



April 19, 2016

Dear Bro. Ray and Members of the Search Committee:

I ask you to consider my application for the position of University Professor of Faith and Culture. In my thirty-two years at the University of Dayton, I have dedicated my teaching and research to the advance of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Qualifications

Catholic intellectual tradition must engage the entire range of disciplines and professional schools found at the University of Dayton. My own teaching and writing have strong interdisciplinary elements. My first B.A. and first M.A. were in English literature, the latter including a minor in Philosophy. My doctorate in Religious Studies from the Catholic University of America included interdisciplinary expertise in Religion and Culture. The greatest element of my own formation has come from my work at the University of Dayton, where I have participated in faculty seminars as well as countless events devoted to faculty development. In addition, I taught for ten years in the first year Core Program, a year-long team-teaching experience that blends History, Philosophy, English, and Religious Studies, with further

inclusion of music, visual and performing arts, science, and social science. I have many times taught in UD international programs in Dublin, Florence, Leipzig, and Augsburg that have an interdisciplinary dimension.

Of my many experiences that have equipped me with skills useful for the position of University Professor of Faith and Culture, I will highlight just a few. In 1985-86 I was a member of the Christian Humanism Fund Committee. From 1986-88 I served on the Committee for the Integration of Social Justice Materials into the University Curriculum. From 1988-91 I was the initial director of the Community Leadership and Service program which coordinated the inclusion of service learning into the curriculum, and then from 1991—94 I continued to serve as the chair of the faculty board for this group. I also served on the Forum for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition from 1991-95. I have once served as a mentor for Collegium, the national program for integrating Catholic tradition and university academics, and another time served as the program evaluator.

For fourteen years I was the Director of Publications for the College Theology Society. I published a backlog of volumes from previous years and negotiated a deal that got the CTS out of debt and put us on firm financial footing. In addition, I oversaw a period during which without exception the published volume appeared before the next annual meeting. In 2005 I received from CTS a Special Service Award for my fourteen years of service. I have also served in many other capacities in offices for the CTS on the local and regional levels.

From 2000 to 2005 I participated in a national-level United Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue. I was co-drafter of the document, "Through Divine Love." This experience greatly enhanced my ecumenical understanding and vision, something which I think is critical for the position which I am seeking.

In 2010-11 I led a group of six doctoral students in teaching sections of an experimental version of the Religious Studies introductory course. As a group we worked together with the College of Arts and Sciences dean's office as well as with several staff members from the Teaching-Learning Center. We spent two weeks in the summer putting together our student learning outcomes as well as various other elements of our syllabi. We taped or filmed common "pre-lectios" for each class session. We structured each class meeting along the lines of a student-centered workshop. I brought to that year-long experience a spirit of leadership and collaboration along with a mixture of seriousness and fun.

In May 2011 I put on an international conference at the University of Dayton, river campus, on the topic of "Ecclesiology and Exclusion." It took two and a half years of preparation and collaboration to make this happen. We had many participants from Europe as well as some from Africa, Asia, and Australia. I later co-edited a volume, *Ecclesiology and Exclusion*, which appeared in Fall 2012. This conference showed my ability to organize and conduct a large undertaking that required collaboration and coordination with many dozens of people.

I have been three times a guest professor at the University of Augsburg, and will be a guest professor in May/June 2016 at the University of Regensburg. In recent years I have given invited lectures at the University of Toledo, Boston College, Georgetown University, the University of Tübingen, and the University of Augsburg. I have given plenary addresses at the Lonergan Workshop and at the annual meeting of the College theology Society. I have also given papers at recent conferences in Rome, Assisi, Durham, and Belgrade.

My research and publication at the national and even the international level has focused on the intersection between Catholic faith and culture. My textbook, *The Church Emerging from Vatican II*, which sold over forty thousand copies, focuses on what it means to be a Catholic in

the world of today, and includes chapters on ecumenism, dialogue among religions, culture, economics, politics, peace, and the environment. I am now under contract to write a significantly updated book with a new title. My book *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions*, has been used as a textbook in several graduate programs in the United States and Europe and has been cited and even built upon numerous times in scholarly articles and books. It addresses directly issues of faith and culture including Hispanic-American and feminist perspectives. My co-edited book, *Ecclesiology and Exclusion*, takes on topics such as migration, homelessness, racism, gender discrimination, and political action within the context of reflecting on Catholic and ecumenical concerns. Over the past few years, my published articles have directly addressed topics such as inculturation, cultural diversity in the classroom, and religious freedom.

I have been interviewed and quoted frequently in major news outlets regarding Catholic topics.

Vision

The Second Vatican Council highlighted the need for Catholic intellectuals to engage the culture by reading the signs of the times and aiming for a synthesis that draws upon the enormous progress of science, technology, and the social sciences in a way that will lead to wisdom. My main model for thinking about the Catholic intellectual tradition in a university setting is along the lines of an interdisciplinary conversation to which all are invited. At its best the Catholic intellectual tradition aims at the integration of reason and faith while remaining open to truth wherever it is found.

I envision the University of Dayton as continuing its robust and vital identity as both Catholic and Marianist. I would see my own role at the University of Dayton as contributing to maintaining and enhancing this identity through creative and collaborative efforts at building

intellectual community among faculty, students, and staff. This intellectual community extends far beyond the immediate campus by maintaining strong local, regional, national, and international connections.

I see the University of Dayton as a place where its Catholic identity really means something because it is embodied in worship, learning, and service. We have managed to avoid two extremes. One is the extreme by which Catholic identity becomes a mere slogan for selling what is in the end something no different from what purely secular institutions offer. The other is the extreme by which a narrow viewpoint restricts the type of open inquiry appropriate to a university. I want to foster conversations in which the Catholic intellectual tradition is experienced as substantial and challenging, and at the same time as valuing religious and secular pluralism as it engages a range of positions articulated by diverse voices in an open-minded and respectful shared search for truth.

My own positions on controversial issues have often been described as being balanced and centrist. I do not think of centrism as a lukewarm middle between stronger viewpoints. Rather, I think of centrism as the result of a method of understanding that weighs carefully and empathetically legitimate concerns across a broad spectrum of possibilities. A centrist position may turn out in particular cases to be closer to one extreme rather than the other, but it reflects a process of being in dialogue with many points of view in a way that transcends narrow ideological camps. I think that centrism is an important quality for a University Professor of Faith and Culture during a time when the word “Catholic” is often co-opted by those on either extreme to function as a tool in the culture wars.

Priorities

If I am selected, my first priority will be to maintain an office and to be a presence on campus serving as a resource for sustaining and enhancing the role of the Catholic intellectual tradition. I want to be someone who is approachable and available. I am inspired by St. John Paul II's encyclical *Laborem exercens* in which he asserts that everyone should think of oneself as a worker. Clearly there will be campus events that will originate from my office, but even more so will there be many other events for which I will be a collaborator and supporter.

There are some key foundational tasks to which I will attend. I will chair the Forum on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. I will give a university wide address each year. I will teach, on average, one course each semester. I will collaborate with others to develop programming for faculty development. I will also—often in collaboration with others—organize symposia, colloquia, and conferences that promote on campus and on a national level the Catholic intellectual tradition as well as the Catholic and Marianist identity of the University of Dayton. I will expand my membership and contacts within organizations related to Catholic higher education.

I would hope to be able to work out my priorities within these foundational tasks in consultation with others. Thematically, I would concentrate on making the Catholic intellectual tradition something familiar, attractive, and useful for faculty. I would place an emphasis on showcasing work done by UD faculty especially when it comes to the integration of the Catholic intellectual tradition into the curriculum. I would in most cases want to concentrate my efforts within existing structures in collaboration with others. I would focus especially on including a wide range of disciplines and the professional schools in these efforts.

I would like to mention two more specific ideas. I have been inspired by the work of Richard Chenoweth in his orchestration of the programming of Rites, Rights, Writes. I could imagine, in conjunction with others, launching or at least playing a major role in something similar.

Also, James Keenan of Boston College has recently published a book, *University Ethics*. As he points out, much explicit attention has been given to Business Ethics, Engineering Ethics, Medical Ethics, etc., but very little attention to the ethics of university practices. In my judgment, this book could serve as the topic for a colloquium or even a symposium.

Finally, I have always thought of myself not only as a worker but also more specifically as a teacher and a writer. These tasks would continue to rank highly among my priorities. At various times, I have come to find myself to be a leader. My style has been to lead collaboratively and from within. If I am selected, my very first priority will be to start thinking of myself as a teacher, a writer, and a leader, specifically in regard to the promotion of the Catholic intellectual tradition on the University of Dayton campus and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis M. Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'D' at the beginning.

Dennis M. Doyle, Ph.D.

Professor
Department of Religious Studies
University of Dayton