



CHARACTERISTICS OF MARIANIST UNIVERSITIES

Marianist Universities Educate for Service, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

(37.) *The Marianist approach to higher education is deeply committed to the common good. The intellectual life itself is undertaken as a form of service in the interest of justice and peace, and the university curriculum is designed to engage the classroom with the wider world. Marianist universities extend a special concern for those who are poor and marginalized, and promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all peoples.*

PROMOTE A SENSE OF WORK AS MISSION

(38.) At Marianist universities, in a unique way, we are called to a striking “both/and” approach to our work, our growth and development, and our understanding of what it means to be an active community of faith. We know from Blessed Father Chaminade’s teachings that “the essential is the interior.” We are called to look within ourselves, and constantly strive for growth in our own prayer life and self-understanding. Blessed Father Chaminade also said: “We are all missionaries, and we consider ourselves on a permanent mission.” It is the mission of witnessing to the good news of Jesus. Marianist universities, like all Marianist communities, exist not only for themselves but also for the sake of those beyond the community. We recognize through this duality of interior focus and an outward call to serve others that, being in a state of permanent mission, we are gathered and sent. We come together as a community — faculty, students, staff, administrators — to learn, be nourished, develop in formation of faith and justice and expand the previous confines of our heart and mind; we then are sent forth into the world to be agents of change. Marianist education requires that we constantly look to and work with others in a search for justice: that is, a search for right relationship with God, self, others and creation.

ATTEND TO THOSE WHO ARE POOR AND MARGINALIZED

(39.) In line with our Catholic social tradition, we remain

committed to particular awareness and preferential treatment of those who are poor and vulnerable. We are mindful of those who are often marginalized by society and use our resources to create a more equal playing field — at home and in our communities, locally, nationally and globally. We choose to confront social ills with a perspective that is both compassionate and controversial — to challenge the status quo in the search for the common good. This requires us to be creative and innovative as we consider our response to the problems of the world. It also demands that we be courageous; that we be modern-day prophets, bringing to light the hard and often uncomfortable issues of our day. A Marianist education teaches one to think critically, to advocate and act for justice, always supporting the dignity of each person, to engage in deep social analysis, and to undertake research and initiatives that address actual social and moral problems. We do so in the spirit of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*'s observation that “If need be, a Catholic university must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society.”

PROMOTE THE DIGNITY, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WOMEN AND MEN

(40.) It is part of our responsibility as institutions built on the teachings of Christ to promote the dignity of all human persons. To do so authentically, we must acknowledge, analyze and deeply comprehend global disparities and the intersectionality of power systems and injustice at work in our communities. Our critique must be inclusive of reflection on the roles we play, as both individuals and institutions, in creating and perpetuating systems of injustice.

(41.) Marianist universities recognize the critical importance of leading by example, and therefore start at the nucleus — that is, our own institutions and policies — to establish just structures and fair procedures. We strive to offer educational opportunities to individuals

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from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. We commit to paying just wages to employees, eliminating gender inequity and providing a healthy professional environment for all faculty and staff. We encourage space for open conversation and dialogue on ways in which, as institutions, we can improve upon our care of and respect for the needs of all members of our community. We then have the courage to explore that conversation in light of the needs of the world. Marianist universities recognize that those training and forming students, both inside and outside the classroom, bear a special responsibility to help them become aware of the history and contemporary reality of inequity in our nation and world, and to eliminate it where it still exists.

WORK TO INTEGRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO SERVICE, JUSTICE AND PEACE INTO THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

(42.) A primary goal of a Marianist University education is to create space and opportunity where all members have the chance to discern and live into their vocations. This means that students, through their academic scholarship, service work, experiential learning, engagement in the community and relationships built with peers, faculty and staff, are asked to enter into deep exploration of

self, faith and the world around them. We want our students to ask themselves: what are my gifts, talents, skill sets and passions? How do they meet the needs of the world? As faculty and staff at Marianist universities, we challenge and support our students in exploring these questions during their university education and beyond; we recognize and embrace the responsibility and privilege of creating space where this profound transformation and growth can occur. In his encyclical, *Laudato Sí*, Pope Francis clearly draws the connection between the common good, the poor and care for the earth our common home. Marianist education embraces this connection, instilling in our students a respect for the integrity of creation and a commitment to environmental justice.