

Gwynedd Mercy University (www.gmercyu.edu)

Mission Leadership Academy

Summary:

This three tiered program is designed to identify and support faculty and staff who strive to understand, live and teach the mission intentionally on a daily basis.

Goals:

The goal is to strengthen the University's Catholic/Mercy mission identity and develop a core community of mission leaders. The Academy has two primary objectives:

1. To provide a broad group of the University's faculty and staff (Members) with resources and a support network to integrate the mission and values in their day-to-day responsibilities at the University; and
2. To give select faculty and staff members (Scholars and Stewards) who have a wide range of responsibilities for people and projects a strong exposure and solid foundation in mission integration.

Participants will become the leaders who will influence governance, curriculum, culture and will sustain the University's mission into the future.

Description:

The Academy, designed by the Special Assistant to the President for Mission and Planning, with input from the University's Mission and Values Committee, offers a cohort model that provides the structure for a mission-inspired community of faculty and staff to learn, network, support and inspire one another. The Academy has three levels: Members, Scholars and Stewards. Each level builds upon the one before it. Participation is limited. Interested participants apply through a formal application process. Applications are reviewed by the Office of Mission and Planning.

(1) Members: In its inaugural year and subsequent years, over 100 faculty and staff were inducted as Members at a University assembly. An individual can serve as a Member for the duration of their tenure at the University. The focus of Members' activities is Introduction to Mission.

(2) Scholars: Members may apply to serve as "Scholars". Since 2012 over 60 individuals have participated in the "Mission Development Program" (MDP) consisting of eighteen months of mission integration and education activities. All in this tier complete an integration project relative to the work at the University. Once they complete MDP, they are designated "Scholars". The focus of Scholars' activities is Mission Development.

(3) Stewards: After completion of the Mission Development Program, "Scholars" can apply to serve as Stewards. About 5-6 Stewards will be selected from each cohort. This level is intended to sustain some

aspect of mission by the Stewards. Usually this aspect will flow from their integration projects during the MDP tier. They will be recognized as campus leaders and will assume responsibility for the life and vitality of the Academy. Stewards will be intentional about mission integration in curricular and co-curricular programs. They will participate in immersion experiences, present at conferences, lead mission activities on campus, etc.

The Academy is coordinated by the Special Assistant for Mission and Planning. The MDP portion is taught by both internal and external faculty and staff who have expertise in the various subjects covered in the curriculum. It is currently funded through the operational budget and some projects through the President's Excellence Fund.

Charts and syllabi that further explicate the program are available.

Successes:

A requirement of the Mission Development aspect of the program is an integration project. These projects are wide ranging and align with curricular and co-curricular interests of the Scholars. Some examples of projects submitted include: creation of an online site for Mission related resources; a research project on the correlation of an immersion experience in International Nursing and appropriation of CST and the Critical Concerns of Mercy; the development of a mission orientation program for adjunct faculty; the creation of an on-line curriculum module that focuses on the topics of good goods, good work, and good wealth for use in business courses; and the exploration of learning abroad experiences and partnership with Mercy in Peru.

Advice:

As a staff of one it is difficult to juggle the many aspects of the Academy and to keep everyone engaged at the appropriate level. So my advice would be to have two or three consistent others to help with the logistics and keeping the balls in the air. My hope is that the Stewards will provide this assistance going forward.

It took several years to develop and to get buy-in but was worth the wait. It has really helped to bring the mission and heritage alive for many folks and has been as hoped a leaven for mission oriented work. In the beginning cohorts it was all the "usual" suspects but the last couple cohorts have consisted of newer and younger colleagues, which is wonderful. So patience helps.

Funding is an issue and while we have been unsuccessful obtaining grant funding, that would be most desirable especially in providing immersion experiences, etc. Lack of funding limits the development of the upper level of the Academy.

Further Information: Kati McMahon, RSM

mcmahon.c@gmercyu.edu

215-542-5787