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Heart Meets Head: Integrating the Mission and the Workplace

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Introduction. The Ignatian Colleagues Program, of which the Marquette Colleagues Program is an off-shoot, has 26 participating institutions, sponsored by four provinces — Chicago-Detroit, California, New Orleans, and Wisconsin — that establish conversations among the members through gatherings, online learning, and retreat, an international immersion experience, and finally a capstone where the members gather for three days to plan projects for their own campuses. **RASsj**

Heart Meets Head: Integrating the Mission and the Workplace

By Kathy Coffey-Guenther and Doug Leonhardt, S.J.

Building from four of the five components of the Ignatian Colleagues Program, the Marquette Colleagues Program has adapted the same foundations in an abbreviated program for faculty, administrators and staff on campus. The four building blocks include education and formation in the **Spiritual Exercises**, the Jesuit and Catholic **educational heritage**, the commitment to **justice** through service and a **capstone** experience to develop an action plan for one's work.

During the past two years, four cohorts have participated in the Colleagues program: senior leaders from advancement, associate vice presidents and directors from the operational side of the university, associate and assistant deans and ten faculty members from the College of Nursing. During the fall semester of 2011, there will be two more cohorts: academic department chairs and senior administrative assistants. The participants choose to be part of a cohort in response to an invitation and the groups vary in size from eight to eighteen.

Each cohort gathers eight times during a semester, including two full day meetings. One day consists of a retreat day during which there is an introduction to the *Autobiography* of St. Ignatius and an overview of the Spiritual Exercises with time for reflection and prayer. The second day is a service day in which colleagues volunteer at different social outreach agencies. The group gathers as a whole at the end of the service day for reflection and sharing of experiences. For the main body of the MCP, each cohort gathers every two weeks for an hour and a half conversation over lunch. The four topics for the noon discussions are: Ignatian discernment, Jesuit education, the Catholic and Jesuit identity of Marquette and the faith and justice mission of the Society of Jesus. The discussions are primed by several articles which are required reading. The final session of MCP is the capstone experience during which the participants talk about their written plans to bring what they have learned to their colleagues or classroom.

The program was designed to contribute to the integration of Marquette's

mission into the way faculty, staff and administrators lead, teach, do research and work. It is an attempt to educate and form Marquette personnel in the Ignatian spirit which animates the mission of the university.

Participants who discussed their experience report that the program made them part of the university community, helped them see the difference between Marquette and a non-Jesuit university and unite the heart and head as their decisions help others grow,

Graduates of the MCP program are invited to continue their formation through participation in alumni retreat days, a service day, and programs sponsored by the Faber Center for Ignatian Spirituality. ■

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