



## **General Conference Concurrent Breakout Session Descriptions**

**Target Audience** of each session: **A** = All, **H** = High School, **C** = College/University

### **Breakout Sessions I: Friday, November 22, 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

#### **Caritas for Others Begins With You! – A**

Timothy Sember, Relationship Manager, Christian Brothers Services, Romeoville, IL

This session will draw out best practices for living a life of service to others. Recognizing that each of us is only as “good as we can be” depends on who we are at our core. The doing consists of educating, witnessing, caring, leading, etc., and starts with being – our spirit of faith, zeal for service, communion in mission and reverence for life following in the spirituality of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. The session will be interactive and engaging. **WARNING:** Participants may enjoy themselves as well. Participants will leave with a customized wellness plan of reflection and action that supports the vocation to which each is called.

#### **Lasallians, Sport and Spirituality – A**

Mary Volmer, Mission Fellow for Athletics, Saint Mary's College of California, Moraga, CA

This session will examine the role of Lasallian educators as coaches whose impact on the spiritual health of students extends well beyond the field and classroom. After offering a summary of existing research on spirituality and sport, we will shift our attention to consider how Lasallian spirituality and uniquely Lasallian teachings, such as the “Pedagogy of Fraternity” and the “Twelve Virtues of Good Teacher,” inform the way we care for our student athletes and enhance the health and sense of belonging for the whole community. During the session we will: identify ways to help athletic educators embed Lasallian Core Principles into coaching practices and extracurricular activities; begin framing Lasallian formation sessions for student athletes, coaches and associates; review the “Twelve Virtues of a Lasallian Coach”; and consider creating an annual Regional conference on the spirituality of sport.

### **Talking Across the Divide – A**

Alexandra Walton, Director of Inclusion and Belonging, Saint Mary's College High School, Berkeley, CA

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. schools are becoming more ethnically and socially diverse. In today's increasingly diverse world, it is even more necessary to foster inclusive environments, where students can feel proud of their identity while appreciating and respecting the identity of their peers. Being intentional about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming not only reflects fundamental principles of human equity and justice but also serves as an essential catalyst for academic success, social cohesion and personal growth among students. As we become more diverse, we also have become more separated and steeped in our own positionality. This session will focus on what is getting in the way of bringing us together for meaningful dialogue across differences as well as strategies to implement intergroup dialogue in community settings.

### **Breakout Sessions II: Friday, November 22, 3:45 – 5:00 p.m.**

#### **Affirming and Supporting Our LGBTQIA Students – A**

Dr. John Taylor, M.Ed., MACC, LPC, Assistant Professor, Urban Public Health and Nutrition / Sexuality Educator, Sex and Mental Health Therapist, La Salle University, Philadelphia, PA

The session is designed to increase awareness, understanding and inclusivity toward students that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA). The session aims to create a safe and supportive environment by providing participants with knowledge about the unique challenges of the LGBTQIA community. The goal is to promote empathy, reduce biases and stereotypes, and enhance cultural competence. Through increasing awareness, we can create an educational environment where all individuals, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, can thrive, live and be respected.

#### **Exploring the Data to Support Lasallian Students – A, H**

Dr. Jaclyn Doherty, Research Associate, Springtide Research Institute, Winona, MN

For the past two years, Springtide Research Institute has surveyed Lasallian students across RELAN, collecting over 25,000 responses. Overall, we find that Lasallian students are thriving, feel supported and observe the Lasallian principles in action. This session will explore Lasallian students' perspectives on the support they receive at school, including academic, spiritual and mental health support. The session will also review students' encounters with religion/spirituality and the Lasallian Core Principles. We will discuss correlations between these variables and student outcomes (e.g., sense of meaning/purpose, thriving, belonging, etc.). Further, the presentation will draw on Springtide's datasets to contextualize these Lasallian experiences within those of young people across the country. From our national datasets, we will discuss young peoples' experiences of the sacred, religion/spirituality and support in school. Attendees will have opportunities to discuss how these findings relate to their own schools and how they can continue to support students.

### **Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve: Embedding Service in Everyday Teaching and Executing Successful Service Programs – A, H, C**

Elizabeth Hamer, English Department Chair, Mullen High School, Denver, CO

Katie Abeyta, Director of Lasallian Student Life and English Teacher, Mullen High School, Denver, CO

Vishal Patel, Chemistry and Computer Science Teacher, La Salle College High School, Wyndmoor, PA

Lewis Clark, Director of Lasallian Mission and Ministry, La Salle College High School, Wyndmoor, PA

At the core of our Lasallian charism is the guiding principle, “Enter to learn, leave to serve.” Inspiring a mindset of service among students and within our communities in our ever-changing global landscape requires a holistic approach that integrates empathy, support and outreach. This session will showcase Mullen High School’s strategies for embedding service education into both classroom learning and community engagement. We will explore how English literature and other subject area curriculums can serve as powerful tools to foster empathy, encourage advocacy, empower students to affect positive change through project-based learning and meaningful real-classroom instruction and promote a culture of service and responsiveness. After discussing strategies for integrating service into curricula, sharing best practices and collaborating on developing new initiatives, participants will be guided through the process of organizing service opportunities for students. Presenters will offer steps and resources to ensure successful planning and execution of various service opportunities. Participants will learn how to identify and establish service sites that provide meaningful experiences for students, as well as develop effective fundraising strategies for summer service trips. The session will also cover La Salle College High School’s process in conducting meetings with families, ensuring clear communication and involvement, as well as the importance of a Commissioning Mass to foster a sense of community and purpose among participants.

### **Breakout Sessions III: Saturday, November 23, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m.**

#### **Concentration Programs at La Salle College High School – H**

Brother Anthony Baginski, FSC, Associate Dean, Concentrations Program, La Salle College High School, Wyndmoor, PA

La Salle College High School’s concentration programs, including digital media and communication, global business, health sciences, IT, and music production and engineering, are designed to tap into the transformative potential of tailored educational pathways. This session will explore how specialized concentration programs can reignite passion and engagement among students often overlooked by traditional educational models. Participants will learn how schools can integrate this program with modest resources, leveraging existing technology and partnerships to provide students with valuable, industry-relevant skills.

#### **Lasallian Pedagogy - Ever Ancient, Ever New – A**

Brother George Van Grieken, FSC, Coordinator, Lasallian Resource Center, Romeoville, IL

Since 17<sup>th</sup>-century France, Lasallian pedagogy has and continues to innovatively respond to genuine student needs today. There is no reason why this will not be the case in the future. We must have some familiarity with the 40-years-in-the-making "School Operation Manual" that became the backbone of Lasallian education in France and beyond. We should become familiar with some of the newer innovative Lasallian pedagogical programs that have been implemented both in the U.S. and in other parts of the Lasallian world. With similar priorities and goals, we may confidently determine how best to address the challenges of pedagogy today and define the basic principles, approaches and priorities that

will benefit today's learning needs (different student learning habits, integration of technology and artificial intelligence, expected learning outcomes and goals, etc.). This session will not answer all questions, but it will provide a foundation for moving forward in asking the right questions and moving step-by-step toward living into the answers.

**Peace out, Lasallians! – A**

Dr. Erica Kwiatkowski-Egizio, Associate Professor, Secondary, Middle and Foreign Language Education Programs, Lewis University, Romeoville, IL

Restorative justice is a philosophy and set of practices grounded in indigenous teachings, as well as “a proactive strategy to create a culture of connectivity where all members of a community thrive and feel valued” (Davis, 2019). This session will explore the restorative practice of peace circles and how Lasallians can use this approach for a more integrated, spiritual and transformational education experience. Peace circles are a way of being in community and building relationships with one another. Rooted in indigenous practices, peace circles are one of many restorative justice practices used to strengthen positive community relationships. They can be used for celebration, grief, conflict, to share information, to make collective decisions, to come up with creative solutions and more. Therefore, peace circles can be tools for individuals to explore their Lasallian identities, reflect upon successes and challenges of their Lasallian ministry and provide ways to repair hurt relationships among colleagues. Anyone and everyone can benefit from the use of peace circles.