

The
Dominican
Charism in
American
Higher
Education:

A
Vision
in
Service
of Truth

Inspired by the
12th Biennial Colloquium
of Dominican Colleges
and Universities

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The future of American Dominican institutions of higher education is, in large part, in the hands of dedicated lay women and men. These partners in mission bring their gifts of leadership, wisdom, knowledge and faith to colleges initially founded and primarily staffed by sisters and friars. Today the founding communities have entrusted what is most valuable and cherished

This document is written *to* the contemporary world of Dominican higher education in the United States — *out of* the collaboration of women and men, religious and lay — *for* the sake of sustaining a continuous conversation regarding the unique heritage, vision and mission of American Dominican higher education in the 21st century. By initiating the conversation we hope to engage the scholarly richness and diverse experience of our colleagues in Dominican institutions in reflection upon our shared mission and, most importantly, to occasion further research and writing that will articulate the wisdom of the Dominican charism in higher education.

D O M I N I C A N H I S T O R Y C

prayer and ministry, his pursuit of truth was unique and relentless. One of the most endearing stories about Dominic describes a nightlong conversation he had with an innkeeper, who had been misled by the local heresy of the Cathars. By dawn, after conversing patiently all-night, Dominic had helped his companion to accept the truth of the Gospel and turn away from heresy. Those hours spent in dialogue and debate reflect Dominic’s pragmatic approach to truth, which later found expression in the earliest constitution: “Our order is known to have been founded from the outset precisely for the sake of preaching and the salvation of souls, and our zeal should be primarily and passionately directed to the goal of being useful to the souls of our neighbors.”¹

This dedication to the pursuit of truth for the sake of others has inspired and formed saints and scholars whose works have built up the faith of the church and contributed to the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the order:

“In our daily and often difficult search for truth, we have not only the inspiration of one another to keep us going, but also the great ‘cloud of witnesses’ in the Dominican tradition in which we stand and to which we are called to contribute in new ways.”

Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP

- D** : Our founder from whom we inherit our zeal for the Word and find inspiration in his special gifts of governance and administration.
- A** : Our brother philosopher, theologian and poet, who offers us an immeasurable legacy of wisdom.
- A G** : A scientist and lover of the universe, who inspires our care of the earth.
- E** : A German master of prayer and contemplation, who gifts us with audacity to be open to all sources of truth.
- C** : Our sister-doctor who inspires all to speak truth to power.
- F A** : A gifted friar, who preached not with words but with paint and color, and who challenges us to see God through the beauty of the arts.

C J

Out of a deep belief in the grace of creation and in fidelity to the spirit of the founder, the Order of Preachers emerged in response to the suffering and ignorance that Dominic encountered in the world of the 13th century. Dominican institutions of higher education continue to address the thirst for truth and cries for justice of their age; they are called to be communities of compassion and justice in the service of truth. From their earliest beginnings, Dominicans have been called to see what is needed and to do what is useful.

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Urgent questions fuel Dominican scholarship. The liberal arts tradition of the institutions founded by Dominican sisters is a story of engaged scholarship. Dominican sisters who earned doctorates in political science, economics, chemistry

QUESTION A

Since the time of Fra Angelico, Dominicans have exercised their charism of preaching through participation in and practice of the arts. From the

Order of Preachers has been inclusive — of men and women, religious and lay, ordained and non-ordained. In the contemporary American experience of Dominican higher education, institutions founded to serve a single sex student body are now coed; schools of theology founded to prepare men for priestly ministry now educate both women and men, lay and religious. The 21st century Dominican learning community has a multiplicity of perspectives and differences that include race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical and intellectual abilities, and ways of knowing — a microcosm of the human family. Exposure to the wide range of human experience within higher education expands an understanding of the multiple threads that create the fabric of a collaborative society marked by solidarity and acceptance of differences. Timothy Radcliffe reminds Dominican institutions of higher education of their true call when he says, “But we are called to be a place of counter-culture, of a different way of relating, through which one believes that one may learn something from those with whom one disagrees. This requires of us compassion and vulnerability.”

INTELLECTUAL COMPASSION

In a tradition that began with Dominic, who sold his books to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, Dominican educational practices foster compassion for all those in need. Study is undertaken not for itself alone, but for its usefulness to the world at large. Those educated in the Dominican tradition study in order to respond to the needs of their time, whether that means alleviating suffering, enhancing the dignity of each person, serving those in need, or working for peace and justice.⁶

“Your heart must be tender to feel another’s suffering. If you can do that, you are truly human.”

Vincent Shigeto Oshida, OP

All who serve in a Dominican institution — administration, staff and faculty — model compassion and empathy by creating a hospitable atmosphere where diversity is respected and where students are encouraged to speak their truth. From the moment students enter a Dominican university or college, they are welcomed by the staff committed to student services — in admissions, the registrar’s office, student accounts, financial aid, to name but a few. Residential

staffs create an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to develop academically and socially, and in which diversity is respected. During their years of study, library staff and the IT department provide resources to students that enhance their learning and engagement. Those serving in health and wellness centers compassionately tend to students’ physical and emotional well being, just as university ministers encourage and enhance students’ spiritual development. Thus, staff members play a crucial role in the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual growth of our students.

Professors see suffering around them and realize that their scholarship and teaching must serve the needs of the world, especially with regard to justice and peace. This is a traditional understanding of compassion — responding to the emotional and physical needs of others. But professors have the opportunity to exercise intellectual compassion as well. This kind of compassion causes us to be moved not only by others’ physical suffering, but by their intellectual confusion or uncertainty. Intellectual compassion seeks to bring comfort to others by dispelling uncertainty and helping them to understand. St. Thomas said it is better to illuminate rather than merely to shine, and this is exactly what intellectual compassion compels professors to do. Careful scholarship and teaching seek to clarify, simplify and enlighten.

This atmosphere of compassion and caring exists because the administrators of Dominican institutions encourage faculty and staff in their dedication to the total well being of every student. Without their inspiration and support, faculty and staff would lack the resources to serve students in a spirit of

Administrators themselves model and inspire compassion in their conversations and interactions with colleagues and students.

THE COMMON GOOD

The common good is a political and social reality that may be defined as “the sum total of social conditions that allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”⁷ The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. From this, we see that the common good is the goal of political life.

But the common good is not just a political and social reality. It also has a theological dimension. Thomas Aquinas understood the common good as intrinsic to God. “. . . Now the good of the whole universe is that which is apprehended by God, who is the maker and governor of all things: hence whatever he wills, he wills under the aspect of the common good. This is his own goodness, which is the good of the whole universe.”⁸

Formed by Aquinas’ understanding, Dominicans see the common good as a foreshadowing of the reign of God. The common good is an organic experience of living together in justice and love, not simply the sum total of individual needs and desires. By the study of all fields of knowledge, Dominican higher education endeavors to help shape a society where the pursuit of goodness is possible and in which every person enjoys dignity and respect.

The Dominican practices described here are not intended to exhaust the many dimensions of the Dominican tradition of higher education but rather to stimulate further reflection on the charism as it is embodied in contemporary American Dominican institutions of higher education.

E, . . . :

American Dominican institutions of higher education have been inspired and shaped by an 800 year history and the rich traditions of the Dominican Order, and they claim the charism joyfully. With the members of the family of Dominic, they exist — as Dominic did — in the midst of the church and the world; and they speak out for truth and justice, from the heart of the church. These 16 colleges and universities and the three studia have inherited this legacy and seek to make it manifest so that it may flourish and be shared with future generations. The charism and its manifestation in Dominican institutions of higher education are a cherished gift needed in our troubled world and as light and hope for the church of the 21st century.

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1. Order of Preachers. . . .
2. Yves Congar. The expression “I have loved the truth as one loves a person” is a profession Congar took from Madame Swetchine. 82. . . . 47.
3. Richard Woods. “What’s Love Got to Do With It.” Presented at: 12th Biennial Colloquium of Dominican Colleges and Universities, River Forest, IL. June 2012.
4. Ann Garrido. “On Being A Dominican School.” Aquinas Institute of Theology Convocation Address, St. Louis, MO. August 2011. Accessed at: <http://www.dominicanstudies.org/on-being-a-dominican-school>.
5. Patricia Walters. “Higher Education in the Dominican Tradition.” Presented at: 12th Biennial Colloquium of Dominican Colleges and Universities, River Forest, IL. June 2012.
6. Examples such as the martyrdom of Bishop Pierre Claverie of Algeria and the Maryknoll sisters and co-workers in Guatemala.
7. Pope John XVIII. . . . 51.
8. Thomas Aquinas. . . . 1-2, q. 19, a. 10. For a commentary on this passage, see Appendix 4 in the Gilby . . . , translated and edited by Thomas Gilby (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), vol. 28, p. 172, “Common and Public Good.”

C

This document offers a brief overview of the Dominican educational charism and a vision for Dominican higher education in the United States that flows from this heritage. This vision is foundational to our institutions and has shaped our practices and pedagogy. College and university leaders are invited to bring board members, faculty, staff and students into conversation about how the Dominican educational charism shapes their own institutions and how it can be deepened and developed into the future. The following questions are offered to begin the conversation.

1. From your 10 (ams are in 1TJETu gs/T11 12t5 oauBoirom y)12 .aDC BT9.555follsonal charism sd oi2p8-5 (f)10 (eredpega35.8059 TmSID 73Me and univ)20 (ersity leaders are)TJ tradition, allow themselves to be formed by it, and pass it on to the next generation? What kinds of programs are in place for their orientation, formation and appropriation of Dominican tradition and culture so that the future is rooted in that same tradition? What are the outcomes we hope for, and how do we measure those outcomes?
6. What is the integrative core of your curriculum? Where are the opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue?
7. Culture has been described as “distinctive and inheritable.” In what ways is the Dominican culture of your institution distinctive? How will you pass it on to the next generation?
8. The lay leadership of boards, administration, faculties and staff of Dominican higher education has been entrusted with the Dominican heritage, legacy and intellectual tradition. How will they experience this tradition, allow themselves to be formed by it, and pass it on to the next generation? What kinds of programs are in place for their orientation, formation and appropriation of Dominican tradition and culture so that the future is rooted in that same tradition? What are the outcomes we hope for, and how do we measure those outcomes?

provides opportunities for affirming our Catholic identity, Dominican heritage and collegiate traditions. Catholic beliefs and values are enriched by ecumenical and interfaith dialog. Through worship and ritual, we celebrate our religious identity while remaining a university community where all are welcome.

Caldwell University

Founded in 1939 by the Sisters of Saint Dominic, Caldwell University promotes intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic growth to a diverse population and welcomes all cultures and faith traditions. Inspired by St. Dominic de Guzman and our Catholic heritage, we transform students' lives by preparing them through the liberal arts and professional studies to think critically, pursue truth, and contribute to a just society.

Dominican House of Studies

The Dominican House of Studies traces its mission to the preaching charism and Catholic intellectual heritage bequeathed to the Order of Preachers by its founder, St. Dominic de Guzmán. Dominic constructed a religious order

remains, even today, a guide and model of the Dominican intellectual life by reason of his docility of mind to Revelation, unwavering respect for the visible world and the human person, and unflagging commitment to think with and within the Church. The Dominican House of Studies is a direct heir to this theological and spiritual tradition that Dominic founded and Thomas developed, a theological heritage both speculatively inclined and pastorally charged that spans eight centuries.

In service to the evangelizing mission of the Dominican Order, the primary purpose of the Dominican House of Studies is to provide a Catholic theological education that prepares students for the ordained ministry in the Province of St. Joseph. Recognizing the wide appeal of a theological education in the Dominican tradition, the Dominican House of Studies accepts all interested and qualified students without regard to race, gender, religion, or ethnic background. The Dominican House of Studies is committed to imparting to all of its students a capacity for serious scholarship and a basic competence in philosophy and theology through the study of St. Thomas Aquinas in dialogue with the best of contemporary thought. For ministry preparation it offers a comprehensive program of studies integrated with spiritual and pastoral components in order to form students imbued with a desire for holiness, capable of effective preaching, and competent pastoral ministry. With an academic environment shaped by a Thomistic focus, a small student enrollment, and a high faculty—student ratio, the Dominican House of Studies fosters among students and faculty an intimacy conducive to personal formation in the spiritual, intellectual, and ministerial.

Dominican University

As a Sinsinawa Dominican-sponsored institution, Dominican University prepares students to pursue truth, to give compassionate service and to participate in the creation of a more just and humane world.

Dominican University New York

The aim of Dominican University New York is to promote educational excellence, leadership, and service in an environment characterized by respect for the individual and concern for the community and its needs. Founded by the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt, the University is an independent institution

of higher learning, Catholic in origin and heritage. In the Dominican tradition, it fosters the active, shared pursuit of truth and embodies an ideal of education rooted in the values of reflective understanding and compassionate involvement.

Committed to building its programs upon a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, the University maintains a student-centered climate and serves a diverse community of students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The University empowers this community of learners to excel, lead and serve with integrity and to engage responsibly in the pursuit of a more just, ethical and sustainable world.

Dominican University New York is dedicated to the principle that its educational programs and services must be both challenging and supportive, distinguished both by high standards and by attention to the needs and potential of the individual student. Affirmed and engaged by these standards and values, graduates are prepared for purposeful lives and for the careers and professions they choose to pursue.

Dominican University New York

Our institutional mission is to educate and prepare students to be ethical leaders and socially responsible global citizens who incorporate the Dominican values of study, reflection, community and service into their lives. The University is committed to diversity, sustainability and the integration of the liberal arts, the sciences and professional programs.

Deep Learning: The Disciplined Inquirer

Deep Learning. Motivated by a thirst for truth, the disciplined inquirer is a life-long learner who recognizes fundamental principles in a given field of inquiry and applies them in innovative ways to broader contemporary issues which are of importance to Church, the academy, and/or society.

Edgewood College

Edgewood College, rooted in the Dominican tradition, engages students within a community of learners committed to building a just and

compassionate world. The college educates students for meaningful personal and professional lives of ethical leadership, service and a lifelong search for truth.

Molloy University

Molloy University, an independent, Catholic university rooted in the Dominican tradition of study, spirituality, service, and community, is committed to academic excellence with respect for each person. Through transformative education, Molloy promotes a lifelong search for truth and the development of ethical leadership.

Mount Saint Mary College

Mount Saint Mary College is an institution of higher education guided by the Catholic and Dominican traditions of academic rigor, pursuit of truth, social justice, leadership and service. The College Bylaws indicate that Mount Saint Mary College “aims to give its students a Catholic cultural-professional education in the liberal arts tradition.”

This distinctive approach provides the philosophy for our commitment to educating the whole person and to cultivating intellectual achievement, religious and spiritual growth, and the development of moral character.

Consistent with these principles, Mount Saint Mary College endeavors to graduate students who

- are inquisitive and value the free exchange of ideas in pursuit of truth
- are analytical in their approach to problem solving
- are motivated toward self-improvement
- have developed an aesthetic sense
- possess effective leadership and communication skills
- respect the value and ethics of the Catholic and Dominican traditions
- embrace civic responsibility and community service

The deepening of Mount Saint Mary College’s commitment to these principles will involve the leadership efforts of the entire college community, within a culture of academic excellence.



As reflected in its motto “Doce Me Veritatem” (Teach Me the Truth) Mount Saint Mary College, founded by the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, is an independent, coeducational institution committed to providing students with a liberal arts education to prepare them for lives of leadership and service. Through a variety of majors and professional programs, students are also prepared for career entry or graduate and professional studies.

Consistent with Judeo-Christian values and the Dominican tradition of education that values the inherent worth of the individual, the mission of Mount Saint Mary College is to create an environment which fosters close student-faculty interaction that enables students to reach their full potential as lifelong learners. Mount Saint Mary College strives to provide a stimulating environment that promotes the intellectual and personal growth of undergraduate and graduate students.

Dominican University

Founded in 1911 by the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs (now known as the Dominican Sisters of Peace) Ohio Dominican has expanded and evolved in many directions. Yet still to this day, it maintains its original vision of providing students with relevant preparation for life, challenging them to boldly face changing times, and exploring with them new applications in their search for truth.



As a Catholic, liberal arts university in the Dominican tradition, Ohio Dominican University is guided in its educational mission by the Dominican motto: to contemplate truth and share with others the fruits of this contemplation. Ohio Dominican educates all individuals committed to intellectual, spiritual and professional growth, who develop into life-long learners, serving others in a global society. They, in turn, become ethical and effective leaders grounded in the pursuit of truth, justice and peace.

Providence College

Providence College is a Catholic, Dominican, liberal arts institution of higher education and a community committed to academic excellence in pursuit of the truth, growth in virtue, and service of God and neighbor.

St. Thomas Aquinas College

The mission of Siena Heights, a Catholic university founded and sponsored by the Adrian Dominican Sisters, is to assist people to become more competent, purposeful and ethical through a teaching and learning environment which respects the dignity of all.

St. Thomas Aquinas College

St. Thomas Aquinas College seeks to challenge, guide, and energize each student to realize and create their own path to success and commit themselves to making a profound difference in the world.

St. Thomas Aquinas College endeavors to be a vibrant, inclusive learning community that is the top choice for students who seek a leading-edge, transformative education rooted in the liberal arts and designed to prepare them for career success in a changing world.

Rooted in a tradition of study, reflection, and service, and faithful to our founders, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, St. Thomas Aquinas College believes that education has the power to liberate and transform. These values are manifested in our four principal commitments: Access and Affordability, Diverse Learning Community, Lifelong Learning, and Nurturing the Whole Self.

