



AMU LINKS

Winter Newsletter

February, 2013

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Association of
Marianist Universities

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Dear Friend,

Welcome to the first edition of our AMU e-newsletter.

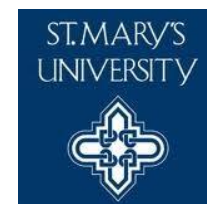
This newsletter, presently planned for four times during the academic year, is part of an effort to sustain cooperation and the exchange of experience and information among the communities of the three Marianist universities. Each issue will contain a feature of special interest at one of the universities, another section will contain a brief reflection on an aspect of Marianist education and a final section will be a kind of bulletin board of upcoming events, meetings, job openings, significant appointments, etc. As the new AMU web site comes online, the newsletter will be coordinated with that mode of communication.

We welcome your observations and feedback so that AMU LINKS will serve you in your commitment to Marianist higher education, which seeks to serve the common good of our Church and world. Fr. David Fleming, SM, Associate Director of AMU will serve as Editor of AMU LINKS. Contact him at: dfleming1@udayton.edu

Thomas F. Giardino, SM -- Executive Director, AMU

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY'S NEW CORE CURRICULUM

After a long period of gestation, St. Mary's University inaugurated in the fall semester of 2011 a new core curriculum. Its aim is to educate students in an interdisciplinary way, providing a foundation in liberal arts for all, no matter what their majors. Rather than general education requirements, the Core Curriculum explicitly seeks to



engage students in fundamental human questions and to motivate them toward lives of service to others and the common good.

Beginning with a basic course ("Foundations of Civilization") that emphasizes the development of historical consciousness, the new core revolves around four axes:

- * SELF (physical, spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, affective and moral life) -
- * OTHERS (family, friends, community, profession, politics, economics, culture, education) -
- * NATURE (in the human person and other living organisms, in the material world and cosmos) -
- * GOD (mediated by religious traditions, culturally and artistically, in a pluralistic world).



St. Mary's Task Force on Core Curriculum: left to right, James Ball (Theology), Susan Oxley (Chemistry), Jim Welch (Business), Michael Lecoche (Mathematics), Zaida Martinez (International Business), Megan Mustain (Philosophy). Not pictured are: Rafael Moras (Engineering), Janet Armitage (Sociology).

Courses are offered to all students in these four dimensions at two levels, the first emphasizing reflection and the second action ("Foundations of Practice" in Ethics, Civic Engagement, Fine Arts and

the Creative Process, and Literature). A final core capstone seminar aims to integrate all elements in "Prospects for Community and Civilization." Each student keeps a "core portfolio" throughout the process.

The total core curriculum for all students requires 30 hours of academic credit. In addition, the three Schools (Humanities and Social Sciences/ Business / Science, Engineering and Technology) add some school-specific requirements, ranging from 18 to 30 additional credit-hours.

Faculty members from a wide variety of departments teach the core courses; some of them are team-taught.

Initial reaction, from faculty and students, is reported to be very positive.

For more information, contact Megan Mustain (mmustain@stmarytx.edu), in the Department of Philosophy at St. Mary's.

WHAT MAKES UNIVERSITY EDUCATION "MARIANIST"? By David Fleming, SM

From its origins, the Marianist Family has taken a positive approach to some key historical currents that are still with us today. Diversity, secularism and pluralism already marked the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, the time when we were born. Rapid social transformations, sometimes traumatic, had split the public into opposing camps. It was clear that society could no longer be uniform, under the dominance of a single all-embracing worldview. Chaminade and his contemporaries wanted to transmit the Catholic Christian tradition in a new, pluralistic world.



They might have longed sometimes for pre-revolutionary days of social cohesion under a Catholic ideology, but they frankly accepted the need for new methods. They wanted to engage society directly,

speak to it in ways it could understand, make every effort to connect post-revolutionary mentalities with the Christian tradition. They felt the need for a new "fulcrum," a new pivotal point for engaging a new kind of society.

Chaminade accepted much of the newness as not only inevitable but also positive. He and his followers aimed to be fully "Catholic" in the ecclesiastical sense, but at the same time also "catholic" in their desire for holistic integration of newly emerging human knowledge and values. They stood empathetically at the side of people trying to adapt to a new kind of world. They sought to collaborate in building a society that was new in political, social, economic and industrial terms. They aimed to connect and integrate that new society with a rich Christian heritage.

Rapid social development has now continued without signs of abatement for two centuries. In response, Marianist university education today has a few striking points of emphasis:

1. It stresses the importance of community. Marianist educators are convinced that all personal and social transformation requires an environment of collaboration and interpersonal communication. Such an environment supports and challenges each participant to ongoing growth and positive interaction with others. This emphasis on community and communication has obvious implications for relationships among students, faculty, staff and all members of the educational community. It insists on high standards in relationships among members of the community and on shared, interdisciplinary endeavors in teaching, research and service to the community. It requires an atmosphere of patient, disciplined dialogue, of staying at the table of conversations about local and universal questions. This community approach contrasts with the excessive compartmentalization and individualization of knowledge that often characterizes contemporary academia.

2. Marianist education seeks to link faith and culture. Rather than excluding questions of a moral and

spiritual nature from academic discourse, it tries to integrate them. It recognizes that beliefs and transcendental values have a key role in understanding and transforming personal and social life. It recognizes that all areas of the curriculum (humanities and social sciences obviously, but also natural sciences and the professions) have issues related to such beliefs and values. The Marianist approach seeks to integrate faith and values into its academic discourse as well as into the social life of the university community. While positively presenting Catholic viewpoints, the Marianist approach respects contemporary pluralism and educates for dialogue. Marianist education fosters an atmosphere in which diverse groups of people may feel free to live their convictions, respected and invited to share values, beliefs and perspectives with others.

3. The Marianist approach is marked by a concern for transformative social leadership. It believes that all learning has societal consequences, either fostering or hindering peace, justice, reconciliation and human dignity. It seeks to integrate alert and well informed social consciousness into all aspects of learning and campus life. It vigorously promotes the university's role to be of service in society and to motivate all students to use their learning for positive social transformation.

4. The Marianist approach strives to be holistic. It is concerned with integral human development and with the overall welfare of all aspects of life among the members of the university community as well as in the regional civic and ecclesial communities it serves. Resisting any compartmentalized fragmentation of knowledge, it fosters interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration. Its aim is to broaden intellectual and personal horizons and to offer greater, more sustainable service to contemporary society.

Many other traditions, Catholic or not, share similar aspirations. The majority of Catholic traditions share a very similar sense of mission. What characterizes the Marianist approach is a high degree of intentional commitment to these four points and a concern for the ways they interact. For those of us committed to the

mission of education in a Marianist university, it is important to identify and reaffirm these characteristics that ground our commitment.

AMU News

- AMU sponsored a student immersion trip to Los Angeles, 5-12 January 2013. Check out the blog entries of students from all three Marianist universities: <http://labreakout13.blogspot.com/>
- AMU Campus Ministries Staff Conference, 20-23 May 2013 @ St. Mary's University
- New MEA initial formation workshop, 29 May-2 June @University of Dayton; Contact the VP for Mission or Rector for more information.

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