

## **“VISION STATEMENT”**

**Approved by the Board of Trustees on December 9, 2005**

Deeply rooted in the centuries-old tradition of Jesuit education, Gonzaga University aspires to develop the whole person through contemplation, intellectual dialogue, and engagement within a vibrant Jesuit, Catholic, and humanistic learning community. We exist to develop generations of leaders whose actions reflect a faith that promotes justice, the pursuit of truth, a dedication to service, and a commitment to ethics and the common good.

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#### **Preface**

The Gonzaga ethos, in practice, can be seen as one of “overlapping commitments,” where we as a community agree on values and principles, some of us for religious reasons (whether Catholic or Christian or from other religious traditions), some of us for humanistic reasons, and some from our grounding in the Jesuit spirituality. We see these three terms as informing and bounding our ethos, creating a common field. While each of us may have a different location within this field, closer to one boundary than another, depending upon our grounding inspiration, all of us are presumed to operate within the same field.

The Mission of Gonzaga University is at once Jesuit, Catholic and humanistic. Our sense is that the Mission, and thereby the community, is better served when statements about these terms are also symmetrical. For example we require a Jesuit way of proceeding that supports and complements Catholicism, and a Catholic Church that supports Jesuit education; a humanism that is supportive of Catholicism but also a Catholicism that is supportive of humanistic values, and so forth.

#### **References**

The term “Jesuit” refers to a religious Order of men within the Catholic Church, who have committed their lives to the service of God in specific works. Through the profound influence of the Jesuit intellectual tradition and the vision of the Spiritual Exercises, the Constitutions, and documents of its General Congregations, Jesuits and their colleagues participate in the work of the Society of Jesus. In the context of the University, “Jesuit education” includes major themes: helping students to find their own calling from God through the creation of a discerning heart that can identify their true desires; the cultivation of a faith that promotes justice; and the formation of “persons for others”—students who graduate with a desire to give something back to their community. “Jesuit” also means helping students recognize and confront the realities of sin and suffering in the world—not only through study but through solidarity with the marginal in our society by direct hands on, face-to-face engagement. We should aspire to form committed Christians and engaged citizens allied in the building of a more humane and just society.

The term “Catholic” refers to a specific Church, which expresses itself through living the Gospel of Christ, and understands itself through time in its Councils and traditions.<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits and their colleagues carry out their Mission as a vocation within this Church. The Catholic Church provides the opportunity for the cultivation of a vibrant and mature faith life, and a means of reaching out to the world with a message of hope: a belief in the love of God. The Catholic Church includes a sacramental, moral, and intellectual tradition which seeks dialogue beyond itself to reach that horizon of hope and love. A significant way in which the University serves the Church is by providing a forum in which Catholicism can enter into critical (that is, intellectually reasoned and responsible) dialogue with other voices and other fields of knowledge. It has been said many times over these last several years, that the Catholic university is a significant “place where the Church does its thinking.”<sup>2</sup>

The term “humanistic” is understood to include the quest for self-knowledge and the formation of a virtuous character.<sup>3</sup> We impart to our students a critical understanding and appreciation of our common human nature, the moral heritage of their culture and society, as well as some exposure and education in cultures and societies different from our own. We also impart to students a similarly critically informed understanding and appreciation for their own religious traditions and an exposure and education to other religious traditions prevalent in our global community. Humanistic, in its original meaning, “of the humanities,” is meant beyond academics to include the development of the whole person, helping students to integrate their lives into a harmonious whole and learning to prize and respect the flourishing of others, however different from themselves. This latter sense links “humanistic” to both “Catholic” and “Jesuit,” which have a concern for the faith that promotes not only individual, but social justice.

The integration of the three therefore requires an integration of faith, justice, ethics, service, and leadership for the common good into a vibrant learning environment.

- 1 The Catholic Church has most recently articulated its relationship to Catholic universities through the apostolic constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. In addition, the Documents of Vatican II, and the Social and other encyclicals, have shed great light on the need for, and the value and nature of, Catholic higher education.
- 2 Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, former President, Notre Dame.
- 3 Within the Jesuit tradition, “humanism” is seen as distinct from “secular humanism” (see Preface).

## **GONZAGA UNIVERSITY'S STATEMENT ON NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Gonzaga University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action University. The University does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, or any other non-merit factor in employment, educational program, or activities which it operates.

All University policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with Gonzaga's Catholic, Jesuit identity and Mission Statement, and comply with federal and state regulations, including Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

To inquire about the University's non-discrimination policy, please contact the Equal Opportunity Officer at 313-6910 or extension 6910.

## **GONZAGA UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN DIVERSITY**

Gonzaga University's distinguished tradition of humanistic, Catholic, and Jesuit education recognizes that all human beings have the same sacred origin, nature, and inherent dignity regardless of race, sex, religion, nationality, economic status, or other differences. The University believes in the principles of holistic education and strives to provide all community members with opportunities for a variety of experiences from which they can learn and grow. The University recognizes that the quality of education as well as the growth and development of the human person is enhanced by awareness of and learning from persons with different experiences, backgrounds, and ideas. This approach equips all community members, especially its graduates, to understand and relate to persons from all cultures and backgrounds. The University is committed to promoting awareness and acceptance of human diversity. The University further strives to provide an environment in which all members can reap the educational and experiential benefits of a diverse community whose members reflect a variety of cultures, backgrounds, ideas, and values consistent with the University's traditions and Mission Statement.

## **STUDENT LIFE MISSION STATEMENT**

In partnership with students, faculty, administrators and other members of the Gonzaga University community, the Division of Student Life assists students in their pursuit of an education based on Jesuit tradition and the Gonzaga University Mission Statement.

Students come to Gonzaga University as unique individuals with contributions to offer and talents to be developed. We strive to know the students personally, encourage them to grow and to mature, and to enrich their education by challenging them to act on all areas of their development. Recognizing growth as a continuous process, we are sensitive and responsive to the spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth needs of our students.

We want students to commit to excellence; to develop their talents more fully; to be involved in the educational community; to develop mutual respect for and sensitivity to others; to commit to honesty; to communicate openly; to value and to offer service to others; to increase their awareness of the oppressed; and to work for a just society.

The Division of Student Life is committed to serving students and the Gonzaga University community through counseling, health education and service, career planning, prayer and worship, crisis intervention, student orientation, student discipline, and serving on university committees. Our program objectives are intended to assist students in achieving the maximum benefit from their educational experience and to improve the quality of campus life.