

Presidential Colloquium on Jesuit Liberal Arts at Holy Cross

Rev. Michael C. McFarland, S.J. appointed sixteen faculty and administrators to the Presidential Colloquium on Jesuit and Liberal Arts at Holy Cross. Their responsibility was to develop a document that articulates how these two powerful educational heritages shape the education we offer at Holy Cross and can provide a vision for education for the next generation of students.

Susan Amatangelo, Modern
Languages and Literatures

Robert Bellin, Biology

Melissa Boyle, Economics

Mary Conley, History

Daniel DiCenso, Music

Gregory DiGirolamo, Psychology

Mary Ebbott, Classics

Margaret Freije, Associate Dean of
the College

Rev. Paul F. Harman, S.J.,
Vice President for Mission

Kendy Hess, Philosophy

Matthew Koss, Physics

Thomas M. Landy, McFarland
Center for Religion, Ethics
and Culture

Shawn Maurer, English

Kenneth Mills, Chemistry

Gareth Roberts, Mathematics and
Computer Science

Mathew Schmalz, Religious Studies

Holy Cross

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Jesuit Liberal Arts at Holy Cross



The College of the Holy Cross stands among a prestigious group of colleges devoted exclusively to undergraduate liberal arts education. We are the only Jesuit institution to make this commitment.

Academic excellence is the College's highest priority. Inspired by the Jesuit, Catholic, and liberal arts traditions, Holy Cross education values the exploration and integration of the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences. We are a community of scholars, learners, and teachers invested in intense academic pursuits, working together to identify and develop intellectual passions and a life-long love of learning. A liberal arts education at Holy Cross engages both reason and imagination to identify what is good and liberating. It develops critical and analytical skills, drawing on the methods of many disciplines, to allow students to understand and evaluate the intellectual traditions that shape us today. It encourages students to bring new perspectives to important questions, to discover new knowledge through original research, and to create works of art and music. A Holy Cross education is marked by a shared commitment to critical inquiry, eloquence, engagement, reflection and discernment, and imagination.

Critical Inquiry

Critical inquiry is at the core of the College's curriculum. As preparation for their lives as leaders in artistic, civic, professional, religious, and scientific realms, students learn to think independently, to understand problems from a multitude of perspectives, and to take intellectual risks.

A liberal arts education at Holy Cross is purposeful, leading to a life of intention and meaning. Students learn to appreciate the transformational power of ideas and how to translate those ideas into action. In the Jesuit tradition, critical inquiry requires learning to recognize injustice and oppression so as to enable meaningful action towards an equitable world. Students learn to form and defend a point of view that is established on a rational basis and guided by a moral compass.

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Eloquence

The liberal arts curriculum at Holy Cross values eloquence in all forms of communication. Eloquence plays a crucial role in the search for liberation and truth. Critical inquiry has little impact without the ability to share, debate, and reshape our ideas with others. The long tradition of Jesuit education emphasizes learning to speak persuasively, to write crisply, to argue and debate effectively, and to express oneself creatively. Students learn to appreciate elegance in verbal, artistic, and mathematical expression. Eloquence includes acquiring a significant understanding of another language to enable communication across cultural boundaries.

Engagement

Learning at Holy Cross is designed to develop a radical sense of curiosity, wonder, and active engagement in the world. In a supportive but demanding academic environment, through free and honest exchanges, faculty and students share ideas and collaborate on research that enriches our understanding of the world and our place in it. Students are challenged to be open to new ideas, commitments, and experiences, and to interrogate their own assumptions. They are encouraged to engage the world outside the classroom and to deepen these experiences through the curriculum.

The study of and engagement with other cultures enables our students to participate more fully in a global society and continues the Jesuit tradition of solidarity with others built on a foundation of cultural understanding. Holy Cross graduates take seriously their responsibilities as citizens and members of a variety of communities, using the knowledge and skills they acquire to contribute to the common good and to stewardship of the environment.

Reflection and Discernment

A Holy Cross education is a privileged opportunity to reflect on oneself and one's obligations to the world, to learn how to discern one's own vocation in the world. Education entails more than absorbing information. It requires growing in capacity to reflect on the implications of knowledge and to discern what good one ought to pursue in life. Discernment is a particular hallmark of Jesuit spirituality, a deliberative process of discovering the greatest good that one can accomplish in the world and committing to its achievement. Members of the Holy Cross community are helped to discover and clarify their own talents, imagine new ways of being and thinking, explore their passions and motivations, and develop lifelong habits of reflection. A Holy Cross education aims to develop as fully as possible the unique potential of each student for growth in wisdom, faith, and character.

Imagination

The goal of a Holy Cross liberal arts education is not simply the mastery of a particular academic field but the ability to imagine and re-imagine the world, and ourselves within it. In order to be creative and constructive, imaginative work requires perseverance and builds upon the disciplined methods of investigation developed in the liberal arts, from the sciences and social sciences to the arts and humanities. A Holy Cross education cultivates compassion and empathy to explore the possibilities of human intellect and inspiration.

The individual attention given by faculty to students, the shared commitment to excellence, and the rich foundation provided by the Jesuit and liberal arts traditions make Holy Cross a remarkable place where students can develop as intellectuals, as leaders and as persons of faith.

