

Fall kick-off puts new method of learning in play

A formal introduction of the Strength-Based Learning system was given by Vice President of Higher Education, Mark Pogue with the Gallup Organization. After fifteen years of work with a non-profit youth organization, Mark Pogue helped co-found the StrengthQuest program, based on forty years of Gallup research. The program is based around the principle that students and faculty should learn and educate using their inherent strengths along with individual talents, and harnessed knowledge and skills.

The program boasts reaching over 550,000 students since its inception, 200,000 in the previous year alone. "Most institutions adopt the program after hearing about it from peers from other institutions," ex-



Photo by Amanda Kellerman

Vice President of Higher Education, Mark Pogue, elaborates on how strengths-based learning can lead to greater personal success.

plained Pogue. The programs are set up at high schools and higher education institutions, where students have the chance to take a thirty-minute assessment that ideally helps them discover their personal "themes," or "talents and

areas of strengths." The central themes were the result of a culmination of extensive research through content analysis of psychological and empirical data collected via the Gallup Organization through survey and observing

focus groups of the most successful individuals in career fields, from doctors to salespeople. Despite the generally positive feedback regarding Strength-Based Learning and StrengthsQuest, much criticism has been applied to their

methodology. In a 2004 paper by Gallup's Edward C. Anderson, he stated that faculty might see it as an attempt to "dumb down" the credibility of degrees.

Rob Kaiser of Kaplan DeVries Inc. was quoted in a 2009 article from Chief Learning Officer Magazine saying that, "The truth of the matter is, there is no such things as pure strengths and pure weaknesses--they're all intertwined and mixed up together. It depends on how you used these qualities and abilities that determines whether it's a strength or weakness." Kaiser also suggested the use of a system of "behavior-based feedback about how to use your strengths." In rebuttal, Pogue offered that behavior and strength are often confused for one another.

Effective change uses a cycle



Photo by Amanda Kellerman

Father Brennan discusses the change cycle at the MAC.

throughout the campus." The need for change wasn't uniformly embraced by all members of the audience. "When change occurs, it clashes with don't fix what's not broken," said Professor Frank Salvatini.

During Dr. Brennan's address, he spoke of philosophies by Robert Enright, Everett Worthington, and William Glasser. He detailed each of their ideas on

the phases of forgiveness in all situations. "People who forgive reduce stress. Forgiveness is good for our health," said Brennan. Dr. Brennan is a doctor of clinical psychology. He has written several books on the psychology of spiritual growth, including Paschal Journey: Reflections on Psycho-Spiritual Growth. He also was a consultant and led mass for Harper College in Palatine.

Dr. Brennan spoke to an audience of faculty and staff in the main stage auditorium at the MAC. Reading from a prepared speech that was available to attendees he detailed the cycle of change. He spoke of life being filled with change, stating that new life always comes from it.

When asked how his message applied to the college, Dr. Brennan said it was to help "retain a sense of community amidst the changes

Involvement in new method is voluntary

According to College President Robert Breuder, it's a voluntary movement where faculty and staff are invited to participate in it if they chose to do so. "I think it is up to them to assimilate and get there on their own. Not everyone is going to sign up

based learning in the fall because of the benefits for both the students and the instructors.

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ROBERT BREUDER,
COLLEGE PRESIDENT

After today's kick-off events instructors were given an opportunity to obtain a code from Vice President of Diversity and Organizational Development, Jocelyn Harney or

today, nor does everybody expect that, Breuder said." Breuder's projection is that more instructors will choose to implement strengths-

Vice President of Higher Education of the Gallup Organization, Mark Pogue to take a strengths-based test.