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## Loyola Marymount University's President's Institute Collection: Introduction and Overview

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## Loyola Marymount University President's Institute Collection: Introduction and Overview

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### Introduction

Over a five-day period in May 2016, the faculty fellows selected to participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Loyola Marymount University President's Institute explored the topic of faith and reason in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Catholic university. The theme was derived from LMU's core values of faith and reason and inspired by John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio*<sup>1</sup> and Pope Francis's encyclical *Lumen Fidei*.<sup>2</sup> Fellows explored the theme from three perspectives: the relationship between faith and reason; know yourself—our relationship to faith and reason; and the relationship of faith and reason to our academic disciplines and to our teaching, scholarship, and service.

We served as co-directors for the institute and co-constructed it with the support of many colleagues. We would like to recognize and honor the selfless work of Robert Caro, S.J., recently retired Vice President for Mission and Ministry, who supported each institute for many years and imagined this publication long before it achieved fruition. He was our advisor, advocate, and mentor. From its inception we imagined a creative and scholarly product—one such as our colleague, Mary McCullough, Ph.D., had overseen from two previous institutes—and one that would recognize the contributions of heart and mind of the fellows while paying homage to our Jesuit heritage. She was our inspiration. Finally, we welcomed the opportunity to engage more deeply with the work that our new president, Timothy Law Snyder, Ph.D., began with his inaugural address in 2015. LMU honors its traditions not simply because we

have engaged in them repeatedly without consideration and reflection, but because we understand in deep ways the value of drawing faculty members into the culture of the university and helping them to establish a lasting bond with LMU.

This institute does exactly this—establish shared and lasting bonds among faculty members from schools and colleges across the university. One of the co-directors who is completing her tenth year at LMU attributes her commitment to the institution not because of her tenure, but because of her grounding in the university's mission and of the relationships she built with colleagues through shared experiences in an institute as a third-year professor who had no mooring. It was, as she frames it, the safe harbor. Although the institute's particular signature is unique to LMU, the model is replicable at any fellow Jesuit institution.

Beginning on the first day of the institute in May 2016, the fellows engaged in writing. We structured a variety of opportunities for writers' workshops over the days to come. Fellows chose to write on prompts related to the content, and we invited them to consider a topic for an article for future publication. When the institute concluded we then invited fellows to join us periodically through the 2016-17 academic year to reconvene for fellowship and critique of individuals' emerging articles.

McGrath & Reilly,  
*LMU President's  
Institute  
Collection:  
Introduction and  
Overview*

Snyder, *Necessary  
Companions:  
Faith and Reason*

McGrath & Reilly,  
*President's  
Institute on the  
Catholic  
Character of  
LMU: A Twenty-  
One-Year  
Tradition*

Bouvier-Brown,  
*Nurturing Student  
Scientists as  
People of Faith*

Jarvis, *Faith  
and Reason in  
the Pursuit of  
Understanding*

Rohm, *Our  
Students' Search  
for Meaning*

Scheibler, *What  
Can TV Teach Us  
About the  
Spiritually Healthy  
Institution?*

Reilly & McGrath,  
*Faith and Reason  
in Antiquity:  
A Photo Essay*

While not all fellows were able to contribute to this collection, all participated at some point in the following year in the reunions and in meetings to support those whose work appears here. We offer our gratitude to our colleagues who gave selflessly of their time and energies to extend our work long past the five days we spent that May.

### **The Collection**

This collection includes scholarly works, reflections, and perspectives. Following is a description of each work in the collection. We recommend that readers begin with three articles that will set the context for the institute—President Timothy Law Snyder's article, *Necessary Companions: Faith and Reason*, and one from us, *President's Institute on the Catholic Character of Loyola Marymount University: A Twenty-One Year Tradition*. Readers can then peruse the contributions from the fellows in any order they wish. The human heart desires to know itself and to know the truth. We hope that this collection inspires your *human spirit to rise*.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***Loyola Marymount University President's Institute Collection: Introduction and Overview.***

*Cathleen McGrath and Elizabeth C. Reilly*

This article provides readers with an introduction and overview to the collection whose content originated with the 2016 LMU President's Institute. It provides a description of each article in the collection.

#### ***Necessary Companions: Faith and Reason***

*Timothy Law Snyder*

Can faith and reason exist, free of mutual companionship? If we restrict ourselves to a traditional scientific method when pondering questions of the universe and close the door to theological data and human thought, we may be rendering inaccessible the majority of what exists. As a scientist, I take solace in what we can discover through science and math, as we seek to understand the one percent of our physical universe that is accessible. But humans seek to know more; to learn more; to experience more. In this essay, I argue that the synthesis of faith and reason helps us to experience what can be known

in ways that neither faith nor reason, alone, can. As a Catholic university with a Jesuit and Marymount heritage, LMU integrates faith and reason into our core curriculum for many reasons. We speak often to wanting our students to develop as whole persons, to lead lives with and for others, to be educated toward purpose. We also educate them to explore the universe with an open mind and to pursue truth with all their being. Such a pursuit requires *fides et ratio*, necessary companions that shepherd us in and toward infinite wonder.

#### ***President's Institute on the Catholic Character of Loyola Marymount University: A Twenty-One Year Tradition***

*Cathleen McGrath and Elizabeth C. Reilly*

Through the President's Institute on the Catholic Character of Loyola Marymount University, we provide faculty with the opportunity to learn about the university's Catholic and Ignatian traditions and identity. Each year faculty from every college and department are selected to participate as fellows in a week-long program that explores issues such as Ignatian pedagogy, scholarship of engagement, the intersection of faith and the arts, justice, hospitality, and the intersection of faith and reason. Consistent with Ignatian pedagogy, the program is designed to provide opportunity for experience, reflection, and action. We work to create a context of trust that allows faculty to deepen their relationship to the mission of the university and to each other. The 2016 President's Institute focused specifically on the relationship of faith and reason in the 21<sup>st</sup> century university. After exploring definitions of faith, reason, and their intersection from philosophical, theological, and practical perspectives, we set out to understand how we could incorporate this understanding more fully in our work at the university. Throughout the week fellows reflected and shared their insights, and at the end of the week participants provided feedback about the institute. In this paper we use their insights to understand the impact of President's Institute on their work at the university. Fellows reported a deeper understanding of the university's mission as well as a fuller understanding of the potential for integrating faith and reason into their research and teaching.

***Fides et Ratio: The Pursuit of Faith and Reason in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Catholic University***

*Elizabeth C. Reilly and Cathleen McGrath*

(Note that this will be published in *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* 7:1 [2018])

The faculty fellows who participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Loyola Marymount University President's Institute in May 2016 explored the topic of faith and reason in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Catholic university. The fellows explored the theme from the perspective of the relationship between faith and reason; our personal relationship to faith and reason; and the relationship of faith and reason to our academic disciplines in the context of our teaching, scholarship, and service. The idea that these notions compete for attention in a Catholic university became fundamental to the exploration. This article provides an analysis of the fellows' experiences in relation to those questions, a discussion of the themes, and recommendations for our institution and others considering the exploration of topics such as this with faculty.

***Nurturing Student Scientists as People of Faith***

*Nicole Bouvier-Brown*

The LMU campus community fosters the interplay between religious faith and scientific reason. Not only is this evident by honoring scientists in the stained-glass windows of Sacred Heart Chapel, but the culture invigorates a disproportionate number of science students to actively engage with the faith community. This integration might seem counter to society's norms, but it is well aligned with the teachings of the Catholic Church and Jesuit tradition. Jesuit universities, in particular, have a unique role to play in fostering the mutual enrichment between faith and scientific reason. Education should be used to bridge the misunderstandings between faith and science. Faculty members, particularly at Jesuit universities, have a wonderful opportunity to share their experiences with students through teaching and scholarship.

***Faith and Reason in the Pursuit of Understanding***

*Emily A. Jarvis*

Both faith and reason must contribute in the pursuit of holistic understanding in the sciences. Just as maintaining an exclusively wave or particle view of matter would be incomplete, faith must be coupled with reason to develop scientific paradigms and even more so to challenge these. Artificially separating these two facets from evolving our comprehension leads to intellectual dishonesty. Current advances in science and technology hold great potential. The powerful impact these have on our lives and our world necessitate deep consideration beyond what is simply feasible to what is moral and just, concepts of great importance whose understanding is not developed via the scientific method. By joining faith with reason, we can hope for the promises of modern advances to be realized in the context of what is good and true.

***Our Students' Search for Meaning***

*Andrew Rohm*

This article offers a reflection on the role of faith, reason, and meaning as part of students' educational experience. By intermixing elements of his personal journey with the development of course projects designed to infuse meaning within the classroom, the author examines the challenges that teachers often face when reconciling the idea of faith- and purpose-based learning as compared with a purely skills-based, vocational approach. The three course projects discussed highlight ways in which students apply course content and skills to higher-level outcomes that lead them to better understand their sense of connectedness, sense of community, and service. By overcoming complacency in course design and applying creative and innovative ideas, the author presents several examples that can be applied to teaching practice across disciplines within a meaning- and purpose-based curriculum.

***What Can TV Teach Us About the Spiritually Healthy Institution?***

*Sue Scheibler*

The Twentieth Century Fox procedural series *Bones* provides a model for a lively and vital 21st century Catholic institution. The show is considered a conventional forensic procedural, but the characters, settings, stories, plots, and themes consciously and consistently engage with and explore various aspects of faith and reason, as well as justice and ethics. Their multidisciplinary research institution may provide insights from which faculty members may derive spiritual, intellectual, and affective insights.

***Faith and Reason in Antiquity: A Photo Essay***

*Elizabeth C. Reilly and Cathleen McGrath*

On the third day of the LMU President's Institute, fellows took a field trip to the J. Paul Getty Villa located on the coast in Pacific Palisades, California. The Villa introduces art from the Etruscan, Greek, and Roman cultures extending from the Bronze Age through the Late Roman Empire—approximately 3,000 BCE to 600 CE. During their visit, the curator of the exhibit “Mosaics Across the Roman Empire” provided a private tour for the fellows, explaining the history and function of mosaics, as well how pre-Christian themes from Greek and Roman mythology emerged into Christian themes over time. Fellows considered how faith and reason were exemplified in the mosaics. We invited the fellows to photograph scenes and objects that resonated with them around the themes of faith and reason. On the following day, fellows presented their photographs, along with a narrative of their personal connection between it and the theme. Presented in this essay are some of the fellows' photographs and reflections. HJE

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**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, *Encyclical Letter* (Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), accessed April 16, 2017, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html).

<sup>2</sup> Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, *Encyclical Letter* (Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), accessed April 16, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130629\\_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html).

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*.