

Core Values at Loyola College in Maryland

From the time of their founding four-and-a-half centuries ago, Jesuits – beginning with their founder, St. Ignatius Loyola – have had a distinctive way of looking at life. Their characteristic Ignatian worldview has permeated their educational and spiritual apostolates, and has been shared with hundreds of thousands of women and men formed by Jesuit teaching and pastoral care. This Ignatian worldview includes the following characteristic notes or emphases: 1) openness and enthusiasm toward the whole of God’s richly diverse creation and for the human person as its crowning glory; 2) hopefulness and pragmatism in seeking graced solutions to life’s challenges through creative use of all available gifts and resources, tempered by realism and compassion about the reality of human weakness; 3) sustained critical attention to motivations and choices based on the conviction that individuals, through the exercise of their freedom, exert a real influence on their world and one another for good or for evil; and 4) commitment to a life of growing integrity and increasing service to God and others after the Gospel model of Jesus Christ.

As a Jesuit, Catholic university with a 150-year history, Loyola College adopts and adapts these characteristic emphases of the Ignatian heritage and reflects them in its life and work. Loyola’s Jesuit tradition was complemented and enriched by the tradition of the Mercy Sisters when the College joined with Mount Saint Agnes College in 1971; and Loyola continues to remember and to recognize with gratitude the gifts which it received as a result of that joining, as will be seen in the text below. One of the particular ways in which Loyola preserves its religious heritage while recognizing and incorporating the necessary openness to pluralism which is characteristic of American higher education today is by encouraging all of its constituents to cultivate and to live by certain core values.

During the preparation of the current strategic plan, groups representing the various constituencies of the College community met to identify and articulate what these core values are at Loyola today. Their deliberations resulted in the following list, the order of which in no way reflects a ranking in order of importance; indeed, while the values listed are discrete, they are also strongly connected and interrelated. There was, however, a fairly broad consensus that the values most typically associated with Jesuit education in the public mind over the centuries, and still today, are its commitment to academic excellence and its focus on educating the whole person. There was also a widely shared sense that these two values, along with all the others which follow, are bound together by the characteristic Jesuit striving after the “greater good,” the “better thing,” which Loyola highlighted when it called its last strategic plan *Magis*.

The paragraphs in italics are intended to offer a historical context which explains the distinctive Jesuit origins and character of each value (some which are certainly shared by non-Jesuit institutions of higher learning, and all of which are shared by non-Jesuits, non-Catholics, and non-Christians working at Loyola and other Jesuit institutions). These paragraphs thus remind Loyola that it is part of a greater reality which stretches across national boundaries, cultures, and several centuries. The non-italicized paragraphs summarize the consensus of the year-long discussions by more than 400 members of the Loyola College community. They, in turn, express the ideals toward which the College strives in understanding and practicing each of these values in its life today.

--Academic Excellence

The Jesuit motto Ad majorem Dei gloriam means “for the greater glory of God”; and nowhere has the pursuit of “greater” heights of human achievement been better or more consistently

exemplified in the Jesuit educational tradition than in the pursuit of academic excellence. The preeminence and consistency of this value in Jesuit schools no doubt explain why academic excellence is the hallmark most often associated with a “Jesuit education” in the minds of the world at large.

At Loyola, the pursuit of academic excellence includes promoting a love for learning, discovery, and integration across a wide range of disciplines and interests. The ideal of integration, in particular, represents one expression of Loyola’s Catholic character; the College seeks that “higher synthesis of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person.”¹ The College also situates itself within the Jesuit tradition of openness to a wide range of ideas by fostering and protecting academic freedom. Loyola seeks to inculcate habits of thinking which are both critical and creative. It seeks to provide state-of-the-art facilities and to employ methodologies which foster active personal engagement as well as collaboration. The College strives in various ways to foster, recognize, and reward high standards of professionalism and excellence in learning, teaching, and scholarship. It also seeks to promote high levels of expectation and accountability across its constituencies, which naturally includes a commitment to academic honesty as expressed in its honor code and attendant policies. As Jesuit schools have traditionally done, Loyola pursues academic excellence by preserving the intellectual heritage of the past while at the same time boldly advancing to embrace the future. This value thus contributes to a sense of Loyola’s mission and identity as Catholic insofar as the College “assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage”² of humanism broadly construed. Loyola also joins itself to a long and venerable Jesuit tradition of encouraging education which is unapologetically open to faith and values, and which strives to integrate intellect with faith and with action for justice. Here again, Loyola embodies its Catholic heritage which encourages it “to promote dialogue between faith and reason, so that it can be seen more profoundly how faith and reason bear harmonious witness to the unity of all truth.”³ Lastly, Loyola seeks to instill a love for learning in its constituent members which will create in them lifelong habits of ongoing learning and growth. In all this, Loyola seeks to enhance a growing sense of school pride within the institution, as well as a growing reputation for excellence outside it.

--Focus on the Whole Person

In the Jesuit tradition, human beings are understood to be spiritual at their deepest level. This conception of human nature traces its roots to the biblical account of creation which portrays human beings as created “in God’s image and likeness.” Jesuits, who take their name and identity from Jesus, see the human condition as further ennobled by that union of divinity and humanity which they believe to have taken place in the life and person of Jesus Christ. These beliefs, as well as their historical roots in the Christian humanism of the Renaissance, help to explain why Jesuits have long sought to reverence, celebrate, and care for all that is best about human beings and their existence. As a result, Jesuit institutions have been noted for respecting and responding to the unique needs of individual persons, as well as for helping them to identify and develop the full range and variety of their particular gifts and talents, especially with an eye toward service and leadership.

Loyola manifests its effort to honor, care for, and educate the whole person by encouraging its constituents to strive after intellectual, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual health and well-being. It does this in its curricula by emphasizing the formative potential of the study of the liberal arts. Loyola also seeks to encourage holistic growth outside the academic context by providing members of its community with a wide variety of resources and opportunities, and by encouraging them to appreciate the value and importance of well-integrated, restorative leisure. For instance, Loyola’s commitment to the classical ideal of “a sound mind in a sound body” is

reflected in its state-of-the-art Fitness and Aquatic Center and the variety of programs and opportunities which that facility offers to members of the College's extended family. The College also seeks to provide varied and innovative cultural and recreational programming which fosters community and which engages and develops minds outside the classroom context. Loyola offers a variety of retreat opportunities, as well as ecumenical and interfaith opportunities for prayer and meditation, to foster growth of the spirit within its members. Lastly, through its policies and procedures, Loyola seeks to call forth the best in its constituents, and to challenge them when they neglect or endanger their own well-being or that of others.

--Integrity and Honesty

In the Jesuit tradition, living truthfully and integrally is one important way of imitating Jesus Christ, who Jesuits regard as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Beyond that, however, insistence on integrity and honesty has been seen in Jesuit education as a vital element in caring for and educating the whole person; these virtues are regarded as essential both for full realization of individual potential and for promotion of trust and harmony between persons.

At Loyola, the commitment to integrity and honesty is manifested in an atmosphere of open, civil discourse and careful, respectful listening where freedom of thought and expression are valued and protected. The College also supports honesty and integrity by striving in various ways to foster respect for oneself and one's own work, as well as respect for others and for their work and their basic human rights. The Honor Code and the Honor Council are two specific means used by Loyola to educate students about and to encourage the practice of academic and intellectual honesty. The Code and the Council serve to support the College's presuppositions that "students who are truthful on all academic matters and who submit academic work that is the product of their own minds demonstrate respect for themselves and the community in which they study, as well as a commitment to Jesuit education."⁴ Loyola also hopes to instill in all members of its extended family a sense of balance, perspective, and personal satisfaction in trying hard and doing their best. Indeed, Loyola expects all of its constituent members to embrace, abide by, and help to enforce personal and professional standards of ethics – which represents one of many reasons for including the teaching and learning of ethics in the College's curricula. Loyola also strives to foster habits, standards, and structures of accountability which are consistently and fairly applied. All of the preceding helps to define the mindset which undergirds and comes to expression in Loyola's honor code, its personnel policies, and its other ways of proceeding.

--Diversity

Ignatius Loyola and his Jesuits have seen the world, in the phrase of the great Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, as "charged with the grandeur of God." This means that they regard the rich diversity of life and creation to be inherently good – even holy – insofar as that diversity shows forth countless reflections of the Creator's own inexhaustibly rich nature. Ignatius also conceived of his Jesuits from their inception as a global order at the service of the worldwide Church; and the Jesuit educational tradition, as a humanistic ideal conceived in the "age of exploration," has from the outset regarded greater breadth of knowledge and a more comprehensively global perspective as hallmarks of heightened excellence. Indeed, throughout their history, Jesuits have been noted for their openness to and close observation of cultures other their own, as well as for their efforts at mutually enriching intercultural dialogue. Many have distinguished themselves, for instance, by the careful study of indigenous languages in their adopted countries and cultures. Hence, it seems unsurprising that Jesuit schools have traditionally fostered openness toward and special interest in peoples, experiences, and ideas that are new, different, and diverse. The Jesuit educational tradition has sought to celebrate

differences, while at the same time seeking out and highlighting fundamental human qualities which are shared across diverse cultures. Beyond its Jesuit heritage, Loyola has its own tradition and history of religious diversity. When the College was founded in 1852, one of its seven original students was non-Christian; and perhaps as a consequence, chapel attendance was never mandatory at Loyola. The current and ongoing commitment of the Jesuits to such diversity is expressed in the documents of their most recent General Congregation: “The signs of the times give stark proof of the fact that a faith doing justice must necessarily lead to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and cooperation.”⁵

Seeking to increase its own diverse nature, Loyola encourages openness to new discoveries, ideas, methods, and perspectives, and it actively encourages and celebrates diversity in all forms. This includes promoting “awareness of and sensitivity toward differences of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disabilities” as articulated in the College’s current undergraduate and graduate catalogs.⁶ Indeed, Loyola sees diversity as an inherent source of richness and a necessary opportunity for learning and growth. In this, it accepts the contemporary challenge of the Catholic Church that universities “must become more attentive to the cultures of the world of today, and to the various cultural traditions existing within the Church in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society.”⁷ Loyola also seeks to encourage all of its constituents to respect, value, and welcome “inherent value and dignity of each person”⁸ as a gifted contributor to the community as a whole. The College is of course committed to challenging and repudiating prejudice in all its forms, and to encouraging global and international awareness, both within and outside its curricula.

--Community

Ignatius Loyola and his first Jesuit companions – in keeping with the values of Jesus who came “that all might be one” (John 17:21), and who urged his followers to love their neighbors as themselves – decided early on to bind themselves together as a community of “friends in the Lord” founded on shared faith, values, and mission. In so doing, they complemented their reverence for individual persons with a conviction that humans are social by nature – i.e., created for relationship – and that love is “a more excellent way” (I Corinthians 12:31). Having united themselves to one another, the early Jesuits then sought to include others in their faith vision and to “help souls” by whatever means came to hand. Imitating their example, Jesuit institutions historically have made community a high priority.

As a Jesuit institution committed to the value of community, Loyola strives to define its goals and values clearly so as to ensure unity of purpose and to encourage shared ownership for the College’s mission and vision. Loyola also seeks to foster a spirit of trust, hopefulness, collegiality, and dialogue by providing members of its community with structures that encourage open sharing of ideas and values, and which encourage collaboration within and across institutional divisions and constituencies. The College joins here with other Catholic institutions of learning in encouraging community “animated by a spirit of freedom and charity... [and] characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals.”⁹ In its ongoing commitment to hospitality and conviviality, which it expresses in many and various ways, Loyola recognizes a particular contribution of its Mercy heritage which is the legacy of Mount Saint Agnes College. Lastly, the College reminds its members of the practical wisdom of St. Ignatius, who encouraged people to give each other the benefit of the doubt – i.e., to be generous in spirit, and more ready to put a good interpretation than a negative one on each other’s words, actions, and intentions.¹⁰

--Justice

Jesuits who practice openness to and appreciation for the rich diversity of God's creation are also concerned for its proper ordering and responsible use. In the "First Principle and Foundation" of his Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius presents the attainment of this sense of order and responsible use of creation – of wholeness, holiness, and the right ordering of relationships according to God's primordial plan – as the primary purpose for human existence.¹¹ This sense of wholeness, holiness, and right relationships is also what the bible means by the term "justice." Belief in the importance of this practical, guiding value has thus naturally predisposed educators in the Jesuit tradition to a committed pursuit of justice as an inseparable correlate to an authentic life of faith. The pursuit of justice continues to inform and shape both the educational mission and daily dealings of life in Jesuit institutions, including colleges and universities. As recently as October 2000, Jesuit General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach stated: "As Jesuit higher education, we embrace new ways of learning and being formed in the pursuit of adult solidarity; new methods of researching and teaching in an academic community of dialogue; and a new university way of practicing faith-justice in society."¹²

Loyola's commitment to justice begins at home with creation of an environment where each individual is valued and attended to, can live safely, and can express him or herself honestly. The College seeks to be sensitive to and supportive of individuals in their particular needs situations, and it also seeks by all available means – including fair and competitive wages and equitable application of policies and procedures – to provide for all its members a lived experience of consistency and fair play. Educationally, Loyola strives to foster global awareness, as well as a sense of solidarity with and care for all who struggle for justice. In particular, the College strives to foster awareness and understanding of first-world privilege, and of its attendant responsibilities for leadership and for advocacy of social and structural change. In advocating both actual and spiritual solidarity with and direct service of the materially poor, Loyola expresses a characteristic note of the spiritual heritage of Catherine McAuley and her Mercy Sisters which came with the joining of Loyola to Mount Saint Agnes College. Loyola also seeks to infuse its curricula and its day-to-day practices with justice-related themes and issues such as critical examination of unjust social, economic, and political structures, awareness of how personal and national choices contribute to the conditions of society, conservation of the global environment, and minimization of needless consumption.

--Service

Jesuits were the first religious order in the Church to liberate themselves completely from the constraints of the cloister in favor of full engagement with and activity "in the world." (It is interesting to note in this connection that the Religious Sisters of Mercy, whose tradition of service lives on at Loyola as a result of its joining with Mount Saint Agnes College in 1971, were the first order of religious women to establish similar freedom from the cloister.) The new and somewhat radical founding vision of Ignatius Loyola foresaw from the outset that his Jesuit companions should be "men on the move" – "contemplatives in action" whose lives were completely devoted to "reading the signs of the times" and responding creatively and concretely to the pressing needs of their world. In the Jesuit educational tradition, this "apostolic" or action-oriented focus has translated into a tradition of forming "men and women for others"¹³ who are committed to generous service which aims to create a more just world for all men and women. This "institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life"¹⁴ also marks Loyola as a Catholic institution of higher learning.

In keeping with this Jesuit tradition of commitment to service, Loyola offers to all of its constituent members a rich variety of opportunities for solidarity and service both within and outside the institution. These service opportunities extend Loyola's helping hand throughout the greater Baltimore area, as well as to the wider national and international communities. The College also seeks to encourage habits of caring, engagement, and civic responsibility by incorporating its own particular approach to service learning into its curricula, by reflecting a service orientation in its research interests, and by emphasizing and encouraging the connection between excellence, leadership, service, and development for the professions.

--Leadership

Very early on, Jesuits were recognized as innovators and leaders in educational methods, in approaches to foreign mission work, and in the giving of retreats and spiritual direction. Indeed, leadership would seem to flow naturally from a number of the other defining Jesuit values already enumerated here: openness and curiosity about all things new and different, commitment to the alleviation of human injustice and suffering, conviction that individuals can and should make a difference to their fellows, and commitment to bringing the best intellectual resources to bear on creative responses to problems and challenges. It was natural enough, therefore, that Jesuit educational institutions from their earliest beginnings should become renowned for training leaders who would go on to render effective service to their various human communities.

The Jesuit commitment to the particular form of service which is leadership continues to the present day. Loyola's commitment to this value includes identifying, developing, encouraging, and rewarding the exercise of gifts of leadership in all of its constituent members in all areas of their lives. The College likewise encourages in all of its members the regular practice of both leadership and "followership." In other words, it encourages its diverse constituents to think and act both as teachers and learners who lead by lived example, modeling the College's mission and values and contributing to the common good. Loyola hopes by all these means to continue forming alumni and alumnae – as well as other members within its extended family – who can serve as leaders and exemplars in the College, in their communities, and in society at large.

--Discernment

At the heart of Ignatian spirituality is the practice of discernment – an art which St. Ignatius learned through sustained careful attention to and reflection on his own experience. Discernment is based on several presuppositions, including: 1) humans have freedom, and their choices have consequences; 2) some choices are better – and freer – than others; 3) human choices are not only between good and evil, but are often between lesser goods and greater goods; 4) it is possible through attending to motivations, feelings, and patterns of decision-making to improve the freedom, goodness, and authenticity of one's choices. The early Jesuits also discovered the art of "communal discernment," whereby they were able to make corporate choices for their future as an apostolic body through shared deliberations. For Ignatius and his Jesuits, discernment involved prayer and the enlightenment of grace; they sometimes referred to their own practice of ongoing discernment as "seeking God's will for their lives." As they trained others in the practice of discernment, however, the art became practical as well as spiritual. Thus, Jesuit institutions have been known over the centuries for teaching people – regardless of their individual faith convictions – to think critically, to inform their consciences, and to cultivate habits of ongoing reflection and self-evaluation.

Loyola's commitment to carry on the tradition of discernment includes encouraging the practice of regular reflection and self-examination which foster awareness of personal freedom (or lack

thereof), a sense of personal responsibility for choices and actions, and a balance between enlightened self-interest and promotion of the common (“greater”) good. The College encourages this habit of reflection and self-examination by introducing its constituents to the Jesuit practice of the *examen* (a daily self-review) in a variety of venues – e.g., through its Alpha courses, and through various projects of the Jesuit-Lay Committee. Loyola likewise encourages critical thinking and reflection by including the study of ethics in its curricula, and by offering seminars and employing pedagogies (such as debate) which foster both the expression and critical refinement of opinions. Loyola seeks in general to foster open expression and careful consideration of a wide range of viewpoints and positions, cultivating in its constituents an awareness that argument or difference of opinion can be accommodated without compromising mutual respect. In service of this core value of discernment, the College continues to recruit qualified Jesuit faculty and administrators who can share their particular expertise in discernment within the Ignatian tradition; but Loyola also offers to all of its constituents a variety of supports, resources, and opportunities – including Ignatian retreats – to enhance their efforts at making freer and more well-informed choices.

--Constant Challenge to Improve

As noted at the outset, “for the greater glory of God” is one expression of the Jesuit ideal of the magis – that is, commitment to the “greater good” or the “better way.” For Jesuits themselves, of course, this “better way” is the model of charity and self-sacrifice which they seek to emulate in the person of Jesus Christ. Within Jesuit institutions, however, this ideal – which presumes and builds upon the practice of discernment – has played itself out in a broad-based commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement at both the personal and structural levels. The ideal of the magis undergirds a certain restless pursuit of excellence across the board – a refusal to be satisfied with mediocrity, or to become easily contented with the status quo.

Loyola challenges itself and its constituents to strive for improvement on an ongoing basis by holding out an ideal of personal wholeness and integration as the ultimate horizon of growth while simultaneously recognizing that development and growth require time and sustained effort. The College seeks to encourage its constituent members to think creatively and to challenge the *status quo* when appropriate. Loyola also seeks to foster habits of learning, inquiry, and personal and corporate self-examination which will encourage ongoing growth and change in its members, even after they leave the College community. Lastly, Loyola seeks to recognize and reward the pursuit and achievement of excellence, and to continue attracting high-quality students, faculty, administrators, and staff from a wide variety of backgrounds and religious traditions who will embrace, own, and promote the Ignatian core values which have been elucidated in this document.

¹ John Paul II, *Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities (Ex Corde Ecclesiae)*, 1990, par. 16. This document articulates Pope John Paul II’s understanding and expectations regarding Catholic higher education.

² *Ibid.*, par. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, par. 17.

⁴ “Honor Code Statement,” *Loyola College Undergraduate Catalog 2001-2002*.

⁵ Society of Jesus, General Congregation 34, *Decree 12: Ecumenism*, 1995, par. 1.

⁶ “Diversity Statement,” *Loyola College Undergraduate Catalog* (and *Loyola College Graduate Catalog*) 2001-2002.

⁷ *Apostolic Constitution*, par 45.

⁸ “Diversity Statement.”

⁹ *Apostolic Constitution*, par. 21.

¹⁰ Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, trans. Elder Mullan (New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1914), par. 22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, par. 23.

¹² Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education* (address given at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA on October 6, 2000)

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Apostolic Constitution*, par. 13

Endorsed by the Loyola Conference on February 19, 2002.