

# Baylor and Silliman: Historical and Academic Comparison of Two Christian Universities

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Employing historical and comparative approaches, this paper describes how Christian commitment has inspired Baylor University and Silliman University in establishing quality higher education institutions that have surpassed the test of time and continued to develop academic and community programs that bear and transmit Christian values and ideals to students amidst the secularization of higher education in the world. Informed by their vision and mission, both institutions demonstrated efforts in promoting faith-learning integration and at the same time ensuring quality education at par with other universities in the US and the Philippines, respectively. Certainly, the younger Silliman still has something to learn from Baylor although it has its own ways of integrating faith and learning and in improving the quality and scholarships of its faculty and students, evident in the recognition it received in recent years.

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**KEYWORDS:** Christian university, Protestant, Baptist, Presbyterian, faith-learning integration

## INTRODUCTION

I was struck by some parallel events in the history of Baylor University (henceforth, Baylor) and Silliman University (henceforth, Silliman) and their common foundation as Christian higher education institutions, which they claim in their respective mission statements, even though they are widely separated by the

Pacific Ocean. And speaking of a body of water, Baylor can be aptly described as a campus by the river with reference to the Brazos River on its northern side, while Silliman is a campus by the sea because, on the eastern side, it directly faces Bohol Sea. Metaphorically, water is life and the connection of these two institutions to certain bodies of water, by coincidence, incidentally symbolizes their commitment to nourish life and to promote quality living, a commitment that is evidently embedded in their degree programs and community engagement in both the sacred and secular fields. Both are Protestant universities; in fact, Baylor is the largest Baptist higher education institution in the world while Silliman is one of the largest Presbyterian universities in the Philippines.

Baylor is situated in Waco—a small city in Texas—while Silliman is situated in Dumaguete City, also a small city and the provincial capital of Negros Oriental. Each is the oldest university in its locale: Baylor in Texas and Silliman in Negros Oriental. Silliman is also the oldest Protestant university in the Philippines. Baylor was established on February 1, 1845 and is now (i.e. 2012) 167 years old (Baker, 1987, p. 15), while Silliman, which was founded on August 28, 1901, is 111 years old (Carson, 1965, p. 1). They have both surpassed their hundred years of struggle for existence amidst the challenges of modern times. It was the Texas Education Baptist Society, as recommended by Reverend William Milton Tryon and District Judge Robert Emmett Bledsoe Baylor, which established Baylor University (Baker, 1987, p. 12). Meanwhile, Silliman was founded under the auspices of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, USA through a donation from Dr. Horace B. Silliman, a retired businessman from the town of Cohoes in New York (Carson, 1965, p. 1).

Although establishing a school was originally the idea of W.M. Tryon, it was after R.E.B. Baylor that the university was named because the former refused the honor. Tryon did not want to be misconstrued as having personal interest for suggesting the idea of creating a school, so he endorsed the name of Baylor. Actually, Baylor also refused in favor of Tryon because, according to him, he had done nothing worthy of being honored. In the end, the highest officials of the Republic of Texas supported Tryon's suggestion of having Baylor's name (Baker, 1987, p. 15). In the case of Silliman, although Dr. David S. Hibbard, together with his wife Laura, had done all the work to start Silliman Institute and was its first President, it was named after Dr. Silliman in recognition of his persistence in building a school for the Filipino people because they "need a new kind of

education” (Carson 1965, p. 2).

The foregoing events were just a few of the historical facts about Baylor which got me more interested to discern how Silliman is similar or different from Baylor. It also led me to further examine how Silliman may stand among other universities in the Philippines some years from now like in the case of Baylor in Texas or in the US. Certainly, the experiences of Baylor is a good benchmark for Silliman being both Christian and private non-profit universities. I stayed with Baylor as a Fellow of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA) from January to May 2012. The opportunity to be in the campus of Baylor for four months allowed me to read books and documents in its libraries; to participate in its academic and co-curricular activities; to intellectually interact with Dr. James Benighoft, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Policy; and to interview some faculty and administrators to validate the information about Baylor I got from my readings and observations.

In the following sections, I will compare Baylor and Silliman in terms of the political events that unfolded when they started as educational institutions and eventually expanded, the challenges met and opportunities enjoyed, and the adaptability of programs they pursued that described or characterized the quality of Christian education they have produced through the years.

## POLITICAL EVENTS

It is interesting to point out the parallel political events in Texas and the Philippines prior to the coming of the Americans. Texas was once part of Mexico and the latter was a former Spanish colony, which was also the case with the Philippines, but the Mexicans gained their independence earlier—on August 24, 1821—than the Filipinos did. According to the *Handbook of Texas On-line*, “New Philippines or Nueva Filipinas and Nuevo Reino de Filipinas were secondary names given to the area of Texas above the Medina River at the time of Domingo Ramón's expedition of 1716” (de la Teja, cited in Baker & Pohl n.d.). The same source also notes that in using these names the Franciscan missionaries were actually trying “to equate their work in Texas under Philip V with that of their brethren in the Philippine Islands under his predecessor, Philip II, thus engendering royal support.” They wanted the province of Texas to be like a “new” Philippines. However, the name was no longer commonly used in legal documents by the early

1800s except in land grants.

The residents of Mexican Texas and the Republic of Texas were disgruntled with the Mexican government because of its shift to centralism during the rule of General, then President, Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana. They revolted, led mostly by immigrants who were accustomed to federalism in the United States where they came from, which produced the Republic of Texas on March 2, 1836. But it was not that easy for the young republic which was always threatened by invasions of Mexican troops in some of its territories as well as by Indian attacks. These had also impeded the plans of the Texas Baptist Education Society to establish a school (Baker, 1987, p. 12).

On the other hand, in the Philippines sometime later, the Filipinos did gain independence from Spain but it was short-lived because the Philippine-American war erupted. The sovereignty of the United States over the country by virtue of the Treaty of Paris, resulting from the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American war in 1898, was not recognized by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. The general played a major role in the final stage of Filipino revolution against Spain up to 1898. He proclaimed the First Philippine Republic on January 23, 1899 and became the first president to mark the end of Spanish occupation of the country.

So while Baylor was chartered a university in the last year of the Republic of Texas when it became part of the United States of America, more than 50 years later the establishment of Silliman coincided with the end of the Philippine Republic when it became a US colony. Certainly, American missionaries thought of education a very important tool to meet various challenges in life particularly under newly acquired or imposed political statuses of the people of Texas and the Philippines, respectively.

## **CHRISTIAN VISION AND MISSION**

In its decision to proceed with the establishment of a school, the Education Society was guided by a major goal of meeting “the need for educating ministers as well as those individuals interested in secular learning” (Baker, 1987, p. 12) through a school that “...would be fully susceptible of enlargement and development to meet the needs of all ages to come” (originally quoted in Baker 1987, p. 12). The Society already had a vision that the school it could establish would not only be parochial in scope and provisional in character but

would grow so as to significantly impact not only Texas at a certain period in its history but even beyond for many years to come. On the other hand, Dr. Silliman's proposal to the Presbyterian Board to establish an industrial school in the Philippines was inspired by the Hampton Institute model in Virginia which he also supported. But because of the religious background of its founders, "Silliman has been intimately associated with the Protestant missionary movement and with the formation of and growth of evangelical churches in the Philippines" (Carson, 1965, p. 1).

Baylor and Silliman as Christian educational institutions have Protestant orientation that strongly determined their directions in the succeeding years up to the present. Baylor upholds a moderate Baptist orientation, as opposed to fundamentalism, founded upon an ecumenical Christian mission that "historically stood for religious liberty and tolerance" (Parsons, 2003, p. 64). In the same manner, Silliman, with its Presbyterian and Congregational traditions, also plays a significant role in the Ecumenical Movement and is, therefore, liberal in its religious perspective. With similar historical beginnings and religious foundations, Baylor and Silliman undeniably have the vision and motto that are filled with notions of delivering excellent education to all, regardless of religious affiliation and beliefs, in order to produce the kind of leaders who will serve not for personal gain but for the well-being of others in society, within and beyond one's community, and within the natural environment with a commitment to pursue Christian ideals in the process.

The mission of Baylor says "to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community" with *Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana* (For Church, For Texas) as its motto. Similarly, Silliman's mission is to become "a leading Christian institution in Asia committed to total human development for the well-being of society and environment" with the motto of *Via, Veritas, Vitae* (the Way, the Life, the Truth). Guided by these mission and mottos, both institutions have visualized that their respective students and graduates are both intellectually equipped and spirituality inspired by Christian ideas, values, and practices that put their education not only for personal pursuit of grandeur but likewise for the service of humanity. For Baylor, being a Christian university is not enough just to have an atmosphere of high moral and religious kind of campus life, but that which also integrates faith and learning into the whole process of educating its students (Schmeltekopf, 2003, p. 11). Silliman shares

the same expressions without compromising “academic dignity and secular scholarly pursuits” and equally recognizes the “reality and supremacy of the Divine” (Silliman Strategic Plan 2008, p. 31).

### SMALL BEGINNINGS

It was not immediately in 1845 that Baylor started to operate. It had to open a year after because the location had to be identified, and the president and the faculty had to be named. In its first opening, the students had to be content with what was immediately available to become their classroom. From the documents he examined, Baker (1987, p. 23) described later the scenario of the first class in this manner:

On May 18, 1846, twenty-four young boys and girls gathered in a small partially refurbished frame schoolhouse on the southern edge of Independence to open the first class of Baylor University. Thirty-year-old Henry F. Gillett, a native of Connecticut who had been in Texas teaching and farming for about six years, greeted the students. He was the only employee of the University, as president Henry L. Graves had not yet arrived.

The scenario of the first class at Silliman Institute (its first name) was not far different from the experience at Baylor. Although there were more students at Baylor representing both sexes with only one school official around, the first batch of students at Silliman was all boys, because that was originally intended to be an industrial school, and the school President and a teacher were both present to receive the students. Similarly to the Baylor students, the first batch of Silliman students had to start from scratch but their commitments to learn very well prevailed as they continued to meet during the succeeding school days. From the letter of Dr. Hibbard, Carson (1965, p. 1) quoted the following lines that show how the first class at Silliman started:

There were fifteen boys that morning. The equipment consisted of four desks about ten feet long, two tables and two chairs, a few McGuffey’s Readers, a few geographies, arithmetics and ninth-grade grammars. I was President; Mrs. *Laura* Hibbard was the faculty (*italics mine*).

I am showing the earliest enrollment and classes to compare those with the scenarios now after more than a century of the existence of these two universities. With such limited resources and enrollment when they started, one may ask how they continue to operate during times when the political climates were unstable in those places.

Moreover, formal education would have been a novelty which few locals would have considered very important, since they had been making a living without finishing school or earning degrees. Even at present, newly established schools have to have enough capital to sustain their operation when income from tuition fees is not enough or not reliable to pay for faculty and staff as well as to purchase what equipment and facilities are needed in order to attract more students and to become competitive. Baylor and Silliman were, therefore, navigating the seas without clear assurance that they could reach land with limited resources at their disposal. Establishing school as part of missionary work, I would say, they may have been motivated by faith that God would provide for a noble cause, and indeed, donations kept coming from philanthropists who believed in them.

### THE EXPANDING PRESENT

Baylor was merged with Waco University (another Baptist school in Texas) in 1886 and was moved from Independence to Waco. The merger was primarily driven by the desire of some trustees to have only "one central university which the entire denomination could support," and Baylor was retained as its name because of loyalty to the denomination's first school (Baker, 1987, pp. 40, 42). Baylor presently occupies an area of 735 acres (297 hectares). For the school year 2010-2011 it had a student population of which 80 percent came from within Texas and 20 percent from 48 states and 86 countries. The enrollment for that period was 15,029 wherein 12,575 (83.67%) were undergraduate students and 2,454 (16.33%) were graduate and professional students ([www.baylor.edu/about/index.php?id=48867](http://www.baylor.edu/about/index.php?id=48867)). Although Baylor has only 11 schools and colleges, these academic units offered 151 degree programs at the undergraduate level, 76 master's programs, 33 doctoral programs and the juris doctor. Previously, it also included a medical school.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Silliman, which is centrally located in Dumaguete, occupies an area of only 153 acres (62 hectares). It includes all academic levels: pre-school and basic education, both elementary and high school, and collegiate and post-graduate education. In 2012, it has 17 academic units but its degree programs are limited as compared to those at Baylor. It only offers 63 degree programs at the undergraduate level, 27 master's programs, 9 doctoral programs, juris doctor and medicine. In the school year 2010-2011 (Annual Report of Silliman, 2011) it had an average

enrollment for the two semesters of 8,732 covering the following academic levels and degree programs: undergraduate (5,920), graduate (291), medical (91),<sup>2</sup> law (95), special students (18), high school (981), elementary (991) and preschool (345). In summary, the undergraduate students comprised 68% of the total enrollment followed by those enrolled in basic education (26.53%) and the graduate and professional degree programs (5.46%). The small percentage of special students (0.21%) refers to those who only took English orientation classes (usually South Koreans) or other lessons for a limited period in a semester. As a whole, the foreign students from about 23 countries comprised only 4 percent (368) of the total student population.

The growing number and mixture of academic programs Baylor and Silliman have acquired since their modest beginning is a fulfillment of their missions of providing holistic education in response to the needs and demands of a modern and globalizing world. They did not simply stop with what they had offered during the first half of the century of their existence, nor did they cater only to the communities immediately within their surroundings as well as the church that they are directly affiliated with, but they chose to spread their wings and soar high and wide to meet both the opportunities and threats in the secular world. Nevertheless, they both retained their religious schools which are tangible expressions of their beginnings and commitments. But it was only in 1905 that a Theological Seminary was organized in Baylor, only to separate from it in 1907 and later move to Forth Worth, Texas in 1910. To have a seminary on campus was important enough that in 1993 the George W. Truett Theological Seminary was organized in Waco, but classes only began in 1994 (Baylor University, 2011, p. 5). Meanwhile, at Silliman, a Bible School was opened in June 1921 to train students who wanted to go into church ministry. This was the rationale of Dr. Frank Laubach, a member of the American Board Mission, when he proposed having this school (<http://www.su.edu.ph/college/divinity/>). Today it is called Divinity School and offers Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Theology.

## **EXPANDING BEYOND THE MAIN CAMPUS**

The academic program of Baylor does not only transcend time but likewise space. It has expanded to other places in Texas in order to bring quality education to areas where it is appropriately needed and resources are available. In 1909, it opened as a diploma program



the Baylor School of Nursing within the Baylor Hospital in Dallas—the predecessor of the Baylor University Medical Center.<sup>3</sup> It is now called the Louise Herrington School of Nursing, which started to offer degrees in nursing in 1950. The first Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees were awarded in 1954 and this made the school one of the oldest baccalaureate nursing programs in the United States (Baylor University, 2011, p. 296). The School of Nursing is now conveniently housed in the Harry W. Bass Academic Center at the Dallas campus of Baylor. This is just a few blocks northeast of downtown Dallas and is highly accessible to students who want to enroll in the nursing program. Pre-requisite courses may be taken either at the Baylor-Waco campus or elsewhere.

Meanwhile, three new off-campus academic programs are in partnership with the state and situated in Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. First is the Army-Baylor Graduate Program in Health and Business Administration, which produces graduates with Master of Health Administration (MHA) degrees, which may be combined with the Master in Business Administration (MHA/MBA). The program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME) and the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) (<http://www.baylor.edu/graduate/mha/>). Second is the U.S. Military-Baylor Graduate Program in Nutrition and the U.S. Military Dietetic Internship Consortium which award Master of Science in Nutrition degrees (<http://www.baylor.edu/graduate/nutrition/>). And the third is the U.S. Army-Baylor University Doctoral Program in Physical Therapy which started to offer masters degrees in 1971 and the doctoral physical therapy program in 2003 (<http://www.baylor.edu/graduate/pt/>). All the above programs are especially designed to meet the needs of personnel in the uniformed services. But what is noteworthy here is the high regard of the state for Baylor's reputation in the fields of health research and education, reflected in the fact that the former forged partnerships with the latter rather than with other private or state universities in Texas.

The other recent off-campus academic program of Baylor is the 21-month Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program which actually started on the main campus in 1991. It is now offered in its extension schools in Dallas since 1993 and in Austin since 2001. The professors from the main campus would travel to these places to hold classes as scheduled although local lecturers who are practitioners are also being tapped to handle

certain courses. Meanwhile, paper submissions and other assigned activities are conducted on-line. According to Dr. Gary Carini, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies of the Hankamer School of Business, the EMBA Program is unique because it illustrates a campus in a learning environment. The knowledge from classroom instruction is immediately applied by students in their existing professions. Classes are also conveniently scheduled so as to fit the work schedules of these students who want to advance their careers.

Although Silliman is already more than a century old, it has never expanded to other cities in the country, unlike other private sectarian or religious universities in the Philippines (e.g., Saint Paul University, La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, University of San Carlos) to cater to people who wish to enroll but are hampered by cost and time because of the distance. The geographic extension of classes or having campuses in other places is not actually new in the Philippines. In fact, several state universities in the country (e.g., University of the Philippines, Negros Oriental State University, Cebu Technological University) have campuses in some parts of the province where they are located or in other provinces which are managed as one system.

Actually, Silliman had a plan to have an MBA Program similar to what Baylor has that will particularly cater to professionals who are working in Manila, the capital city of the Philippines. A feasibility study was conducted to determine its viability, considering strong competition with other universities. If this is to be pursued, lessons about how to proceed can be gleaned from the opinion of Dr. Carini that to have a competitive off-campus program is to offer quality instruction but with a relatively comparable price—not necessarily the lowest—with other universities. Often price is associated with quality, and professionals who are conscious of their investments would naturally select the best university but with a fairer price. Silliman has a high national reputation and a number of alumni working in Manila who may avail themselves of its MBA Program. Likewise, qualified alumni in Manila with related advanced degrees can be tapped to handle classes in addition to the pool of faculty coming from the Dumaguete campus at certain times.

## **CHALLENGING AND SHARPENING THE INTELLECT**

Another feature of the academic program of Baylor is its dedication

in providing students a broad range of learning opportunities that cater to individual preferences and abilities. It may be appropriately considered a special program, because it has stricter requirements and expectations for students who want not only to deepen but also to broaden their understanding of the various aspects of life in relation to the disciplines that they are currently pursuing. Baylor's Honors College provides talented students with superior academic records and independent motivation with several "innovative and challenging interdisciplinary programs." These programs include the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, the Great Texts Program, the Honors Program, and the University Scholars Program (Baylor University 2011, p. 248). I remember when I was yet in college that Silliman also had an Honors Program which was opened only to university scholars, but it had stopped in the 1990s after the faculty who supported it had either retired or left the university. Although it was just one program and was not sustained, it nevertheless showed that Silliman also has that desire to provide a more specialized academic program for talented students.

The Honors Program which started in 1959 at Baylor is a four-year departmental and interdisciplinary program which inspires students to intensely explore their major fields of study by integrating several areas of knowledge through independent research with guidance from faculty members from various disciplines. The Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, on the other hand, offers an "option for the general education requirements of all undergraduate degree programs." In this case, there is an integration of the various academic disciplines within a set of comprehensive interdisciplinary courses so the students can see and appreciate the relationships and connections among issues, disciplines, and thinkers. As a result they are able to critically examine and synthesize the materials that they study towards a more comprehensive understanding of the matters at hand. There are five sequences of courses in the program, including The Examined Life, World Cultures, The World of Rhetoric, The Natural World and The Social World (Baylor University, 2011, p. 250). The incumbent Silliman president Dr. Ben S. Malayang III has proposed this mode of integrating core courses as part of strengthening the liberal education program of the university. However, this has yet to be realized and adopted by the faculty members who have initially shown some apprehension because of the problem of integrating several topics in a single course.

The Great Texts Program of Baylor is akin to Dr. Malayang's

proposal of exposing Silliman students to various readings in the humanities for the same reason of broadening their liberal arts education. As practiced at Baylor, the Great Texts Program is an “interdisciplinary program that explores the richness and diversity of the Western intellectual heritage” (Baylor University, 2011, p. 266). The students select a major and minor concentration of studies as the focus of their undergraduate education. If they major in Great Texts of the Western Tradition, they will find this useful especially if they are in the Bachelor of Arts programs or will pursue graduate study. Having Great Texts as a minor will strengthen their background in liberal arts as well as broaden their learning. The University Scholars Program likewise seeks to broaden the liberal arts background of students while they are being prepared “for a career through concentrated study in several areas” (Baylor University, 2011, p. 269). They are free to create an individualized course of study and are exempted from having specialized course requirements of a traditional major. Throughout their entire four years in college, they get advice from a program director that mentors them.

### **ADAPTIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

While remaining true to its heritage the academic program of Baylor does not only aim to produce graduates who are knowledgeable and skilled in their specialized disciplines in order to meet the demands of the labor market and to provide substantial return of investments for their college education; it also makes sure that its graduates have a broader, integrative, and humane understanding of issues confronting them when they will start to practice their professions by providing them a strong background in liberal arts education. The adaptive nature of the academic programs of Baylor is seen in its expanding degree programs and in bringing Baylor education off-campus coupled with scholarships for those who need them. This likewise indicates Baylor’s commitment to make education available to anyone who has the motivation and talent but may be hampered by social inadequacies. Meanwhile, the creation of Honors College provides extra opportunities to students who crave more learning and demonstrate love for greater challenges beyond what the regular academic program can offer them.

Comparatively speaking, the academic programs of Silliman may lag behind Baylor in terms of quantity and resources, but the

essence of responding to the demands of time and the market as well as in producing well-informed graduates is apparent. Some of the programs of Baylor which have been reaping positive results, such as its EMBA and Honors College are actually within the plans or had been practiced in the past, but they are not further pursued by Silliman administration. However, given its limited human and financial resources, Silliman has to be careful about expanding or reviving programs unless it is assured of sustainable support of alumni and faculty. It has to re-assess the proposal to offer off-campus MBA or other graduate programs, to review the need to re-establish its Honors Program in terms of the interest of students, and to re-evaluate the capacity of faculty to teach integrative courses.

In general, the major concern of Baylor and Silliman on liberal arts education is informed by its importance on providing broader human and spiritual dimensions on the learning of students promoted by early philosophers and the forerunners of Christian education. This perception about the importance of liberal arts is summarized by Holmes (2001, p. 10-11) who particularly reiterated the argument of philosopher Seneca: "While liberal studies cannot actually bestow virtue...they do prepare the soul for its reception...prepare one for wisdom." Furthermore, Holmes (2001, p. 26) also wrote that according to Augustine, "liberal learning leads to the contemplation of God...." Thus, institutions supportive of Christian higher education, like the United Board, always look for programs that promote whole person in the liberal arts tradition (<http://www.unitedboard.org>). Liberal arts education helps in preparing students "for service to both church and society" as well as in bringing them to "the unity of truth that Scripture implies" (Holmes, 2001, pp. 2, 20).

## INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING

Talking about commitment to Christian faith and quality education is like discussing how religion and science can be reconciled given their perceived inherent tensions. In fact, even the past trustees of the United Board that link Baylor and Silliman in the Fellowship Program, which I had participated, had to grapple with the question of whether Christian higher education really exists. One group argued that there is no such kind of education, while the other said that it is what Christian schools offer. According to Dr. Paul Lauby (1996, p. 192), former executive director of the United Board and was with Silliman

for 16 years, Christian education takes “religion seriously in all areas and dimensions of life, and... fosters a cohesive and comprehensive educational experience” but is “completely committed to a free exchange of ideas and serious consideration of all world views.” It is a kind of education that does not adhere to self-righteousness and attitudes of exclusion, he added. This is the view that has ultimately guided the United Board in partnering with Christian higher education institutions in Asia, both Protestant and Catholic. But Dr. Lauby was, at the same time, alarmed by the growing secularization of Christian colleges and universities.

For Baylor, the tension within its organization was real and had caused a division between the conservatives and moderates who upheld different views of how to face the threats of secularization of Christian institutions. The tension was marked with the charter change of Baylor that made it independent from the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The centrists viewed this to have allowed the university to be “both intellectually enlightened and religiously faithful” (as quoted in Baker, 2007, p. 113). I do not have to elaborate on the details of the tension because they have been thoroughly described in the book *The Baylor Project: Taking Christian Higher Education to the Next Level* edited by Hankins and Schmeltekopf (2007). But what is important to note from my reading of this book is that there is a way to maintain Christian heritage without abandoning the pursuit for quality education, which Baylor has successfully done and clearly shown in the recognitions and achievements it has earned.

Dr. Herbert H. Reynolds, Baylor president from 1981 to 1995, pledged during his inaugural speech “that we will continue to remain true to that heritage and respond faithfully to the trust granted us” (as quoted in Baker, 1987, p. 301). He favored the integration of faith and learning because of his belief that Baylor had a unique purpose: “to be a first-rate university which acknowledges that humankind is God’s creation and that the best type of education is that where discovered truth and revealed truth exist side by side in a complementary fashion” (as quoted in Baker, 1987, pp. 316-317). Taking a comprehensive view about Christian faith allows a scholar to use his or her religious orientation as “a starting point, the end point, and the guiding inspiration” and not a “limiting label,” according to Dr. Richard John Neuhaus, for scholarly pursuits or for seeking and serving the truth (Baker, 2007, p. 119). Thereafter, I presume that what Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Neuhaus advocated had informed the direction of the academic programs of Baylor and driven the students to excel

in their disciplines without abandoning Christian ideals. Dr. Robert Sloan Jr., Baylor former president, later wrote that he was also for faith and learning integration but he was criticized because of his “managerial style and methods of implementation” (Sloan, 2007, p. 320).

Therefore, the expansion of academic programs of Baylor, particularly on the physical and natural sciences, in order to respond to secular demands should not be taken as a neglect of Christian ideals. In fact, with more academic programs, more avenues are opened by which these ideals can find application and interpretation, provided that these ideals have been internalized by students in their participation in various religious or faith-related activities and in dialogues with their professors. Indeed, there are Baylor faculty who do not see being a Christian and a scientist to be problematic, and it is interesting to find them among faculty who handle courses at Honors College. They certainly can influence the thinking of their students, and they do not only speak inside the classroom but also in churches that seek harmony between science and faith (e.g., Hendrickson, 2012, p. 3). For example, when I was in Baylor, the Physics Department of Baylor invited Dr. Hugh Ross, an astronomer and Christian apologist, to lecture on the convergence of physics and faith (Allison 2012, p. 1).

The Annual Report of Baylor (2011) of its achievements provides evidence of the strong Christian identity of the university not only in academic realms but as demonstrated by students in campus ministry activities and in the community. The Spiritual Life Center of Baylor offers a variety of experiences and exposures for students to re-examine their faith and to find meaning for their being in a university. These activities include chapel hour, mission work, pastoral care, and spiritual growth and formation. Chapel is considered to be the oldest tradition of Baylor where students and faculty come together at scheduled times on Mondays and Wednesdays to listen to and be inspired by people about their commitment to Christ. There is the Seventh and James Baptist Church within Baylor campus where students can attend services, in addition to the various Baptist churches around Waco. Meanwhile, three groups aside from the Baptist Student Ministries or religious structures intended for students are present inside Baylor campus where worship services are also held. These are the St. Joseph Catholic Student Center, the United Methodist Student Center, and the Reformed University Fellowship which is the campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

The students are also given opportunities to serve and learn

in the community to instill the spirit of volunteerism and service-learning into their lives as Christians even after they graduate from the university. These opportunities are provided by its Community Service Programs and the Baylor Interdisciplinary Poverty Initiative. Baylor also sponsors the Global Mission Leadership Initiative of the School of Social Work, which trains international students and sends them back to their home countries to serve the needs and transform the lives of marginalized people (Snoberger-Balm, 2012). During his March 21, 2012 chapel remarks, Baylor incumbent president Judge Ken Starr emphasized the realms where science and God intersect as well as how faith and science are equally embraced by Baylor faculty and students while working with or helping communities in need (<http://www.baylor.edu/president/news.php?action=story&story=111933>). This is another occasion which shows how at Baylor the opportunities to link faith and science emerging from classroom or community activities are made for students to appreciate.

The case of Silliman is not very different from that of Baylor. Although it is affiliated with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), it is officially non-sectarian or ecumenical and its academic environment is generally liberal. Its Christian orientation does not discourage the expression or exercise of other beliefs and, therefore, any tension due to religious differences is not common. Except the University Church, there are no other religious buildings within the campus but there are several religious student organizations pursuing ministries. So while it is known as a Protestant university, the majority of its faculty and student population are Roman Catholics with a good number also of Muslim students. As of Baylor, religious freedom is promoted at Silliman but all students have to take a Religion course as an institutional requirement and to participate in church programs and activities. Moreover, ecumenical and other religious celebrations, but not Catholic masses, are allowed at Silliman with permission from the University Church as a matter of policy.

The position of Silliman about the integration of faith and learning is clearly articulated in its mission: "infuse into the academic learning the Christian faith anchored on the gospel of Jesus Christ" (Annual Report of Silliman 2011, p. 4). President Malayang emphasizes always the place of the church in what he calls the 5 Cs of Silliman education which include classroom, church, cultural center, court (athletic) and community. And the church is not just a component that can be removed for convenience, because Christian faith is considered



“foundational to a Silliman education” where “various activities for faith nurture, education, worship, fellowship, and service are in store for Silliman students all year round” (Annual Report of Silliman 2011, p. 10). Faith integration in classroom and campus activities is done in a manner that does not discriminate students from other religious denominations. But as a way to ensure that the theology and practices of faith shall respect and conform to the Protestant heritage, the University Spiritual Life Council (USLC) is organized and currently led by a University Church Elder who happens to also head the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). The Dean of the Divinity School co-chairs the USLC and the memberships have both academic and church representations which include the University Senior and Associate Pastors.

The highlight of Silliman’s Christian celebration is the University Christian Life Emphasis Week (UCLEW) during the first and second semester which is spearheaded by the USLC. The activities designed for the week take in the forms of faculty and staff retreat, church convocations, Bible studies and devotions and Galilean fellowship participated by students, which are spiritually relevant, Christ-centered, and deeply rooted in the Word of God (Annual Report of Silliman 2011, p. 13). The people involved in these activities, either as convocation speakers or Bible facilitators, are Sillimianians who represent the cross section of the community but are not necessarily Protestants. They can be administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the ministers of the University Church. Therefore, fostering of spiritual growth among members of the Silliman community is part of the academic calendar and programmed according to a chosen theme for the semester.

Similar to Baylor, Silliman has a strong community engagement by involving students through volunteer work and the employment of service-learning as pedagogy. As part of their academic learning, the students are brought to the community both to serve and to learn in the process while at the same time instilling the values of sharing to people in the community who are less privileged as compared to them. So while they are able “to test theories and principles through actual community work” (Annual Report of Silliman 2011, p. 12) they are made to experience the Christian meaning of service to others and an appreciation of the blessings they have as compared to people who have not attended schools like Silliman. Their service-learning experience challenges their elitist thinking that they are superior because of their education and teaches them the notion

that as privileged Christians they have responsibilities to fulfill. The realization of the values of service and sharing come about during reflection sessions in which they process their community experiences with the help of their teachers (Oracion, 2010). Thus, faith and learning integration in Silliman education ensures competence, character, and faith among its graduates as results.

## MEASURES OF QUALITY EDUCATION

The quality of education that a university offers has some indicators and these include the program accreditation and ranking it receives, the graduates it produces, and the impacts it makes on society in terms of government policies and programs. An indirect measure is the amount of donations and grants it receives from institutions, both private and public, that believe in its ability to produce graduates who can make significant contributions to societal and environmental well-being. But in this paper, I will limit my discussion to the accreditation of programs and rankings that Baylor and Silliman have achieved during recent times. Although this is not the best way to demonstrate how Christian commitment and quality education are related in the absence of comparative data of a significant sample of non-Christian and Christian schools, I may be able to show that a well-meaning emphasis on faith will not hinder the delivery of quality education as demonstrated by these two Christian universities.

The accreditation of academic degrees and programs given to certain schools signifies that these have complied with the standards set forth by the granting agencies, either private or governmental; and therefore, accredited schools have satisfactorily demonstrated competence and delivered quality education. Baylor has degree programs at all levels accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (CCSACS) and is also a member of ten educational organizations (Baylor University, 2011, p. 8). Foremost of its memberships as a Christian university is that with The Lilly Fellows National Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities which started during the administration of Dr. Reynolds. This network is concerned with "the connection between scholarly vocation and the Christian faith" (Baker, 2007, p. 116). Many of Baylor's academic units are also accredited by their respective professional organizations or specific accrediting agencies. There are also some specific departments and programs that enjoy

individual accreditation in addition to the accreditation given to their mother academic units.

Meanwhile, Silliman is one of the few universities in the Philippines granted autonomy by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). As an autonomous university, it has the authority to develop new programs without the approval of the CHED. In 2010, it was also granted Institutional Accreditation by the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP)—a status enjoyed by only five universities in the country. The two private, non-profit agencies that accredited Silliman and are authorized by CHED are the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities-Accrediting Agency, Inc. (ACSCU-AAI) and the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU). Of the 32 duly recognized programs offered by Silliman, 94 percent are accredited by ACSCU-AAI (60.00%) and PAASCU (40.00%) (Annual Report of Silliman, 2011, p. 36). In 2012, seven of Silliman's graduate programs in English, History, Sociology, Public Administration, Nursing, Social Work, and Psychology were given Level IV accreditation by ACSCU-AAI. Also, seven of its undergraduate programs in Arts, Science, Psychology, Mass Communication, Nursing, Secondary, and Elementary Education were awarded the same level by PAASCU (<http://su.edu.ph/article/445-14-Academic-Programs>).<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the masters and doctoral degree programs of the Divinity School are accredited with the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA).

Although national or international rankings of academic institutions have their own biases and loopholes in terms of indicators and methodology, they are nonetheless helpful in knowing how one is generally perceived by others. Baylor ranks 75th in the 2012 *U.S. News and World Report* ranking of national universities in the US and some of its graduate programs are given high ratings as well (<http://www.colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com>). There are 262 national universities in the US, which are doctorate granting institutions, and composed of 164 public and 98 private universities. Harvard University and Princeton University share the top ranking among these national universities. It is interesting to note that all those universities in the top 10 are private but do not have religious affiliations except for Duke University which is ranked 10th and identified with the Methodist Church. Meanwhile, Baylor shares the rank of 75 with five public universities and one private university which is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.

The above data roughly show that getting into the highest rank may be difficult for universities that might be limited by their religious principles and priorities unless they make deliberate attempts to balance the demands between religious tradition and scientific pursuits. How Baylor is able to balance these demands in providing quality education and land above 50 percent of all ranked universities in the US may be gleaned from the remarks of one of its recent graduates and a former student body president:

*“Now that I am in the workplace, it has become even more apparent to me how important my education was at Baylor. Baylor was a place where I grew spiritually, academically, and as a young leader”* (Anonymous 2012, p. 8).

Silliman may not have the same fame that Baylor has enjoyed but it is equally gaining recognition as one of the top 10 universities in the Philippines. It is ranked sixth with the University of the Philippines, a national public university in the country in the lead.<sup>5</sup> The scores used in rating come from the Asian University ranking for 2011 released by Quacquarelli Symonds, a leading global career and education network (<http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/asian-university-rankings/2011?page=5>). In contrast to the US, where the top universities are private and non-religious, in the Philippines, aside from the two public universities on the list, those universities belonging to the top ten are private and affiliated with religious groups. Those based in the national capital region are the Ateneo de Manila University, University of Santo Tomas, De La Salle University and Adamson University while those in the provinces are Silliman University, Xavier University, University of San Carlos and Saint Louis University. All of these universities are Catholic except for Silliman.

## CONCLUSION

Both Baylor and Silliman have been seriously negotiating the demands of religious traditions and scientific pursuits in order not to fall into the trap of being too exclusive or of betraying the ideals of their founding leaders. Since they have chosen to be true to both worlds, faith and learning, they are managing two identities of being Christian universities in the traditions of the Baptists or Presbyterians and of being competitive scholarly institutions as expected by the scientific community. They can, however, decide which should be

their major concern, as did some American universities that started as religious schools and eventually lost this affiliation when they turned to secular education in the desire to be on the top (see Benne 2007, p. xiii). This means that Baylor and Silliman could have been like other seminary schools if they really wanted to pursue more religious instructions. But they took the more challenging path of combining religious instructions with the secular disciplines as a way of adapting to the changing world where Christian faith and values are needed to spiritually enlighten graduates as future workers and leaders.

But as noted earlier, the experience in the Philippines is more interesting because the quality of education being offered by the top religious schools does not diminish. Despite that Catholic educational institutions are more conservative than the Protestant universities on certain social and moral issues they are more able to combine faith and science because of the priorities they set for using education as a venue for evangelization. Thus delivering quality education becomes an effective means of enlightening students about their faith, and not religion questioning or limiting their pursuit for more knowledge. For instance, the case of the Ateneo de Manila University, managed by the Jesuits who are known to be more scholarly and liberal among the Catholic religious orders, demonstrates effective faith-learning integration inspired by its motto "Light in the Lord" (<http://www.admu.edu.ph/index.php?p=120&type=2&sec=39&aid=7542>). Meanwhile, in the US in general, Benne (2007, p. xiii) would confirm how every Protestant university lost its Christian identity as it pursues top research university status but the Catholic universities had fared better in this regard.

Indeed, secularization is slowly or quickly creeping into the "soul" of Christian universities all over the world because times have changed and they have to adapt or to directly confront the challenges and threats brought about by this development. Should they hold on to the notion of doctrinal purity of their religious affiliation or to become Christian universities in a general sense as in the cases of Baylor and Silliman? This question is begging for a change in the definitions of their identity, perhaps different from how they were envisioned a century ago, to meet the threats of "pervasive secularism and loss of traditional moral virtues" (Sloan, 2007, p. 327) confronting Christianity at present. As Schemeltekopf (2003, p. 11), Baylor former Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, wrote that a "Christian college or university which does not integrate faith and learning will eventually collapse from within." With this note,

Silliman can learn from the story of Baylor as to how it maintains faculty and students who manifest commitment to Christian faith and values that inspire, rather than limit, their scholarly search for knowledge which they unselfishly share for uplifting the worsening conditions of society and the environment.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Baylor University College of Medicine started in 1903, located in Dallas, as a result of the alliance between Baylor and the medical doctors who decided to start a medical school to improve the medical practice in north Texas. However, in 1969 the College separated to become an independent institution which allowed it to access federal funding. The Baylor College of Medicine is currently located in Houston (Camp 2010; *see also* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baylor\\_College\\_of\\_Medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baylor_College_of_Medicine)).

<sup>2</sup> Similarly to the Baylor College of Medicine, the Silliman University Medical School was a brainchild of certain groups of physicians in Dumaguete City who realized the need to establish a medical school. Given the required resources and processes to start a school, the group worked with the Silliman administration on October 20, 1997 to prepare for all the documents for its approval by the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The BOT approved the Medical School Program on March 20, 2004 and the CHED approved it to start in school year 2005-2006. So while Baylor College of Medicine later became independent from Baylor University, the Medical School of Silliman University is yet in its infancy but has already made a record of having 100% passing rate during the last two board examinations.

<sup>3</sup> The name Baylor University Medical Center was officially adopted by the trustees only in April 1959 although it had been called the medical center previously (Baker 1987, p. 251). Presently, this hospital is not owned by Baylor University. Meanwhile, Silliman University also includes the Silliman University Medical Center (SUMC) which is managed by the Silliman Medical Center Foundation, Inc. (SMCFI) where the College of Nursing and School of Medicine students are sent for clinical instruction and internships. The SUMC was formerly the Mission Hospital but was directly located inside the campus. It was first opened in December 1915 as part of the medical missionary work of American educators and doctors in Negros Oriental and the nearby province of Siquijor.

<sup>4</sup> Level IV which is the highest, is given to “accredited programs which are highly respected as very high quality academic programs in the Philippines and with prestige and authority comparable to similar programs in excellent foreign universities” (<http://www.paascu.org.ph/paascuprimer.pdf>).

<sup>5</sup> There are a total of 2,180 higher education institutions in the Philippines classified into private (1,573) and public (607) as of August 2010 (<http://www.ched.gov.ph>).

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