TRADITIONS

The Jesuit Catholic University of the Rocky Mountain West

Our Intellectual, Ethical and Religious Foundations

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INTRODUCTION

When arriving at Regis University, visitors see campus maps marked with an “X” and the words, “You are here,” so they can find their way around the campus. But locating the institution’s mind and heart is far more challenging than finding the library or recreation center. It is also more critical. As the Carnegie study “Three Thousand Futures” and the experience of institutions of higher education in the United States indicate, those universities that have a well defined and well implemented sense of identity will survive and thrive. At Regis University it is crucial that our identity, as well as the distinctive character and educational objectives that flow from it, be widely understood and shared by the members of the University community. Our survival and prosperity demand it.

The purpose of this booklet is to welcome prospective administrators, faculty and professional staff by introducing them to the spiritual and intellectual ethos of Regis University. To understand the University in this way entails grasping its history and traditions, its mission and educational goals and the spirit that animates and directs its deliberations and its strivings. This booklet attempts to do this. It is hoped that its examination of Regis University’s Catholic, Jesuit character and its history and heritage will help the reader to better understand and appreciate its distinctive identity and educational mission.

Our discussion of the identity and mission of Regis University takes its lead from the University’s Mission and Goals Statements. These Statements articulate the fundamental beliefs and principles which inspired the first Jesuit founders of the University and which still animate and give direction to the University community.

The Regis University Tradition booklet is meant to provide the context for an accurate understanding and appreciation of the Philosophy and Mission Statement. PART TWO examines the Catholic character of the University. This section treats some important issues concerning Catholic higher education, including academic freedom and religious liberty. PART THREE deals with the Jesuit character of the University, and it includes an account of the history and philosophy of Jesuit education. While Regis University shares much in common with other Catholic and Jesuit institutions, its distinctive character and educational mission arise out of its unique history and circumstances. Therefore, PART FOUR traces the University’s historical origins and development. In PART FIVE, three faculty members offer reflections on their experience of teaching at the University. As their words indicate, at Regis University we can and do share a common educational mission and value system without necessarily sharing religious beliefs.
PART ONE
The University’s Mission and Goals Statements

THE MISSION OF REGIS UNIVERSITY

Regis University educates men and women of all ages to take leadership roles and to make a positive impact in a changing society. Standing within the Catholic and United States traditions, we are inspired by the particular Jesuit vision of Ignatius Loyola. This vision challenges us to attain the inner freedom to make intelligent choices.

We seek to provide value-centered undergraduate and graduate education, as well as to strengthen our commitment to community service. We nurture the life of the mind and the pursuit of truth within an environment conducive to effective teaching, learning and personal development. Consistent with Judeo-Christian principles, we apply knowledge to human needs and seek to preserve the best of the human heritage. We encourage the continual search for truth, values and a just existence. Throughout this process, we examine and attempt to answer the question: “How ought we to live?”

As a consequence of Ignatius Loyola’s vision, particularly as reflected in his Spiritual Exercises, we encourage all members of the Regis community to learn proficiently, think logically and critically, identify and choose personal standards of values, and be socially responsible. We further encourage the development of skills and leadership abilities necessary for distinguished professional work and contributions to the improvement and transformation of society.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Based on hope in the goodness of human life and responding in solidarity with Jesus Christ, “Who came to serve, not be served,” we seek to:

1. Provide our students with an excellent education in which they develop the ability to think critically, perceive comprehensively and perform competently.

2. Offer a liberal education in the arts and sciences that develops talent and abilities, promotes awareness of career alternatives and provides the practical skills necessary to pursue such careers. We believe that recognizing the continuum between conceptual rigor and practical application enables our students to adapt to new situations throughout life.

3. Examine the dominant values that constitute society. We provide our students with the experience and understanding necessary for establishing their own framework of values within which they can make moral judgments and personal choices. In this way, we help empower students to make a positive impact on a changing society.

4. Investigate the theories, methods and data of academic disciplines, as well as their underlying assumptions and values.

5. Promote an atmosphere of personal concern for each student. This includes conscientious advising, substantial interaction between faculty and students, and close attention to each individual’s personal intellectual growth.

6. Concentrate our limited resources as a private and independent institution on select areas and extend these resources by forming partnerships with other organizations. In this way the University attempts to be innovative, both educationally and technologically.
7. Motivate students, faculty, and staff to put their wisdom, skills and knowledge at the service of humanity.

8. Expand the presence and influence of the Jesuit vision and values, which are derived from the Ignatian, Catholic and United States traditions of education.

“LIVING THE MISSION”

At Regis University we practice what we teach by being committed to building and sustaining a culture that values the dignity, diversity, and contributions of all its members. With mutual respect and justice, the Regis community seeks to live the Jesuit Mission by:

• Maintaining the highest ethical relationships within the Regis community as well as with partners, suppliers and other business entities, the Catholic Church, other religious traditions and educational institutions.

• Fulfilling our obligation to society by supporting women and men in the Jesuit tradition to be leaders in their families, communities, and vocations.

• Achieving a unique student experience by providing value-centered education with rigorous academic programs, a focus on life-long learning and service to others that prepares students to contribute to the transformation of society.

• Reviewing and strengthening the continuing health and financial viability of the University with strategies and resources that are responsive to the Mission.

• Acknowledging and affirming exceptional contributions, seeking fair and equitable rewards, and providing opportunities for self-expression and growth in the Regis community.

Regis University thrives when all members of the community act to promote a culture that is congruent with the Mission.

These goals are designed to nurture the ability to exercise leadership and adapt to new circumstances for students in Regis College, College for Professional Studies and Rueckert-Hartman College for Health Professions programs.

Undergraduate Core Educational Experience

Fundamental Goals of the Core Educational Experience

From its origins in the Renaissance and Reformation, Jesuit education has provided leadership in bringing the traditions of Christianity and classical learning into fruitful engagement with new developments in thought and culture. This task remains central at Regis University, where the core educational experience seeks to provide all undergraduate students with a Jesuit liberal arts education. The core educational experience challenges students to reflect on tradition, continuity, and change, and to explore the question “How ought we to live?” in terms of the development of Western thought from classical to contemporary.

Inspired by Catholic tradition and Ignatian spirituality, the core educational experience at Regis celebrates the essential goodness of the world and the joy of learning. This education is grounded in the belief that faith and reason are complementary; it emphasizes the basic values of human dignity, diversity, freedom, and justice; and it promotes the formation of conscience and character through imaginative and critical discernment. The core educational experience aims to develop the whole person. It seeks not only to enable students to meet the challenges and goals of their personal and professional lives, but also to cultivate their leadership in service to others and in work for the common good.
The Regis University core educational experience engages students in an academic environment that both models and nurtures the beliefs, commitments, and goals that are central to Jesuit liberal arts education. The mentoring relationship between faculty, staff, and students is central to this experience. While required core courses are essential to the core educational experience, common goals and themes inform all academic majors and professional programs, as well as campus and community activities.

**Characteristics of the Core Educational Experience**

The specific structure of the core educational experience varies within each of the University’s three colleges because of the different student populations and instructional formats in Regis College, the College for Professional Studies, and the Rueckert-Hartman College for Health Professions. Nonetheless, the core educational experience in all three colleges is characterized by:

**Development of the Whole Person**
The core educational experience is designed to nurture the whole person: head, heart, and hands; intellect, sensibility, and skills. The whole person, however, is not understood in terms of an isolated self. Rather, Regis seeks to develop leaders whose compassion and concern for others inspires them to contribute to the common good.

**Academic Challenge**
Regis University is committed to academic excellence: the disciplined search for knowledge and the joy of discovery and understanding. The core educational experience is designed to strengthen students’ skills in critical reading and thinking, speaking and writing, research and scholarship, and the use of information technologies. Students are encouraged to become partners in a collaborative process of learning and discovery.

**Liberal Arts Foundation**
The core educational experience promotes literacy in the major academic disciplines: the arts, the humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. By giving students an opportunity to explore the questions, methods, and understandings of different disciplines, the core educational experience establishes a broad foundation for more specialized studies.

**Integration**
The core educational experience challenges students to integrate new learning with prior knowledge and personal experiences. It seeks to strengthen habits and skills of integration, thereby encouraging students to become life-long learners and to achieve more comprehensive understandings of truth.

**Ethical Inquiry and Reflection**
By challenging students to examine the ethical dimensions present in all of their studies, the core educational experience seeks to cultivate the habit of critical reflection on values. Students are encouraged to reflect upon crucial human concerns and to strengthen values that lead to sound decisions and just actions.

**Spirituality and Religion**
Rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition, Regis University is committed to integrating faith with learning. The core educational experience fosters a critical appreciation of religious questions and spiritual experience. While special attention is given to Catholic philosophical and theological tradition, the core educational experience also involves exposure to other philosophical and religious traditions. It encourages mutual respect and genuine dialogue in the context of a shared search for meaning.

**Concern for Social Justice**
The core educational experience seeks to nurture a life of service for the common good and a commitment to work toward a more just and peaceful world. By challenging students to develop the analytical skills necessary to understand relationships of power and privilege in contemporary society, the core educational experience strives to cultivate respect for human diversity and a special concern for the poor and the oppressed.
Global Awareness
While contemporary individuals operate in many different social contexts, the Jesuit tradition has always been global in its horizons and outreach. Thus, the core educational experience furthers students' appreciation of the diversity of persons and cultures, the complexity of relationships in the new and evolving international order, and the impact of humans on the natural environment.

Leadership
Regis University is committed to developing leaders in the service of others. Recognizing that there are many forms of leadership, the core educational experience challenges students to strengthen their personal leadership skills through academic courses, service learning experiences, and other campus and community activities. Special attention is focused on refining students’ abilities to listen and to engage in dialogue in diverse settings.

Graduate Education Philosophy Statement
Graduate degree programs at Regis University emanate from and embody the University mission of educating men and women to take leadership roles and to make a positive impact in a changing society. These programs provide a rigorous, focused, value-centered professional education rooted in the Jesuit Catholic tradition.

Graduate education at Regis University is learner-centered. Learners and faculty are full partners in an educational relationship that emphasizes academic excellence, active and collegial participation in the educational process, practical application of theory, ethical processes and decisions, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Regis University's graduate programs infuse professional education with Jesuit ethos and values, develop the whole person, and foster professional competence.

Regis University graduate programs are characterized by:

• Openness – a respect for others and their perspectives;

• Optimism – an affirmation of the goodness of the world and of the human dignity of all people in it; and

• Other-centeredness – a conscious move beyond self to an appreciation of the interconnectedness of human beings and their actions.

Regis University graduate programs purposefully emphasize:

Academic Excellence
Regis University graduate programs are committed to academic excellence: the disciplined search for knowledge and the joy of discovery and understanding. Regis University expects each graduate student to achieve mastery in a discipline, including the ability to integrate and extend knowledge to contexts outside the classroom and to effectively translate theory into practice. Graduate learners are also encouraged to be active partners with faculty in the collaborative process of learning and discovery and to become lifelong learners.

Leadership
Regis University graduate programs develop leaders in the service of others. In this context, leaders are communicators with vision who analyze problems, find and implement solutions, and structure and facilitate processes to make a positive impact on society.
Ethics
Ethical decision-making and behavior are fundamental components of Regis University graduate programs. Ethics in Regis University graduate education guides individuals to make a conscious effort to apply ethical principles to decisions; to integrate and broaden the considerations surrounding the decisions; and to examine carefully the consequences and implications beyond personal and organizational self-interests.

Social Justice
Graduate programs at Regis University strive to nurture a life of service for the common good, to cultivate respect for human diversity, and to strengthen a special concern for the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. By emphasizing a concern for social justice, Regis University graduate programs reinforce an individual’s commitment to be an active and productive member in society and to work for structural change to protect the disenfranchised.

Global Awareness
Regis University graduate programs are committed to preparing learners to live, work, and lead in an increasingly interconnected global society. Graduate programs strive to create a learning environment that celebrates diversity, values the uniqueness of the individual, and instills a passion for justice for all people.

Approved by the
Board of Trustees of Regis University
October 13, 2000
Regis University is a Catholic university sponsored by the Society of Jesus. As such, the University is dedicated to the ideal of striving for academic excellence under the inspiration of the Christian faith; it recognizes and affirms the importance of the principle of academic freedom in its pursuit of truth; and, in keeping with its Christian vision of the dignity of each human person, it welcomes and respects students, faculty, and staff from all racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and beliefs. Since its Catholic identity is essential to Regis University, Part Two examines the origins and character of U.S. Catholic higher education.

I. THE ORIGINS OF U.S. CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

A. Europe’s First Universities

Regis University has its origins in the universities of medieval Europe, which were either founded by or closely associated with the Catholic Church. Among the first medieval universities founded were Bologna and Salerno (first a medical school and later a university) in the eleventh century, Paris and Oxford in the twelfth and Salamanca in the thirteenth century. Following the Protestant Reformation some universities in various countries broke with the Catholic Church, but remained religiously oriented. Secular universities did not appear in significant numbers until the early 1800s.

B. The First Universities in the Colonies

In the 13 colonies the first institutions of higher learning were Protestant. Founded in 1636, Harvard College was closely associated with the Congregational Church, and later with the Unitarian. It remained church-related until 1851, when the required representation of clergy on its board of overseers ceased. The second colonial college, William and Mary, was chartered in 1693 and opened in 1694 under the auspices of the Episcopal Church. Yale (founded in 1746), Pennsylvania (1740), Princeton (1746), Columbia (1754), Brown (1767) and Dartmouth (1769) all took root in the Protestant milieu of the colonies. Like Harvard, however, all eventually became secularized.

C. The First U.S. Catholic Universities

The Catholic Church was formally established on these shores in 1789 when John Carroll, cousin of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was consecrated the first Bishop of Baltimore. Bishop Carroll had been a Jesuit until the Order was suppressed in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV because of political pressure from a number of European monarchs. (In 1805 the Jesuit Order was restored in the U.S., and in 1814 it was restored world-wide by Pope Pius VII.) In the year of his consecration, Bishop Carroll founded Georgetown College on the banks of the Potomac at a time when Catholics numbered scarcely one percent of the population. In 1805, when the Society of Jesus was restored in Maryland, Bishop Carroll placed Georgetown under Jesuit direction. Regis University, then known as Sacred Heart College, was established in 1877 as the 15th Jesuit institution of higher learning. In 1921, the college was renamed in honor of St. John Francis Regis, a Jesuit saint who died in 1640 serving the poor living in the mountains of southern France. Since the early days of higher education in the U.S., private colleges and universities have multiplied. There are now about 1,620, of which some 230 are Catholic.
II. THE CHARACTER OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Since the late 1960s, there has been an ongoing and sometimes tense discussion about the distinctive character and contribution of Catholic higher education, especially within the U.S. Numerous authors, committees and commissions have debated the relationship between the Catholic university and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, including issues such as academic freedom, how to guarantee the university’s Catholic identity, institutional autonomy and religious liberty. The most recent authoritative statement on Catholic universities was made by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Constitution, From the Heart of the Church, issued on September 26, 1990. This document is the result of an ongoing discussion begun at the end of the Second Vatican Council that included the participation of the presidents of Catholic colleges and universities world-wide and of other experts as well. When it was finally published, From the Heart of the Church was positively received by Catholic educators in the U.S., including the administration of Regis University. Any description of Catholic higher education must recognize the diversity of Catholic institutions, which owe as much to their cultural settings as to their educational structures. With this in mind, this section of the booklet will examine the identity and mission of Catholic higher education. Given the extensive publicity and circulation of From the Heart of the Church, the following remarks summarize the document for the convenience of the Regis community.

A. The Identity of a Catholic College or University

Some Catholic colleges and universities have been established or approved by the Holy See, by national bodies of bishops or by individual dioceses, while others, particularly in the U.S., have not been explicitly established or approved by these Church authorities. All of the Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S., including Regis University, which is governed by a joint lay/Jesuit board of trustees, belong to this second category and do not report to the Pope or the bishop of the diocese in which they are located. Such Catholic colleges and universities are institutionally autonomous and respect academic freedom.

As an institution of higher education, each of these Catholic colleges and universities is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through teaching, research and various services offered to the local, national and international communities. As Catholic, its objective is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world. Therefore, while respecting and valuing those members of its academic community who are not Christian, each Catholic institution of higher education exhibits the following essential characteristics:

1. a Christian inspiration of the university community as such;

2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;

3. institutional practices faithful to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;

4. A commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pursuit of the transcendent goal that gives meaning to life.

Through its institutional consistency with these objectives, a Catholic college or university makes its distinctive contribution to the academic and socio-cultural worlds in which it exists. More broadly, as an institution that encourages individuals in their own search for meaning in life, Regis will respect each individual’s conscientious beliefs. In practice this means that the University will not sponsor organizations that are opposed to official Church teaching. At the same time, the university vigorously defends the right of faculty to respectfully disagree with official Catholic Church teachings in their classroom presentations. Regis similarly asks faculty to inform students of relevant Catholic teachings if applicable to their course content and it provides resources to assist in these efforts as needed.
The Catholic identity of each such institution has definite implications for its academic environment. It should pursue its objectives through the formation of an authentic human community, whose unity springs from its dedication to the truth, from sharing a common vision of the dignity of the human person, and from attention to the insights of the Christian tradition. Its research efforts, in addition to assisting men and women in the pursuit of truth, should include the search for an integration of knowledge and should foster the dialogue between faith and reason. Since theology has an important contribution to make to these efforts, each Catholic college and university should have a faculty, or at least a chair, of theology (or, as is the case with Regis University, of religious studies). Because knowledge is meant to serve the human person, the moral and ethical implications of each branch of study should be examined and taught in order to contribute to the student's total development. Students should be challenged to pursue an education that combines academic excellence with growth – growth in the capacity to ask questions, to understand, to make personal judgments and to develop a religious, moral and social sense.

The Catholic identity of an educational institution is a matter of the utmost importance to it, to the Church and to society at large. Therefore, this identity should be made known publicly either in a mission statement or in some other appropriate public document. Each Catholic college and university must find effective means to preserve this identity, using both its institutional structure and its policies, while maintaining full respect for the freedom of conscience of each person and for academic freedom. The responsibility for maintaining and strengthening its Catholic identity rests primarily with the college or university itself.

B. The Mission of a Catholic College or University

The mission of a Catholic college or university is allied to the basic mission of higher education, but with its own specific characteristics and purposes. Catholic higher education is a privileged place where the Gospel and contemporary culture can engage in fruitful dialogue.

As an academic institution and member of the international community of scholarship and inquiry, each Catholic college and university participates in and contributes to the life and the mission of the universal Church. It prepares men and women to live in a mature and responsible manner. By offering the results of its research and scholarship, it helps the Church to understand and respond better to the problems and challenges of contemporary culture. All of its basic academic activities (research, education, professional training and the dialogue with culture) contribute in a vital way to the Church by establishing the relationship between faith and life in each individual and in the socio-cultural context in which individuals live and relate to one another.

In its service to the Church, each Catholic college and university must strive to become an effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals and society. Its research should seek to discover the roots and causes of the problems faced by contemporary society, giving particular attention to their ethical and religious dimensions. In the face of increasingly rigid compartmentalization of knowledge, Catholic higher education must foster cooperation among the different academic disciplines, encouraging each to offer its distinct contribution in the search for solutions to these problems. Catholic colleges and universities examine the predominant values and norms of modern society and culture and find effective methods to communicate the ethical and religious principles that give meaning to human life. The promotion of social justice must also be a priority. In its service to society, it must develop collaborative relationships with the academic, cultural and scientific world of the region in which it is located.
III. Academic Freedom and Religious Liberty

A. Academic Freedom

The governance of a Catholic college or university, whether it has been established and approved by Church authorities or not, remains autonomous so that it may function effectively. In virtue of its institutional autonomy and its identity as a university, academic freedom is guaranteed. Those engaged in research, in their search for truth within their specific disciplines and according to the methods of those disciplines, may proceed to whatever conclusions evidence and analysis may lead them. They may teach and publish the results of their research, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good.

B. Religious Liberty

Almost without exception, U.S. Catholic institutions of higher education include many administrators, faculty, and staff who are from religious traditions other than Catholic, or who profess no religious belief. Many of them have made, and continue to make, significant and valued contributions to fulfilling the identity and mission of their respective institutions. What does a Catholic college or university ask of these colleagues? In brief, they are asked to recognize and respect its Catholic identity and its responsibility to pursue its mission and practices in harmony with applicable teachings of the Church. This does not entail agreement with or acceptance of the Church and its various doctrines, nor does it prevent the statement of personal views that may differ from those held by the Catholic Church. The institution respects the freedom of conscience and religious liberty of each member of its academic community.

Why have so many administrators, faculty members and staff from diverse religious backgrounds taken positions in Catholic institutions and remained in those positions, some for their entire careers? It is unlikely they would remain if they were truly dissatisfied, or in substantial disagreement, with the Catholic educational environment. Many find support and are comfortable in such an environment. They share some or all of its intellectual, moral and humanitarian values; and they feel they can contribute to the achievement of at least some of its objectives. Certainly, not all of the values and objectives of Catholic higher education are unique to it. Those members of the academic community whose traditions are rooted in the Old Testament, or in the New Testament, or in both, find areas of emphasis which are familiar to them and with which they agree. Moreover, those who profess other religions or no particular faith, also have found areas of agreement.

Experience has shown that in a Catholic college or university people can share educational ideals and values without necessarily sharing religious beliefs.
The educational mission of Regis University has been shaped and guided by the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Society of Jesus. Jesuit universities, which are solidly rooted in the tradition of Catholic higher education, are often said to have a distinctive spirit, style and approach to education. To grasp this distinctive way of participating in the mission of Catholic higher education, one must have at least some understanding of the Jesuits: who they are and why they, and the educational institutions they have founded, exist. Therefore, Part Three examines the Jesuit heritage and character of Regis.

I. Jesuit Education: An Historical Perspective

A. The Founding of the Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus, popularly known as the Jesuit Order, was founded in 1540 by a small group of alumni from the University of Paris. They were ten in number, all Roman Catholic priests with excellent educations and university degrees; and their leader was a Basque named Ignatius of Loyola. The Jesuits' unique history, spiritual and intellectual ideals and educational heritage have derived, more than from any other single source, from the spirituality of Ignatius.

Solidly within the Christian tradition, Ignatius’ spirituality arose primarily out of his own life experience. He was born Iñigo Lopez de Loyola in 1491 to the noble family of Loyola whose ancestral castle was in the Basque country of Spain. He spent his youth as a courtier in the household of Spain’s Royal Treasurer and eventually became an officer in the Spanish army. In 1521 he was severely wounded during a minor skirmish between the Hapsburgs and the Valois at Pamplona, Spain. The wound he received shattered his leg and ended his career as a soldier at age 30, but initiated a spiritual journey that would result in his becoming one of the most influential religious and educational leaders of the 16th century. (Ignatius’ name is on a list of influential educators atop the main building of Teachers College of Columbia University, along with Socrates, Plato, and John Dewey.) His spiritual journey is the key for understanding the Jesuits and their approach to education.

After Ignatius was wounded in battle, he spent a year gradually recovering his strength in the family castle at Loyola. During that year his life changed directions. Ignatius’ previous goal in life had been to distinguish himself as a soldier-knight in the court of Spain. During his recuperation that goal became distinguishing himself as a knight of the God-king, Jesus Christ.

During the years following his conversion, Ignatius’ desire to serve Christ was profoundly transformed and redirected. Through a series of mystical illuminations, he experienced a divine summons to associate himself with the redemptive work of the Son of God, and to do so with the same modalities with which Christ did: as an unconditional, universal mission of service, undertaken out of love, without restrictions, in poverty, humility and the cross, and in constant union with God. His spirituality, which initially had been introspective and individualistic, became outer-directed, open to community, apostolic and world-affirming. His fundamental principle of choice became to do whatever after prayerful consideration he judged to be for the greater glory of God and the greater good of others.

One of the first projects Ignatius undertook was to compile a set of directives and a series of meditations that would help others to experience a spiritual transformation similar to his own. These notes are the Spiritual Exercises, and they contain the basic vision and the spiritual principles that characterize Ignatian spirituality.

During the early years of this journey, Ignatius was not a priest, nor does it seem he intended to become one. However, this proved to be highly problematic in 16th century Spain, when the type of spiritual direction he was giving as an unschooled layman to an ever-increasing number of people was called into question.
On two different occasions he was imprisoned by the Inquisition. The judges found no fault with his spiritual teachings, but silenced him because he did not have the proper credentials. So, for the greater glory of God and the greater good of others, at age 33, he chose to begin studies in order to get the education and the credentials he needed to continue his ministry. Ignatius’ spirituality of service would always be characterized by this respect for learning and this sense of pragmatic realism.

Eventually, this led him to the University of Paris. In 1535 Ignatius received his Master of Arts from the University, as well as the Inquisition’s formal approval of the book of the Exercises. He was 44 years old.

During his studies Ignatius also realized that, as far as his mission in life was concerned, the greater glory of God demanded that he look for others who had the potential to share in this same mission of service. Ignatius was a shrewd judge of character, and he attracted some of the best and brightest of his fellow students at the University of Paris to become his companions. Each of them made the Spiritual Exercises under Ignatius’s direction and decided to follow him and “his way of life.” After receiving their degrees, in 1537 Ignatius and his companions, with the exception of Pierre Favre who was already a priest, were ordained priests in Venice, Italy. In 1539 they decided to seek recognition as a religious order and were established as such by Pope Paul III on September 27, 1540, under the name of the Society of Jesus.

Ignatius was not a loner, but a companion, whose spirituality invited others to become partners in a shared vision and mission of service.

The original objective of this group of priest-scholars had been to go to the Holy Land in order to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. But because of a war that made passage to Jerusalem impossible, they decided to place themselves at the service of the person whom they believed to have the broadest vision of the needs of the human family, the Roman Pontiff, so that: “(he) might distribute them for the greater glory of God. They did this in conformity with their intention to travel throughout the world, ever intent on seeking the greater glory of God our Lord and the greater aid of others.” This statement from the Jesuit Constitutions encapsulates the mission of the Society of Jesus.

From 1540 until his death in 1556, Ignatius was directing what quickly became a world-wide network of more than 1,000 Jesuits, working in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. The Pope requested Jesuit theologians for the ecumenical council that was about to open in Trent. Jesuits were requested for the flashpoints of the Reformation in Germany, in France and in Ireland. Requests to open colleges, requests for missionaries, requests for court confessors, requests for help in reforming the clergy, among other requests, were pouring across Ignatius’ desk in Rome. As always, his rule of thumb was to choose that work which he judged to be for the greater glory of God and the greater good of others.

During these years Ignatius also worked on constitutions for the Order. He did this with great care and deliberation, even though he was absorbed in governing and directing the rapidly growing young Society. These constitutions were revised several times during his lifetime and were approved in 1558, two years after his death. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus are considered a classic of spirituality and religious law, and they contain Ignatius’ educational theory and practice. Pope Gregory XV declared Ignatius a saint on March 12, 1622.
B. A Brief History of Jesuit Education

One of the first directions the Jesuit quest to seek the greater glory of God took was education. Academic education was not a declared purpose for which the Society of Jesus was founded in 1540. Soon afterward, however, Ignatius saw that the education of youth was a great need that the Society of Jesus could help to meet, and he wrote provisions for academic educational work into the Jesuit Constitutions. In 1543 the newly arrived Jesuits in India began to teach humanities and Christian doctrine in Goa. In 1546 the Jesuit college at Gandia in Spain, which Ignatius had set up simply to educate young Jesuits, began to admit non-Jesuit students. In 1547 the Spanish viceroy of Sicily requested that the Jesuits establish a college for lay students in Messina. Why? “For the reform of the island,” he said. So Ignatius sent ten of the very best men he had, in what was still a very small Society, to set up the first Jesuit college for non-Jesuits. Ignatius, in a prophetic frame of mind when these men left for Messina, told them, “If we live for ten years we shall see great things in the Society of Jesus.” Towards the end of those ten years, by 1556, the year Ignatius died, the Jesuits had established 40 colleges throughout Europe, in India, in Africa and in parts of the New World. In 1599, the year the Jesuits published their working document on education, the Ratio Studiorum, there were 245 Jesuit schools; by 1640, 100 years after the Society was founded, there were more than 300; and by 1773, the year that the Jesuits were suppressed, there were 620 schools and colleges, 15 universities, and 176 seminaries sponsored by the Jesuits. This was the world’s first educational system, and it counted among its graduates Galileo, St. John of the Cross, René Descartes, and Voltaire.

Concerning Jesuit education Francis Bacon wrote: “As for the pedagogical part, the shortest rule would be, ‘Consult the schools of the Jesuits; for nothing better has been put into practice’” H.G. Wells observed, “For nearly three centuries the Jesuits were accounted the best schoolmasters in Europe.” Whatever the truth of these observations, until the suppression of the Order in 1773, the education of youth was one of the Society’s chief works.

After the restoration of the Society in 1814, the Jesuits moved right back into education. Today there are 665 Jesuit educational institutions throughout the world, including 72 universities. In the U.S. there are 28 Jesuit colleges and universities, 46 secondary schools, and, in recent years, an increasing number of “nativity schools,” which serve at-risk inner city grade school youth. Some of the more recent graduates of Jesuit educational institutions include Popes Paul VI and John Paul I, Edward Bennett Williams, Coach Don Schula, President Bill Clinton, and Supreme Court Justice Anthony Scalia. While legally separate and independent from one another, these Jesuit schools are joined together in national organizations such as the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities and the Jesuit Secondary Education Association. Each of these institutions carry on the educational legacy of St. Ignatius and share a common purpose, commitment and heritage.
The Jesuit institutions of higher education in the U.S. are the following (in order of founding):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>City, State</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>City, State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Georgetown University</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Regis University</td>
<td>Denver, Colorado</td>
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<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Saint Louis University</td>
<td>St. Louis, Missouri</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>University of Detroit-Mercy</td>
<td>Detroit, Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Spring Hill College</td>
<td>Mobile, Alabama</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Creighton University</td>
<td>Omaha, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Xavier University</td>
<td>Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Marquette University</td>
<td>Milwaukee, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Fordham University</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>John Carroll University</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>College of the Holy Cross</td>
<td>Worcester, Massachusetts</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Gonzaga University</td>
<td>Spokane, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Saint Joseph’s College</td>
<td>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>University of Scranton</td>
<td>Scranton, Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>University of Santa Clara</td>
<td>Santa Clara, California</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Loyola College</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Rockhurst University</td>
<td>Kansas City, Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Loyola Marymount University</td>
<td>Los Angeles, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>Boston, Massachusetts</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Loyola University</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Canisius College</td>
<td>Buffalo, New York</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Fairfield University</td>
<td>Fairfield, Connecticut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Loyola University</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Le Moyne College</td>
<td>Syracuse, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Saint Peter’s College</td>
<td>Jersey City, New Jersey</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Wheeling College</td>
<td>Wheeling, West Virginia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF THE JESUITS

A. The Educational Objectives and Ideals of St. Ignatius

The ultimate objective guiding each Jesuit school is to serve the greater glory of God and the greater good of others. However, to accurately understand Ignatius’ educational objectives and ideals, another principle of his spirituality needs to be examined. This principle, which has been called the “principle of instrumentality,” governs how one seeks to serve God’s greater glory.

Ignatius operated out of a world-view based on an understanding that all reality descends from and is meant to return to the glory of God, in whom everything finds its fulfillment and ultimate meaning. In this world-view all of creation is good, and each thing has intrinsic meaning and value. Simultaneously, each creature has a relationship to everything else in creation and to God; everything has meaning and value within this ultimate frame of reference. In this latter sense, each thing can serve as a way or means by which men and women can better understand and achieve their ultimate purpose in life, which is eternal happiness in being loved by and loving God. This understanding of reality does not diminish the inherent value of anything, but supplements it by situating it within a frame of reference that gives all reality ultimate meaning. Ignatius taught that by freely engaging the world around us, and by respecting its intrinsic worth, we can simultaneously show respect for life’s ultimate meaning and value, thereby serving God’s greater glory.

Ignatius applied this understanding of reality to education. He regarded formal education as an especially apt way of serving the greater glory of God. He wanted Jesuit schools to form intelligent, competent, and committed leaders, who would enter into the social order in numbers large enough to make a difference. However, he also understood this overall mission of Jesuit education could only be achieved if the internal integrity of the academic subjects taught, as well as the internal integrity of the educational institutions themselves, were valued and respected. Violating the inherent meaning of an academic subject or institution in order to promote a religious goal was completely foreign to Ignatius’ thinking or intent. Formal education has its own character, its own inner dynamic, which must be respected, preserved and enhanced if it is to be an effective means to truly serve God’s greater glory and the greater good of others.

B. Contemporary Jesuit Education

Is there a continuity between Ignatius’ educational objectives and ideals and the mission of contemporary Jesuit higher education? According to Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, there is, although these must be adapted to our vastly changed social, cultural, and educational context. In an address he gave at a 1989 assembly of U.S. Jesuits, Kolvenbach affirmed that the world-view and central themes of Ignatian spirituality continue to enlighten and provide impetus to the Jesuit work of higher education today. Acknowledging the diverse histories, cultures and personalities of the different Jesuit colleges and universities, he described some of the characteristics that distinguish the Jesuit mission in higher education today:

1. The purpose of Jesuit education is to form men and women for others, in imitation of Christ, the Word of God, the Man for others.

2. In a Jesuit college or university the promotion of world justice is an educational priority, and this has implications for its teaching, programming and research.

3. Jesuit education is value-oriented. Values bring meaning to life and provide motives for action, and they involve one’s mind and heart, one’s whole person.


5. Teaching and research are of the highest importance because they lead to a comprehensive view of the human person.
6. Jesuit higher education should be engaged in the integration of the different forms of knowledge with human values and theology.

7. Jesuit education should equip students for life in the global village.

8. Jesuit higher education has a close partnership with the Church, even when this collaboration may seem to create difficulties.

C. Jesuit Identity and Lay Partnership

For many years at Regis and other Jesuit universities, the mission of these institutions was completely identified with the many Jesuit priests who served their schools as faculty and administrators. In more recent times, non-Jesuits (sometimes called “lay” colleagues) have become the animating leaders, trustees, staff and faculty at Jesuit universities, bringing their gifts and perspectives in partnership with Jesuits, along with a shared commitment to keeping our Jesuit and Catholic mission vibrant.

In a 2008 international gathering of the Jesuits, General Congregation 35, they affirmed this commitment “to apostolic collaboration and to a profound sharing of labor” with their non-Jesuit colleagues. They further noted that “we are enriched by members of our own faith, but also by people from other religious traditions, those men and women of good will . . . with whom we labor in seeking a more just world.” In similar words, the current Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, reminded all who work at Jesuit universities: “It should not cause surprise that Jesuits, whose originating charism dictates that they attempt to discern and find God present and laboring in all things, might also try to find that same God working in and present to all persons, whatever their identities, traditions, cultures or religions.”

In welcoming colleagues of all faiths and backgrounds who can advance the mission of Regis University, we seek individuals who see in their lives and professional journeys the opportunity to contribute not only their academic insights to their students, but also to inspire in them a deep desire to serve those around them in their families, their professions, their communities and the wider world—to form “men and women for others” in the words of the Jesuits.

The University assists new colleagues by providing workshops, retreats, national conference opportunities, and a range of other faculty-staff development activities that invite those who join our community to discern how they can enrich our Jesuit mission identity with their insights, experiences, and enthusiasm. As Fr. Nicolas has noted, in such “authentic conversation about mutual mission, God is always active, present and profoundly to be found.”
Part Four
The History of Regis University

The rapid growth of Jesuit education in the United States during the nineteenth century affected Denver and the Rocky Mountain west as well, when in 1877 a group of Jesuit missionaries from Naples, Italy, established a college in northern New Mexico in the town of Las Vegas. Las Vegas College, as it was initially called, never prospered, and in 1884, the Jesuits relocated the school to Morrison, in the foothills southwest of Denver at the invitation of the Catholic bishop of Denver, Joseph Machebeuf.

Renamed the College of the Sacred Heart, the institution again relocated in 1887 to its current site following donation of land at 50th Street and Lowell Avenue from John Brisbane Walker. The original building, now called Main Hall, was erected in 100 days according to legend, although the internal features no doubt took considerably longer.

The institution was authorized to grant college degrees by the state legislature in 1888. In 1921, the Jesuits renamed the school once more as Regis College, after a Jesuit missionary who preached and worked for social justice in the small mountain communities of southern France in the early 17th Century. Among the reasons for the name change may have been an effort to distinguish the college from other Catholic schools of the same name, as well as a concern to avoid becoming an obvious target for the Klu Klux Klan, which was quite powerful in Colorado at that time.

For the first forty years of its existence, Regis provided a joint high school and collegiate curriculum for boys and young men. In 1917, the two programs were separated, although both shared the same campus and facilities until as recently as 1990, when Regis Jesuit High School relocated to a new campus in southeast Denver. Single sex education ended for Regis in 1968, when the College began admitting women to its traditional undergraduate programs.

Growth at Regis began to expand even more markedly beginning in 1977, when the College began offering degree programs to adult learners, initially for military personnel in Colorado Springs. At present, the Regis University College for Professional Studies serves more than 10,000 graduate and undergraduate students on eight campuses in two states and through multiple distance learning formats around the world.

In 1988, education for health professionals began with the acquisition of nursing programs from Loretto Heights College in South Denver. Currently, RHCHP offers programs in undergraduate and graduate nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy and health services administration.

In 1991, Regis College became Regis University, with three constituent schools: Regis College, which still serves primarily traditional undergraduate students, the College for Professional Studies, which serves non-traditional working adult learners and the Rueckert-Hartman College for Health Professions, which serves a mix of traditional and non-traditional students in health care clinical preparation programs.

Throughout the many years of Regis’ history, and in its many academic programs, the University strives to live out its commitments to its Jesuit, Catholic traditions.

Today, Regis University ...

• Emphasizes academic excellence, active participation in the educational process, ethical decision making, the practical application of theory, and lifelong learning.

• Continues the Jesuit commitment to finding God in all things of the world and God’s presence in all human endeavors.

• Seeks students, faculty, and staff who appreciate the intellectual challenge of freely examining different systems, traditions, and beliefs as they consider the question “How ought we to live?”
• Views religious experience and religious questions as integral to an understanding of human existence.

• Challenges all to attain the inner freedom to make decisions which change for the better one’s own life and the lives of others.

• Desires to transform the world by forming men and women of competence, conscience and compassion, who are committed to the service of others.
If any of the universities I learned or taught in before coming to Regis were “mission-driven,” I certainly didn’t know it. I arrived here in 1996 with a thoroughly secular and essentially disciplinary understanding of higher education, one that had been internalized without much reflection and strongly reinforced during graduate school. My “mission” was self-evidently to teach and criticize literature, just as a chemist’s mission was to teach and experiment in chemistry, a historian’s to teach and research history, and so forth. The institution’s mission, so far as I reckoned it at all, was to house and facilitate these disciplinary missions.

My non-comprehension of mission-driven education prompted me in my first year to represent Regis at a national conference on “Academic Freedom at Religiously Affiliated Colleges and Universities.” Given this title and my ignorance of the field, it seemed perfectly obvious that the main issue would be the preservation of such freedom at such places, but it turned out quite the contrary. The central issue of the conference was whether and how any particular religious affiliation could retain meaning and value in the face of a pervasively held, and to that extent comparatively secure, standard of academic freedom. Especially when that standard is construed, as it tends to be in the U.S., as freedom from religious establishment of any kind, what can the adjectives in a phrase like “Jesuit Catholic University” really mean in terms of the day-to-day educational practices of such an institution?

The question was for me hitherto undreamed. Yet it stands at the heart of Regis’s mission, and the University therefore poses it insistently, openly, and resourcefully, to remarkable effect. In the Jesuit Catholic tradition, the broad question “How ought we to live?” serves as an invitation to reflection and dialogue about governing values within contextual constraints. Constrain the question to the context of a liberal arts curriculum in the early twenty-first century, and it now asks about the values that govern such a curriculum and – which is not the same question – the values that ought to. Constrain it more narrowly to the philosophy and pedagogy of a freshman literature requirement, and it asks about the values that presently configure the course, and invites reflection about those that should or could. While there are no programmatic Jesuit Catholic answers to these specific questions, there is nonetheless a rich Jesuit Catholic tradition of educational experiment and innovation and, deriving from this tradition, a distinctive set of values and goals, including the dialogue of faith and reason, the integration of knowledge, and the promotion of social justice. Such values and goals give specific shape to general questions of educational design and purpose: e.g., how can a liberal arts curriculum, and the freshman literature course within it, best serve these preferential ends?

There’s nothing obvious or easy about such a question, not least because it can’t be answered once and for all, but must be revisited as ever-changing circumstances require. What I could not foresee when I first arrived here was the extent to which, in persistently posing such questions, the academic culture at Regis would challenge and enlarge my understanding of the nature, purposes, and possibilities of higher education, nor how much the Jesuit Catholic tradition would contribute to answers that respond to the mission yet remain genuinely my own. In working out a viable solution to the liberal arts question, for instance, I and my colleagues in Regis College have been guided by the Jesuit notion that the curriculum should be not merely progressive but, wherever possible, cumulative, and not just within disciplines, but across them. As a result, I have had the unanticipated but hugely instructive pleasure of team-teaching with faculty from art history, political history, philosophy, and religious studies on topics such as Art and Literature from Antiquity to Modernity, the Renaissance and Reformation, and Revolution and Resistance in the Long Nineteenth Century. These courses have allowed me, my colleagues, and our students to explore mission ideals such as the integration of knowledge and the dialogue of faith and reason in concrete, historically inflected terms. And insofar as they advance beyond simple disciplinary conceptions of what are after all complex socio-cultural and historical phenomena, such integrative and dialogic courses are helping us to cultivate habits of mind that are indispensable to the pursuit of social justice, now and in the future.
This is but a single illustration, from the perspective of a single faculty member, of the larger and more critical point. The Jesuit Catholic mission promotes a shared spirit of inquiry and aspiration that is appreciative of individual difference, respectful of personal and professional freedoms, and sensitive to historical and cultural realities. It is a difficult but invigorating balance, a cooperative effort of institution and individual that benefits greatly from nearly five centuries of international experience and success in higher education. At Regis, this tradition is itself a form of magis, the “more” that a Jesuit Catholic university characteristically asks and offers.
What Kind of Place is Regis?

New faculty and administrators who come to Regis have typically spent their years of academic preparation at one of this country’s many larger and very good secular universities. Often they have worked for some years at similar colleges and universities. Thus their experience has typically given them very good preparation in their disciplinary specialization or expertise, and a strong sense of their career as focused primarily or almost entirely on the pursuit of that expertise. That’s one of the reasons that Regis has hired them. Yet it may also leave them unprepared for some different and very significant challenges involved in pursuing a successful career at Regis.

For at Regis they will be invited to become engaged participants in an academic mission that is grounded in religious faith – or, more accurately, in the Jesuit way of embodying Catholic faith.

Of course words like “faith” and “religious,” as well as “Catholic” and “Jesuit” are, in contemporary public discourse, fraught with a tangle of conflicting and controversial meanings. So let me first hasten to add that the invitation extended by Regis to new faculty and administrators is NOT an invitation that they should somehow become Catholic or be supportive of the specifically Catholic dimensions of Regis’s mission. Indeed, central to the Jesuit sense of things, and to the understanding of Catholicism articulated at its Second Vatican Council (1962-65), a rich pluralism of religious and personal faiths, including the faith or convictions of contemporary secular humanism, is essential to the life and mission of Regis. Yet that pluralism will be “rich” for Regis only to the extent that public discourse about faith (not just about Catholicism or about religion) is an intrinsic and fundamental dimension campus academic life.

The invitation to become an engaged participant in such an understanding of academic life does, then, involve a significant paradigm shift or development from the understanding of academic life that prevails at our country’s very good and predominantly secular institutions of higher learning.

Let me try to make Regis’s invitation to that paradigm shift more concrete by comparing Regis with two other Colorado universities. We respect both Colorado College (in Colorado Springs) and Colorado Christian (in Denver) – yet we don’t want Regis to be like either of them. We don’t want to be pervasively sectarian like Colorado Christian (a school with an evangelical protestant sense of mission), but neither do we want it to be pervasively secular like Colorado College.

Let me reiterate that I mean no disrespect for either Colorado Christian or Colorado College. On the contrary, precisely because I’m “catholic” and Jesuit in my sensibilities, I think it’s very good for Colorado that we have fine secular schools like Colorado College and good sectarian or, put more positively, good evangelical schools like Colorado Christian.

My point is that Regis, as a Jesuit school – as a Catholic school with Jesuit understanding and spirit at its foundations – is not and should never become either “pervasively sectarian” or “fully secular.” It needs to remain, rather, a place where the secular and the religious are integrated in ways which: a) really respect the autonomy of modern secularity (of disciplines and professional programs which are appropriately grounded in secular intelligence and freedom), b) really also respect the freedom and the importance of the diverse religious and faith commitments which we bring to our secular work, and finally, c) really and regularly seek the mutual enrichment of such secularity and such foundational faith.

That’s no easy task. Indeed I’d argue that in the present social and cultural climate of this country, the other two schools have an easier task. That’s partly because the task is simpler, but also because our culture at present favors a clear division and separation between the secular and the religious. Put another way, many cultural and religious traditions in this country favor an either-or mentality that takes comfort in the clear separation of fundamental aspects of human life. Indeed, such a mentality at times even finds great joy in provocative polarization between such fundamentals as faith and freedom, or rationality and religion.
Yet Roman Catholicism traditionally (and when at its best) has favored a both-and or an integrating mentality that has sought to integrate reason and faith, the centrality of religion and the goodness of the (secular) world. This is perhaps especially true (or true in characteristic ways) for the Jesuit understanding of and embodiment of the Catholic tradition. Typical Jesuit platitudes about “inner freedom and discernment” and “finding God in all things” are ways of suggesting this integrating approach. To wit: “God” (or the source of meaning and value) is found or heard not only in churches and scriptures, but also in the world – in the discoveries and achievements of human rationality and freedom, and thus in and through our academic disciplines and professional programs. Similarly, if individuals and groups are to hear and embody meaning and value, they must not only attend to external authorities (whether of churches or of professional associations), but must also have the kind of real inner freedom which allows them to discern amidst the surrounding clamor, the authentic meanings and true values.

Putting all this differently, the Jesuit spirit at its best has always been one which both reached out to the world in all its diversity (to the diversity of sciences, of cultures, of faiths…), but also has sought and encouraged those forms of freedom which enabled students and colleagues and themselves to sort through such diversity and find good and meaning wherever it might be found. Thus a diversity of sciences and disciplines, as also a diversity of cultures and faiths, is not for their integrating (both-and) sensibility a problem to be solved, differences to be reduced or leveled. Rather it is an invitation to real respect and dialogue – an ongoing “way of proceeding” (to cite another Jesuit platitude).

Thus Regis should be and needs to continue to be an academic place characterized by an integrating or “catholic” sensibility and practice. Not a place organized by the separations characteristic of pervasively sectarian or fully secular institutions. Rather a place where, said again, we continually seek to integrate (1) the specialized findings and meanings of our different disciplines, and (2) the meanings and commitments of our diverse faiths, and finally (3) the mutually enriching significance of these secular findings and these religious or faith meanings.

Yet the actual work of making such integration real in the life of our university involves, as already noted, a challenging paradigm shift or development in the meaning of academic life – not only for those new to Regis, but also to the many already working here who continue to struggle with the meaning of this shift/development.

It is a paradigm shift away from the idea that our professional work is to be solely or primarily focused only on our particular expertise, our disciplinary or functional specialization – an idea that leaves matters of faith and concerns about the religious foundations of the university to a few administrators and staff (the Mission office, University Ministry…), to members of the Jesuit Community, and to some faculty in Religious Studies. Thus, it is a paradigm shift towards a broader and deeper sense of professional work which, in different ways and degrees, gives all of us some real responsibility for relating our secular expertise to the religious foundations and mission of Regis. It is NOT, I hasten to repeat, a paradigm shift that calls all of us to be personally involved in matters properly Catholic or Jesuit. BUT it is a shift that asks each of us, according to our own personal faith and beliefs (whether religious or secular humanist), and according to our own personal ability and inclinations, first to be willing to understand our professional lives as both secular and also, and inevitably, grounded in some form of faith. And secondly, to be willing, at this religiously grounded university, to contribute, each in her or his own best way, to a common campus conversation about the relation of faith to our appropriately secular tasks – to contribute to “faith talk” as a necessary dimension of university life.
I am the product of Catholic education. I sang in the school choir; I can tell stories of my education at the hands of habited nuns; I even know about the perils of patent leather shoes! As a college student I witnessed the dramatic changes that occurred in the Church following Vatican II and I struggled through the 60s. Along the way I found my calling.

I love teaching; I love higher education. Like many others, I have heard the saying, “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach” but I’m convinced that people who espouse this position have it backward. To me, a faculty member has the opportunity to share his or her passion and knowledge, to shape future professionals and leaders who, in turn, will make a difference in the world for years to come.

When I moved into administration, my role and duties changed. Now I am no longer involved with teaching. Instead, I have the privilege to provide academic leadership and the responsibility to ensure that the faculty and staff have the resources and support they need to carry out our academic mission—to educate men and women as leaders in service of others. In truth, I serve those who most directly serve our students.

Before coming to Regis I taught at four other colleges, but it is here that I feel most at home. The Jesuit tradition is the key. But what is it that makes a Jesuit university so special?

The Jesuit commitment to education is paramount, reflected in their worldwide network of schools. Over 450 years ago, Ignatius of Loyola and his followers recognized that they could have the greatest impact by educating others, preparing leaders who could go forth to make the world a better place. Although I had not realized it before starting at Regis, my vision of the power of education perfectly matched this central tenet of the Society of Jesus.

The Jesuits are known and respected for their emphasis on excellence. It is not surprising that many people believe that the University of Notre Dame is Jesuit (much to the chagrin of the Holy Cross fathers who run the school). The thinking is – if it is outstanding, it must be Jesuit! This commitment to excellence is a reflection of the principle of the magis (more). This principle challenges us to never even consider selecting the second rate, but rather, to choose the “more” always. How could I, or any educator, fail to support this principle?

In The Jesuit Mystique, John Padberg, S.J., a widely respected scholar and teacher, describes the Jesuit purposes for sponsoring schools as fourfold: There is a practical purpose (preparing people to earn a living); a social or civic purpose; a cultural or liberal arts purpose; and a religious purpose. When these purposes are addressed in the education of health professionals through courses in the major combined with study of the arts and humanities, the natural and social sciences, philosophy, and religious studies, we offer an incredibly powerful curriculum. Such a curriculum prepares well-rounded, thoughtful practitioners with a broad understanding of the world and its people.

At Regis and at other Jesuit universities, we are expected to challenge students to think critically and to communicate their ideas effectively. We are urged to raise the “tough questions” of ethics and values with students, not avoid them. We do not provide a values-neutral approach to education, nor do we proselytize. We actively challenge students to read, study, and question so that the values they hold and the decisions they make are informed ones. We encourage, no we embrace, thoughtful dialogue and “respectful disagreement.”

Sometimes I find it easy to lose sight of a basic reality: while not all Catholic universities are Jesuit, all Jesuit universities are Catholic. A rich Catholic intellectual tradition exists although it is often overlooked and occasionally discounted. For me, two characteristics of this tradition are especially significant. First, Catholic intellectual tradition does not support blind acceptance; rather it encourages people to think about and understand their beliefs. Second, in Catholic tradition, philosophical thinking is taken very seriously because “a disciplined mind and systematic thought can help discern important things about what is real.”

(p. 173)
Because the Jesuits are both realists and visionaries, they have begun planning for a future in which their numbers will be seriously diminished. They seek to collaborate with the laity in carrying out the works of the Society of Jesus. To this end, Regis provides opportunities for dialogue between Jesuits and laity as well as opportunities to learn more about the Jesuit heritage. I am invigorated by these experiences and I welcome the opportunity to help the Jesuits continue their mission.

Yes, there are tensions as we grapple with issues such as hiring for mission or Church control vs. academic freedom. However, a Jesuit university provides an enriching environment. Emphasis is placed on excellent teaching; the individual student is valued and supported; service learning is recognized as an important part of education; faculty are encouraged to move beyond their specialties, to meet and share ideas; there is respect for difference and a generous welcome for those, regardless of their faith tradition, who share the Jesuit vision of higher education. People and ideas matter here. Our shared goal is to make a difference in the world.
A strong fall wind blows outside. Its voice and breath are everywhere. Even the doors swing, creaking softly when the stronger gusts find their way through the small cracks in the old cabin. Such is the mission of Regis. It becomes part of our lives and our work, sometimes unseen, the still small voice. It is not intrusive but a seamless part of who we are as individuals. There are moments, however, when it is strong and demanding like a fierce breath of wind that breaks its way through the protective shells we have built up, and challenges us to examine our lives and work, to be the best in what we are called to do.

In my own work, there are two particular voices, born of our long tradition, which speak to me most clearly. The first is that of John Francis Regis, after whom the University was named and whose work I often recall to our incoming students. Like the vast majority of the students in the Master of Nonprofit Management program, he served the poorest, the forsaken, those who had no voice, no advocate. He received his most ardent criticism because he opened refuges for prostitutes and helped find them “honest means of livelihood.” This type of work, as do the challenges, continues for all of us.

The second voice is one that emanates from the University of Central America in El Salvador, where on November 16, 1989, the Salvadoran military murdered six Jesuit faculty members, including the president. Jon Sobrino, S.J., in an address to the Regis community, called them “above all human beings . . . who . . . reacted to the poverty of their country with mercy, compassion, and justice and who dedicated their lives to transform poverty into survival, lies into truth, oppression into liberty, death into life.”

These Jesuits of El Salvador understood that: the university must understand itself explicitly as one of the social forces which might make the reign of God grow. The University, with its center . . . outside of itself . . . is co-responsible with and not separate from the rest of humanity, especially not from the poor of the world. It offers dignity not in the worldly sense of praise and prestige but in the sense of serving the life of the people. It offers reconciliation, not distancing from other human beings.

So how does this translate into reality for my work at Regis? Imperfectly, of course. But the lives of these Jesuits and the lives of others offer hope that we can and must be forces for good and justice in our world and in our community.

In the Master of Nonprofit Management these challenges and models are reflected in the lives of the students. By dedicating their studies to the work of the Third Sector, they have already committed themselves to being servants within the greater community. Their salaries will not reflect the greatness of their work but there is within them a desire for meaning through their lives of service.

The program is meshed with the concept of service learning. Thus much of the work that the students complete in their courses is used to achieve positive change in the world in which we live. Grants are written for grassroots organizations, strong, participatory governance structures are created, teaching manuals are developed, research takes place that asks difficult questions in a search for truth. Sometimes direct service takes place, even in places like Guatemala. Students and faculty offer their work and thus become a small piece of that greater social force. When the work is done, we seek to reflect upon its meaning, for ourselves and for our community.

Another aspect of my work deals with the Institute on the Common Good. One of the fundamental principles of the Institute is inclusivity. We seek to bring the many separate voices to the table, beyond the politics and the egos, to find elements of a common voice. We do not claim a single truth, nor require a single option, only a desire to seek the common good.
This challenge to speak the truth and serve justice extends inwardly into our lives within the University. We are called upon to be courageous in our own departments to raise the questions of how might we make ourselves patterns of service and reflect the just structures we seek to create in the wider world.

In the year of this writing, I am particularly aware of the life of John Francis Regis. We share a birthday and he died serving the poor at the age of 43. The Catholic Encyclopedia recounts how once after a particularly long day, John Francis was asked if he were tired. “No,” he replied, “I am as fresh as a rose.” “He then took only a bowl of milk and a little fruit, which usually constituted both his dinner and supper, and finally, after long hours of prayer, lay down on the floor of his room, the only bed he knew.” I do not have such stamina nor faith, but some nights I grab a touch of milk and some fruit with my daughter and ponder what new gifts and challenges are before me. How might I, in my day to day living and work offer my own simple share of humanity for the common good?
I made a decision early in my career that I would only work for faith-based organizations. As it turns out, that means I’ve worked for the Catholics virtually my entire adulthood, even though I’m not Catholic. I worked for the Sisters of Mercy, first as a nurse and then as a hospital administrator, for more than two decades. In fact, when I took a leave to complete my PhD, I fully intended to return to that work. But life led me on a different path; as a graduate assistant, I fell in love with teaching. I told my husband, “Let me look around and see if there are any jobs in teaching that would fit.” Regis was advertising for faculty in health services administration, and I got the job. “Let’s see if it works out,” I said. “I can always go back to working in a hospital.”

More than a decade later, I’d have to say it’s worked out. I’ve found work that fits my nature in an organization that supports my values, and that is no small thing. Almost daily, I pause on the quad with a profound sense of gratitude for my job. I tell new faculty, “don’t underestimate the privilege of doing work that has meaning” and I don’t underestimate it myself. The work I do, that we all do here, is not about us. It is about the influence we have on the next generation of professionals, on the very future of health care. The ability to influence that future, to witness that little piece of lightning we see in sudden understanding, to place an indelible imprint on a student, is a powerful and addictive thing.

But one can do that in any university. Doing it at Regis, at a Jesuit university, is a particularly satisfying experience. What is it that makes it different here? It is partly the intersection of the humanist and the scholastic that is the focus of our work. Knowing that we are expected to bring our values to the classroom is a powerful – and daunting – charge. Emphasizing academic freedom while affirming our values integrates the two and elevates both. It is liberating and empowering to be able to talk about what is right alongside what is correct.

Understanding the principles of Jesuit education is a bit more challenging. Fr. Robert Mitchell, a widely respected Jesuit and scholar from Boston College, described five traits of Jesuit education that make it unique. First is a passion for quality. The institution – no matter what the major area – seeks good education, respected by those who know the field. In RHCHP, we have a constant stream of feedback from our clinical partners that our students (and graduates) are “different.” They are remarkable products of a remarkable education, one that is grounded in a passion for quality and ideals. As a result, we transform students into healthcare professionals of competence, conscience and compassion.

A second characteristic is the study of the humanities and sciences no matter what the field of study. Our students need to be able to think critically and write articulately, and these skills are nurtured in a well-rounded education. Some of our students, particularly those in the science-focused fields, may wonder about the value of this requirement when they are in the midst of their core curriculum. They don’t wonder for long after they graduate, when they realize that success in healthcare is as much about relationships and communication as it is about understanding pathology. Part of what makes our graduates remarkable is that they are “whole people,” the product of an education that places equal emphasis on both what we do and who we are.

This focus on the whole person is consistent with a third characteristic of Jesuit education, which is a preoccupation with questions of ethics and values for the student and their career. This is one of the reasons that every graduate of any program in RHCHP has a class in health care ethics. These discussions are not limited to a single class – ideas about what right and wrong, about individual and professional values, are integrated into virtually every program throughout the curriculum.

The importance of religious experience is a fourth characteristic. While the university and its members do not proselytize, it is clear that our nature is as a Catholic institution. This enables a rich tradition of focusing on matters of the spirit, no matter what particular lens that spiritual tradition is viewed through. What has become clear to me is that the Jesuits have a wide enough frame to allow us to live out our own mission within that frame.
A final characteristic of Jesuit education is its focus on the person. No matter how large or complex the program, its focus is the individual student and his or her success in learning. We are deliberately and passionately focused on teaching, and the student is at the center of our work.

I had the privilege of being selected for the Ignatian Colleagues Program, an intense program of study, immersion experiences, and retreats that is intended to steep lay people in the mission and values of the Jesuits. We learned how the Jesuit principles of cura personalis (care for the person), Magis (the greater good), finding God in all things, and discernment can be demonstrated by our lives and our work. These are not contradictory with education; they are complementary. In the Jesuit Education Reader2 the Jesuit education tradition is described as a tapestry, where religious motives, intellectual climate, social conditions, and political contexts are intertwined in a complex texture.

This makes for a fascinating place to work and learn. It also provides us with direction. Having the Jesuit principles as a basis for decision-making helps form a rational and transparent basis for discerning the right choices. It is as if an older and respected colleague is guiding us in our journey. The result is work that has meaning, reward, and a higher purpose. It becomes our indelible imprint on the future.
ENDNOTES


SUGGESTED READINGS:

Callahan, John J., S.J. *Foundations: The Jesuit Tradition at Regis University*.


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