies the need for active, Spirit-empowered human participation in God's restoring work in the world.

1. Our primary recommendation, therefore, is for SPU to "make the implicit explicit" and do more to name and own our work in Christian character formation. Excellences of character are only intelligible within a shared conception of human flourishing. Character formation strategies are dependent on a community's ability to gather together around a common story of human purpose in the world. Our review suggests that SPU must do more to articulate a coherent, gospel-centered vision of human flourishing that calls for a discernable set of character excellences against which our curricular and co-curricular programs and procedures could then be indexed. Mapping our objectives onto specific virtue outcomes would provide greater integration of efforts across the curricular and co-curricular realms *and* help us to get our story straight as a Christian institution of higher education.

2. We think it would be beneficial to share information about these six virtue domains with faculty and staff. This would provide an explicit conceptual framework for them to utilize—a lens by which to examine their vocational, curricular, and co-curricular goals in order to discern which of the traits we aspire to cultivate are targeted by their work. It would also provide greater specificity for developing language around character formulation at SPU—beyond "character" as an unidentified side-kick to "competence."

Given our sense that many faculty/staff respondents to our survey about character formation strategies were not sure how character applies to their work, we recommend providing them with opportunities to reflect on the six higher-order virtue categories and five intervention strategies we identified (i.e., environmental, cognitive, affective/somatic, behavioral, and incentive strategies). We believe that examination of how our extant practices map onto this 5 by 6 "matrix" would reveal areas of relative strength as well as neglected opportunities. This would support clearer articulation and specificity in terms of what we mean by character formation (and how different disciplines/units may emphasize

unique domains). Moreover, this would facilitate identification of existing strengths as well as new areas for application.

We believe that many staff and faculty are already contributing skillfully to student character formation, and sharing relevant exemplars would provide one way to model and disseminate such practices (similar to "best teaching practices" that were collated and shared in the past at SPU).

Dissemination of character formation concepts, strategies, and exemplars could occur via several possible channels, including uploading resources online (e.g., Center for Scholarship and Faculty Development website or video recordings), provision of a faculty/staff in-service, and meeting with "units" on campus to provide mini-workshops on applying our virtue framework to current practices.

As we have already noted, though many schools claim a focus on character (sometimes in the language of "spiritual formation"), relatively few schools have articulated specific virtues as targets, or offered a conceptual framework that could be mapped to curricular/co-curricular opportunities and outcomes. Were SPU to map campus opportunities and outcomes to the six-virtue framework, it might represent a relatively unique development in Christian higher education, a strength of SPU, and a way to better "tell the story" of what happens at SPU.

3. Consistent with Wesley's focus on both works of personal piety *and* works of mercy, and keeping in mind the need to practice both "in-breathing" and "out-breathing" disciplines, ***we recommend further consideration of ways to help students, faculty, and staff to strengthen "muscles" related to the cultivation of the love, joy and peace that both informs and empowers the "righteous" pursuit of justice to which we are all called.***

We recommend continued dialogue about the kind of pedagogical and communal practices at SPU that will foster this more robust, theologically rich vision of character development. Such conversation must remain cognizant of our historical, cultural context that values individual choice and expression over the sort of communally held conceptions and practices that are actually required for intentional character formation to actually take place. To this end, we recommend a serious re-examination of communal Christian practices at SPU (e.g., chapel/worship, sacraments, small groups, service, etc.) in terms of character formation, as well as how we might structure and incentivize student, faculty, and staff engagement in activities that might promote their character formation and growth in virtue.

4. We recommend further assessment of the six virtue domains in SPU students. This might entail further assessment via measures that overlap some of the domains implicitly (e.g., PSRI). We acknowledge that the VIA self-report measures do not perfectly assess Christian character, but given their widespread use as the most well-studied tool, we recommend (for the time being) further assessment of SPU students using this measure. We commend existing efforts with VIA assessment on campus (e.g., the Psychology department has begun to assess students several times during the major, and Dr. Lynette Bikos plans to assess students twice if they participate in Calling Initiative programming). We recommend a broader study of longitudinal patterns of change in SPU students on the VIA (ideally over 3-4 years), to determine average trajectories as well as identifying predictors of which students endorse greater growth. Supplementing student self-reports with mentor or advisor reports would provide rich data beyond student self-perceptions.

5. We also recommend further empirical research on character interventions/strategies at SPU.
Targeted research on effects of Wesleyan small groups is warranted. It may be possible to develop and pilot an explicitly Christian character formation program (e.g., akin to a 12-week skills intervention). Such work remains rare and thus would represent a unique contribution by SPU to Christian higher education.

A focus on student formation must also invite focus on staff and faculty formation, given our interdependence in the mutual process of development. We recommend more explicit discussion of formation in faculty PDP and promotion materials (in terms of the six virtue domains), identifying personal areas of stronger cultivation versus areas for growth. We view this as complementary to and providing greater nuance to self-assessments of competence (e.g., pedagogy), giving specificity to what we mean by competence and character. Incorporating items related to character formation (in general, and in the six domains) in course evaluations would provide further incentive for reflective practice.

Further reflection on how to foster formation in transfer students is warranted, given that they do not experience communal life in the dorms, experience less overall contact with SPU faculty, staff, and programs, and often have less time for communal formation experiences given work and commuting.

6. Finally, through this work the authors have been pleased to discover how many others in our community have extensive training in the theory and practice of character formation. We recommend, then, that this study not be received not as the "final word" on character formation at Seattle Pacific University, but as a starting point for a more collaborative, university-wide effort.

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APPENDIX A – The Character Formation Initiative Charter

Background:

Since 2002, Seattle Pacific University's mission statement has expressly acknowledged a commitment to character formation.

> **We seek to graduate people of competence and character.** At SPU each student is profoundly important. We focus our curriculum and resources on shaping graduates who will be effective and positive change agents in the world. This means that we work to prepare individuals who understand their own giftedness, who are both liberally educated and skilled in their chosen field, who exhibit honesty and integrity, and who value serving others.

This was not, however, a 21st century innovation. Virtually from its inception, SPU has consistently understood its mission as training the whole person rather than just the mind. Variously described as cultivating virtues, developing moral values or building character, the underlying notion has a long pedigree in SPU catalogs and publications.

> **The chief aim of the school is to develop strong, self-reliant characters**. To realize the highest possibilities of the future, it is necessary to have the right start. Not so much the number of years, or the precise course pursued, but the spirit of cheerful and faithful work, the self control [sic] developed, the self denial [sic] exercised, the power of steady application acquired- these will decide the real strength of the adult. – 1913 catalog

> **As a Christian college, it aims to develop manly and womanly character** and to train the students for lives of effective service. – 1919 catalog

> **Because of the purposes of this school, however, its standards of personal character must be higher than those of the average school.** Building of character is the first responsibility of the Seattle Pacific College. But building of character is a cooperative task. The school can make no progress without the sympathetic co-operation of the student. For this reason only those students are desired who are seriously in earnest in getting assistance in developing a high type of moral character. - 1927 catalog

> **Building for Christian character is the first aim and responsibility of Seattle Pacific College**. - 1940 catalog

> **The emphasis placed by Seattle Pacific College upon high moral standards** is such as to make a real appeal to discriminating young people who are anxious to receive help in building a high type of Christian personality. – 1948 catalog

> The Christian philosophy of education affirms the value of the individual. **Subject matter is not regarded so much as an end in itself as a means toward the self-realization of the individual**. Since choice is regarded as foundational to character, students should be allowed the greatest freedom of thought and action commensurate with their degree of maturity. …The college program in all its phases should be so organized and directed as to help students attain for themselves a completely integrated Christian life which issues

dynamically in service and the acceptance of responsibility with the college, church, home, community and vocation." – 1958 catalog

Spiritual growth is encouraged by a Christian spirit which permeates every campus activity. **The primary aim is to foster an individual experience and character that will find natural expression in distinctly Christian conduct**. – 1968 catalog

As a Christian liberal arts college, **Seattle Pacific is a community of learners whose members are dedicated to helping each other attain a life characterized by wholeness**….We recognized that values education takes place in every learning activity, consciously or unconsciously, implicitly or explicitly. - 1976 catalog

People familiar with Seattle Pacific have long known that the University attracts people of memorable character. Now it's 'official.' In May, SPU was named to the 1990 John Templeton Foundation Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges. The Honor Roll is a list of schools which encourage the development of strong moral character among students. "This is truly a privilege," says University President David C. Le Shana. "It validates Seattle Pacific's dedication to building community-minded students of personal integrity and moral conscience." - Response September 1990

[SPU graduates] are also graduates who understand something about healthy relationships, marriage and family. **Change agents are people of character; people of honesty, integrity, loyalty and humility.** We seek to graduate good people, people who know how to serve, people who are trying to make things better for those in need. Preparing such graduates lies at the heart of SPU's vision of a Christian university for the 21st century. - "Keeping the Outcomes in Mind" by Philip Eaton *Response* Winter 1998

The Seattle Pacific University faculty shares a conviction that the ultimate purpose of a university education is the formation of Christian character. Specifically, a liberal arts education at SPU seeks to build these qualities of heart, mind and action. – 2003 catalog

Of course, it is not surprising that a Christian university would emphasize character formation. The Scriptures are replete with calls not only to right behavior but to holy character: "But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him." (I John 3:2) "Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:10). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. (Galatians 5:22-26) "Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:24)

The challenge:

And yet, in spite of the central place that "character formation" has played in the university's written materials and in the Scriptures, three foundational questions appear not to have been answered with the clarity that might prove desirable if Seattle Pacific is to press further into this central commitment.

First, what exactly do we mean by "character formation"? How would we define the character that we are seeking to form?

Second, what specific characteristics are evidence of such character? Different comments reference integrity, loyalty, humility, cheerful work ethic, concern for others, persistence, self-control and self-denial, among others. But is this the list? And given the nature of the students arriving on our campus today, which of the many potential characteristics of character are most in need of bolstering and reinforcement?

And third, how are such characteristics cultivated? Is this just something that happens when professors and staff of good character interact with students or are there particular practices that contribute more than others to character formation? And if so, are we engaged as best we can in these practices or are there ways that we can more consciously work to achieve our mission of character formation.

The Assignment – Phase One:

The initial work of the task force ("Phase One") will have five primary foci. **First**, the task force will develop a working definition of "character" and "character formation" as such words are used in the Seattle Pacific University mission statement and the related vision statement and strategic plan. The definition should be grounded in our faith commitments and be theologically informed.

Second, the task force will identify a set of 6-10 specific characteristics or attributes (e.g. hard-working, honest, kind, other-oriented) which if developed in an individual student would substantially contribute to his or her "character formation." The task force may choose to select a different set of characteristics for undergraduate and graduate students.

There is no expectation that this list of specific characteristics would be complete or comprehensive. It is unlikely that a full-orbed understanding of character formation could ever be reduced to a list of specific attributes. It is also clear that character formation is a life-long endeavor and that the development of certain characteristics may be more likely, more needed or more effective at different stages of life. In identifying the particular characteristics that will be the focus of this initiative the task force should be guided by the following questions:

- Will the characteristics contribute significantly to the formation of character as defined by the task force?
- Are the characteristics age and developmentally appropriate for our students?
- Do the identified characteristics respond to perceived areas of weakness in our students? Put differently, would the development of these particular characteristics in our students be the most effective means of developing their character?
- Are there existing (and validated) assessment tools that would allow for the assessment of growth or progress in the development of the selected criteria or would new instruments need to be developed?

Third, the task force will undertake a literature review and explore potential best practices at other universities to identify what may be the most effective ways of contributing to the development of the specific identified characteristics in our students. In some cases, this may mean "direct" formation practices. For example, providing students with a set of low-stakes assignments and tests that are difficult and graded rigorously early in their college careers may help develop resilience in students not

accustomed to failure. In other cases, recognizing that character formation is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit, the task force may identify certain more "indirect" formation practices. For example, certain spiritual disciplines could if practiced make students more receptive and available to the work that God wants to do in their lives.

Fourth, the task force will assess where and how character formation, and in particular the formation of the specifically chosen characteristics, is already occurring at SPU. This assessment of our current work should examine both formal and informal interactions and processes. It should also look at both curricular and co-curricular settings.

And fifth, the task force will identify a preliminary list of possible actions and corresponding tools for assessment that we might choose to implement if we wanted to develop a plan for enhancing character formation on our campus. This list is intended to be preliminary. The actual development of a plan would await a second phase. In this regard this initiative differs from the work of the global, vocational and reconciliation task forces. Each of those task forces was charged with first assessing the current campus work and then immediately moving on to the development and implementation of a plan. Here the initial charge focuses primarily on assessment. The completion of Phase One will serve as a seam point and allow us to determine whether we should proceed with the development of a plan in a second phase.

We are approaching this initiative differently in this regard for several reasons. For one, we may conclude that robust character formation is already happening on our campus and that any improvements that might result from the implementation of a plan would be marginal and not worth the additional investment of resources. We may conclude that the nexus between the desired growth in particular attributes and any potential interventions would be too uncertain to warrant further investment. We might also conclude that by the end of the 2016-17 academic year, the campus is experiencing initiative fatigue and that any plan of implementation would not be well received at the time. Or we might conclude that a small handful of changes would make a significant difference and an extensive planning process would be unnecessary to move forward with these changes.

One clarification: by identifying these five foci in a particular order there is no expectation that the work associated with each area of focus will be finalized before moving on to the next. While there may be some logic to starting with a definition, moving onto specific characteristics and then assessing our current campus programs, it is likely that the process will be most effective if it proceeds in an iterative manner. A tentative definition may be established and certain attributes identified. As the campus work is assessed, however, the task force may conclude that certain refinements to the definition and attributes would be appropriate. These in turn might trigger a revised literature review. And so on.

 The Task Force:

Champions/Chairs: Thane Erickson, David Nienhuis

Task Force Members: (list)

_____

_____

_____

Jeff Van Duzer, Provost, *ex officio*

Resource Team:

_____

_____

_____

The champions will be hired to approximately an aggregate .5 FTE position. The "champions" will report to the Provost and function as members of the strategic initiative team. Individual task force members will agree to serve on the task force in satisfaction of their faculty service commitments or staff duties. The champions are intended to remain in the role until the work of the task force is complete but individual members may rotate in and out as the work moves between different phases. The resource team will be called upon for particular expertise and input as appropriate.

The Scope of the Assignment:

The task force will begin its work January, 2016 and will be expected to complete Phase One of the plan by _____. The work will primarily focus on the units that report to the Office of the Provost (i.e. Academics, Student Life and University Ministries).

Milestones

The work of the task force will be measured against certain key milestones set forth below. As the project unfolds intermediate milestones may be adopted and it is also possible that certain of the milestones identified below will need to be adjusted:

• the development of a preliminary working definition of "character" and "character formation" – [TBD]

• the preliminary selection of key characteristics and the preparation of a white paper summarizing the reasons for choosing these particular characteristics – [TBD]

• a white paper summarizing the findings relative to an assessment of current work of character formation on the campus – [TBD]

• a white paper identifying "best practices" for character formation and suggesting a preliminary list of possible programs and tools of assessment that could strengthen the work of character formation on the campus– [TBD]

Questions

In completing this assignment it will be necessary for the task force to consider the following questions:

1. Given that this is a Christian university, the "character" that we are seeking to "form" in our students should be described in reference to a biblical and theological understanding of the character that God desires to form in each of us. In other words, we should be seeking to enter into the work that God is already doing. But will this take us in any different direction than simply using a more generic understanding of "character formation"? For example, does

"integrity" for a Christian look different or have different elements than a more generalized understanding of "integrity"?

2. To what extent is our understanding of "character" and, in particular, the kind of "character" that we are seeking to form culturally determined? Given our commitment to a diverse and multicultural community, what should we be thinking about as we set out to define those particular attributes of character that we want to focus on? Are certain character attributes more readily identified with particular cultural backgrounds or are character attributes more universally applicable?

3. Given that the assignment asks the task force to identify particular attributes that we should focus on based, in part, on perceived deficiencies in our students as they arrive at our campus, what do we know about the next generation of students, i.e. the post-millennials, who will be coming our way?

4. Can character formation actually be tracked? Can "character" be measured? If the answer is "no", can certain attributes of "character" be measured? And if "character" or "character attributes" cannot be measured how will we know if we are achieving our objectives? Is this one of those areas where one can't measure outcomes and so is relegated to relying on the nature and extent of "inputs"?

5. In some respects, character formation may be perceived as a mysterious and potentially delicate task. Could the mere effort to articulate and measure growth in certain attributes, in and of itself, adversely impact the good character formation work already underway on our campus? In other words, could the mere fact of measuring our work impede or even destroy its effectiveness?

Appendix B - Sampling of Sister Institutions on Character Virtue Frameworks/Programs

University	Language relevant to character (in mission statement, website, etc.) *(specific named virtues in bold font)*	Practices	General reference to character	Specific virtues	Integrated conceptual framework	Mapped to strategies, programs, or curricula
Azusa Pacific	**"Shared values, mutual respect, and hospitality are cherished attributes…**Faith integration, student care, **service**, diversity, and religious expression..."	-Unspecified freshman survey on character -No formal, systematic programs for character formation.	✓ (as "spiritual formation")			
Biola	-Mission Statement: "The mission of Biola University is biblically centered education, scholarship and **service**—equipping men and women in mind and **character** to impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ."	-University Learning Outcomes" tied to curriculum map: **Patterns of Thought** that are rigorous, intellectually coherent, and thoroughly biblical. **Patterns of Heart** that reflect the heart of God. **Patterns of Action** to lead in the face of unscripted problems for the good of a changing world.	✓	✓	✓	✓
George Fox	-Website refers to spiritual formation, including specific **fruits of the spirit (e.g., caring for the hungry)** and specific behaviors (avoiding gossip, good stewardship, spiritual disciplines). Quaker commitments to concern with the world's poor.	-Isolated "pockets" on campus. -Faith Formation team designated by leadership to create culture of faith formation. -No formal, systematic framework or programs for character formation.	✓ (mostly "spiritual formation")	✓		
Houghton	-Website: "Scholar-**service**" language. Espouses "leadership skills and **character**" including specific traits "**learning to work as a team, sacrificing individual acclaim for the betterment of others, striving for integrity, moving beyond comfort zones.**" Staff is "expected to live, act, and speak in a manner that emulates Jesus Christ's life of **selfless service** and demonstrates his **redemptive love**."	-No formal, systematic framework or programs for character formation (website says "naturally cultivated throughout" college). -Application process asks for letter of character reference. -"Christian character formed via mentorship, residential, community covenant"	✓	✓		
Loyola (Baltimore)	-Website: refers to *cura personalis* or "**educating whole person** in Ignatian tradition" (**integrity/honesty, diversity, community, justice, service, leadership, discernment, and constant challenge to improve**). Focus on **ethical analysis, social justice** throughout (philosophy/culture)	-Specific character traits tied to Ignatian philosophy and specific programs, but no further operational definitions. -Center for Community Service and Justice	✓	✓	✓	✓ (limited to isolated programs

	• Intellectual study, pursuing a broad range of knowledge • **Social justice and service** • Cultivating the whole person—mind, body, and **spirit** • Commitment to a life of **integrity** and **honesty** • Traveling throughout the world to **serve** God • **Discernment** and **reflection** • Dedication to **the greater good**, the better way, the *magis* "Leadership and service are connected" "You'll be challenged to understand the **ethical dimensions** of personal and professional life and to examine your own values, attitudes, and beliefs."					
Loyola Marymount	-Website: refers to educating **"whole person"** in Ignatian tradition	-Specific character traits tied Ignatian philosophy and specific programs, but no further operational definitions.	✓	✓	✓?	✓ (limited to isolated programs)
Pepperdine	-Website: Explicit language about specific character traits in values/mission. ("Jesus refers to **meekness, humility, purity of heart**"); more content about spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines/ "Community, Character, and Mission"; "All students will integrate faith/learning, all invited to discern, develop spiritual development habits"	Reference to spiritual formation but largely aspirational without operational definitions.	✓ (as "spiritual formation")	✓		

Point Loma Nazarene	-Website: Mission: "PLNU exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, **character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith**. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and **holiness is a way of life**." -Several of the Core Values are relevant: **"An Intentional Christian Community** We want students to be participants in a community of learning who intentionally think and behave as Christians in all their endeavors. Through many curricular and co-curricular activities, PLNU builds a community where women and men are challenged to explore ways to align their hearts and minds to that of Christ. **Service as an Expression of Faith** We are stewards, not owners, of our time, talent, and selves. Part of our call as Christians is to serve the world, working to better the condition of humankind locally and globally. **The Development of Students as Whole Persons** A complete education prepares women and men to live full lives that integrate the pursuit of knowledge with beliefs, values, and actions. Holistic learning prepares students to make a positive difference in the world."	-No formal, systematic framework or programs for character formation. -But Psychology department assesses senior majors to self-report growth, and 2 faculty mentors rate them on **service and care for others**. Coursework on "Pursuing Goodness: The Science of Moral Change (lectures & exercises).	✓			✓ (limited programs, e.g., psychology)
Santa Clara	-Website refers to "Jesuit **character**" and **educating "whole person"** in Ignatian tradition but no specifics.	No explicit link of mission statement to curriculum.	✓			
University of Portland	-Website: Mission: "…educating the **heart and mind**….[growing in] faith and **service**"	-Team taught (including president) **Character Project** weekly class with guided discussions of how value systems/beliefs influence moral character (30 students per year). -**Dundon-Berchtold Institute** offers classes, events, student-faculty research to form **moral character and ethical reflection** in various fields.	✓			✓ (isolated programs)

		-**Leadership Certificate** program: 2-year program, open to all majors. Provides tools/knowledge to develop 7 particular **character habits of leaders**.				
Westmont	Conceptual framework: **"Loving to learn"** (i.e., cognitive strengths…curiosity) **"learning to live"** (affective/personal response to learning, development in community) **"living to love"** (serving others beyond campus)	-Leadership program (major/minor/certificates) -Dallas Willard Center for Christian Spiritual Formation (on-campus **spiritual formation groups**, educational resources, supporting research) *Capax Dei* groups foster a deeper walk with God through prayer and reflection on Scripture, and provide an introduction to the classical spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith. Some examples of groups include "Lectio Divina," "Evensong," and "Praying Through the Psalms."	(as "spiritual formation")	✓	✓	✓ (isolated programs)
Wheaton	-Mission: "…**educate the whole person** to build the church and benefit society worldwide." -Spiritual Life office refers to 7 Christian "loves" (Implicitly including generosity, hospitality, stewardship, etc.), but no clear practices.	-Community Covenant -No explicit practices noted	✓	✓		
Whitworth	-Minor or general reference to character (more about worldview development/evaluation)	Leadership program (major/minor/certificates)	✓			

APPENDIX C: Exemplars of Character Formation Strategies

(Selected faculty and staff responses to self-report pilot survey)

DEPARTMENT (of response provider)	VIRTUE PROMPT	RESPONSE	CODED VIRTUE	CODED STRATEGY
Family and Consumer Sciences	WISDOM	I present human development from a wellness model; there are multiple dimensions that speak to much more than physical health or simply the absence of disease. Because [this course] is a required course, I attempt to find an interesting angle to connect the various majors. On the first day of class I survey my students and ask if, at this point in time, they think they want to have children. I also ask them to list what they want to learn from this course. On the second day of class, I share with my students that percentage who want to be parents (overwhelming majority) and inform them that this our common ground--this course will provide evidence-based approaches to healthy development, including best practices for parents and those who have children/young adults in their sphere of influence. Showing my students how they can use this knowledge now and how they can transfer this knowledge in the future helps them stay engaged in the content. I also take their statements about what they want to learn in this course and put several of them up on a slide, one comment at a time, so that they can see what their peers are interested in learning. I remind my students that one major goal of education is to have piqued their curiosity about this subject so when the time comes, they will be interested in learning more about, for example, specific developmental milestones for their newborn child and know where to find the information. I believe this combination of finding a common teaching platform to reach a diverse student classroom and leveraging students' desire to learn how they may grow healthfully, including their future children, helps them make the connection between life-long learning and their long-term health and well-being.	Curiosity, Perspective, Love, Kindness, Leadership	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Exposure to story (media, fiction, saints, etc.)
Business, Government, & Economics	COURAGE	My best example… I worked one on one with students and provided feedback for performance. It was so wonderful to see students evolve from being absolutely terrified to speak in front of a group of business leaders to finding the confidence to stand on stage and deliver a professional pitch to potential investors for a business idea. Through ongoing one on one coaching, I saw amazing transformations of students. This was one of the more rewarding teaching experiences of my career.	Bravery, Humility	Exposure to people/mentors/"others"; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Incentives via reward; Moving into challenge/discomfort
Theatre	COURAGE	As we rehearsal a play, students are invited to work from a place of courage over and over again. Every time we, as actors, step onto the rehearsal room floor we are taking a leap of faith and every time (if we are lucky) the Director provides us with feedback of what we can nuance and/or do better. There is always the possibility of failure, and there is always the necessity to persist. In fact, it is only by courageous persistence that a character becomes embodied and a play becomes audience-ready. At that point, a whole new level of courage is required to give the play away to an audience.	Bravery, Perseverance, Creativity, Humility	Direct behavioral rehearsal; Moving into challenge/discomfort; Self-assessment/feedback
Theology	COURAGE	Here is a midterm exam question for [this course], a course which begins with a study of the early Christian martyrs: This exam is due on All Hallows' Eve, the day before All Saints' Day on the liturgical calendar. Let us suppose that your congregation has decided to observe All Saint' Day by commemorating those who have made the supreme sacrifice for their faith in Jesus Christ, and has asked you to deliver the sermon for the service. Although you are well aware that there have been martyrs in nearly every age and nation, including our own, you have decided to focus on one of the more famous martyrs of the pre-Constantinian church, such as St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp and St. Perpetua. Your sermon must accomplish three things: (a) It must be rooted in Christian scripture. Appropriate texts from which you might draw (and which you would thus have to exegete responsibly, albeit briefly) include: Isaiah 25:6-9; Daniel	Bravery, Curiosity, Perspective, Social Intelligence	Exposure to story (media, fiction, saints, etc.), Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Incentives via reward

3:1-30; Daniel 7:1-28; Wisdom 3:1-9; Wisdom 5:1-16; 2 Maccabees 7:1-42; 2 Esdras 2:42-47; Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-31; John 11:1-44; Acts 7:1-8:1; Ephesians 1:11-23; Hebrews 11:32-12:2; I John 3:1-3; Revelation 7:9-17; and Revelation 21:1-6a. (b) It must narrate the story of the martyr in as lively a manner as possible, without being unnecessarily gruesome. It should briefly explain the historical background and indicate the personal character and religious convictions of your chosen martyr. In other words, it should draw your audience into the events in question. (c) It must apply the story of the martyr and the message of your chosen scripture texts to the audience. You might, for example, address one or more of the following questions: What can we learn from these classic texts about the role of self-sacrifice in the Christian life? Are there dangers in valorizing suffering and sacrifice for its own sake? What kinds of Christian witness can we bear, and what kinds of witness should we bear in a land where religious liberty is guaranteed? What kind of support ought we to be giving to Christians in lands where persecution continues, such as Syria or China? Other theologically significant questions might occur to you as well, and you are free to address those as well as, or instead of, those just suggested.

Psychology	COURAGE	In [this course] my students participate in an activity and reflection where they choose three social norms to violate and also discuss a time in their life where the conformed to the crowd (public compliance) even though they did not really want to / did not think it was a good idea (no private acceptance). Students reflect on these experiences and often speak to the incredible discomfort that they feel when they act contrary to social norms. The students acknowledge that it takes courage to go against the crowd. We continue to discuss how this applies to following our convictions even when they are contrary to the majority.	Bravery, Honesty, Curiosity, Judgment	Moving into challenge/discomfort; Incentives via reward; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)
Psychology	COURAGE	In [these two classes], I have students participate in an activity called "Living in the present". The activity is two-fold. The first part of the assignment is a technology fast where students are asked to step away from their cell phones and social media accounts and to be in the present with the people around them. Students are encouraged to share the assignment with friends and family and challenge them to also take part. Students' reflections often highlight having meaningful and engaging dinner conversations with friends and family as a result of the technology fast. The second part of the assignment is to intentionally take time to be thankful for the small stuff and to recognize beauty in "ordinary moments". Students are asked to take photos of these moments to help them crystallize the experience in their mind.	Curiosity, Zest, Appreciation of Beauty/Excellence, Gratitude, Love	Fasting/self-denial; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Exposure to people/mentors/"others"; Exposure to human creations/art; Exposure to God's creation
English, Honors Program	COURAGE	In [this course], students have to exhibit bravery, persistence, and honesty/integrity every time I teach it, through the central five weeks of the term. At that time, they have to come to terms intellectually, emotionally, and religiously, with several of the central philosophical positions of postmodern theory. They read short selections in an anthology but must take the ideas seriously on their own terms, writing a 1500-word response essay every week. Class time is spent in seminar/discussion of the ideas and their implications in an environment (I hope) of love, support, and grace. But students can't shy away from some claims that most find at least troubling if not seriously de-stabilizing. I am always really proud of even the most-struggling student in that class because no one has ever just bailed on the work that has to be done with those ideas. To me that class is rooted in bravery, persistence, and integrity. (And, in fact, I actually wrote a book chapter on this very topic a few years ago -- teaching Theory at a Christian university -- and highlighted a lot of these same movements of bravery, persistence -- and grace -- that seem to always emerge in that class.	Bravery, Perseverance, Kindness, Curiosity, Judgment, Perspective	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Team/group/pair-work
Multi-Ethnic Programs	COURAGE	We do this all the time in one-on-one conversations with students: how to have difficult conversations with roommates, classmates, professors, as a leader when there's conflict. We encourage students all the time to have brave conversations, how to give feedback when they experience something that feels "other-izing" or offensive. We use a lot of role play, having students practice with us. We point out the bravery, persistence, initiative, they already have and that brought them to SPU. We help them identify their strengths and how to expand upon those strengths. We provide a space for exploration of intersectional identities, and offer language to help them put words to their experience so they can speak for themselves.	Bravery, Perseverance, Social Intelligence	Exposure to people/mentors/"others"; Self-assessment/feedback

Residence Life	HUMANITY	Through our training with RAs, and our development of community meeting content, we try to portray our values of creating a safe and inclusive community for everyone on our campus. We provide bystander training to encourage students to keep each other accountable for the safety of our community, and we ask students to have an empathetic and curious posture to understand the experiences of others, especially those who are at greater risk of marginalization.	Curiosity, Bravery, Kindness, Social Intelligence, Fairness	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.), Direct behavioral rehearsal; Prosocial behavior/service Moving into challenge/discomfort
Library	HUMANITY	In every interaction with a student at the Reference desk, we aim to behave in a Christ-like manner thus putting the student at the receiving end of the virtue as well as modeling how to demonstrate it. We refuse service to no one and make no judgement on any question/information need. We go the extra mile and try to never let a student leave without some kind of answer or hope of an answer from another resource.	Kindness, Social Intelligence, Hope	Direct behavioral rehearsal; Prosocial behavior/service
Biology	HUMANITY	I used to assign students to groups such that each group included students of different academic ability, or students with similar majors. This approach didn't seem to solve any problems, so more recently, I have been grouping students according to race/ethnicity (as far as it can be discerned from a Banner roster). For the first grouping of the term, I make sure that each under-represented minority or religious minority has a match in the same group. In theory, this helps them feel less like outsiders. Later in the quarter, the groups are scrambled so that white/mainstream students work with the minority students, giving all students a chance to learn to work with students unlike themselves. I don't have any data, but this approach feels right to me, as it allows students to build solidarity as well as get to know students unlike themselves.	Curiosity, Fairness	Exposure to people/mentors/"others"; Prosocial behavior/service; Team/group/pair-work
Theatre	HUMANITY	In [this course], students are broken into "Breaking Bread Groups." They are required to meet weekly to share a meal, discuss the topic of the week (based on the reading), and submit a five minute video recap of their meal/discussion to me via email. As they participate in these eight required meals, my hope is that they are not only learning to care for themselves by eating well and engaging in life-giving conversation, but they are also practicing other-awareness by considering the food sensitivities and budget sensitivities of others.	Social Intelligence, Kindness, Teamwork, Judgment, Zest	Celebration/Sabbath/feast; Team/group/pair-work; Prosocial behavior/service
English, Writing Program	HUMANITY	This comes up in [these courses] too, especially when quoting the work of others. It's easy to quote someone and make them look like a fool, to use them as a straw man. Much harder to quote generously and fairly, and then to respond with care.	Fairness, Kindness, Self-Regulation	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)
English	HUMANITY	Again in [this course], we focus a lot of attention on reading generously. I see this as a matter of loving our neighbors. It does no one any good to read a text and assume the author is an incompetent fool. But it's quite hard to read the text generously, even when we disagree with it. This goes back to being able to say "no, but ..." to an author.	Kindness, Curiosity, Judgment, Self-Regulation	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Prosocial behavior/service
Education	HUMANITY	I think my example fits in the "situational" approach, as I try to have my students experience reading as if they were struggling readers. My intention is that students develop more compassion/empathy for students who find reading very difficult. I do this by having students read texts that are either unfamiliar (middle English) or altered in some way (a type of dyslexia simulation).	Curiosity, Social Intelligence, Kindness	Exposure to people/mentors/"others", Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)
Writing Program / English	HUMANITY	This might sound strange, but I try to encourage my students to see our classes as writing communities and places where we come alongside each other to support one another through the writing process. Most students tend to feel vulnerable about their writing, especially when it comes to sharing it with others. One example of how I try to address this is in the peer review process. In peer review in my classes, students do not exchange papers and mark errors or problems. Instead, writers read their papers to their peers while the reviewers take notes. The reviewers then share their perspective on the paper as readers and what specifically they liked in the draft; where they got lost or confused; where they wanted to hear more about one thing or another. By shifting the focus from "finding the problems" in a draft to showing writers where readers react or get lost, we try take out of peer review the	Kindness, Judgment, Love, Bravery, Social Intelligence	Team/group/pair-work; Moving into challenge/discomfort; Incentives via reward; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Creating/making; Self-assessment/feedback

		"judgment" that many writers feel and instead focus on honest, helpful, and generous responses to help writers produce more effective next drafts.		
Clinical Psychology	JUSTICE	In a flipped class where students sign up for "live grading" with the teaching assistant, and I the students whose labs were nearby would come into the classroom HOURS ahead and sign up first. When this was brought to my attention (by really unhappy students who always had to wait to be graded last) I used the opportunity to talk about it as a microcosm of privilege. That is, those students "in the building" by no merit of their own had the privilege of geography/place and could easily get in and sign up. The students really struggled with this -- those who were signing up early were offended and felt blamed. I reflected that if we couldn't talk about this simple issue of signing up early -- how could we ever talk about issues of racism, sexism, oppression? The students decided that (in this statistics class) an agreeable solution would be for the teaching assistant to create a list of random numbers and reassign the sign-up according to the random list.	Fairness, Humility, Perspective	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Eliciting emotion
Biology	JUSTICE	Each class activity includes a reflection component, where the group analyst (with group input) determines where the group succeeded and where it fell short. Because students rotate roles each day, they have multiple opportunities to serve as the group's conscience. The analysis step also allows students to admit when they are not prepared and are letting the group down; it also allows them to offer praise to peers who were particularly helpful to the group.	Humility, Fairness, Judgment	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Moving into challenge/discomfort
Theology	JUSTICE	Here is a midterm exam question for [this course], which begins with a study of the Reformations of the Sixteenth Century: The Seminarian as Reformer: You are a student at Seattle Pacific Seminary, and, if you choose to answer this question, you must stay in that role and formulate your answer accordingly. Your task is to write a letter either to the deans and faculty of SPS or to the pastor(s) and chief decision-making body of a church with which you are very familiar (e.g., one you grew up in or currently serve). You have identified certain "problem" in the school or congregation (theological error, ethical misconduct, spiritual malaise, programmatic inadequacy, liturgical aberration, cultural insensitivity, etc.) and you feel yourself conscience-bound both to formally express your disapproval of these problems and to map out concrete proposals for reform. It is not enough and indeed, it would not be proper to write an angry rant or threatening ultimatum, even if you are angry, and even if your anger is warranted by the circumstances. Rather, you must write a graciously worded, biblically grounded and theologically argued manifesto. You must give evidence that you have some understanding of both the cause(s) and effect(s) of the problem(s) you have identified, and you must display love and respect for all involved. You might model your answer on Martin Luther's Disputations (an itemized list of issues needing public discussion), or on John Calvin's Necessity of Reforming the Churches (a programmatic essay), or on the Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia (as an inventory of grievances). But other suitable formats might occur to you.	Prudence, Social Intelligence, Leadership, Judgment, Bravery	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.) Moving into challenge/discomfort; Exposure to story (media, fiction, saints, etc.); Incentives via reward
Education	TEMPERANCE	This is a big one for professional teachers, and we discuss it extensively in the course EDU 6942, which is titled "Professional Issues." Students learn all about the behaviors and choices that are not only illegal for teachers, but they see the ramifications for poor choices. There are several opportunities for self-analysis, such as having students check their social media accounts for appropriateness.	Prudence	Self-assessment/feedback; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)
Education	TEMPERANCE	Over the course of the entire program, every student has develop (at least to some level of competence and awareness) the habits of reflection. Where they are challenged to think deeply about who they are and how they interact with students, families and peers. They have experiences within each course where they share aspects of their reflections with classmates and engage in the important work of living in community. Each time this takes place there is an opportunity to live into the challenge of temperance, self-constraint...	Humility, Teamwork, Self-Regulation	Self-assessment/feedback Direct behavioral rehearsal;
Art	TEMPERANCE	Deadlines, exams, etc., help develop discipline. Productive class discussion also requires self-control and humility. These behaviors are encouraged in the context of class discussion.	Humility, Self-Regulation	Team/group/pair-work; Incentives via reward; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)

Chemistry	TEMPERANCE	It's a simple thing, but the online quizzes and deadlines we use in [these courses] force students to keep up with the work. I wouldn't even include this except that ~10-20% of first-year students struggle to organize their lives enough to keep up with simple assignments, and yet it's an important foundation for everything else.	Self-Regulation	Incentives via reward
English	TEMPERANCE	Revision requires a certain degree of humility. The writer must recognize that a first draft is just that--a draft--and then have the humility to continue working on those ideas, refining them. Revision is the foundation of WRI 1000.	Judgment, Perseverance, Humility	Incentives via reward; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)
Languages, Cultures, & Linguistics	TEMPERANCE	This may like the opposite of self-control, but I inflict online quizzes to get students in the habit of studying, a habit that I hope will continue when the course is over.	Self-Regulation	Incentives via aversive consequences; Incentives via reward
Education	TEMPERANCE	Working with undergraduate students allows for many opportunities to work on these habits, as students are often learning to self-regulate their academic land non-academic behaviors. On the whole, my approach to classroom management is to be clear with expectations related to class preparation, pre-professional behaviors and interactions, and problem-solving (I frequently say, "I can't solve your problem for you, but I am happy to help you become aware of options"). With assignments, there is almost always the opportunity for resubmission if a student can demonstrate learning through the process.	Self-Regulation	Self-assessment/feedback
Psychology	TEMPERANCE	In [my courses], I have students write forgiveness letters. Importantly, they identify an individual in their life who has hurt them and write the first letter to themselves from the transgressor. The second letter they write is a response letter back to the transgressor. We discuss how these letters are not always appropriate to deliver, but students find that even having the forgiveness conversations written down with themselves from both perspectives is a transformative experience.	Perspective, Forgiveness, Social Intelligence, Humility, Bravery	Moving into challenge/discomfort; Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Prosocial behavior/service; Incentives via reward
Writing Program / English	TEMPERANCE	My classes focus on the process of writing: the idea that reading, re-reading, drafting, sharing drafts, revising, etc. is an ongoing process through which we discover different perspectives and create new knowledge. Central to this process, then, is the ability to be wrong, to miss the mark, and to reconsider what we think throughout the process. This is difficult for many students, who feel the pressure to have the "right" answer and to hold on to their position come what may. We talk a lot, then, about being writing imperfect drafts and having only partial understanding of the texts we read. I have one assignment where I ask students to provide a brief interpretation of a text we read; then they share their interpretation with others, re-read the text, and then write a new interpretation, focusing on what they overlooked the first time. This assignment asks students to focus on where their initial interpretation was "wrong" and to revise toward a better and fuller understanding. This asks students to approach their process of creating knowledge with humility and in a way that allows them to enter into academic conversation (through writing) by exchanging ideas and listening to others rather than by insisting on the "correctness" of one's first impressions.	Judgment, Perspective, Teamwork, Humility	Moving into challenge/discomfort; Deliberate cognitive processing; Team/group/pair-work; Incentives via reward
Theology	TRANSCENDENCE	In [this course] on place and the Christian life, we explore the writings of Wendell Berry. We read his lecture "It All Turns on Affection," and in class we listen to his "Poem on Hope." Both of these works centralize the practice of imagination as seeing a place in all its fullness, enabling a deep kind of hope that accounts for the histories (positive and negative) and the possibility of redemption. To help cultivate the virtue of hope, students are asked in written and in-class exercises to describe how they might connect this material to their own places.	Hope, Appreciation of Beauty/ Excellence	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.); Exposure to human creations/art; Exposure to story (media, fiction, saints, etc.)
Languages, Cultures, & Linguistics	TRANSCENDENCE	This happens more in one-on-one advising sessions, in discussions on study abroad trips, or in response to assignments and exams that students find extremely challenging. Often students come to my office indecisive about their future career path; I remind to continue to pray for guidance, but that "there are many ways to the Lord," and	Hope, Spirituality	Exposure to people/mentors/"others"

		sometimes, "in the doing is the knowing." If they are called to try one path, and it doesn't work out, God can use that to teach them something they will need and can use in the future, even as they are called in a different direction.		
Communication	TRANSCENDENCE	In [this course], we study Phil 4:2-9 as a way to check our own hearts and take responsibility for the ways that we have contributed to a conflict. The 5 steps that come out of this passage are to 1) Rejoice in the Lord (look to God and rejoice in who He is and where we see Him in the conflict situation AND thank therapy), thanking God for all that is good (both in the conflict situation and outside of it) 2) responding with a Gentle tone of voice 3) replacing anxiety with prayer, 4) looking for the good in our opponent and 5) practicing these things. These steps help students to look to God, practice thankfulness and be intentional about looking for the good in other people.	Kindness, Humility, Self-Regulation, Gratitude, Hope, Spirituality	Being in one's body; Prayer; Scripture reading; Self-assessment/feedback
Theatre	TRANSCENDENCE	In [this course], students are taught a physical warm-up emphasizing breath and stretching that they are then invited to pair with a Christian Meditation exercise. As they progress through the quarter, students are required to document their experience with the warm-up and Meditation Exercise. Thus far in every group I have taught this, students have commented not only on the practical efficacy of this work for their acting, but also on the changes they sense happening in their spirits resulting in an openness, an expanded awareness to the world around them, perspective on their own situations, and sometimes a deeper intimacy with Christ.	Curiosity, Spirituality, Zest	Moving body/posture; Being in one's body; Prayer
Art	TRANSCENDENCE	History forces you to see beyond the present moment. It helps us understand the vastness of the human experience through time, and our own smallness.	Appreciation of Beauty/Excellence	Deliberate cognitive processing (reflection etc.)
(Unspecified)	TEMPERANCE	Teaching about professionalism implies these virtues of temperance. We teach and coach students to develop patience (job searches are often slow and frustrating and disappointing; also careers develop slowly over time). We teach and help them to keep disappointments in perspective, to avoid despair, and to deal with failure.	Perspective, Self-Regulation, Hope	Exposure to people/mentors/"others"