

**Institution:** St Aloysius (Deemed to be University), Mangalore

**Submitted by:** Ms. Charleen Annette Rebimbus, Chair of Counselling & Health Sciences

**Head of Institution:** Dr. Praveen Martis SJ, Vice Chancellor

**Year Founded:** 1880

### **Title of the Practice: Gratitude Circle**

#### **Problem Context**

At St Aloysius University, faculty observed that final-year students faced challenges in self-reflection and emotional resilience while preparing for life beyond campus. The absence of opportunities for forgiveness, gratitude and recognition created a gap in holistic development. To address this, the university introduced an innovation that would nurture emotional clarity and strengthen community bonds.

#### **Description of the Practice**

The Gratitude Circle was conceptualized as a week-long initiative for final-year students. Organized annually by the Department of Counselling, the program integrates three dimensions - reflection, recognition and scholarly communication. Students participate in guided activities such as writing letters to release hidden hurts, composing messages to their future selves and expressing gratitude to mentors and peers. The introduction of the Gratitude Journal further extended the practice, enabling students to engage in daily reflection and record positive experiences. Over time, the Gratitude Circle evolved into a replicable model of holistic pedagogy.

#### **Key Actions Taken**

- Organized Gratitude Circle sessions for final-year UG and PG students.
- Facilitated reflective letter-writing and symbolic release activities.
- Encouraged recognition of mentors, peers and meaningful experiences.
- Guided students to compile reflections into structured narratives.
- Distributed Gratitude Journals to sustain daily reflection and documentation.

#### **Timeline of Implementation**

The Gratitude Circle was introduced as an annual initiative in the first week of February. Sessions were facilitated by faculty and mentors across departments with participation from thousands of students. Over time the practice was institutionalized as a structured pedagogical innovation, supported by the Vice Chancellor and the Counselling Department.

## **Evidence of Impact**

Active participation from over 2,020 final-year students in 2025 reflects its resonance. Faculty reported increased openness and emotional expression, while students described the sessions as healing and empowering. One student noted, "*Writing a letter to my future self-gave me hope and direction, it felt like a gift I am sending forward.*" The Gratitude Journal further reinforced long-term well-being by encouraging daily reflection.

## **Replicability and Scalability**

The Gratitude Circle requires minimal resources making it highly replicable across institutions. Success depends on faculty involvement, administrative support and structured facilitation.

## **Conclusion**

By embedding gratitude into pedagogy, St Aloysius demonstrated how emotional growth can be integrated into higher education. The Gratitude Circle provided students with tools for resilience, empathy and self-worth, while strengthening campus culture. As a replicable framework it offers institutions a practical pathway to prepare students for life beyond academia.