

Teaching and Learning
----- in the -----
SSND Tradition

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Teaching and Learning in the SSND Tradition

Introduction

The mission of Mount Mary is its very soul. It is what is distinctive about us and what breathes life into all of our endeavors. That mission takes its impetus from the educational vision and values of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and this booklet is designed to paint a picture of how the SSND legacy permeates the excellence and creativity of every academic area today.

The founding sisters established an environment within the Catholic intellectual tradition, which was, and is, dedicated to the development of the whole person. They taught and administered out of a sacramental imagination which saw connecting threads of God's Spirit woven through every discipline, threads that created a wholeness and an ultimately positive approach to the world rather than a collection of courses with no meaning that could embrace the whole. [See Appendix II in this booklet.]

Faculty members of Mount Mary University continue to be invested in the spirit that the School Sisters of Notre Dame offer. The interviews conducted within every academic area testify to the "something more" that is at the center of the educational enterprise on this campus. Faculty encourage students to become beholders—a profoundly sacramental stance—of the Mystery that opens them to wonder, to creativity, to empowerment, and to their place in the connectedness of all things. Students are affirmed even as they are challenged, not only to do their personal best, but also to use their gifts for the good of the broader community

May this booklet be a testament to the "something more" that is going on in teaching and learning at Mount Mary University. To paraphrase St. Paul, may we ask God to enlighten our innermost vision in order to know the great hope to which we are called, the wealth of the glorious heritage to be distributed among all members, and the immeasurable scope of the power working in us.
[Ephesians 1:18]

Joan Penzenstadler, SSND
Vice President for Mission & Identity
February 25, 2016
Founders Day at
Mount Mary University

MOUNT MARY UNIVERSITY AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME

The four core values which summarize the mission and vision of the University are linked with SSND defining characteristics. Below is the description of each characteristic followed by the core value which best addresses it.

SSND Characteristic: A conviction that educational excellence empowers those served to reach their full potential as individuals and enables them to direct their giftedness toward transforming the world.

Core Value: **Competence**

- ❖ committing to excellence in teaching and learning with an emphasis on thinking critically and creatively
- ❖ integrating the liberal arts with career preparation
- ❖ enhancing professional excellence at the graduate level.

SSND Characteristic: A commitment to work for unity in a divided world, unity that is evidenced by inclusivity, internationality, and community building at all levels.

Core Value: **Community**

- ❖ developing a learning environment founded on the spirit of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, a community of women rooted in the Catholic tradition
- ❖ promoting a diverse learning community, which is inspired by the SSND witness to unity in a divided world
- ❖ working in partnership with local, national and global organizations.

SSND Characteristic: A sense of responsibility for the world, especially the needs of women, youth, and persons who are marginalized.

Core Value: **Compassion**
promoting a deep sense of social justice arising from sensitivity to moral values and Christian principles

SSND Characteristic: An openness to radical transformation, responding to issues of justice, peace, and integrity of creation, as well as working for systemic change, as appropriate.

Core Value: **Commitment**

- ❖ encouraging leadership and integrity because of the conviction that each individual is created in God's image and is thus a person of dignity
- ❖ providing an environment for the development of the whole person, since the SSND educational stance is grounded in a Christian vision of who the person is called to be and what the world is destined to become.

The development of each core value works toward Mount Mary's vision of transforming persons in order to transform the world.

As faculty reflected on their disciplines, teaching methodologies and desires for their students, they focused on the four defining characteristics of education practiced in the spirit of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. This booklet contains a summary of how members from each of the five academic schools reflected on their commitment to the values of a Mount Mary education.

THEMES EMERGING IN MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL

- ◆ Faculty from every school reflected on their personal commitment to the values for which Mount Mary stands. They talked about the creativity they employ in order to inspire students to excellence and to draw out their giftedness; how to encourage them to ask good questions and understand why they hold the beliefs they do. Even though many of them no longer have a School Sister of Notre Dame in their department, SSND spirit is evident in their convictions—“We believe in our students!” “So often when I am speaking with a student the message I need to give is, ‘You belong here!’” “We truly desire each one to succeed.”
- ◆ The mission and environment of this campus enable faculty, staff and students to explore the spiritual dimensions without barriers.
- ◆ Students get more individual attention than they might in another institution; emphasis on personal values and interests, time for reflection and sharing would not take place to such an extent on a larger, secular campus; faculty have much more personal contact with students, more opportunities to know their backgrounds and the challenges they face.
- ◆ Community is a central strength in our classrooms as well as among student engagement leaders. Conversations kept emphasizing the importance of establishing safe environments where each one is heard and treated with respect. Relationships are key, and collaboration on projects teaches skills in navigating the complexity of relationships as well as in evoking imaginative ways of learning, sharing, and presenting.
- ◆ In contrast to some area colleges and universities, Mount Mary has a very diverse student population, including traditional and non-traditional students, various racial and ethnic groups, a variety of religious beliefs, etc., which provide rich opportunities for reinforcing global perspectives and respect for cultural differences. The culture at Mount Mary fosters and supports each student as an individual while also creating a sense of belonging to a community.
- ◆ A sense of compassion and the desire to make a difference are nurtured throughout the campus. In the category of General Community Service, Mount Mary was awarded the 2014 President’s Honor Roll with Distinction. Our students involved in the Peace Building Certificate, in Common Ground, in Special Olympics efforts all have enlarged their compassion and their sense of the mighty currents of hope that can be created when we work together.

- ◆ Another area that plays a role in all of the schools is international studies. Students in such diverse areas as art therapy, fashion, dietetics, philosophy, theology and the social sciences have the opportunity not only to study abroad but to live the values of a Mount Mary education. For example, the trips to Ireland and Northern Ireland have focused on social justice and peace. The study programs in Peru have enabled students to do volunteer work in a squatter settlement, and the trip to Rome gives students the opportunity to serve meals to those who are poor in the heart of the city.
- ◆ Reflection is woven into the work of every department whether it is a silent moment to collect oneself before class begins or the meta-cognition (reflecting on how one is thinking) used in science classes or the pondering that occurs when writing journal entries or responding to the questions asked repeatedly in psychology: Why are you here, What do you have to do to get what you want? How many times might you have to do something before you arrive at what you want? A commitment to reflecting on and developing one's gifts within a supportive community as well as living out one's convictions on a day-to-day basis is what transformational leadership in the SSND tradition is all about.
- ◆ Creativity, evoked through unique learning environments on and off campus, interdisciplinary course and projects, and intentional encouragement of agility, experimentation, imagination, open-mindedness, and the navigation of complexity (AEIOC attributes) continue the SSND legacy. The sisters incorporated in their teaching whatever would enhance the creative spirit within their students so that they would use their gifts for the betterment of society. This attitude is a primary motivator across all disciplines.
- ◆ The faculty and staff who stay at Mount Mary find that their values match those of the institution; they are not afraid to express those values and ethics when it is appropriate.

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND DESIGN

In contrast to other campuses, the School of Arts and Design at Mount Mary has a deep commitment to cross-cultural experiences and appreciation of diversity as well as to leadership and community service.

Departments within the School collaborate on projects, which include juried galleries, shows, workshops, and special projects. They engage in extensive community service, social justice, and women's issue projects year round. The departments collaborate with other majors such as Communication, Spanish, and Occupational Therapy to broaden learning and service. Students participate in faculty-led trips to Asia, France, Italy, Peru, and Scandinavia. Environmentalism and sustainability are threaded throughout the curricula. Departments regularly join with industry to enhance student learning and experiences; community and non-profit projects are incorporated. Student organizations provide many opportunities for growth, leadership, networking, and service learning.

- ◆ **Art** courses are open to all campus students resulting in the interaction of many cultures and majors. Classes emphasize group analysis, which develops critical and creative thinking skills, improves oral communication, and provides leadership opportunities. Community and social justice content are infused throughout the program and the students' extra-curricular activities within the department.

Faculty members encourage habits of reflection in students by requiring them to document the creative process and write down each step as a critique of their own work. They draw students into self-acceptance, asking them to pace their own expectations. Conversation focuses on what development looks like, what the struggle with truth and right relationship look like, and what the distinction might be between beauty, the sublime, and truth. Developing a lens for life, faculty and students together learn what it means to lead a creative life.

- ◆ **Art Education** embraces hands-on learning, with an emphasis on leadership and action. Students engage in various teaching service opportunities with community organizations. Using the model of Visual Culture Art Education, the art education students are able to make educational connections and address the challenges of the 21st century classroom.
- ◆ The **Art Therapy** undergraduate program emphasizes community arts, a movement which has historically embraced the role of the arts in community development and social action. The program is rooted in

service learning where students work in the community to enable persons in underprivileged areas to gain a voice. The students collaborate with Express Yourself Milwaukee as peer leaders in a collective, transforming experience that culminates in a performance including music, dance, and visual art.

◆ **M.A. and Doctoral Programs in Art Therapy**

These programs result in students who are committed to being critical and creative scholars, ethical and just human beings with a global perspective, and leaders who put knowledge into transforming action. Art Therapy, by its very nature is grounded in community, works to empower others, is highly collaborative, and thus develops the Mount Mary students' leadership skills. Service to the marginalized and the disenfranchised is integral to this profession, so its fit with Mount Mary is mutually enriching.

The art therapy doctoral program builds upon the mission and values of Mount Mary as well as the profession and strives to educate future leaders in the field. The program is intended for active practitioners who are prepared and ready to take the next steps in their educational and professional development.

- ◆ **The Fashion Department**, both Fashion Design and Merchandise Management, offers courses that discuss social issues such as sustainability, ethical buying practices, and the increased awareness of fair labor standards. Most sewing related courses complete a charity project each semester, such as sewing dresses to send to girls in African communities, as well as sewing dog and cat toys to donate to the Wisconsin Humane Society. In addition to those charity projects, our student-led Fashion Association completes multiple charity projects a year, including hosting its bi-annual Closet Sale, where all items for sale at the end of the event are donated to local women's shelters.

The call for design excellence is apparent in every design submitted by our students accepted for the annual ITAA Design Exhibition, where all of our students place awards in the competition and receive high praise. In 2015, BizTimes.com in Milwaukee posted an article in June 2015 titled, "Mount Mary Fashion Graduates in High Demand among Area Retail Giants."

- ◆ **Graphic Design** encourages students to examine their values and design aesthetic through a global, historical and ethical understanding of the industry. Courses utilize client-based work and internships as a means for students to connect with relevant community partners. Recent partnerships include the Ronald McDonald House Charities, Make-a-Wish Foundation, and the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. The students' graphic design work is an integral part of the campus digital

communication for events such as Founders Day and CREO, the annual Arts and Design Showcase.

- ◆ **Interior Design** is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), which testifies to our striving for excellence. Students are involved in a variety of community projects, including homeless shelter remodels and fostering social justice awareness from interior design idea development to hands-on completion. Commercial and residential projects promote social justice issues with emphasis on sustainability, universal design, and special needs. The student organization and additional networking opportunities aid in the development of teamwork, leadership and communication and collaboration skills.
- ◆ **Music** survey courses provide an opportunity for students to appreciate and learn about the history of music in their country and in other cultures in the world. Music Education courses teach students how to integrate music into the traditional classroom. Instrument specific instruction in private lessons and classes helps students to develop self-discipline and self-confidence and to learn the value and rewards of commitment and achievement, in addition to experiencing the joy of making music.
- ◆ The **Physical Education** department seeks to develop balance in life, creating harmony within the body, mind, and spirit. At Mount Mary, physical activity is perceived as critical for the development of the whole person, promoting an individual sense of empowerment and well-being. It can also develop readiness to respond to stressful situations in a creative way through dance, athletics, yoga postures, breath work, and strength building. The skills students learn will serve them well in any career they choose

It is also hoped that the practices and habits fostered through the physical education department will support the development of a wellness lifestyle which includes personal strategies for stress management, fitness, nutrition and women's health issues. By learning what it means to contribute one's best in a dance troupe or on an athletic team, students grow in their appreciation of collaboration and a sense of community.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The **undergraduate degree in Business Administration** emphasizes values, ethics and social responsibility across the curriculum. Courses promote critical thinking and social responsiveness. Although some career preparation courses do not specifically discuss the mission, they focus on preparing women to be professional leaders. The skills taught in professional courses are integral to leadership and to professional competence.

Excellence and competence are called forth in ways that go beyond the status quo. For example, when teaching students how to prepare tax returns, faculty require this in paper form, so that students understand every detail and do not need to rely solely on electronic versions.

Class projects are specifically designed so that students work together with others whom they would not normally choose to be in their group. In this way, they are exposed to a variety of perspectives and move out of their comfort zones. Spontaneous study groups have also emerged, since tutoring in the Student Success Center cannot accommodate many of the specialized subjects in this discipline. The students themselves initiate these groups, which are very inclusive.

Many business courses address social justice and leadership issues. In particular, Strategic Management (capstone course), Principles of Management and Principles of Marketing use the Mount Mary mission and the missions of other organizations. Students begin to see the importance of a mission statement for any organization, and how they individually will be matching their goals and values to those of the organization for which they work.

An advertising plan for a non-profit is a requirement in the Advertising and Promotion class. Students visit non-profits, interview managers, explore missions and design effective ways to promote the organization and their causes.

The **MBA** program is as rigorous as any master's program available. The value added to the Mount Mary program is that it is student-centered and collaborative. The courses promote critical thinking and social responsiveness as they prepare women and men to be professional leaders.

When teaching leadership, the instructor makes it clear that the course is not simply about securing a body of knowledge, but learning how this knowledge impacts others, impacts the student as a leader, and impacts the organization. The course challenges participants to reflect upon their current leadership capacity and become intentional in expanding and exercising this capability.

The importance of cultivating ethical practices is infused throughout both the undergraduate and graduate business programs. In Business Ethics, students are asked to reflect on the philosophy they are following. To concretize this philosophy, they come up with an ethical dilemma that they have faced and do a self-assessment on their own leadership. Doing this exercise early in the course allows time for self-reflection. Later in the course, the exercise is repeated, so that students can note the shifts that may have occurred within their thinking.

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

- ◆ The **Communication** department is committed to developing students who are competent in their ability to convey a message to a variety of audiences and understand the effect that message has on issues that impact our society. Students explore the role of communication in various communities and organizations through courses in Intercultural and Small Group Communication. They also learn the vital connection between compassion and communication through courses with an interpersonal or health and wellness focus. Faculty weave social justice issues into courses such as Gender Communication where topics such as domestic violence are critical, as well as Communication and the World of AIDS where students explore the experience of HIV/AIDS from a cultural perspective. More formally, all majors must complete a capstone course where it is required to conduct a social justice project that utilizes communication and public relations skill

- ◆ The **Education** department is purposeful in developing competence, creativity and commitment in their students who will become teachers in this 21st century. Being perceptive and agile in meeting the diverse needs in the classroom today requires one to suspend judgement and discover what lies beneath the question or the behavior. Education majors are led to operate out of a strength-based perspective regarding each student rather than a deficit model. Faculty set high expectations and then help students meet those expectations.

The required multicultural course of the Education program broadens the student perspective to appreciate the struggle for unity in diversity which is at the heart of the SSND mission. The conceptual model the department uses—The Reflective Decision-Maker— reflects the leadership model and social justice mission of Mount Mary while providing a variety of perspectives for students to assess their growth in these areas.

Curricula in the **M.S. in Education** are designed with societal needs in mind, so that social justice is an intentional perspective in each course. Students in the Diversity among Learners course are challenged to step out of their comfort zones and confront positions related to diversity, equity, and social justice.

Graduate students frequently serve in high need schools and with high need populations. As they are prompted to make connections between their coursework and their experiences, issues of justice and equity naturally emerge.

Graduate student projects include action research, which emphasizes self-reflection “in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices” in light of the situations where they will find themselves, thus promoting an increased awareness of justice in society and in practice. In addition, graduate student projects often include service learning. As part of the required coursework in the Graduate Program, students consider issues and problems in education today. They are prompted to formulate questions, evaluate evidence and search for answers, consider the positive in alternative views and draw tentative conclusions. Dialogue and dialectics frame the critical thinking required in this process

- ◆ In the **English** department, an emphasis on effective oral and written communication skills helps develop students into effective leaders. One example of this leadership can be seen through Arches, the award-winning student publication, which offers both a printed and online version. Arches is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press.

Faculty members are vigilant about creative ways to connect course material with the most effective ways for students to learn today. They have collaborated on several projects, both among themselves and with other departments. For example, several faculty members developed ways to make the course on the post-colonial novel more diverse, especially regarding gender and race. It has been particularly empowering for students in this course to be able to choose one of the novels required during the semester. When personal choice is involved, students are more likely to engage with the material.

Another vehicle for learning today is through the use of social media. In the Intro to New Media course, students learn to use social media in creative ways that help develop a sense of responsibility while giving voice to those who have no voice. They develop awareness, within themselves and with others.

Opportunities for reflection that contribute to transformative insights are abundant in the English department. In Composition I and II, students keep journals, and the instructor suggests topics that resonate with the students’ lives and evoke meaningful essays. Another literature course offers readings on mother/daughter relationships in various cultures. Students are encouraged to engage with this relationship in their own lives.

The discussion of provocative topics in literature classes enables students to disagree with one another and to defend personal values in a supportive environment. Such dynamic dialogue provides opportunities for students to practice leadership and communication skills.

The Capstone course in English includes preparation for entering the job market through mock interviews with industry professionals and the development of job application materials. Students also create a professional ePortfolio, so they can showcase their skills, values, and hopes for their work in the professions.

The **M.A. in English** promotes transformation as well as excellence through creative and professional writing courses, which require multiple revisions of manuscripts. The process of continual revision inevitably helps students grow and develop a greater appreciation of the nuances of story and language.

The English graduate program reflects upon community needs and cultural issues thematically and realistically. Whether students write short stories, novels, feature stories, grants, poetry, or memoir, they write to explore the world and, many times, with the goal of advocating for social change within the community.

Other ways in which the graduate program connects students with the community include:

- A real-world emphasis on projects in grant writing, technical writing and writing for new media, which helps build a portfolio of materials that advocate for the marginalized and disenfranchised.
 - An emphasis on effective oral and written communication skills, which are essential to effective leadership.
 - Recommended internships, which enable students to exercise humanitarian, professional and leadership skills.
 - Exploration and research into theme and character, which enables students to acquire a sympathetic understanding of other people and strengthens critical thinking about their own cultures.
- ◆ The **History** department structures course work so that student will gain a global perspective, understanding the social, economic, political, religious, and cultural factors which shaped the situations in world. Through courses like World Civilization (as opposed to Western Civilization), Modern Asia, African Studies, or Studies in the Middle East, students come to understand the nature of cultures and societies that are different from what they know. What is different about the Mount Mary approach to the teaching of history is that the role women have played is fully integrated into their study, not as an add-on but as an essential part. The focus on multiple perspectives and relationships reflects a more feminine pedagogy that seeks not only the factual data but the underlying reasons and causation which statistics may not address. Students are asked to look at all the factors in a person's or nation's life and see the interconnectedness. By participating in team taught courses like the

French Revolution or the Harry Potter Honors course, the students see clearly how different disciplines look at the decisions made in the past and begin to understand how they inform and shape the values and situations in the world in which they live.

Students learn that the concept of social justice has evolved over the centuries, since it is rooted in how a society values persons. Students come to understand how things change and how they can be effective agents of change. They also have the opportunity to study how protests in history have intended to change injustices and the factors that have limited that change. To give them practical experience History majors are encouraged to hold offices on campus and to organize political activities on and off campus. To broaden their vision they are encouraged to participate in programs such as those sponsored by the Women's Leadership Institute, the Milwaukee Historical Society, and the Elmbrook Historical Society.

Seeking to develop students with a world vision, faculty in the History department offer a United Nations course every other year. This is integrated with the work of the SSND NGO. Students learn of the work of the United Nations in the fall semester and then go to the United Nations in the spring to participate in UN conference work, specifically the Commission on the Status of Women. The department has also participated in study abroad programs to Rome, the People's Republic of China, Germany, Japan and Korea. With each of these trips, students engage in a campus class.

The Political Science part of the Department provides an opportunity to better prepare women to function as citizens. This requires a fundamental knowledge of the structures of political systems and the complexities of international relations. Courses are designed to develop an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the experiences and achievements of men and women in world politics. Students need to understand the people and the political processes of the past in their context in order to understand the evolution of society and the world. This requires that they, at times, need to set aside their values and look at the world through the eyes and values of people with whom they disagree. This is important in clarifying how the world has or has not changed and what agents move change on a national and global level. Students learn to think critically about political issues; explore various ways to become involved in the political process; evaluate evidence; develop skills in comparative and causal analyses; interpret political information; and construct sound arguments in explaining a position that can effect change. All of these skills help our students become critical and creative leaders navigating the complexities of our world.

- ◆ The **Justice** curriculum is interdisciplinary with courses in business, history, political science, psychology, economics, sociology and professional writing. At the same time, it teaches students that the very nature of the justice system today requires a collaborative approach to persistent problems in order to seek solutions.

Leadership requires that efforts bridge social justice gaps in a visible, conscious manner. The Justice program connects coursework with community experience and professional work through internships at such places as St. Rose's, Sojourner Family Peace Center, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Milwaukee's Safe and Sound Program, District Attorney offices, police departments, and local immigration law firms. The students take what is learned in class into the community, and they bring community issues to the classroom.

A program's faculty should lead on campus and off. The Justice program's director is active in the community through work on boards and participation in teaching and training legal and health service professionals, as well as the practice of elder and dispute resolution law. The director also leads the LOTUS Legal Clinic for victims of crime. The Justice Program Part-time faculty are also actively working in the community, and seen as leaders in their respective organizations, which include the District Attorney's Office, Marquette University Law School, the Milwaukee Police Department, and the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

The department's Advisory Board brings its members expert knowledge to the Mount Mary community. It also helps the program director choose and create high-visibility programming for the campus, and invites the community to share. Examples include a distinguished panel on Mental Illness and the Law, the Untold Stories program series for survivors of gender-based violence, and a professional workshop on using social media campaigns to combat sexual violence.

Leaders are those who integrate their experiences for the good. Many of the students in the program have personally experienced injustice; this personal connection leads them to excel in the classroom and to apply their learning with real commitment toward shaping a better future for themselves and others. The Justice on the Rise Student group is an active, completely student led organization that illustrates this level of engagement.

The syllabi of the Justice courses incorporate Human Centered Design theory as applied to pervasive abuse, injustice, resource scarcity, and enforcement of rights. The model evokes profound reflection. Students formulate questions about what they take for granted, as well as how to design solutions that begin from a place of empathy for the participants. They realize that quiet contemplation, curiosity and questioning are habits for a lifetime.

- ◆ **Philosophy** is unique in its place in the core curriculum, its historical orientation, its emphasis on women, its orientation towards ethical leadership, and its link with theology. In contrast with most secular schools, Mount Mary requires all students to take philosophy as well as theology. The central aim of the Theology and Philosophy departments is to introduce students to the fundamental questions of human life, to the Western intellectual tradition, and to the Christian tradition. In addition, Mount Mary's Philosophy department places an important emphasis on women thinkers and on questions of feminine identity. The curriculum is primarily grounded in the Western Canon but its faculty are committed to the idea that philosophical questions are universal and that answers are found not only inside but also beyond that canon. Thus the courses in philosophy at MMU strive to incorporate texts and authors in intellectual traditions beyond the Western canon, particularly those in African American philosophy and Eastern philosophy. Importantly the faculty are constantly striving to globalize the curriculum further by incorporating ideas, texts, and authors from Arabic philosophy, African philosophy, Caribbean philosophy, and other areas.

Philosophy emphasizes critical reading, thinking, questioning, writing and speaking skills which stretch students to do their best thinking. This discipline is inherently experiential; it requires that one reflect on one's own experience. Many upper level classes in Philosophy include project oriented learning experiences that require students to apply philosophical method in their majors. The Philosophy Club offers service learning opportunities. The Capstone course is a semi-independent study course that requires many leadership skills.

Search for Meaning (required of all undergraduates and taught from both philosophical and theological perspectives) stresses that the individual's search for meaning always takes place in a community. The course is focused on group discussion rather than lecture. Thus, the course teaches that conversation is a leadership activity. Making the method more explicit can strengthen leadership skills and the model across the campus. A question on the final exam always asks students to reflect on social justice and how they saw it incorporated in the course.

- ◆ **Sociology** majors everywhere acquire a deeper understanding of social structures. What sets Mount Mary’s sociology program apart from the rest? We include both sociology and cultural anthropology courses to help students broaden their perspectives beyond the familiar and local; to see connections between the local and the global; to raise better questions about what it means to be human and to act as responsible citizens of the world.

We also focus on skills needed to put knowledge to use in building stronger communities. Conflict mediation and community based research put students in contact with situations they read about in textbooks. They are encouraged to work for positive change. Thus, we have a strong commitment to learning that leaves the classroom. We do this with field trips, community experts as speakers, engaging our students in projects that contribute to the work of community organizations.

We have a faculty that takes seriously the need for involvement in social issues. Community engagement is not a buzz word but a way of life for professors. We explore the meaning of social justice by unlocking the complexities of the “social” and speaking boldly about the need for “justice.”

Throughout our course of study, we address social justice awareness and leadership development. One cannot study sociology and anthropology without deepening an awareness of social inequalities throughout society and the world. Race, gender, age and social class are examined in a number of courses to help students better understand the underlying structures that perpetuate divisions and conflict.

Classes often visit community organizations and interact with guest speakers to gain first-hand insight into problems and solutions. Service learning is incorporated into many classes. We want our students eventually to be effective leaders of organizations that are characterized by diversity. We encourage internships and class projects directly involving students with community agencies in Milwaukee. A final senior experience requires students to either write a thesis paper or do an internship where they use the skills and knowledge they have acquired to work with an organization for change.

Because our department was influential in committing the University to membership in Common Ground, a southeastern Wisconsin advocacy organization, and because we value the organization’s approach, we have involved our majors in Common Ground projects – e.g., fairness for homeowners caught in bank foreclosures; civic concern over tax-payer dollars for a professional sports arena while children’s athletic facilities deteriorate.

We offer a **Peacebuilding Certificate** which develops students as leaders on key social issues such as violence, trauma, community reconciliation, and nonviolent conflict intervention.

The study of sociology and anthropology offers students another opening into the search for meaning. One cannot understand why things are as they are without grappling with the significance of social structure – an invisible but powerful influence in everyone’s life. Our disciplines add a critical component to an understanding of what it means to be human. Department courses illumine other areas of the core curriculum – natural science, literature, theology, philosophy, history, world languages – and rely on these other disciplines to add background and content for the questions that absorb sociologists. Students are encouraged to connect what they are learning throughout their undergraduate years to the discussions in our department courses. Our certificate encourages students to study topics such as violence and nonviolence from an interdisciplinary set of perspectives.

To aim to transform the world in ways consistent with social justice and Christian principles requires that individuals are aware of that world and of the difficulties they will meet as they engage it. Sociology raises questions about what “transformation” means and how one can be committed to one’s own goals while recognizing and engaging the diversity of the goals of others. The tension between “unity and diversity” is a hallmark of our disciplines – and a challenge for us all to be hopeful that a better world is possible.

The **Theology** department is grounded in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition which has maintained over the centuries that the core of human flourishing requires both free inquiry and faith. Faith necessarily seeks understanding, and the search for understanding eventually leads to questions of ultimacy that invite a faith response. Theology is a point of access to thinking critically about the Transcendent, that is, about God. Creative thinking skills also play a role, especially in helping students grasp abstract principles and theories.

Since faith and reason are mutually illuminating, the Search for Meaning course—combining philosophy and theology—is central to the core curriculum at Mount Mary. This course is the undergraduate students’ introduction to a theological framework, and it is shaped around seven foundational questions:

- What is the Transcendent and what is its significance?
- What is happiness and its significance for human life?
- What does it mean to be virtuous?

- What are the possibilities for human knowledge?
- What is the relationship of community to the individual's search for meaning?
- What does the Christian tradition have to offer to the individual's search for meaning?
- What are the various possibilities for thinking about and responding to suffering, social justice, and/or death?

The teachers are very intentional about creating an environment where each student learns to express her beliefs with confidence and to begin to understand why she holds the beliefs she does. Faculty are not focused solely on imparting knowledge but also on integrating knowledge with commitment.

Thinking critically, creatively, and collaboratively, faculty are alert to ways that theology melds with other disciplines at Mount Mary. Besides the Search for Meaning course, which is inherently interdisciplinary, God and the New Physics is routinely offered and taught jointly by faculty in the theology and physics departments. The course introduces both the theological and scientific modes of inquiry about the nature of and the wisdom within the universe.

Social justice is a major theme that threads through many of the offerings in Theology, for example, in the Synthesis Seminar, Biblical Perspectives on Justice, and The Social Gospel. Another course, Current Moral Issues, focuses on the critical thinking necessary for dealing with the specific, yet far-reaching, moral questions of our day (e.g., war, abortion).

Study abroad programs give the students a foundational experience which instills a knowledge of and a passionate concern for global issues, especially those related to justice. The Theology course taught in Rome has consistently done this through service to and with the Sant'Egidio community.

Faculty members talked about a calling to lead students to the tools that would allow them the ability to enter into thoughtful discourse on a deeper, more informed level. Some of the questions that are explored are: How can we look at Scripture texts critically and see their relevance for the present time?

Where do our ethical positions come from?

How do we order priorities in our lives?

Reflection is an integral component of every course. A great deal of self-disclosure happens in many of the classes which may, in large part, be due to the safe, respectful and confidential environment that is established.

◆ **World Languages and International Studies** department enables students to acquire a sympathetic understanding of other people and to strengthen critical thinking about their own culture.

Because most students will have heard about the mission before entering language classes, they are more prepared to make connections between the course content and the mission. In addition, an unwritten part of Mount Mary's culture is that course content does not take precedence over what might be going on in the larger community at the moment.

Taking advantage of "teachable" moments, e.g., the debate over immigrant rights in Spanish classes, enables faculty and students to engage in real-life issues that have social justice implications and strengthen communication skills in the process. Although faculty may not teach differently here than they would elsewhere, the mission can inform their teaching by its emphasis on education as a vehicle for transforming the world.

The Capstone course in Spanish includes the opportunity for students to choose an issue they are passionate about and to do research on it in a global context, e.g., free trade.

SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

The 'sciences' is one of the five foundational elements of the core curriculum. The **School of Natural and Health Sciences** offers a variety of courses for both the science related majors as well as majors from non-science areas. All these courses focus on scientific information and its relationship to real world problems. Students apply mathematics, particularly statistics, to analysis of scientific data. Students are also required to compose formal reports, make presentations, work in small groups, and apply communication skills.

- ◆ The **Counseling** department offers a Master of Science in Counseling with a choice of three concentrations: clinical mental health counseling, clinical rehabilitation counseling, and school counseling. Mount Mary's co-ed counseling graduate program participates in the National Board for Certified Counselors' National certification program.

Part of the mission of the Counseling program is to prepare students for professional practice with a collaborative commitment to professional competency, cultural sensitivity, and commitment to the values and ethical principles of Mount Mary. To this end, students are required to complete coursework in Professional Identity & Ethics and are trained to competency in Multicultural Counseling. In the area of leadership students are given progressively more responsibility for themselves in their work with a vulnerable group of clients in their community.

This program provides a holistic learning community that is designed to prepare professionals who possess a sense of vision, are committed to social justice, are effective communicators, and are skilled to assist individuals, families, and/or groups in achieving their potential. On-going assessment of developing knowledge, skills and dispositions related to competency in the profession is used to assist students in seeing their progress and areas of growth, so that by the time they graduate, they are competent and capable clinicians.

At Mount Mary, SSND values are integrally related to the values in the Counseling dept. Faculty members lay the groundwork for a trusting, supportive relationship and can, therefore, give effective, critical feedback that lets students know what skills they need to cultivate and hone. High expectations let students know there is something to reach for, while simultaneously being affirmed that they have the capabilities to become competent counselors.

Building relationships is the key to trust, from the admissions process onward, and teachers are continually alert to building this trust and being with their students the way they would want them to be with clients. They are thoughtful about being united in feedback, and, thus, have also nurtured trusting relationships among themselves. Together, they problem-solve around struggles that a given student might be experiencing.

The multi-cultural counseling course addresses respect for the diverse populations that counselors are called to serve. Moving beyond one's comfort zone and taking risks may be called for. These practices, coupled with critical self-reflection, help to bring about transformation. Self-work is necessary and ongoing with reflection being an essential component to the process.

- ◆ The Dietetics department at Mount Mary is different from what it might be at another institution because all pathways lead to the ability to complete training and move directly to the Registration Exam and a meaningful career.

The student body is diverse, and thus faculty strive to be supportive in responding to the needs of each student as well as creating a sense of belonging to a cohort. Truly seeking to serve the students, teachers bring their life experiences to the classroom, revealing their own failures as well as their creativity. The relatively small class sizes allow for meaningful interaction within the classroom.

Among themselves, faculty members collaborate to bring about an optimal learning environment. For example, they practice creative teaming for group projects, carefully selecting who will be in each group. They are intentional about meeting the challenge to be encouraging and yet honest, accepting students where they are and yet stretching them to their greatest potential. One teacher mentioned that as she perceives either the best needs of a single student or a group, she sometimes changes the process of a class or assignment to better fit meeting professional competencies.

Labs are taught by the professor responsible for the course instead of by a TA. The professor designs the lab experience to blend with the lecture/discussion portion of the course so that the learning experience is seamless.

Students participate in providing nutrition education to various community groups which bring them into contact with people from diverse backgrounds, offering the opportunity to become aware of the social justice issues with these various groups. Class assignments at meal site

programs, free clinics, food pantries and participation in a hunger simulation all raise awareness of social justice. During the two year program, students are required to complete ten hours of service learning outside of the classroom. At the completion of their service hours, students write reflections on their experience, which highlight both social justice issues and leadership opportunities. Students must also participate in service to a professional organization. The purpose of this activity is to promote the profession of dietetics. In doing so, students exercise critical and creative thinking, long-range planning, and problems solving.

Throughout the **M.S. in Dietetics** social justice awareness and leadership development are addressed. In *Issues and Problems in Healthcare* (DTS 722), students discuss worldwide healthcare policies and the greater implications they have for the social good; this fosters an awareness of the ethical challenges in healthcare policies. In the *Lifecycle Nutrition* courses (DTS 571, 573), socioeconomic status is emphasized as an important factor that is strongly related to nutritional status throughout the different life stages.

Leadership development is addressed in the *Integrated Human Nutrition* courses (DTS 660, 661) and in the *Research Design and Analysis* courses (DTS 712, 714) in which students take on a leadership role by facilitating class discussions. In the evidence-based practice courses (DTS 761-765), students in different areas of practice take on leadership roles in the classroom as they share their experience with patient care and reflect on practice guidelines.

- ◆ The **Math** department collaborates with many other areas in building up student confidence and skills. Empowerment is driven not only by skills and confidence, but also by spirit. Mathematics nurtures a spirit of wonder and appreciation for the complexity and proportionality in our universe. In teaching mathematical formulas and introducing new ways of thinking, faculty are committed to assuring the students that they can do it. The transformation that occurs can be seen in their faces.
- ◆ The **Occupational Therapy** department at Mount Mary incorporates the diverse life experiences of students to enhance learning. It also provides a developmental sequence of experiential learning activities including: case studies, hands-on labs with clients, short fieldwork experiences with clinical reasoning and problem solving, and longer-term internships emphasizing reflective practice. O.T. draws from social and natural sciences as the foundation for understanding the client's diagnosis, the client's experience of that illness and the social environment surrounding the client.

Faculty members go to remarkable lengths to support each student, holding each one as a person of dignity and worth. Students assume responsibility in planning events, and as their confidence develops, their skills also develop. Faculty testify to the transition from student to therapist that takes place after the fieldwork experience and that continues through each stage of transformation.

Layers of pondering and creativity are involved in clinical problem-solving. Students also engage in reflective practice as they develop effective treatment plans for clients. Teachers video students working with clients and then have them write a reflection on how they saw themselves. This process has the potential of drawing students to an awareness of their gifts on a deeper level.

The **M.S. in Occupational Therapy** respects diverse practice experiences that students bring as the foundation of their graduate learning experience. The program provides opportunities for each student to reflect on theory and practice with faculty mentoring for professional growth. The educational experience is contextualized with students learning from consumers of rehabilitation in the community and on campus to analyze the impact of the environment on engagement in meaningful activities.

The **Occupational Therapy Professional Doctorate** leverages the academic strengths of Mount Mary as a whole. The mission of the master's program is to provide a professional education in occupational therapy resulting in skilled hands-on generalist practitioners who are client-centered and occupation-centered in their approach to the profession. The mission of the doctorate is to provide a post-professional education resulting in practitioners who have advanced specialty practice that will strengthen and transform service delivery. Faculty intend the doctoral program to strengthen the climate of scholarship synergistically across the campus.

- ◆ The discipline of **Psychology** includes entire sub-disciplines devoted to issues of social justice and leadership. Prejudice, intergroup conflict, cooperation, leadership and prosocial behavior are explored with a distinct sensitivity to the emotional impact on individuals and groups. Respect for strict ethical standards in clinical practice and research upholds principles of social justice for a greater goal of improving the human condition.

In the classroom, every faculty member works at discovering how people learn. They seek to empower students by modeling what it looks like to

try new things, perhaps not succeeding at first, and then trying again. They rest the responsibility solely on the student for earning the grade that they do. Through empathy, they have come to see the student, not as failing, but rather as not quite there yet. They are very intentional about establishing safe environments where every student is treated with respect and where healthy relationships are fostered.

Reflection is an integral component in the psychology program. Besides the reflective writing that is encouraged, there are questions that are repeatedly put to the students, such as: Why are you here? What do you have to do to get what you want? How many times might you have to do something before you arrive at what you want?

Through such thoughtful probing, students begin to see what they really care about, notice what they are good at, and discover how they might transfer their skills to other disciplines. It is hoped that they will connect what they are doing now to what they dream of doing. In this process, transformation is already beginning.

- ◆ In the **Sciences** department, many of the student-centered learning pedagogies engage students in team work. During these activities, students take on leadership roles. All team members experience the strengths and challenges of collaborative work. Sometimes the activities involve constructive feedback from team members regarding performance in the team setting. These experiences raise student awareness of the qualities of a good leader and of effective team dynamics. Issues of ethics are often related to the content of science courses. Science courses emphasize a reverence and respect for life. Treating scientific data with honesty and integrity is a recurring theme.

The very process of the scientific method encourages creative thought and a way to see experiments never as failures, but as steps in a process with each step yielding new information. Faculty members help students to understand that there is not just one right answer. Teachers are continually challenged to provide an environment where students feel safe enough to let go, to risk things not turning out as they had hoped, to handle what may look like failure, and to wonder out loud. Even requiring students to write in complete sentences helps them to think through what they really intended to say.

Science courses incorporate contextualized learning. Students relate the science concepts they are learning to real world situations. Often the topics involve decisions that require analysis of scientific data within the context of values and ethics. A number of courses focus particularly on

the relationship of science to global issues such as the environment. For example, in Ecology, students write a proposal and design an experiment. They are evaluated on how observant, careful, and faithful they were to the scientific method.

The Sciences department prepares women for STEM professions. Quite a few of these women are from minority backgrounds. Both women and minorities are under-represented in these careers, and this fact gives added incentive to the sciences faculty to never stop encouraging, to hold students to high standards, and to continually search out ways to provide students with a sense of belonging.

In labs, teachers establish relationships and know each individual and how she is developing. Besides incorporating different teaching methods, teachers have various ways to assess what students have actually grasped. As an example of creative methodologies, one of the labs in Human Physiology was developed to help students measure different physical responses. Students come up with their own experiments and testified to how empowered they were to learn something about themselves in the process.

Faculty use student centered pedagogies such as: POGIL (Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning), case studies, PBL (Problem Based Learning), exit slips, which is similar to the one minute essay, games and simulations, journals for reflection on process, and hands-on models. The use of these learning approaches fosters a collaborative environment between faculty and students.

There are events in learning called “threshold concepts.” Once a student has grasped a concept, she can never go back to not knowing. When this happens—and it is quite evident when it does—students reflect on why they are stronger and how they have improved because of what they now know. Gratitude seems to be an overarching attitude by the end of a semester. Faculty witness the visible transformation of students who had little or no trust in their capabilities when they entered the course, to persons of confidence, especially in science, at the end of the term.

- ◆ The undergraduate **Social Work Department** at Mount Mary University is “committed to preparing students for entry-level professional social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities within the context of a liberal arts education. Our program is aligned with the purpose, values and ethics of the social work profession. Consistent with the mission of Mount Mary University, the department seeks to help students to develop a special appreciation for the

needs and the strengths of women and the knowledge and skills of professional practice that support and encourage women. Further, the department seeks to prepare students to advance human rights and to practice with respect for diversity and difference. Intrinsic to the mission of the Social Work Department is the ultimate goal of social, economic and environmental justice.”

In pursuit of achieving our mission, our departmental goals are designed to

- 1) prepare students for entry-level generalist social work practice including engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities;
- 2) prepare students to practice social work with respect for diversity and difference;
- 3) enable students to understand and advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice;
- 4) prepare students to understand frameworks of ethical decision making and how to apply principles of critical thinking in practice, research and policy arenas; and
- 5) prepare students to engage in practice informed research, research informed practice and policy practice.

ACADEMIC AREAS NOT HOUSED IN A SPECIFIC SCHOOL

There are academic programs which have a significant impact in shaping the educational experience of students at Mount Mary University, and which reach across all disciplines. They, too, are committed to living out the SSND legacy and the values inherent in our mission.

Caroline Scholars Program

The Caroline Scholars program, Mount Mary's most prestigious and generous scholarship award, attracts students who are committed to making a difference in their world. The students immerse themselves in social justice issues within the Milwaukee community and commit themselves to being engaged in the life on campus. They enjoy the support and encouragement of fellow scholars as they develop their own learning community.

Grace Scholars Program

The Grace Scholars Program provides opportunities for students to: (1) receive the academic, career, emotional, and spiritual support from Grace Program staff needed to succeed at the university level; (2) meet, work with, and develop bonds of camaraderie with a cohort of like-minded young women from Milwaukee who are striving to achieve a university education and better their own lives as well as contribute to their own families and communities; (3) gain a head start on academic progress by enrolling in Summer Bridge Program classes right after high school graduation; and (4) meet and engage with members of the Mount Mary and larger Milwaukee community who provide additional support prior to scholars' first fall semester and throughout their university careers.

This unique program is available to residents of Milwaukee who have been accepted to Mount Mary University as first-time university students, are under 21 years old, who demonstrate financial need, and leadership potential. Each year, 30 students are selected to join the Grace Scholars Program which awards 85% of tuition and fees for eight full-time semesters.

Honors Program

Since the 1970s, the Mount Mary Honors Program has played an important role in providing intellectually enriching and interdisciplinary classes and extra-curricular experiences for highly motivated students who want to be challenged at a higher level. Students must maintain a 3.5 grade point average while they are in the program. Honors courses are offered across the curriculum and often cover

topics in an innovative manner. The material covered may go into more depth, be more difficult, or engage the students in cross-disciplinary thinking. It is often creative and relies on strong critical thinking skills. The extra-curricular activities include honors noon-time seminars with professors leading discussions on a current topic in their field. Students may also attend speakers, cultural events (concerts, plays, dance, etc.), and campus events. Honors students reflect on each of their activities and write essays on how the event enhanced their learning and understanding of themselves. Women's leadership and social justice issues often arise during honors activities.

Leadership for Social Justice Seminar

This course is required of all first-year, traditional age students and is an intentional way of introducing new students to the mission and values of Mount Mary. It increases awareness of the connections among leadership, social justice, and creativity as faculty open themselves and their students to the nature and challenges of college discourse.

An understanding of various leadership styles increases students' self-awareness and confidence in their own ability to act and to lead. They become conscious of personal assumptions and stretch their ability to work with teams, build consensus, and resolve conflicts. Students also become aware of power structures that disadvantage groups, and they especially explore issues related to race, gender, and class.

Integrating conceptual learning with experiential learning, they listen intently, empathize with various community groups, and utilize human-centered design thinking in their efforts to creatively solve problems for the sake of bettering the community. Head, heart, and hands work in tandem throughout this seminar.

Promise Program

A federally funded TRIO Student Support Services program takes on a distinctive flavor at Mount Mary. The Promise Program strives to open the doors of opportunity for first-generation, low-income college students by offering guidance in all aspects of the college experience.

Promise Scholars benefit from a supportive environment that celebrates their achievements and assists them with individual challenges they might face. The Promise Program is committed to providing Promise Scholars the tools, resources, and mindset necessary to be successful students and morally responsible leaders with a strong sense of social justice.

The **Student Success Center** (SSC) is a student-centered space, providing seamless and intentional campus collaboration for ALL Mount Mary University students. The SSC is home to 6 distinct departments that work closely together to support, educate, prepare, and inspire students for current and future success. Individual departments include: Advising and Career Development, Accessibility Services, Academic Counseling, Counseling (personal), Learning Services (testing and tutoring) and Service Learning

The department of Learning Services provides free professional tutoring and learning assistance opportunities for all enrolled students. Individuals interested in improving their academic performance are invited to work individually with a professional or peer tutor, participate in group study, and/or attend skill building workshops. In addition to specializing in specific MMU Core Curriculum content areas including English, math and science, professional tutors are trained to work with students using specific targeted assessment strategies to meet the unique needs of each student. Learning Services also facilitates peer tutoring opportunities for student-led teaching and learning. Whatever path or story a student brings to the SSC, they are sure to find empowerment in becoming independent learners.

Study Abroad enables students, whether they study in London, Paris, Rome, or Costa Rica, to develop new lenses with which to see the broader world and their own culture; in addition, many of our short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs actively further both the mission and leadership model of Mount Mary. For example, programs to Ireland and Northern Ireland focus on social justice and peace and conflict reconciliation. In Rome, our students participate in a New Year's Day Peace March and provide service through the community of Sant' Egidio.

Mount Mary is strongly committed to promoting access to study abroad for all of our students, by promoting a variety of scholarships to enable our students to take advantage of this opportunity. For example, since fall 2012, 11 Mount Mary students have received federally-funded Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarships to help support them financially as they pursue their study abroad goals. Another Mount Mary student was selected to participate in the summer 2015 U.S./China Study Delegation sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

APPENDICES

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| Appendix I | Commissioning Ceremony for All Faculty |
| Appendix II | Excerpts on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition |

**Commissioning Ceremony
for
Faculty of Mount Mary University**

Mount Mary was founded in the Catholic Tradition by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Our approach to knowledge, grounded in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, holds faith and reason in dynamic tension as we search for truth together. We attend to the community dimension of all human behavior, and strive for the integration of learning so that our campus becomes a place of shared, transformative, intellectual life. Four core values summarize our mission and flow out of SSND educational convictions. Let us reflect on the purpose of our teaching in light of competence, community, compassion, and commitment.

Leader: Loving God, the source of all knowledge and truth, give to all who teach, wisdom, strength and compassion in all they undertake, and grant that all who learn may be open to your transforming power.

All: **Amen.**

Leader: The mission statement of Mount Mary University expresses our commitment to **competence**, integrating the liberal arts and career preparation with an emphasis on thinking critically and creatively. Mother Theresa, the founder of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, once said: “A well-educated teacher can more easily accept persons where they are and help them than one who is inadequately educated; good will does not supply for lack of competence.”

Will you strive for excellence in teaching and learning, honing your professional skills and drawing out the best in our students?

Faculty: **We will develop and offer our gifts with integrity.**

Leader: Mount Mary University promotes a diverse learning **community**. Mother Caroline, the one whose leadership established the School Sisters of Notre Dame in North America, was bi-cultural, bi-lingual, and intent on establishing schools and communities that promoted right relationship.

Will you foster an environment which witnesses to unity in a divided world?

Faculty: **In the spirit of Mother Caroline we will promote the unity in diversity, which carries forward the principles on which the idea of a university was originally founded.**

Leader: The promotion of a deep sense of social justice arising from sensitivity to moral values and Christian principles is pivotal to the mission of Mount Mary University, and key to the development of **compassion** within our students. The Directional Statement of the School Sisters of Notre Dame states: “In fidelity to our charism of unity in diversity, we commit...to direct our resources and ministries toward education that transforms and calls all to eliminate the root causes of injustice.”

Will your educational efforts not only concentrate on competence but also focus on what it takes to live justly in our society?

Faculty: **We will work toward character development in our students, which includes a sense of their interconnection with all other beings. We will do our utmost to aid them in their personal transformation and call them to help transform our world.**

Leader: Encouraging leadership, we call forth **commitment** in our students, commitment that emerges when one is convinced of one’s dignity and one’s solidarity with all of creation.

In your call to be educators at Mount Mary University, will you help to grow a sense of commitment in our students?

Faculty: **We pledge ourselves to fostering an environment for the development of the whole person, which includes the kind of commitment leadership for service requires.**

Leader: We welcome you to a new academic year in this community of scholars. May you experience the support of your colleagues as together we realize the mission and vision of Mount Mary University.



EXCERPTS ON THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Monika K. Hellwig, “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the Catholic University,” in A Jesuit Reader, pp. 248-251, ed. George Traub, S.J. Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2008.

Beyond the common base that we share with all religious traditions there is, of course, a Christian core that we share with our fellow Christians. At its simplest, this is the conviction that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth we have an utterly trustworthy interpretation of the meaning and destiny of human life, of human relationship with God, and of what constitutes a good life. From this simple beginning, the Christian community over the centuries has elaborated ways of worship, structures of society, beliefs, and expectations, all of which go to make up a way of proceeding. Among Christian communities, however, some characteristic emphases and understandings are more particularly Catholic. In this essay, I would like to point to some that have direct implications for Catholic higher education and scholarship. These are: commitment to the continuity between faith and reason, respect for the cumulative wisdom of the past, and an anti-elitist bent, attention to the community dimension of all human behavior, concern for integration of goals and objectives, and keep awareness of the sacramental principle.

The first of these, the continuity of faith and reason, leads Catholic universities and colleges to include philosophy and theology as essential components of the liberal arts core of undergraduate education...

The second characteristic emphasis that I have singled out is that of respect for the cumulative wisdom of the past. In contrast to the position of some Christian communities that look for Christian wisdom only in Scripture or only in the legacy of the pre-Constantinian era, the Catholic community has set great store by knowledge of the cumulative wisdom of all the Christian centuries...Catholic universities, therefore, have typically had strong programs in the humanities...

The third characteristic mentioned above is the anti-elitist bent. This is another way of expressing that mark of the church that we used to call universality. Salvation and all other human goods are intended by the creator for all...There is, therefore, a certain intellectual humility required in Catholic scholars and Catholic institutions, as well as a certain sense of responsibility for the conduct and use of scholarship, time, and resources...It means making strenuous efforts to include the underprivileged or excluded from society. It also mean treating respectfully cultures and customs alien from our own.

The fourth characteristic is closely related to this. Attention to the community dimension of all human actions means that there cannot be a pursuit

of any and all kinds of research or teaching simply out of the intrinsic interest in the subject, as though it were all a game without consequences....Similarly, to say that there is a community dimension to all human actions also implies that teaching can never be without reference to the impact on the students, and, through them, on their society.

This relates in turn to a fifth characteristic, namely, the concern to integrate knowledge as a basis for true wisdom in the living of one's life. Perhaps one of the most troubling aspects of rapid change and technical development in our times is that people of all ages have to learn so much so fast. They have to master so much instrumental knowledge and skill at such speed of assimilation that the more significant questions of meaning and purpose are often crowded out. The integration of learning in a coherent worldview or philosophy of life is a necessary basis for living a good, productive, well-directed life. It is necessary, though not sufficient, for setting proper priorities, for attaining a proper hierarchy of values, and even for attaining an appropriate intellectual humility in work and career, and in relations with other people.

A sixth characteristic, the final one mentioned here, is the experience and understanding that modern Catholics have come to name the sacramental principle....Our perception of reality is never in terms of raw experience, but is always arranged, interpreted, focused by the active mind of the perceiver. How we do this depends in large part on what we have experienced in the past, how those about us interpreted the experiences in which we shared, the representational art about us, the stories we heard, the way space and society had already been organized for us, and so forth. Two faculties play a role in this: memory, which records what has been, and imagination, which arranges the elements of experience in a meaningful pattern....

It has been a continuing practice of the Catholic community to build on religious memories by story and image, in literature and art, in music and architecture, in the liturgy and in extra-liturgical devotions, and in the elaboration of symbols of all kinds. The purpose of this is to shape the memories and the imagination of succeeding generations of believers so that they will interpret all their experiences in terms of the pervasive presence of the sacred and in terms of a history of salvation. The value that this gives to the education of the imagination is precious heritage with implications for all education and in a special way for higher education. It demands a foundation in the liberal arts, a style of education that fosters contemplation, and a respect for works of scholarship that take a long time. This is all rather countercultural in our times.

The Church in the 21st Century Center. *The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: A Conversation at Boston College, July 2010.*

The Catholic tradition and the contemporary university share two underlying convictions: that to be human is to desire to discover truth, and that the quest for truth is sparked by the expectation that the universe is intelligible. In the Catholic view, these convictions arise from belief in the union of the divine and human in Jesus Christ and the unity of all things in God. From this theological perspective, the Catholic intellectual tradition is based on two fundamental principles: first, that the search for truth in all aspects of life extends to the ultimate search for truth that animates faith; and, second, that faith is a catalyst for inquiry, as faith seeks to understand itself and its relationship to every dimension of life. Thus, the most probing questions in every discipline are never deemed to be in opposition to faith but are welcomed into the conversation on the conviction that ongoing discovery of the intelligibility of the universe will reveal more of the truth about God. The Catholic intellectual tradition can thrive only with the participation of all who seek the truth, including those whose inquiry leads them to question whether the search reveals purpose, meaning, or God, or to conclude that it does not.

Karen E. Eifler and Thomas M. Landy, eds. *Becoming Beholders: Cultivating Sacramental Imagination and Actions in College Classrooms.*, pp.ix-x. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014.

The last twenty or so years have seen something of a renaissance in terms of attention to the mission of Catholic higher education and the value of preserving it as a distinctive contribution to the American educational landscape. In many ways, the conversation began by encouraging faculty at Catholic colleges and universities to see themselves not as guests on their campuses but as fully invested stewards and collaborators, sharing in the privilege and responsibility of carrying on the unique charism of the place. As the physical presence of vowed religious men and women diminishes on Catholic campuses, the yearning to keep vivid the visions of the institutions' founding orders in the work of education and formation takes on a new imperative for the lay boards and faculty now in place.

What has been missing for most lay faculty is a clear framework that allows teachers of all disciplines to situate their work in the twin animating spirits of Catholic higher education: immersion in the rich, ancient intellectual tradition and sacramental imagination of Catholicism. For indeed, more than anything, sacramentality is a religious *imagination*, offering a perspective on one's discipline and its value. It is a deeply Catholic perspective on the world, one that sees God manifest throughout the natural, created world.

Catholics may be accustomed to think in terms of just seven sacraments, but underlying these seven sacraments is the staggering possibility that God might communicate God's self through the water of baptism, or the oil of anointing, or the bread of the Eucharist. Sacramentality conceives of God as active in, and through, the material world. To some religious sensibilities, that claim might seem blasphemous—for the, the Creator is radically higher than—and different from—a world that might be variously seen as simply fallen or profane. But in terms of a sacramental imagination, learning to see, learning to pay attention—teaching students to become beholders—is a fundamental religious good, and a primary educational task. “Learning to see” means learning to see a thing, or a person, or a social system in all its complexity, as it is. Botanists, poets, historians, nutritionists, and art historians all seek to untangle the webs of their disciplines with students in unique ways, and each field has its own distinct “grammar” and “syntax” to be mastered for genuine understanding to coalesce. While the disciplines and courses taught at Catholic colleges and universities are overwhelmingly, and appropriately, nontheological, approaching that enterprise through a sacramental imagination provides connective tissue that can lend a crucial kind of unity to any course of study. Undertaken in the context of sacramentality, students receive a cohesive, vigorous, and ultimately positive approach to their world, rather than a disconnected amalgam of classes.

MISSION

Mount Mary University, an urban Catholic university for women sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, provides an environment for the development of the whole person. The University encourages leadership, integrity, and a deep sense of social justice arising from a sensitivity to moral values and Christian principles.

Mount Mary commits itself to excellence in teaching and learning with an emphasis on thinking critically and creatively. The baccalaureate curriculum integrates the liberal arts with career preparation for women of diverse ages and personal circumstances; the programs at the graduate level provide opportunities for both men and women to enhance their professional excellence.

VISION

Mount Mary University is recognized as a diverse learning community that works in partnership with local, national and global organizations to educate women to transform the world.

