



“What does it mean to be a Dominican college or university? How can we articulate what we share in common? Is there a way for us to learn about best practices at other institutions?” Over the past few years, these questions seemed to surface at every gathering of Dominican higher education leaders.

In response, the Dominican Higher Education Council (presidents of Dominican colleges and universities) convened a task force with the charge of developing a document that articulates clearly our shared commitments, illustrates common practices, and highlights examples of emerging practices on our campuses. This document does just that, building on and complementing the fine work captured after the 2012 colloquium at Dominican University titled *A Vision in Service of Truth*.

The cover is not just a beautiful illustration—it is an articulation of the four pillars of Dominican Life and Mission, with specific examples of ways those are commonly lived. The pages that follow contain both highlights and common practices in an attempt to animate these important concepts.

The Task Force is grateful to all of those who contributed to this document and, more importantly, for this unique opportunity to gather and share what is so special about Dominican higher education. May the important work we do in Dominican higher education—to contemplate and to share the fruits of contemplation—continue to be blessed in a world that needs it now more than ever.

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# THE FOUR PILLARS OF DOMINICAN LIFE AND MISSION

Community, Study, Reflection, and Preaching are the pillars of the Dominican ethos. These four pillars manifest in similar ways at each Dominican college or university, yet each institution creates new and unique expressions of Dominican life. The common practices illustrate our shared Dominican heritage. They touch upon the needs of our times and demonstrate a constant attentiveness to integrating the Dominican mission into the landscape of higher education. The unique practices and opportunities do not stray from this heritage, but are a reflection of the particular character of the students, faculty, staff, administration, and social location of the institution. On the following pages is a list of both common and unique examples of Dominican life in action at our institutions of higher education.

# COMMUNITY

## **AQUINAS COLLEGE (GRAND RAPIDS)**

The Excel Mentor Program is designed to increase underrepresented student involvement and success by promoting community building, academic excellence, cultural engagement and spiritual exploration. Interested students are matched with an upper-class mentor for their first two semesters at Aquinas. Having a trained peer mentor and program staff who are intentionally focused on supporting the needs of an incoming student from an underrepresented group fosters community in a unique and profound way.

## **CALDWELL UNIVERSITY**

An annual campus celebration, Founder's Day focuses the attention of the university on its founding history, Dominican heritage and current events that contributed to the advancement of the mission. Classes are cancelled between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. so that members of the university community can attend an array of mini-courses on Dominican mission, as well as a Mass celebrating the University's heritage and sponsoring Dominican Sisters.

## **MOLLOY COLLEGE**

The Mission Ambassador Program, started in 2016, invited staff, faculty and administrators to consider becoming Mission Ambassadors. An initial group of 38 (with 8 additional the following year) came forward to focus on deepening their understanding of the mission through workshops and retreats. These leaders then used what they learned to be ambassadors across campus helping to facilitate discussions about our Mission, the four pillars, and our Dominican heritage. In addition, Ambassadors are asked to sign up for subcommittees to discuss and plan programming on Mission literacy and Mission events. As well as to engage in ways that the college can highlight Mission in the environment, with attention to the many sacred spaces on campus.

## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

In 2017, the first annual Service Convocation honored students who have given extraordinary service and leadership to the larger community. Five students received a Presidential Commendation. A faculty member and staff member who are role models for and with the students were also recognized with a Service Award. The College conferred upon Sr. Jenna Marajh, award-winning spiritual leader and founder of the Meditation Museum in Silver Spring (Md.) and McLean (Va.), an honorary doctor of humane letters degree. Sr. Jenna delivered the convocation address, exemplifying the four pillars of Dominican life.

### *Some common practices of COMMUNITY include:*

- focus on inclusion and diversity programming and training for faculty, staff and students
- strategic plans centered on present day needs
- small group discussions on pertinent topic or common book with various groups
- strong partnerships with community organizations
- intentional living communities

# STUDY

## **AQUINAS INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY**

The faculty, administration and trustees affirm the exercise of intellectual compassion in their educational ministry. As stated by the General Chapter of the friars at Providence College in 2001 in a section on the intellectual life of the Order titled *Misericordia Veritatis*, “From the start, the brethren were inspired by the innovative audacity of St. Dominic who encouraged them to be useful to souls through intellectual compassion, by sharing with them the *misericordia veritatis*, the mercy of truth. Jordan of Saxony states that Dominic had the ability to pierce through to the hidden core of the many difficult questions of their day ‘thanks to a humble intelligence of the heart.’” One trustee, the director of Hispanic ministry in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, defined intellectual compassion as “mutually generous transformative learning in critical obedience to the Word, characterized by intellectual humility and grounded in pastoral compassion.” The Board acknowledged that the values of Vatican II are part of the school’s organizational DNA, and remembered that the Church exists only to the extent that its members, as the baptized, participate fully in its life and in the life of the world.

## **DOMINICAN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY**

College of Fellows is a co-curricular endeavor established to engage the contemporary culture in the Dominican tradition of study. Gathering experts from a variety of academic disciplines, the College meets regularly on the campus for formal study. They also offer to the DSPT community some of the “fruits of their contemplation” through the annual convocation which addresses a topic of their own choosing from the different perspective they represent. DSPT faculty join them with responses, and the entire community shares in lively discussion.

## **MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE**

The Catholic and Dominican Institute (CDI) takes a leading role in promoting the Dominican heritage of the college. The Institute has three primary foci: programs related to the Catholic and Dominican intellectual life; ethics and professional ethics; and Jewish-Catholic dialogue. The Institute partners with

the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. and the Center for Ethics and Culture of Notre Dame University for a three-day Thomas Aquinas summer philosophy workshop held on the Mount Saint Mary College campus. The annual event brings together world recognized scholars and graduate students who are interested in learning more about the thoughts of Aquinas. The CDI has also established the Catholic and Dominican Institute Academic Colloquium that invites campus faculty to explore more fully the Catholic intellectual tradition and its relevance to campus culture. This year, members are doing a year-long critical reading of Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. Most recently, the Catholic and Dominican Institute of the Mount has established the Dominican Scholars of Hope program. The program is a non-academic living-learning community for highly motivated students that is guided by the four pillars of Dominican life.

## SIENA HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY

The pillars are embraced together through Liberal Arts Studies (LAS) core curriculum. A class is devoted each year of the students' educational career. LAS 141 is focused on Diversity and Community; LAS 241 on Inquiry and Truth; LAS 341 on Contemplations & Action; and LAS 441 on Justice and Peace. LAS 301 incorporates all four pillars into one semester of study for distance and online learning students.

### ***Some common practices of STUDY include:***

- lecture series and colloquia on Dominican tradition and Catholic Intellectual Life
- research conferences
- pilgrimage to Fanjeaux, France
- core curricula animated by Dominican themes
- professional development opportunities in Dominican mission for employees

# REFLECTION

## **DOMINICAN COLLEGE**

Freshman Convocation at Dominican College takes place the second day of Freshman Orientation. Convocation represents both a coming together of the freshman class, the faculty, particularly the Freshman Directorate, and administrators, as well as a “send off” for the new freshmen as they begin their college years. The Academic Dean serves as the master of ceremonies. Each new student’s name is read by the Director and Assistant Director of the New Student and Transition Center. While their names are being read, students walk to the front of the chapel to sign their names in the Enrollment Book, symbolizing their formal commitment to the college and its curriculum. Campus Ministry then leads the Freshman Class in a prayer, the College song is sung, and the ceremony ends with the faculty recessing first, followed by the students. Faculty and administrators line the lobby and applaud the freshmen as they march out of the chapel.

## **DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY**

Dominican University’s annual “Contemplating Life’s Callings” faculty retreat invites faculty from every discipline and staff from allied student development divisions to the motherhouse of the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters, our sponsoring congregation, for three days of reflection on the theme of vocation. The retreat incorporates theological exploration of vocation with communal reflection, and experiences of contemplative practices from various religious traditions. Participants also visit the “Heritage Rooms,” a museum-quality exhibit highlighting the foundation and history of the Sinsinawa Dominicans, including the educational precursor to Dominican University. The entire program is presented with a leisurely rhythm, with time for relaxation and socializing, and expert facilitation. In addition to the groups’ contemplative practice, the faculty engage one another as a learning community, developing a common theological language for exploring vocation across disciplines, and exchange as well as develop ideas for integrating the contemplation of life’s callings into their classrooms and student advising.



## **EDGEWOOD COLLEGE**

Each year, the College creates an Edgewood Community Reflection Booklet for key liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent. Individual reflections for each day of the season are prepared by community members – students, Board, alumni, faculty, and staff. Catholic lectionary texts provide the focus for the reflections.

## **OHIO DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY**

The University Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministry gather with students, faculty, staff, and administration in the chaplain's campus home to be fed with homemade soup, with the Word of God, and with the fruits of our contemplation on the upcoming Sunday readings. The program, called Soup and Scripture, follows the method of Lectio Divina, proclaiming each reading out loud, taking a few moments to contemplate what in the reading touches the hearts, minds, or body of the participants. Then they repeat that process and share any insights, thoughts, feelings or reactions that they have as a form of preaching to each other.

### ***Some common practices of REFLECTION include:***

- retreats for faculty, students, and administration often hosted by the motherhouses of the sponsoring congregation
- Mass
- prayer and reflection groups
- Bible studies
- opportunities for mindfulness and meditation practice
- symbolic actions to mark the beginnings and endings of special events or life transitions

# PREACHING

## **ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE**

Each year the Students Justice League selects a topic for Student-Faculty Justice Panels. The panels are offered each semester with a follow-up gathering for those who want to continue the discussion. The first panel looks at the reality and cause of the justice issue. The second panel looks at actions that are being taken to address the issue. A process of reflection before and after each panel is built into the presentation. For example, the justice topic for the 2017-2018 academic year was immigration.

## **AQUINAS COLLEGE (NASHVILLE)**

The Center for Evangelization and Catechesis supports the work of catechists serving in parishes and Catholic schools. The Center provides a Catechist Formation Program, trainings in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and workshops in Praying as a Family and the Virtues in Practice program. The Center for Catholic Education, in conjunction with the Aquinas College School of Education, serves Catholic elementary and secondary schools by providing spiritual and professional formation opportunities in the area of mission and Catholic identity.

## **BARRY UNIVERSITY**

The Center for Community Service Initiatives coordinates the University's support of the Fair Food Program, managed by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. CIW is a worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work. The program has been described as "a unique partnership among farmers, farm workers, and retail food companies that ensures humane wages and working conditions for the workers who pick fruits and vegetables on participating farms." The value of the program stems from both the standards outlined in the Fair Food Code of Conduct and the multilayered approach to monitoring and enforcing compliance with those standards. Acclaimed as the most comprehensive and sustainable social responsibility program in U.S. agriculture, the program provides for legally binding Fair Food Agreements. Participating

buyers in the program commit to paying the Fair Food Premium on top of the regular price they pay for tomatoes. The small premium has helped to alleviate the economic hardship faced by farm workers for decades. A Barry student leader serves on the Steering Committee of the Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA), a CIW-allied national organization. Barry students have been active participants in the Fair Food program since October 2014 and have supported the CIW-SFA boycott of certain business that have refused to support the program. Barry student leaders regularly organize and lead public demonstrations, including marches and pickets, to promote the program. Each public action draws support from several South Florida universities as well as from people of faith representing various congregations. As a result, the local community has become more sensitive to the needs of Immokalee, Florida-based farmworkers and their families.

## PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

FaithSpeaks is a program for developing the preaching and evangelization capacity of peer ministers such that they become an integral part of the preaching mission of the Campus Ministry Team. A natural offshoot of FaithWorks—a service immersion program in the local area, and FaithAbroad—a service immersion and study program with Dominican communities throughout the world, FaithSpeaks was established with significant philanthropic support. In this program, students are put into small groups led by two peer ministers. Every couple of weeks they have a chance to gather and reflect on their experiences of college life, share some aspects of scriptural study and reflection, and enjoy the camaraderie of their cohort. In this way, the peer ministry groups engage all four pillars of Dominican life.

### *Some common practices of PREACHING include:*

- advocacy for undocumented students
- local service opportunities
- alternative spring break immersions
- awards for excellence in living the Dominican values
- social justice internships
- commitment to paying a just wage for all employees



# **EDGEWOOD COLLEGE**

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