



ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Ten Ways that Catholic Colleges and Universities Keep Their Founding Values Alive

Did you know that 90 percent of ACCU member colleges and universities were founded by a religious order? Catholic colleges and universities continue to find unique and engaging ways to celebrate their founding visions and values, and incorporate their religious heritage into every aspect of campus life. All member campuses make such efforts; what follows is just a sample.

Our communities have always shared and adopted ideas from one another. In that spirit, we encourage your campus to learn from the ideas presented here.

1. Hold the charism high, for all to see. Nothing brings the words of a mission statement to life like a celebration, which is why many Catholic institutions host commemorative weeks, months, and annual themes that honor founders and foundresses and center on their values and ideals. **Rosemont College**, founded by the Society of the Holy Child, adopts an annual mission theme tied to its founding, with monthly awareness events for administration, staff, students, and alumni to learn about and act on the theme. Similarly, **Neumann University**, founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Saint Francis of Philadelphia, focuses each year on one of the core values (reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship) that flow directly from the congregation's tenets. The value theme is explored through the lens of the Congregational story and the Franciscan intellectual and spiritual tradition.

2. Center awards and recognitions on foundational values. Honors and awards are important elements of the academic experience. Incorporating the values of college founders into these recognitions provides another opportunity to celebrate heritage. The highest awards bestowed at **Saint Vincent College** — the President's Award to a graduating senior, and the *Projektenmacher* Award, to a community member who has brought a vision to life through dedication and hard work — are both based on the college's Benedictine values.

3. Take time to explore the heritage deeply, through retreats and pilgrimages. Students, faculty, and staff at **Caldwell University** have the opportunity to participate in the annual Fanjeaux Experience. The intensive spiritual and educational pilgrimage enables representatives from the nation's Dominican colleges and universities to explore the region in France where St. Dominic de Guzman began his preaching and where his vision for the Dominican order first evolved. The experience includes travel, study, reflection, and prayer.

4. Embed charism into the curricula. The religious orders that established many Catholic higher education institutions adhere to values that remain relevant to contemporary fields of study. As such, principles of ethical living, service to others, and the search for truth can find a place within any classroom. At the Jesuit-founded **Creighton University**, each of the nine colleges has selected one or more Ignatian educational values on which to focus. In the core of the three undergraduate schools, for instance, all faculty are required to indicate whether through content or methodology (or both) which of the values will be embedded into each general education course.

5. Incorporate founding values into student life. Following the French Revolution, Father Basil Moreau founded the Congregation of Holy Cross to re-establish the Catholic faith through education in France. His constant theme was "Educating the mind, but not at the expense of the heart." This theme continues to resonate at **Our Lady of Holy Cross College (LA)**, especially through student life. Student organizations often collaborate with theology and campus ministry departments to give students opportunities in educating the mind and heart through prayer experiences and community service events.

At the **College of Saint Mary**, the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy and Catherine McAuley is equally alive to students. Committed to actively witness justice and mercy through compassionate service to those in need, especially women and children, the college offers the Mothers Living & Learning program, a national model for improving the graduation rates for single mothers. The program includes dedicated advisers, courses in single parenting, and a residence hall just for students who are single moms.

6. *Apply charism values to research.* In 1925, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJs) founded **Mount Saint Mary's University** in Los Angeles with the goal of helping women reach their full potential. To further honor the sisters' legacy, and advance their mission in the broader community, the university is establishing the CSJ Institute at Mount Saint Mary's. The Institute will educate and inspire a new generation of social justice leaders to carry on the sisters' work on campus, across the city, and in underserved communities around the world.

7. *Introduce the founders' values to the public at large.* Many avenues exist for bringing founding values to the community beyond campus. For instance, the President's Lecture Series at **Assumption College** is a public forum in which important ethical, spiritual, and human issues are examined within the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Each year, the five-lecture series includes "The Augustine Lecture," to honor the Venerable Emmanuel d'Alzon, founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption and the college.

8. *Engage with the surrounding community in a meaningful way.* While service efforts are common on all university campuses, Catholic institutions emphasize service from a distinctive perspective, rooted in Catholic social teaching and followed by deep reflection. Consider **Manhattan College**, which works to enhance local and global civic engagement consistent with the social justice values of its Lasallian Catholic identity, with particular attention to the alleviation of human suffering. And at **Duquesne University**, the Spiritan charism emphasizes working with those on the margins. Following this directive, Duquesne operates the nation's first university-owned pharmacy based off-campus in an underserved neighborhood, law clinics focused on civil rights and veterans' issues, nurse-operated wellness centers in urban senior high-rise buildings, and more.

9. *Offer opportunities for lay faculty and staff appreciation of the charism.* As the number of those in religious service declines, the laity must play an ever-more important role in animating founding values. At the **University of Dayton**, a group of staff, faculty and administrators are selected each year as Marianist Educational Associates to deepen their understanding of and commitment to the traditions and beliefs that make the university a Catholic and Marianist community. Associates make public commitments to sustain and enrich the faith-based character and advance the Catholic and Marianist philosophy of education there. **Marywood University** also makes noticeable effort to share the founding vision of its founders/sponsors, the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Through IHM Associates, members of the laity, often employees, alumni, students, and neighbors, strengthen their spiritual relationship with the congregation. During the one- to two-year process, associates learn about the founders, charism, values, and mission of the IHM Congregation and seek to promote and incorporate these values into their lives.

10. *Connect with the Charism Cabinet.* Some efforts are best accomplished by multiple institutions working together. Recognizing this, ACCU serves as the national coordinator for a peer group of charism associations focused on higher education. Coming together three times each year, the **Charism Cabinet** builds community among its members, acts as a sounding board for new ideas, and provides a forum for sharing best practices. Contact us at accu@accunet.org for more information and to learn how your institution might benefit.