

BOOK REVIEW

Faith, Life, and Learning Online: Promoting Mission Across Learning Modalities

Himes, B.M., & Washatka, J.W. (Eds). (2022). *Faith, life, and learning online: Promoting mission across learning modalities*. Cascade Books. 206 pages.

Growing numbers of higher education students seeking online learning options, along with increases in virtual content within traditional higher education programs as a result of the pandemic, have challenged faculty members and institutions of higher education to find new ways of educating students. Christian higher education institutions have been faced with an additional task as they adapt to more online teaching: to fulfill the mission-driven goal of faith formation for online learners. *Faith, Life, and Learning Online: Promoting Mission Across Learning Modalities*, edited by Brant M. Himes and John W. Washatka, is a collection of chapters on the timely topic of faith formation in online Christian higher education.

The editors present a wide-angle discussion of critical issues related to student support and faith formation in online Christian higher education using the path of Los Angeles Pacific University (LAPU), a faith-based, online-only university that emerged from Wesleyan Azusa Pacific University, as a case study. Written as “an invitation for faith-based institutions to take bold steps toward integrating a holistic mission of spiritual formation into the online learning environment” (Himes & Washatka, p. xix), the book is divided into three broad sections: the current state of faith formation in Christian higher education, the essential conceptual faith formation content which can be woven into the online classroom experience, and the ways in which faith formation can be practiced effectively as a university-wide endeavor.

This book chronicles LAPU’s response to the realities and challenges of faith formation for online students. Although the authors focus primarily on describing the process and presenting the outcomes of developing a holistic approach to faith formation at LAPU, they also present related literature and research relevant to the discussion. Helpful

foundational readings are listed, and some suggestions for gathering students’ perspectives are provided for institutions reflecting on new directions for faith formation.

For those currently working in Christian higher education with online course offerings, this book could provide a helpful roadmap for navigating the process of developing a university-wide approach to faith formation for online students in a way that is on par with what exists in the traditional setting. Higher education leaders, including those interested in assessment and institutional effectiveness, may find the discussions around the development and assessment of student learning outcomes beneficial. In addition, those working in student services will find helpful suggestions for effective strategies in the area of student support. For faculty members with a well-developed general approach to faith formation searching for specific strategies for their own online classrooms, this book might have too broad an emphasis to be of great use. However, there is a section on incarnational practices for faith formation that faculty could find quite inspiring. Ultimately, *Faith, Life, and Learning Online* delivers a message of hope through the holistic perspective and innovative approaches it outlines for supporting the faith formation of online students to promote the critical mission of Christian higher education.

Reviewer Information

Cammy Purper
California Baptist University, Riverside, CA
cpurper@calbaptist.edu