



**Office of the Vice President  
for Academic Affairs**

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Dear Colleagues:

Implementation of our new Core Curriculum

One of the remarkable things about a college community is the cycle of renewal which the academic year provides. At Canisius, the start of each academic year brings with it a sense of engagement and new possibility. Students and faculty once again enter into teaching and learning guided by Jesuit principles and focused on our obligations to make and renew meaning in the world. In the fall of 2009, that cycle of renewal will be especially powerful because Canisius College students and faculty will renew their teaching and learning grounded on a new Core Curriculum.

The new Core Curriculum, which will go into effect for all students at the college, is the result of a rich, compelling, and often demanding conversation which has taken place among Canisius faculty for several years. The Faculty Senate voted in favor of the new Core after hours of college wide forums, departmental debates, and individual conversations which modeled precisely what Jesuit education requires: self-reflection in the service of others. The goal of this process of reflection on the old Core was to retain all that was best in its distinguished history while re-imagining what men and women for and with others would need for success in a global culture of constant change.

The new Core retains the fundamental values of Catholic, Jesuit, and liberal arts education but with an enhanced spirit of *cura personalis*. Our faculty has designed a compact core which derives its power from courses integrating into their subjects various educational attributes, including justice and ethics, diversity and global awareness, sophisticated writing, and effective communication. The integrated nature of the coursework makes the new Core large enough to lay a classic Jesuit intellectual and spiritual foundation, but small enough to create greater flexibility in the availability of additional electives. The flexibility of the new Core insists on choice and the related sense of personhood which comes from taking the responsibility to choose. Every additional choice a student makes brings with it intimate engagement with the search for his or her true vocation:

- The opportunity for more electives offers the choice to add a second major, to combine majors and multiple minors, to study abroad with greater freedom, and to pursue multiple internships.

- The opportunity for more electives also offers the opportunity to choose deeply meaningful explorations across academic disciplines in a way limited by the old Core. A student in business might now have an expanded chance to deepen a study in any subject he or she wants, such as languages, classics, or philosophy. An education major might now create a secondary focus in areas such as musical performance, theatre, business management, or anthropology. A humanities student might pursue not only a minor in writing, but a minor in business or science, as well.

Supported by our new Core and challenged by choice, students can build intellectual and spiritual identities intended not only to respond to the rich and extraordinary culture of change around us, but to help shape that change. The design of the new Core, along with individual courses within the Core, models what students must learn to seek for themselves: setting clear learning goals, devising an explicit process for achieving those goals, and carrying through on that process. At the end of the process, both the process and the goals must be assessed to determine the next steps — steps to lifelong learning and development of the whole self, the path to *magis*.

New freshman and rising sophomores will reap the full benefits of the new Core. At the same time, the advisement process beginning later this spring will focus on helping juniors and seniors make the best possible choices with respect to the Core. Advisors can help any student who wishes to complete the old Core find the equivalents necessary. Faculty and staff are here to help students find the opportunities that are available to them in this time of transition.

In the weeks prior to registration for fall courses, there will be further information communicated by email from the Office of Student Records specifying how courses in the old Core will count in the new Core and where students may turn for help and information. You can expect to receive in the week of March 9 notification of the new Core Curriculum website which will explain how the new Core works. During the week of March 16, you can expect to receive email from the Office of Student Records explaining new Banner-based tools to help students understand how courses they have completed will fulfill the new Core.

In April, the Canisius community will gather to celebrate the Core and the learning that it fosters. As always, Associate Deans, the Director of the Core Curriculum, and staff in the Student Advisement Center and the Office of Student Records are available to answer questions during this exciting time.

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Vice President for Academic Affairs