

*Cor ad cor loquitur*

# The Conversation Continues



A Revised Strategic Plan  
Office of Mission and Ministry  
Providence College  
Fall 2011

Since May 2010, we have:

- Interviewed and surveyed 1,757 members of the College community about how they understand and experience the mission of the College;
- Examined the mission statements and accompanying documents from 35 peer institutions;
- Surveyed best practices in outreach and evangelization at 24 colleges and universities;
- Reviewed the mission, structure, staffing and programming at 20 centers for Catholic studies; and
- Reviewed 17 research reports and church documents relating to the role of faith and religious practice in university settings.

## INTRODUCTION

In June 2006 the Board of Trustees of Providence College unanimously approved a strategic plan for the division of Mission and Ministry. Entitled *Cor ad cor loquitur: Heart Speaking to Heart*, it drew on national research as well as interviews and surveys with more than a thousand members of the Providence College community. Chief among its findings were the following:

1. Like college students nationally – and to some extent even more so - students at Providence College fall into one of three categories with respect to faith and religion: the devout, who seek a bridge between their active lives of faith and every other aspect of their lives; seekers who may not come from a religious background but who are seeking a faith worthy of their dedication; and the disengaged, who while not hostile to the faith are indifferent to it and who rarely aver to it in the pursuit of their lives.
2. While nationally faculty tend to be less religious than the population generally, at Providence College faculty, administrators and staff tend to be more concerned with how the Catholic and Dominican mission is lived out – how faith and reason are brought together, and how a lived experience of community is effected – than with the fact that it is a Catholic college.

In light of these findings, *Cor ad cor loquitur* articulated three goals to guide the work of the division, and 40 specific objectives (see the accompanying *Supplement* for details about this and other features of this report):

1. Develop a model program of outreach, evangelization, and spiritual formation that meets the needs of students at every level of faith commitment;
2. Become a model of excellence for the integration of faith and reason by animating the intellectual life of the College from the perspective of its Catholic and Dominican identity;
3. Provide leadership in articulating and supporting the Catholic and Dominican identity of Providence College, serve as a resource for internal and external constituencies, and ensure that considerations of mission be included in all relevant policy, planning, and operations affecting the College.

We have been successful in achieving most of the objectives contained in *Cor ad cor loquitur*. But it is now time to revise and update the division's strategic plan with a view to the next five years and the changed needs and circumstances that attend them.

In the course of our research, we learned that:

- The vast majority of respondents are quite happy with the direction of, and the programs offered by, the division;
- Indeed, they desire more of what we offer; and
- Hope that we can reach more people and to greater effect.

We also learned that people at the College aspire to a lived experience of Christian community on campus, one that is firmly rooted in the Catholic faith and yet open to all, and that they desire a closer fit between the mission and how it is put into practice.

Religious diversity on campus is less about denominational diversity than it is about:

- Belief and unbelief; and
- Those who practice the faith and those who do not.

To this point, we discovered that service activities are critical to reaching students who may be disengaged, a first step towards an embrace of the fullness of faith.

To this end and beginning in May 2010, we engaged in a series of conversations with members of the Providence College community about the College's mission, their own religious and spiritual views and pastoral needs, and the effectiveness of the programs we offer. We also reviewed theological and pastoral literatures, and the findings of contemporary social science of religion, and inventoried best practices at like-minded schools.

This revised and updated strategic plan is a response to what we learned from these endeavors, as well as our own experience and reflection, and has been articulated in tandem with the College's Strategic Plan for 2011-2015. In a companion *Supplement*, we have included additional data, rationales for various initiatives, a timeline and metrics by which to measure our progress.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for advancing the mission of the College in the years ahead. As always, we trust in your prayers. May "the one who began this good work" at Providence College "bring it to completion." (Philippians 1.6)

#### **FROM THE COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015**

##### **1. Advancing the Catholic and Dominican Mission of Providence College**

*We will revise the College's mission statement and provide the resources to ensure that the Catholic and Dominican mission of Providence College is clearly understood and embraced, affects and animates all that we do, and, in this way guides the transformation of self and society to which the grace of God invites us.*

The Vision Realized:

- A campus culture that is mission-driven, student-centered, and aligned with the institution's core values.
- Regular opportunities for members of the College community to reflect on and integrate the Catholic and Dominican mission in their teaching, scholarship, work, study and service.
- Meaningful intellectual, religious, and spiritual programs that reflect the Catholic and Dominican mission, and opportunities for faith-inspired community service and advocacy based on Catholic social teaching
- Broad and ready engagement with Dominicans by students, alumni, and friends and supporters of the College



### Initiatives:

- 1.1 Having surveyed the College community about its understanding and experience of the mission, and engaged in campus wide discussions about the mission, we will revise the mission statement of the College to clearly and succinctly articulate the Catholic, Dominican, and liberal arts mission. The revised mission statement will be accompanied by documents explaining the history, values, and objectives that attend upon it.
- 1.2 We will increase opportunities for service by implementing *Faith Works*, a program of domestic service for incoming students, and by implementing programs for international service; will revise the RCIA program and increase the number of faith formation programs; and will initiate *Faith Speaks*, a program of outreach and evangelization that includes seminarian interns and a post-graduate residential service program for recent alumni/ae.
- 1.3 We will establish a guest lecture series to bring notable figures to campus to address issues of theological and spiritual significance to the College community, especially through the four major endowed lectures in the Center for Catholic and Dominican Studies; and having surveyed alumni/ae about their needs and desires in this regard, we will initiate a program of lectures, days of reflection, and retreats for local alumni clubs.
- 1.4 We will expand the Fr. Philip A. Smith, O.P. Student Fellowships program which provides students with opportunities for study and service abroad in a Catholic and Dominican context.
- 1.5 We will begin an international travel-pilgrimage program called *In the Footsteps of St. Dominic* that will enable faculty, staff, alumni/ae, parents, and donors to visit places of historic Dominican significance in the company of Dominicans. We will do so with a view to enhancing their experience and understanding of the Dominican Order and its spirituality, and how this should affect the life and work of the College.
- 1.6 We will establish and seek donor and foundation support for a program of vocational discernment, tentatively called *Providential*, that will bring the lens of faith and discernment to questions of career, major, service, and life dedication, whether this be in religious life and priesthood or in marriage. This will operate in collaboration with offices and programs such as Career Services, the Center for Student Engagement, the Feinstein Institute, and Academic Advising.

To be true to its founding charter, Providence College must provide a Catholic education to young men and women of every faith and denomination.

Doing so in the years ahead will require that we clearly articulate what it means to be a Catholic, Dominican and liberal arts college:

- In an increasingly diverse and globalized Church, academy and workforce;
- In which communication across domains and contexts is critical;
- But where the habits of discernment and thoughtful deliberation often are wanting.

Thus, we must insure that a Providence College education is at one and the same time thoroughly Catholic, welcoming of all, and deeply contemplative. We also must insure that our students and alumni are generous in sharing the fruits of their contemplation with others.

## ***Cor ad cor loquitur*: THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES**

### **1. Office of Mission and Ministry**

*By 2016, the Office of Mission and Ministry will have raised the profile and prominence of the Catholic and Dominican mission of the College, and will have increased the level of mission related support, education and formation available to members of the College community. To do this, we will:*

- 1.1 Engage the campus community in a discussion about the mission of the College and, in light of this, revise the College's mission statement;
- 1.2 Provide the President and Provost with assistance and support to insure that the mission is included among criteria for tenure;
- 1.3 Expand the Fr. Philip A. Smith Fellowship program to permit a greater number of students to study and serve abroad in Catholic and Dominican contexts;
- 1.4 Launch a travel-pilgrimage program entitled *In the Footsteps of St. Dominic* for faculty, staff, alumni/ae and others so that members of the College community can develop a more intimate acquaintance with St. Dominic and the spirit of the Order;
- 1.5 Expand *LOGOS* to serve as a journal of record, and to include the texts of select lectures and presentations on campus;
- 1.6 Continue to insure that appropriate religious art and symbols be installed on campus, including a commissioned sculpture of St. Thomas Aquinas;
- 1.7 Establish a program of vocational discernment for students;
- 1.8 Expand the division's presence on the internet and facilitate web based access by alumni/ae and others to live and archival presentations, and to appropriate social media; and
- 1.9 Consider the establishment of an Institute of Sacred Art and an Institute for Church and Pastoral Life to serve the local church and community by bringing the unique resources of the College to bear.

### **2. Center for Catholic and Dominican Studies**

*By 2016, the Center for Catholic and Dominican Studies will serve as the locus for a dialogue between theology and the other disciplines on campus, and in this, serve the Order's mission of bringing the Gospel to people and situations in a new, global era. To do this, we will:*

- 2.1 Work collaboratively with similar centers at other colleges, and with Dominican *studia*, centers and institutes worldwide;

During his visit to the College in April 2011, the Master of the Order, Fr. Bruno Cadore, O.P., issued a threefold challenge:

- To support the work of the Order internationally by lending our expertise and working collaboratively with other Dominican entities;
- To bring theology into dialogue with other disciplines; and
- To evangelize the young people entrusted to our care both directly, by word, and indirectly, by listening to them and understanding their struggles and the circumstances of their lives.

- 2.2 Establish an Advisory Board to assist the Director with programming, engagement with the broader community and donor support;
- 2.3 Inaugurate an interdisciplinary minor in Catholic Studies;
- 2.4 Establish a Catholic Studies Scholar in Residence program;
- 2.5 Increase the number of collaborative programs with other offices, centers and departments on campus, including those involving a common, year-long theme;
- 2.6 Fully endow the Quinn Family Lectures and secure donor and endowment support for additional programs sponsored by the Center;
- 2.7 Establish a dedicated program for new faculty to introduce them to the mission and specifically to how it can inform and aid their teaching and scholarship; and
- 2.8 Increase the number of daytime spiritual programs for staff and administrators.

### **3. Office of the Chaplain/Campus Ministry**

*By 2016, the Office of the Chaplain/Campus Ministry will have a markedly increased and effective presence on- and off- campus, with a particular view to meeting the religious and spiritual needs of students not already being served; will have implemented a comprehensive plan for outreach and evangelization; and will have an expanded pastoral staff to guide and supervise new and existing programs. To do this, we will:*

- 3.1 Establish Faith *Works*, a program of domestic service for incoming students, and Faith *Abroad*, an overseas immersion program open to all students;
- 3.2 Initiate a program of outreach and evangelization, entitled Faith *Speaks*, which will include peer ministry, ministry by Dominican student brothers and major seminarians, and a residential corps of recent graduates;
- 3.3 Provide internet, social media and traditional broadcast access to select programs and lectures offered by Campus Ministry;
- 3.4 Increase collaboration with S.A.I.L and Residence Life, and make use of new, auxiliary office and meeting space in Slavin Center; and
- 3.5 Secure the assignment of at least one additional, younger Friar to serve as Assistant Chaplain, and hire one additional lay Campus Minister to enable us to inaugurate and sustain both Faith *Works* and Faith *Speaks*.



#### **4. Chaplaincy to the National Alumni Association**

*By 2016, the Chaplaincy to the National Alumni Association will have extended its already considerable ministry to alumni/ae in need, particularly in times of sickness and bereavement, and will have established programs of faith formation and spiritual development for alumni/ae on campus, through area alumni clubs and online. To do this, we will:*

- 4.1 Conduct an electronic survey of alumni/ae needs and desires with respect to faith formation, spiritual development and days of recollection, and in response to their expressed needs, develop ongoing spiritual and pastoral programs for them;
- 4.2 Publish an online directory of parishes in major metropolitan areas that are welcoming of, and have special programs for, young adults;
- 4.3 Investigate the possibility of online prayer and mass requests, and reflections on the daily readings and liturgical seasons;
- 4.4 Provide internet access to live, streaming and archival video of select lectures and programs; and
- 4.5 Secure the assignment of a second Friar chaplain.