

Characteristics of Marianist Education - Educate in the Family Spirit

I was comfortable in my pre-Chaminade days, working at the University of Hawaii, contentedly envisioning years of a challenging library career and expertise in a field of library specialization. Then I was invited to an interview at Chaminade and was attracted by the characteristics of Marianist education, especially the value of educating in the family spirit because I am a great believer in revitalizing self through a supportive community. But I still remember asking myself post-interview, "Can I really work with these people?"

Well, I still ask that question from time to time but I have no doubts about the family spirit. That spirit permeates the University and manifests itself in my mind as helping hands extended across the campus. While the Chaminade 'ohana (family) fosters individual potential, it also thrives on the contributions of its members. This mutually beneficial situation is even passed on into the wider community. Interns from the UH Library and Information Sciences program who wish to receive guidance in several areas of librarianship are able to do so during their semester at our much smaller library. We, in turn, gain the benefits of their current knowledge of the field.

So, more than six years after that initial interview, I am not a specialist because there is no specialization with a small library staff. There are a multitude of tasks involved in running an academic library and people often pitch in where their talents are needed. It is not only the demands of the library that are time-consuming. I find myself occasionally occupied with work that, at another library, would be considered "not in my job description." Never would I have guessed that this conventional academic librarian would be involved with creating costumes, banners, puppets, traveling exhibit brochures and non-library websites as part of my service to the University. I even found myself teaching a class in computer game design where my most compelling (and most dreaded) hour was spent over the Marianist values, a requirement of the course evaluation. Much to my amazed gratification, students obsessed over World of Warcraft, Doom and Halo were able to relate to quality education, adaptation, and family spirit and were as passionately articulate about values as about massively multi-player online role-playing games.

So, has the work here been challenging? Yes. Specialized? Not even close. The demands of the Chaminade 'ohana have often taken me out of my comfort zone when I find myself tentatively extending my hand to offer assistance but I have learned to treasure those moments of hand clasping hand in the spirit of support and community.

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