

## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Prof. Paul Lauritzen, Assoc. Prof. Matt Berg  
CC: Dr. Linda Eisenmann, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences  
FROM: Assoc. Prof. Paul V. Murphy, Director, Institute of Catholic Studies  
RE: Revised request for change of status from Concentration to a Minor for Catholics Studies  
DATE: April 13, 2009

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This memo serves as a revised version of the formal request that the university change the status of the concentration in Catholic Studies to a minor.

### **THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE OF CATHOLIC STUDIES**

The mission of the Institute of Catholic Studies is to provide students, faculty, staff, and the larger community with the opportunity to deepen knowledge of how Catholicism and Catholics have interacted with the world, both shaping and being shaped by culture and society both in the past in the present. As a Jesuit and Catholic university, John Carroll University is an ideal home for such analysis.

### **PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM**

Through an interdisciplinary Catholic Studies Program, the Institute provides opportunities for encounter with and formation in the Catholic intellectual tradition as expressed in many scholarly disciplines from philosophy to science. It offers courses and public events that highlight the contributions of Catholic intellectuals and scholars and that explore the current conditions in which Catholics find themselves in the twenty first century. This will provide students with a solid interdisciplinary foundation for understanding the interaction of faith and culture in the past as well as for navigating their way in the future. Faculty who develop courses in Catholic Studies should possess an appreciation for this tradition and for the relationship of Catholicism and culture. Using appropriate and effective methods of scholarly analysis and pedagogy, the faculty in the program should promote serious reflection on the richness, diversity, and vitality of the Catholic tradition and its intellectual life. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the program, faculty members are strongly encouraged to develop team taught course across various disciplines.

### **RATIONALE FOR CHANGE TO MINOR STATUS**

There are three primary reasons for changing the status of this program to a minor. First, as the university seeks to develop new academic options for our students, the exclusion of inter-disciplinary programs from minors seems arbitrary. Many of the most vibrant academic fields today are interdisciplinary. Second, the status of a minor is much better understood both by other academic institutions and potential employers than is a

concentration. If the status is changed to a minor, our students will be able to present academic transcripts that are not in need of “translation.” Finally, the enrollment efforts of the university as a whole will benefit if this and other vibrant programs gain greater visibility to potential students.

## **HISTORY OF THE CONCENTRATION**

The Institute of Catholic Studies has been in operation for over ten years, having been established during the academic year 1997-1998 as a result of a donation from Jack and Mary Jane Breen. That donation formed the basis of the Breen Endowment that funds the activities of the Institute. By the decision of the then president, Rev. John Shea, S.J., the Institute was placed outside of any established department but works in cooperation with many of them. Since then the Institute has had three directors, Prof. Francesco Cesareo (1998-2004), Rev. Mark Lewis, S.J. (2004-2005), and Prof. Paul V. Murphy (2005- ). The Concentration itself began to operate in the spring semester of 1998.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE CONCENTRATION**

The Catholic Studies program consists of a minimum of 18 credit hours from approved Catholic Studies courses distributed as follows:

- 1 Course in Religious Studies
- 1 Course in Philosophy
- 1 Course in the Humanities (History, English, Art History, Classical and Modern Languages)
- 2 Electives
- 1 Capstone Seminar

At least three of these courses must be taken on the 300-400 level. In order to ensure interdisciplinarity, no more than three courses may be taken in any one discipline. The Capstone Seminar is meant to serve as an opportunity for students who have completed all other requirements for the minor to integrate a variety of issues that they have studied in the program. That course may be offered by any CS faculty member who is interested. In spring of 2010 Paul V. Murphy will offer it with a History course number and the CS designation.

## **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING COURSES AS CATHOLIC STUDIES**

Courses that receive Catholic Studies designation will devote substantial class time and assignments to the study of the Catholic intellectual tradition and the experience of Catholics and would typically meet several of the following criteria:

- 1) examine topics, themes, or questions pertinent to Roman Catholic doctrine and faith in its various aspects, highlighting the principles and teachings of Catholicism as expressed in literature, art, philosophy, the natural and social sciences, historical study, business disciplines, theology, and Sacred Scripture

2) explore the historical, social, cultural, religious, scientific, and/or economic background of the dimensions of Catholic intellectual life, highlighting the contribution of the Catholic thinkers and artists as well as the influence of culture upon those thinkers and writers

3) emphasize the Church-historical framework of a topic, thereby enabling students to develop a sense of the historical development of a particular theme in Catholic intellectual life, with an assessment of its continuing value for the present and the future

4) illuminate the distinctive characteristics of the Catholic tradition within Christianity, for example: belief in the unity between faith and reason; a theory of Christian virtues; sacramental theology; devotion to Mary; emphasis on institutional and hierarchical structure; concern for corporeality; characteristic pious practices; tradition of Christian education and humanism; monasticism

5) relate the dimensions of Catholic intellectual life to ongoing concerns, discussions, or debates in the discipline(s) in question or investigate a variety of perspectives, in light of magisterial teaching, to insure that students have a critical appreciation of the central points of disagreement among scholars of the topic

It is highly desirable that courses fulfill core requirements in the various divisions (particularly for lower division courses) or major requirements in the particular discipline.

While in theory any department might offer such courses, most of them are offered by departments in the humanities. Nevertheless, there have been some courses offered in the Social and Natural Sciences. Dr. James Lissemore, for example, has offered an optional component on the ethical implications of genetic research in his sections of Genetics for those biology majors who are pursuing the Catholic Studies Concentration.

The concentration has experienced significant growth in terms of course offerings. In the spring of 1998 the Institute offered a total of 5 courses with the Catholic Studies designation. As of the spring of 2009 the Institute will offer a total of 29 courses.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment in the Catholic Studies Program has steadily increased in recent years. The number of students who have declared it as a concentration has risen from approximately 30 in 2005 to 47 in 2008. The number of graduates that have received the certificate in Catholic Studies has increased correspondingly. There were 1 and 5 graduates in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The number increased to 19 in 2007 and 18 in 2008. A total of 68 students have earned the Catholic Studies certificate since 2000.

## **FACULTY PARTICIPATION**

The John Carroll University faculty has been very generous in its support of this program. Approximately 46 faculty members have offered Catholic Studies courses or served on the Institute's Faculty Advisory Board since 1997. Of those, 30 have been permanent, full-time members of the John Carroll University faculty. 4 have been permanent members of the faculty at Borromeo Seminary. 12 have been part-time or visiting faculty members. 19 different faculty members offer Catholic Studies courses in the spring semester of 2009. Most of the courses that these faculty members have offered have been an ordinary part of the course offerings of their individual academic departments. Thus this concentration has not offered a notable further burden on any of the departments.

A significant element in cultivating faculty support for the program has been the availability of course development grants for Catholic Studies. These have been established to encourage the creation of a wide range of courses for the concentration. Numerous faculty members have created entirely new courses or re-worked old ones through the assistance they have received.

The Institute of Catholic Studies and its concentration is overseen both by the Director and a Faculty Advisory Board. This board oversees policy and participates in assessment of co-curricular events as well as the curriculum of the concentration. The current members of that board are

Dr. Richard Clark, Sociology  
Dr. Joseph Kelly, Religious Studies  
Dr. Graciela Lacueva, Physics  
Dr. Joan Nuth, Religious Studies  
Rev. Jared Wicks, S.J., Religious Studies  
Dr. Brenda Wirkus, Philosophy  
Dr. Thomas Zlatoper, Economics and Finance

The success of the Catholic Studies program has in large measure been the result of the generosity and the commitment of the John Carroll University faculty.

## **RESOURCES**

The Institute of Catholic Studies benefits from the Breen Endowment. The endowment provides support to the Institute by providing the budget for a half-time administrative assistant who is shared with the Pilla Program, student workers in the work-study program, funds to support the Catholic Studies Lecture Series and the publication of *Prism* magazine. The endowment also provides for supplement to the salary of the Director in the form of the John J and Mary Jane Breen Chair in Catholic Studies and a one-course per semester teaching load reduction. The chair is currently held by Dr. Paul V. Murphy.

Currently the endowment of the Breen Fund has suffered with the downturn in the stock market just as all other endowments have. Expansion of activities may not be possible in

the near term. However, ongoing financial support of benefactors may provide opportunities for growth in the long term.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The proposed minor has an assessment plan under development. Assessment of the program is currently carried out via two primary mechanisms.

- Student evaluations of individual courses that are submitted at the conclusion of each semester.
- Ongoing oversight on the part of the director and the faculty advisory board. The curriculum was last revised in the spring of 2007 after study by the director and the faculty committee.

These instruments will be augmented by additional mechanisms consistent with the developing assessment procedures of the university as a whole. In particular the use of:

- Written exit evaluations by graduating seniors
- Interviews with graduating seniors

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I look forward to discussing it further with you.