

Marygrove College
2006-2009 Strategic Vision
Board Approved: May 12, 2006

Marygrove College Educates Leaders
For Urban Communities of Today and Tomorrow

The Marygrove College Urban Leadership Vision

Marygrove College is widely recognized for its commitment to the metropolitan Detroit community and has a national reputation for expertise on contemporary social, cultural, political, educational, and economic issues in urban areas. Founded, sponsored, and inspired by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM), this independent, Catholic, liberal arts college attracts and serves students of all faiths who are passionate about engaging these contemporary urban issues. It offers degrees and programs that develop students' understanding of these issues as well as students' leadership skills, particularly those skills necessary to lead in urban communities. The College also serves as an institutional leader by undertaking projects related to current issues of significance to the City. Both of these roles—developing urban leaders and serving as an institutional leader—capitalize on Marygrove College's location in the City of Detroit.

Elaborating on the Marygrove College Vision

What inspires the vision?

Marygrove College's commitment to Detroit and the College's work on urban issues is inspired by the values and beliefs of its founder and continuing sponsor, the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) and is rooted in the intellectual tradition and the social teaching of the Catholic Church. The Church's intellectual tradition directs that the College's scholarly pursuit of truth should stem from both an abiding faith in God and a profound reverence for reason. The Church's social teaching directs that the College's programs should promote the common good by fostering respect for human dignity, encouraging earth-care and sustainable communities, and seeking justice for people and communities who suffer from the actions of more powerful groups.

What is meant by "urban"?

The term "urban" refers to metropolitan regions that are defined by large numbers of people living in highly concentrated locations, typically characterized by a more-densely populated core or urban center and less-densely populated contiguous suburban areas. An important feature of urban metropolitan regions is that the different urban and suburban communities within them do not function or evolve in isolation. Rather, the social, political, economic, educational and

cultural dynamics of individual communities are intertwined with the other communities that make up the region. In addition, urban metropolitan regions are characterized by a number of positive features, such as varied expressions of local and cosmopolitan culture (fine arts, music, theater, sporting events), and of multiple living examples of historical legacies and human resilience in the face of adversity. Such regions also have many challenging and destructive features, such as high concentrations of poverty and of wealth, significant disparities of power, distinct issues of ecological stress and environmental degradation, and unique manifestations of social pathologies (racism, sexism, violence) that dehumanize and marginalize portions of the community. Marygrove College is located in the City of Detroit, the heart of a metropolitan region which exhibits rich expressions of culture, inspiring examples of human and community resilience, as well as some of the starkest urban challenges to be found in this country. Some people choose to view the presence of these stark challenges as an obstacle; Marygrove College long has chosen to view its location in Detroit as an opportunity to learn, to serve, and to lead. The College's distinctive *Urban Leadership Vision* stems directly from this legacy.

What is meant by “leadership”?

Leadership can be defined as making things happen with the help of others. This definition captures the essential characteristics of leadership: *taking action* and *engaging people*. Marygrove College seeks to support leadership that is aimed at promoting social justice and the common good. Since there are many ways to make positive change that supports justice and the common good, Marygrove College believes that there are many ways in which effective leadership can be exercised. Sometimes a person can help people to make good things happen because of his or her formal position (for example, an elected official, the chair of a committee, a managerial position with supervisory responsibilities). Often, however, a person without formal authority can influence collective action. In short, there are different types of leaders: highly visible leaders in traditional positions of authority and in non-traditional positions, leaders who consciously choose at times to be effective followers, vocal leaders and more quiet, soft-spoken leaders, to name only a few. Although each type of leadership is different, Marygrove College believes that effective leadership almost always requires (1) an understanding of underlying causes of issues and the application of ethical criteria in decision making, (2) an awareness of group dynamics and an ability to motivate others to act, and (3) the courage to act that arises from the confidence gained from experience. Marygrove College believes that every individual has the civic responsibility to exercise leadership for the common good. A Marygrove College education concentrates on developing the knowledge, awareness, abilities, and courage that produces competent, compassionate, and committed graduates who exercise their social responsibility.