



CHARACTERISTICS OF MARIANIST UNIVERSITIES

Marianist Universities Educate in Family Spirit

(30.) *Marianist educational experience fosters the development of a community characterized by a sense of family spirit that accepts each person and invites everyone in the university into the challenge of building community within and beyond our campus. Communal support for scholarship; friendship among faculty, staff, administration and students; active participation; and genuine presence (in the community) embodies the uniqueness of a Marianist educational experience.*

CULTURE OF ACCEPTANCE

(31.) Marianists have a strong sense of community, traditionally called a community with “family spirit.” The Marianist family spirit is a way of life with traits that are discernible in the communities it permeates. The members of the Society of Mary do not choose with whom they live, but in their openness, they choose to live in an intentional faith community where they are committed to learn, love and respect those in whose company they find themselves. This sense of family extends to all members of the educational community.

(32.) Every type of Marianist community accepts members in the same way that a family accepts theirs; committed to support their members for continued growth and development. The sense of family enables Marianist universities to challenge faculty, staff, and students to authenticity, excellence, and maturity; because the acceptance and love of a community gives its members the courage to risk failure and the joy of sharing success while remaining appropriately professional and impartial.

FOSTER FRIENDSHIPS

(33.) The culture of acceptance that Marianists call family spirit focuses on the quality of relationships among the members in the community. It is essential that all members embrace the diversity of cultures that surrounds them by communicating with respect and treating one another as equals. Over the long term, these habits acknowledge the value of inclusivity and the dignity of every member cultivating the ground in which genuine relationships can take root and flourish.

(34.) In particular, Marianist universities tend to the relationships among its community members (faculty, staff and students), supporting, challenging and recognizing excellence in teaching, research and advising. Further, Marianist universities emphasize the communal dimensions of research, professional development and experiential learning, challenging and supporting the need for interdisciplinary endeavors that allow for open dialogue between educators and students alike. This culture of continuous learning allows for relationships to develop and extend beyond graduation into alumni networks.

(35.) Such a vision of community and friendship runs the risk of misinterpretation. It must therefore be recalled that friendliness and hospitality are genuine expressions of a process that necessarily includes healthy discourse, disagreement and dialogue. Yet, those grounded in the Marianist vision of education recognize that only with precisely this mix of hardships and triumphs can authentic communities be formed. Growth in Christian faith is now what it has always been — inevitably an experience of entering an ancient and ever new community of unique individuals, all of whom sought and seek what it means to believe in the midst of the complexities and ambiguities that are inescapably part of living in a faith community that respects the achievements of reason.

FORM COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES

(36.) The Marianist educational tradition has long been characterized by shared responsibility for decision-making at all appropriate levels. Effective collaboration requires good communication, clear lines of authority, just policies and respect for the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, the Marianist university cooperates with other educational works, diocesan structures, ecumenical and interfaith initiatives, national and international organizations and the civic communities in which the university lives. All these forms of collaboration require, above all, lay faculty and staff educated in and committed to the vision and mission of the founding religious community.