



Center for
MISSION AND IDENTITY

Benedictine University

Office of the Assistant to the President for Mission Integration

Hiring and Orientation for Mission Policy

History and Background

Benedictine University is an inclusive academic community dedicated to teaching and learning, scholarship and service, truth and justice, as inspired by the Catholic intellectual tradition, the social teaching of the Church, and the principles of wisdom in the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

--- University Mission Statement

In 2015-2016, the University began an intensive all-University process addressing our mission, vision and commitment (new Statements approved April 2016) and consequently, a strategic plan (BenU 2020) was implemented in August 2016. Through the process of developing these documents with their associated applications, the University community reaffirmed its commitment to the institution's Catholic Benedictine mission and identity. Effective January 1, 2017 the Hiring and Orientation for Mission Program will be implemented. The University will biannually review and assess the policy for effectiveness.

Benedictine University is committed to its Catholic and Benedictine identity. Inspired by the ten Benedictine Hallmarks, and convinced of the harmony of faith and reason, Benedictine University cultivates the mind and nurtures a community characterized by hospitality, inclusivity and diversity. Within our institutional Strategic Plan, this commitment is addressed by the goal to cultivate talent and embed our Catholic and Benedictine Mission and Identity within the University culture (BenU 2020 Goal 4, Objective 4.3). To accomplish the desired outcome of this goal and its objective, the entire University community on all campuses and in all modalities must challenge our students to consider their faith as part of their intellectual discourse. In this way, the interplay of faith and reason in the pursuit of knowledge will help our students "shape lives of meaning and purpose." (Vision Statement)

The University is proud and supportive of its inclusive academic community. To develop a policy and processes that maintain a welcoming working and learning environment while advancing the Catholic nature of the institution, a sub-committee within the Center for Mission and Identity advisory board was created. The group was tasked to develop a hiring policy that intentionally addresses the hiring of talented faculty and staff members who are experts in their disciplines and fields and who are willing and able to maintain and strengthen our mission. Tasked to become a thought leader in Catholic higher education (BenU2020 Destination Statement), the sub-committee designed a policy, hiring process and associated orientation program that brings the Catholic Benedictine identity of the institution into prominence at the beginning of the hiring process. The goal is to provide interested applicants with a stronger awareness and understanding of who we are as a Catholic institution. The policy also provides the assurance that not only are Benedictine University faculty, staff and administrators entrusted to support the mission, but also that as employees we are given the opportunity to integrate the mission into our work, research, teaching and service. This is a privilege and a gift of grace.

Pope Benedict XVI stated that as educators we are “to recognize that the profound responsibility to lead the young to truth is nothing less than a gift of love. Indeed, the dignity of education lies in fostering the true perfection and happiness of those to be educated.” (Remarks by Pope Benedict XVI at an address made at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. in April 17, 2008)

Furthermore, he stressed the importance of maintaining a Catholic identity in all aspects of a Catholic university, charging members of the larger Catholic higher educational community to remember

“...the essential task of authentic education at every level is not simply that of passing on knowledge, essential as this is, but also of shaping hearts. There is a constant need to balance intellectual rigor in communicating effectively, attractively and integrally, the richness of the Church’s faith with forming the young in the love of God, the praxis of the Christian moral and sacramental life and, not least, the cultivation of personal and liturgical prayer.” (Address of Pope Benedict to the Bishops of the United States (Regions X-XIII) on their “Ad Limina” Visit, May 5, 2012)

As a Catholic university we are under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Benedictine University is accountable to the “norms” presented in *Ex corde Ecclesiae* (“at the heart of the Church”) (*Ex corde*), the Apostolic Constitution issued by Pope John Paul II and promulgated on August 15, 1990. The document was vetted through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) who, in 1999 approved its “Application” in the United States and *Ex corde* was implemented in 2001. The chief purpose of the norms is to assist Catholic colleges and universities in their internal process of reviewing their Catholic identity and clarifying their essential mission and goals. (*Application* Part Two: Particular Norms)

According to *Ex corde*, “every Catholic University is to make known its Catholic identity” and that “Catholic teaching and discipline are to influence all university activities.” (*Ex corde* Art. 2, para. 3, 4) To fulfill the Catholic mission, *Ex corde* calls for “the recruitment of ... university personnel, especially teachers and administrators who are both willing and able to promote that identity.” (*Ex corde* Art. 4, para. 1) All University teachers and administrators, students and staff “are to recognize and respect the distinctive Catholic identity of the University.” This is re-emphasized in the USCCB’s Application of *Ex corde*, article 4 of the particular norms:

The responsibility for safeguarding and strengthening the Catholic identity of the university rests primarily with the university itself. All the members of the university community are called to participate in this important task in accordance with their specific roles. ... In accordance with its procedures for the hiring and retention of professionally qualified faculty and relevant provisions of applicable federal and state law, regulations and procedures, the university should strive to recruit and appoint ... those committed to the witness of the faith All professors [Catholic or not] are expected to be aware of and committed to the Catholic mission and identity of their institutions. (US Application of Ex corde, Article 4.4.a)

Ex corde is supportive of having a diverse academic community within the University. Furthermore, a Catholic University should “be animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals.” (*Ex corde*, Part 1, para. 21) A genuine spirit of ecumenical and interreligious openness is an important part of our Catholic Benedictine identity.