



From your SRC

Introduction

Hi all! It seems like we have just started the first week of the academic year. What are surprises! Here we are in the third week. The SRC congratulates you all for the tremendous hard work during the past two weeks and welcome you to begin afresh this third week. May your hard work be a blessing to yourself, YTU family and everyone you encounter.

Hospitality Week

Hurreeeee....!!!, It is Hospitality Week 2020. As you may have experience already, YTU is well-known in the larger University of Divinity community for being so hospitable. In this regard, as we celebrate Hospitality Week 2020, the SRC encourages all lecturers and students to bring something to share in the Common Room during the break periods (10:30am & 7:30pm). To all new students we say, feel at home in YTU and feel free to ask for help from the SRC and Admin when necessary. Happy Hospitality Week to all.

“Meet the Folks” – Michael Hardie - svd

WHY DO WE NEED PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS?

Michael Hardie, Professional Standards and Safeguarding, Divine Word Missionaries.

Those of you who have just begun academic studies at the University of Divinity’s YTU campus, or those of you who are continuing, will probably have heard of the term, ‘Professional Standards,’ and are no doubt wondering what it means.

Definitions.

'Professional Standards' are regulations and guidelines which ensure that people engaged in professional occupations such as teaching, medicine, psychology, counselling, sport, church, etc. act in ways that exemplify high moral and ethical conduct. Such standards have been developed and promoted by leading and qualified practitioners in the field of work where competence is claimed. For example, in the area of commercial business, a typical professional standards governing body is the Professional Standards Councils of Australia, and in the area of the Catholic Church in Australia, the governing body which sets and monitors standards of behavior and Best Practice in parishes and ministries is Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL), in association with the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC).

Key Areas of Application.

Professional Standards are usually found in, and applied in, three key areas of application: knowledge, skills and behavior. A dentist for example must be qualified to a certain professional standard with an appropriate university degree; he or she must have undergone a minimum number of hours of practical application of the knowledge before he or she can begin to be called 'dentist,' and he or she must understand (and agree to be bound by) the ethics and morals of the profession in terms of behavior towards others whom they meet in the course of their daily praxis.

Likewise, for those of us preparing to enter religious life, or preparing for work in church-related ministries, everything must be done according to professional standards. Following on from the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013-2017), one of the significant recommendations of the Commission has been the design, implementation and monitoring of professional standards for church ministers and members of institutions who have authority in the lives of others, in order to promote a high level of integrity and professionalism, thus preventing abuse. Such standards generally come under a specifically termed set of regulations and guidelines known as 'Safeguarding.'

Professional Standards apply to everyone. Even as students studying in an academic institute such as UD-YTU, professional standards apply. There are regulations regarding registering for studies, attending classes, researching for assignments, accurately acknowledging sources, presenting the assignment, and so on. The behavior of students towards each other, the Institute and teaching staff (and vice versa) is also covered by a set of professional standards.

The Royal Commission has changed the face of society and Church in Australia. Whereas in the past we usually went about 'church business' guided by Church moral statements and the behavioral ethics of the Gospels (especially the letters of Paul), the absence of a clear distinction between moral failings and criminal actions sometimes meant that those whom we trusted to protect the young and the vulnerable often failed that trust. The eventual result was a situation of abuse, which often took decades to come to light. The provision of recently updated professional standards and safeguarding practices, following the recommendations of the Royal Commission, have greatly improved safeguarding in our society and safety in Church.

Key Legislation.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission have brought about a major shift in the laws of child protection, safeguarding and professional standards. The States and Territories of Australia have recently brought out new laws and regulations, and through CPSL (Catholic Professional Standards Limited), a new set of guidelines has been issued for the Catholic Church. Whereas safeguarding and protection in Australia has historically been state-based, these new regulations are country-wide, for both Church and State. The essential ones you need to know about are:

1. Federal: The National Principles for Child Safe Organizations (2019);
2. Catholic Church: The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (CPSL, 2019).

In addition, other documents such as 'Integrity in Ministry' (2004, Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the National Committee for Professional Standards) are valuable references. In fact, this latter document has been the standard for professional conduct and safeguarding in the Catholic church since 2004. However, with changing times and as a result of the Royal Commission, CPSL's ten standards document (number 2 above) will set the standard for safeguarding compliance within Catholic entities, although 'Integrity in Ministry' remains a significant and valuable document.

Finally, some resources. To be more familiar with the business of Professional Standards and Safeguarding, have a look at the following documents. Your lecturer or YTU Student Council secretary will be able to give you more information; all are available on-line for download.

1. "A Brief Guide to the Final Report." (The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.)
2. "Health and Integrity in Church and Ministry." Conference Papers, Melbourne, 27-29 August 2018. (Stephen Crittenden, ed).
3. "Integrity in Ministry." (2004, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference).
4. "The National Principles for Child Safe Organizations." (2019, Australian Government).
5. "The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards." (2019, CPSL).

Things to Take Note of...

Thanks to those who have made their donations so far to the SRC. A gentle reminder to some of our religious brothers(Students), who have not yet contributed their SRC donations. Could you kindly do so.

The donation envelopes are in each class room. Please hand your donation to any lecturer, SRC member or the admin staff. Your donation of AUD\$ 20 supports the Common Room provisions, fruits, tea, coffee and biscuits in the common room. Our donation also supports: Start of Year BBQ, Start/End of Year Eucharist, Social Night etc.

This Week's Quote:

"It's not about how much you do, but how much love you out into what you do that counts". Mother Theresa.

Freddie, Cp (SRC Secretary).

