

Ohio Dominican University

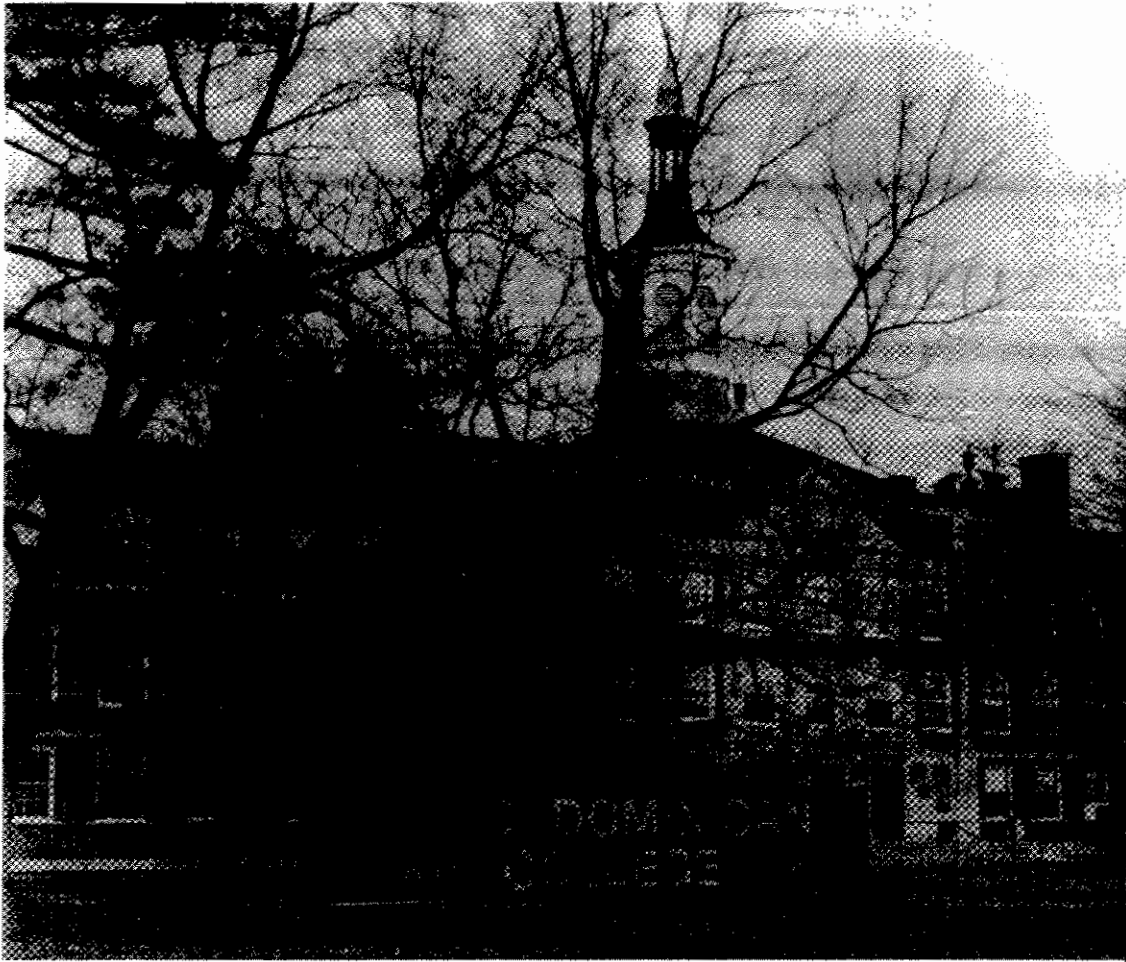
Its Mission and Identity

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In July 2002, Ohio Dominican College became Ohio Dominican University. Announcing the change, President Jack P. Calareso affirmed the institution's continuity with its founding mission: "The change to Ohio Dominican 'University' will not change our founding mission. . . . In fact, our expanded 'university' identity will broaden and diversify the ways we express our Dominican values of contemplation of truth, preaching, . . . community, service, and educational excellence. . . . Ohio Dominican 'University' moves us boldly and with confidence from our distinguished past to our exciting future."

At the entrance to Ohio Dominican's main academic building, carved in stone, is this translation of the Dominican motto: "To contemplate truth and to share the fruits of this contemplation." Moving into the new millennium, Ohio Dominican College was well positioned for the future. The North Central Association Report of 1997 shows why. Among the strengths of the college are these achievements: a "concerned and committed Board of Trustees," the "extraordinary commitment" of the faculty, administrators, and staff to the mission of the college, a strong significantly improved financial situation, "acquisition of technology and its integration into the learning environment," a "clearly . . . sufficient number" of students, and the college's "visibility and leadership in Columbus through a variety of programs."

In addition to the commitment "to contemplate truth," the college's Catholic focus could be seen in its special concern for the kinds of students often denied access to higher education: first-generation college students, minority students, students from families of modest means, and adults returning to school. In 2000 the enrollment was 19 percent American minorities, with Ohio Dominican having one of the highest graduation rates for African Americans in the state of Ohio. ODC also modeled community service by its outreach programs, especially those for



middle and high school students in the area where many residents are economically poor and educationally deprived. The school has won national recognition for these and other innovative programs.

With an enrollment of more than 2,100 students, 130 faculty, excellent financial management, and a carefully cultivated growing endowment, Ohio Dominican is well known in the community and is financially healthy. It is also a good neighbor. Probably the earliest indicator of its new era is not the latest computer network linking all the campus components and connecting them to the outside world, but the act of taking down, in 1981, the long fence that for years had separated the campus from the rest of the world.

To understand the transformation, one must appreciate the past that was prologue. This history began with a shared vision from which sprang a mission rooted

in faith and hope and carried out with charity and sacrifice in the face of great hardship. From the beginning, the institution's features were trust and collaboration, fidelity and hard work. In 1830, four Dominican Sisters came from the hills of Kentucky to Somerset, Ohio, where they opened an academy for girls. When a fire destroyed their buildings in 1866, they accepted a gift of land and bricks to build on this property on the east end of Columbus. They named their new motherhouse and academy St. Mary of the Springs. These Sisters were members of the Dominican Order, founded by St. Dominic in 1216 to preach and defend the truth of the Catholic Faith. Considering all truth to be one and to lead to God who is Truth, Dominicans studied all branches of knowledge, not only theology or sacred truth. In this spirit, the Dominican Sisters conducted St. Mary of the Springs Academy and taught in other schools elsewhere in Ohio and across the eastern United States.

In 1911, the school (which later became Ohio Dominican) was chartered by the Dominican Sisters as the "Ladies Literary Institute of St. Mary of the Springs" to offer college classes. It formally opened as a four-year Catholic liberal arts college for women in 1924 with ten students and five faculty members—two Dominican Sisters, two lay women, and one priest. The president and the dean were Dominican Sisters. That first year the college offered courses in apologetics (a branch of religion), philosophy, languages, hygiene and physical education. In May three examiners from the State Department of Education reported the spirit of the new college to be "refined and serious, with a decided emphasis on the cultural and philosophical side. It is like a world apart and secluded."

Realizing that the college needed growth space, Mother Stephanie Mohun, Mother General of the Dominican Congregation of St. Mary of the Springs, and her General Council decided to embark on a building program and change the name of the corporation to College of St. Mary of the Springs. A large elegant dining room was completed in 1928, and by the fall of 1929 two other large buildings were ready for occupancy, an academic building and a residence hall. To finance this construction, the Sisters had floated a bond issue for \$800,000 in early 1929 with the congregation's property as collateral. The Great Depression hit before a year was up. With income from student tuition and music lessons greatly reduced and with significant decreases in the Sisters' small stipends for teaching in the parochial schools, the congregation was unable to meet the second payment on the principal and the interest on the debt. Both the congregation and the college were facing foreclosure! As the Sisters struggled for survival, the unstinting efforts of a Columbus attorney, James I. Boulger, managed to get the debt refinanced.

In the first decade, 1924–34, the administration focused on securing accreditation and increasing enrollment. In the crucial days that it faced foreclosure, the college was blessed with Sister Jane de Chantal Magruder as academic dean. Her

administrative talents and winning personality were especially needed because, for the first seventeen years, the president was part-time, since she also served as the religious superior of the convent. When the number of college students had dropped drastically in 1932 because of the Depression, Sister Jane and Mother Stephanie arranged that those qualified young women entering the congregation would be enrolled as full-time students so that the college's enrollment would reach the required 100 for NCA accreditation. With the help and support of the president, Sister Bernardine Lynam, and of Mother Stephanie, Sister Jane managed to achieve North Central Accreditation, given unconditionally in April 1934.

By 1934 the college had become a member of the Ohio College Association, the National Catholic Educational Association, the Association of American Colleges, the American Council on Education and the American Library Association.

Both sufficient enrollment and competent staff were required for accreditation. Instrumental in achieving both these requirements were three priests on the faculty: Richard B. Bean, who also taught at Pontifical College Josephinum; Joachim M. Bauer; and Matthew M. Hanley. These three scholarly and beloved professors were also the chief recruiters.

Of these three Father Bauer served the longest, from 1930 to 1965. Not only did he teach philosophy and religion and serve as chaplain, but also he took charge of landscaping the campus and directing an impressive annual public lecture series. Bauer brought to campus speakers with national and international reputations, such as Anne O'Hare McCormick, famed writer for the *New York Times*; Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, able apologist, author, and TV personality; and Ralph Bunche, UN secretary general. These lectures helped make the college better known in Columbus. Lay teachers were also vital to the college. Two of these were Clemence Pique, assistant professor of French, and Sara Macdonald, instructor of German, both of whom contributed a portion of their salaries during 1936–37, as did other generous lay teachers in subsequent years.

During the 1920s, the catalog stated the aim of the college in two sentences: "The educational work of the Sisters of St. Mary's combines the best features of the present pedagogical system with the higher requirements of the convent college. The student is prepared . . . for the responsibilities of our complex modern life, she is thoroughly imbued with lofty ideals and is armed with the Faith, which is both her shield and her support." The meaning of these sentences was unequivocal to the congregation of Dominican Sisters, who had been teaching young women in Ohio for almost 100 years. The aim was clear also to those who would enroll their daughters in the new school.

During the 1930s and 1940s the spirit of St. Mary of the Springs College (SMC) continued to be religious and intellectual. In this period, the college administration further elaborated three main objectives:

1. To know the God-given purposes of life, since the primary purpose of the curricula offered . . . is to enable each student to grow in her Faith through a broad knowledge and a deep love of God.
2. To prepare for life and a work in life . . . to enable her to take her place in the home, in the classroom, in the field of social service, and in such professional careers as are open to women.
3. To be a woman living the Catholic life, inspired by her Faith and strengthened by Catholic philosophy to accomplish her chosen work.

Scholastic philosophy was the chosen means of correlating the courses and integrating the professional courses with the liberal arts. In addition to scholastic philosophy, religion permeated the college in the persons of the white robed Dominican Sisters and priests on the faculty and other clergy, in the code of conduct expected of the students, required religion classes, and the three-day annual retreat for Catholic students. Even non-Catholics were required to attend chapel exercises unless individually excused. Besides daily Mass, there were other religious ceremonies for the campus such as daily benediction before dinner, campus observance of the Church holy days, which were also free days, the celebration of the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of Catholic schools, and the activities of student groups like the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The spiritual atmosphere, combined with the scholastic, was unmistakable.

In those days the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) used to ask its members for statistics on the numbers of Catholics and non-Catholics among the students and the faculty, full time and part time. In 1947-48 of the 259 students, fourteen were not Catholic; of the thirty-two full-time faculty, only two were not Catholic; and of the nine part-time faculty, four were not Catholic. Ten years later, out of an enrollment of 287, only two students were not Catholic. There were no full-time non-Catholic faculty, and only one of nine part-time faculty was not Catholic.

The religious spirit of the college was evident, but financial difficulties continued to plague the institution through the 1940s and 1950s. During the 1940s the North Central Association (NCA) required a financial report almost every year. But during those difficult years, the students had no idea of the college's financial straits. Life for them was happy. Most were residents, and there was a familial spirit in the campus community since, because of the small numbers, everyone knew everyone else. The atmosphere was intellectual, cultured, and genteel. A Sister-teacher lived in each section of the dormitory, and the Sisters' relationships with the residents were friendly.

From the first the college focused on developing leadership in the women who attended. A few of the many examples of the success of this effort are these alumnae. Martha Sliter Sheeran (Class of 1935) worked her way up in several companies and, becoming director of corporate communication for Nationwide Insurance, was

the first woman to be named a department director at Nationwide. She has held leadership positions also in numerous cultural, religious, and service organizations. Ann DeCain Blackham (Class of 1949) has been president of her own realty company since 1968. In addition to contributing her talents to many civic groups, she has received a Broadcaster's Award for Civic Leadership in 1962, was named New England Business Owner of 1995 by the New England Business Owners Association, was appointed to the President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities, and served as the New England regional director of the National Federation of Republican Women. She also organized a pilot childcare program in the basement of the building housing the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C.

A 1957 graduate, Gretchen Wagner Gooding became professor and vice chair of the Department of Radiology at the University of California in San Francisco and chief of the Radiology Service for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the first woman to hold this position. Speaking about what led her to this career, she singled out Sister Suzanne Uhrhane, head of the chemistry department, and Sister Margaret Ann McDowell, head of biology: "[They] enjoyed what they did. They were enthusiastic and curious about the adventure of life." Dr. Gooding felt that her education was extraordinary because of the personal consideration all the Sisters had for their students. "They looked after us and touched our lives in a way that isn't possible at a large university."

Looking back to her student days at SMC, Joanne Luckino Vickers (Class of 1963) also recalled that the atmosphere was intellectually nourishing and at the same time encouraging and supportive. "The teachers never said to a student you couldn't or you can't do whatever you hoped to achieve." Pat Semple Fitzharris (Class of 1966) credited the college with giving her the strength to follow her dreams and recalled that "women learned to be leaders; the school fostered self-esteem in women." Writing in 1963, Sister Camilla Smith, dean of women at SMC, pointed out that women become the principals on campuses "designed specifically for them." She observed that, "homogeneous as it may seem, the woman's college is a microcosm . . . her associates, professors, and college personnel are selected representatives of the human race. Her milieu is, as it always will be, the Mystical Body of Christ."

In the minds of the Sisters of this era, the purpose of the school was first and foremost religious because they believed this purpose gave meaning to and enhanced education in all the subject areas. Responding in 1949 to a question about the college's religious life and interests, the dean wrote: "This institution by its very nature makes ample provision for the development of the students' religious life." Administrative Council minutes from the 1950s attest that the rules for enhancing the students' religious life were as strictly enforced as those intended to maintain an atmosphere of study and good decorum. Students who skipped conferences during the annual retreat were penalized by not being allowed to serve in any ca-

capacity of honor such as membership on certain prestigious committees. One student who returned to the dorm "under the influence of alcohol" was sent home for a week. Another student who persisted in dating a married man after learning that he was married was barred from attending her commencement exercises and taking part in other graduation events. During these years, students regularly attended an early-morning Mass—although some of the students wore coats to cover their pajamas! By the end of the 1950s 140 students from the college had chosen to enter the Dominican Sisters' congregation.

In the mid-1950s four events somewhat alleviated the money worries of President Sister Angelita Conley: the college joined the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges in 1955, ensuring it of a steady stream of unrestricted income: in 1956 and 1957 SMC received a total of \$108,000 from the Ford Foundation; the congregation was able to pay off the debt on the college buildings in 1956; and enrollment steadily increased so as to crowd the main residence hall and make it necessary to house freshmen in an area dubbed College Hall in the convent building. By the end of the decade the college had the largest number of incoming freshmen and the largest total enrollment in its history, 340 women.

Meanwhile, Sister Angelita called on the Sisters of the congregation to help the college: "Each Sister of the Community should continue to be a 'recruiting officer,'" keeping in mind that "we desire good academic students with high moral integrity." Ever since the founding, the Sisters had sacrificed for the college. They had given up gifts they had received individually, patched their clothing time and time again, made beautiful handmade articles to sell, solicited books for the library from their relatives and friends, and even begged at churches. As Mother Stephanie had often reminded them, it was *their* college.

In 1960–61 St. Mary of the Springs College was still "the Sisters' college." The catalog objectives were the same as for the past twelve years. However, a purpose statement preceded the objectives: "As a college conducted by Dominican Sisters, whose motto is *Veritas*, the College . . . has been conceived to educate young women and inspire them ever to seek that Truth which alone makes men free. To achieve this, the faculty endeavors to inculcate such a love of Truth that the three ends of the Dominican Order . . . To Praise, To Bless, and To Preach, will be realized in the lives of its students." By further "Dominicanizing" the statement on the aim of the college, the Sisters made explicit what had been implicit from the beginning.

During the presidency of Sister Angelita Conley (1947–64), the College of St. Mary of the Springs reached the apogee of its original purpose as a Catholic college for women. Two circumstances paved the way for the great change the 1960s brought to the college. First, the college dormitory space was already overcrowded and certainly could not continue to house the increasing numbers of resident students. Second, Father Edward Sanford's visit, provided by the Association of American

Colleges at no cost to the college, gave the Sisters valuable recommendations about the organizational and financial structure of the college. The most important of these was to separately incorporate the congregation from the college with financial reporting distinct from the finances of the Sisters' convent and the academy. These two circumstances led the governing body of the congregation and the administration of the college to plan important changes that belong to the 1960s.

In August 1964 Sister Angelita, ill with cancer, resigned, and Sister Suzanne Uhrhane was named president. Within the space of six years, the College of St. Mary of the Springs had undergone significant changes. In 1963 it became financially and legally separated from the congregation of the Dominican Sisters. In 1964 it turned coeducational and shortly afterward was renamed Ohio Dominican College. Soon enrollment was 1,000 students with a ninety-member faculty, the majority of whom were lay. The college built a large new residence hall and planned a library and a campus center. In 1964 North Central paid its first accreditation visit since 1934 and followed it up with another visit three years later. In 1969 the Sisters completely restructured the board of trustees and gave over ownership and control of the college, though retaining sponsorship. Why and how all these changes happened is a complicated story of strong centripetal forces impacting the college within a relatively short time.

Sister Angelita had pointed out the need to build another residence hall. To apply for a government loan, the college would have to know with accuracy financial data it did not have under its present arrangement. This need, coinciding with the congregation's need for an accurate budget for planning a residence for the large number of young Sisters studying for the Bachelor of Arts degree, led to the legal separation of the college from the motherhouse and the academy in 1963.

The decision to go coed was spurred by the Bishop of Columbus, who told the Sisters that he wanted the Catholic men of the diocese to have access to a Catholic college within the diocese. If the Sisters' college would not go coed, he would bring in the Jesuits to establish a college for men. Reading the handwriting on the wall, the Sisters decided that St. Mary of the Springs College should become coeducational for the fall of 1964. To provide more space for the college, the congregation next closed its academy, which for thirty-five years had occupied the southern half of the main academic building, with the college occupying the northern half. North Central in 1964 had expressed concern that the college library and science facilities did not have sufficient space. Concluding that the need for the college was greater than the need for St. Mary of the Springs Academy for girls, particularly in light of the five new diocesan coed high schools in the city, the governing board of the congregation decided to close its academy.

In the first year of coeducation, the enrollment jumped from 539 to 728. The next year it increased to 948, with the number of men going from 81 to 235. The 1960s

brought huge increases in college enrollments across the nation with the baby boomers arriving at the doors and many of the men wanting student status in order to avoid being drafted to fight the Vietnam War. Into all the political and social turmoil of the sixties there erupted what historian Philip Gleason has called "a spiritual earthquake in the American Church." Considering the wake of the Vatican Council II (1962–64), Gleason noted that "the old ideological structure of Catholic higher education . . . had been swept away," leaving Catholic colleges and universities "uncertain of their identity." The climate of pervasive questioning and uncertainty in the sixties, plus the need for government funds to accommodate the big increases in enrollment, led Catholic college and university presidents to look at the question of restructuring their boards. Mother Francis de Sales Heffernan of the Columbus Dominican Sisters, chair of the board of Ohio Dominican College, heard the question of restructuring discussed at every educational or religious meeting she attended at the time. Superiors whose congregations had colleges or universities were asking how they could ensure the Catholic character and mission of their colleges if they gave up control.

As Mother Francis de Sales and her General Council of Sisters sat in their capacity as governing board of Ohio Dominican College, they pondered and debated this question. (The presidents of both the colleges sponsored by the congregation also participated in these deliberations on restructuring their boards.) Strong differences arose among the Sister trustees over questions of how to preserve the Catholic character of the colleges and whether there should be built-in control by the congregation. Finally, in March 1969, they voted unanimously to adopt a new board structure for ODC having no Sister majority, no two-tiered setup, no inner control group, no veto or reserved powers. The congregation gave over, without recompense and without condition, the land and the buildings with all their furnishings and equipment but continued its sponsorship with one-third membership of the board. So with full deliberation and hopeful confidence in Divine Providence, the Sisters entrusted Ohio Dominican College to the new board. The college had come of age.

Sister Suzanne guided ODC through this whole process of coming to age. Having come into the presidency after Sister Angelita had been ill for almost two years, she had her agenda cut out for her. It was spelled out in detail in the North Central Reports from the visitations in 1964 and 1967. Changes, though necessary, had been "too much, too soon" for the college that had been a small intimate place used to relying heavily on the oral word and a multiplicity of exceptions to the rule. Written policies needed to be developed and promulgated in a number of areas (for example, a new faculty handbook). Other weaknesses lay in the areas of financial organization, development, planning, inadequacies in the physical facilities, and communication. How hard the president and her staff worked on these concerns can be gleaned from the report from NCA's return visit in 1967, which listed the

college's greatest strength as "the willingness of its leaders to accept constructive criticism and to implement suggestions for improvement." Student and faculty morale was good. By then the proportion between lay and religious faculty was fifty-fifty. The report affirmed: "The examiners detected no friction between lay and religious faculty, or between Catholic and non-Catholic, either at the student or faculty level . . . the non-Catholic and/or the less religious are not made to feel uncomfortable by their positions and are not put under pressure to conform. All of this contributes to high esprit de corps and strong institutional loyalty."

Finances, however, continued to be a serious problem. A large factor in the solvency of the operations of the college was the substantial portion of the total income from the contributed services of the religious on the faculty and staff. In 1972 the NCA review team noted the financial condition of the college as "grave, but not yet critical."

One of NCA's commendations that year highlighted the "extraordinarily good atmosphere for blacks and other minority groups. There appears to be a real sense of community between the races at this institution, with less friction than at any other institution with which the examiners are familiar." This atmosphere was the result of the strong commitment to social justice that belonged to ODC's heritage. At the same time a major factor in creating the inclusive atmosphere in which minorities felt welcome was the teachers' respect and concern for each individual student in their classes, knowing each by name and helping each to succeed. On a standardized campus morale scale for 1971, ODC rated a score of 85 for professors going "out of their way to help students," whereas the published mean for 100 colleges was only 49.

With the appointment of the first lay dean of students in 1969, major changes occurred in the rules and regulations, particularly for the residents. The women's dormitory, built in 1966 became coed. By 1974 visitation hours were continuous on weekends until 11:30 P.M. on Sundays. Students of legal age for drinking were permitted alcoholic beverages in their rooms. This was a far cry from the rules of the fifties! And Sisters no longer monitored the residence halls. But North Central was pleased with student life at ODC, which by this time had become largely a commuter college.

By the time NCA visited in April 1978, it was evident that a remarkably favorable change had taken place at the college. The team concluded its report by saying: "The college meets fully its commitment to do what it says it is doing. While it has future financial concerns as well as areas to which it needs to turn its attention, the quality of the programs and the strong sense of academic quality which existed among all elements in the institution led the team to believe that it can continue to be a strong College in the future." They commended the "good academic programs and student life, dedicated and able administration and faculty, excellent Board and well-ordered financial affairs," and one of the many strengths listed was "college-wide understanding and agreement on goals of the institution."

All the faculty, staff, and administrators rejoiced with Sister Suzanne when word arrived of the ten-year accreditation. It was great news after the previous decade of being subjected to reaccreditation every two to five years. Major helps to Sister Suzanne in the interval between 1972 and 1978 were the contributions of Sister Mary Andrew Matesich as academic vice president and dean and Thornton N. McClure as financial director and vice president for business affairs, plus the advantage of a much more active and involved board of trustees, particularly blessed with Dean Jeffers, chairman and CEO of the Nationwide Insurance complex of companies.

Thornton McClure, having recently retired from directing finances for the University of Rhode Island, came to ODC in December 1971 as a part-time financial consultant for six months. It was a fruitful love match, and he remained until 1983. Dean Jeffers, a Methodist, committed himself to helping this small Catholic college to surface from its grave financial condition. The day he saw a young paraplegic being wheeled into the academic building and attended with care, Jeffers decided to say "yes" to the invitation to serve on the board. His stature in the city and in the nation, coupled with his lengthy service on the board, greatly assisted ODC to a new level of community recognition as well as financial health.

At this critical point in the college's history, Sister Mary Andrew was able to bring not only a vision for the future but an excellent grasp of what was needed to move the college toward it. Receiving two substantial grants, the college was able to develop a new mission statement with participation by the entire campus community, as well as alumni and board members, and to design a new liberal arts core for the curriculum. These two changes followed an action taken by the faculty in 1969 before Sister Mary Andrew was dean. They had voted to change the curriculum to a system in which the normal student load would be four four-hour courses each semester. This change, initiated to enable the students to concentrate on fewer subjects in greater depth, necessitated a complete revamping of the academic program. With all courses being four credits, it was necessary to reduce the requirements for philosophy and theology in order to fit all the liberal arts general distribution requirements into the 124 credits needed for graduation. The new requirements included a twelve-credit sequence: one course in philosophy, one in theology, and a third in either discipline. This was a major change from the previous fifteen credits in philosophy and sixteen in theology required of Catholics. The change effectively ended the college's Thomistic core curriculum. Elsewhere many Catholic institutions of higher learning had abandoned the Thomistic synthesis that had been their hallmark. What replaced this synthesis at Ohio Dominican was the new Humanities Program, a sixteen-credit curriculum based on a type of freshman "Great Books" course that would be integrated with writing courses.

Why a Humanities Program? In the mid-1970s the college had committed to increasing diversity in the student body, so at this point 16 percent of the study

body was black. There was also an increase in international students. In 1976 forty-six students from twenty-five different countries were enrolled, the majority from the Middle East. Still another aspect of the new diversity consisted in admitting a greater number of students of lesser academic achievement than in previous years. Considering this diverse student population now coming to Ohio Dominican, the task force worked to structure a core program to try to provide entering freshmen with a common context and vocabulary for intellectual discourse together with the critical skills needed for college.

This Humanities Program, which went into effect in 1978–79, was closely tied to the college's new mission statement. A grant from the Exxon Foundation in 1976 funded a two-year process involving extensive and intensive participation by all the college's constituencies to set goals and to revise the mission statement. The revised statement opened with emphasis on the Dominican motto: "As a Catholic liberal arts college with a Dominican tradition, Ohio Dominican College is guided in its educational mission by the Dominican motto: to contemplate truth and to share with others the fruits of this contemplation." It spoke of truth as "the basis of human freedom and the source of human effectiveness."

In earlier years mission statements contained a more explicit expression of the school's Catholic and Dominican character. The 1964–65 catalog had stated clearly that "the end of education is the knowledge of God." The preface to the statement of the college's objectives read: "The philosophy of education at the College of St. Mary of the Springs is Thomistic philosophy. . . . Following in the Dominican tradition, Thomistic philosophy seeks *truth*, which leads to the knowledge of man's last end." The new statement of 1977 focused on the search for truth without stating the meaning of the object of the search.

This same year, 1977, Sister Suzanne, having served as president for thirteen exceptional years, announced her retirement effective the following year, and for the first time the board of trustees conducted an open search for a new president. With faculty and student involvement and after months of committee meetings chaired by Dean Jeffers, the board unanimously elected Sister Mary Andrew as president.

As had her predecessors, the new president applied her energies to addressing the concerns the North Central team had expressed in its latest visit. Determined that ODC would not only survive but thrive, she attended first to developing the college's financial base. Before the end of the decade both a new science building and an athletic facility had been completed, and the endowment was growing.

The 1987 NCA Report was laudatory. Regarding the mission, the team wrote: "The rich Dominican background of the College is strong and inherent in the educational programs. It bodes well for the continuity of a sound educational program which is built with humanities as a central core." Under the evaluation category of Institutional Effectiveness, the report complimented the college on having met the

changes of the past decade and having “emerged a stronger institution both educationally and fiscally.” It predicted a bright future, and the subsequent paragraph noted: “Leadership has been strong, sustained and effective. The faculty, well-trained and motivated, has been flexible enough to meet the changing needs and the entire institution is well-anchored by a nucleus of Dominican sisters who both teach and serve as administrators. Most of all they are a strong presence.”

In 1987, although the academic dean was no longer a Sister, twenty-three Dominican Sisters served as faculty or staff, 20 percent of the total, full and part time. Their annual contributed services exceeded \$200,000. Since 1981 the congregation had given two six-figure capital gifts to ODC. Referring to the congregation’s contributions, the college’s self-study report for the 1987 visit by NCA said: “Most important to all, they [the Sisters] have given Ohio Dominican its motto, tradition, distinctive character and vision.”

The decade following the 1987 NCA report brought further changes to Ohio Dominican. The administration initiated and managed change by rewarding those faculty and staff who contributed to its planned implementation. This strategy spurred the institution to a remarkable transformation in the 1990s. Decisions about any new program, however, required first applying the mission statement as an evaluative measure.

* Have the changes in the character of the college altered its essential identity as a Catholic liberal arts college with a Dominican tradition? In 1998 Joanne M. Burrows studied Ohio Dominican in a comparison of five Catholic colleges and, by means of interviews, analyzed how fourteen of ODC’s faculty members were interpreting the meaning of “Dominican” and “Catholic” in the opening sentence of the mission statement. She discovered that while “liberal arts college” was the dominant concept in their descriptions of the college’s academic identity, “all participants use[d] the Dominican motto, ‘To contemplate truth and to share the fruits of this contemplation with others,’ to construct ODC’s religious identity.” The college’s emphasis on “the Dominican tradition,” which is an intellectual tradition, seemed to have had an interesting effect on the interpretation of its mission by many of the faculty, perhaps the majority. Actually, the Dominican Order was founded to preach and teach the truth of the Catholic faith. The order and its tradition have their identity within the broader context of Roman Catholic identity. Burrows’s interviews found a decoupling of the concepts of Dominicanism and Catholicism at ODC, whereby Dominicanism provides a “common belief system that is accessible to individuals holding a wider range of views.” Dominicanism, given an inclusive and elastic interpretation, had become “the overarching category,” and Catholicism, “a particular expression to which only a limited portion of the campus community subscribes.”

Today the Catholic identity of the college appears far less clear than its Dominican identity. The eleven Catholic participants in the Burrows’s study expressed a

wide range of views about the Catholic faith and the Church. As far as the atmosphere at ODC, there are fewer than half as many Sisters and priests on the campus as there were a decade ago. There are no statistics on the percentage of Catholics on the faculty. Of the students who indicated their religious affiliation in 1999, not quite a third were Catholic. Burrows's study reports that "religious activities are limited and few students take advantage of these opportunities."

Lack of clarity about what it means for any college, in this case for Ohio Dominican, to be Catholic dates from the sixties. ODC's student body, faculty, and board of trustees became much larger and more diverse than the founders of the college had envisioned. No longer were the majority Roman Catholic. The sixties ushered in a period of soul-searching questions and unsettling changes within the Roman Catholic Church and the sponsoring congregation of Dominican Sisters. Beginning in the late 1960s the congregation experienced a severe drop in new vocations as well as the departure of existing members. Some of these were college teachers. This period was a time of lengthy dialogue among Catholic religious, church, and college and university leaders about what constitutes a Catholic institution of higher learning. These dialogues and the documents they produced eventually led to Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in 1990. When the U.S. bishops asked Catholic college and university presidents to react to this document, Sister Mary Andrew invited faculty input. Some of ODC's faculty again began seriously discussing what makes a college Catholic. The discussion is ongoing.

President Sister Mary Andrew and her administrators were strongly committed to maintaining the Catholic as well as the Dominican character of the college. However, in light of how the institution has developed, it is hard to envision that the faculty would espouse the term "Catholic" in the way they have come to own "Dominican." One reality is very clear: the sponsoring body no longer has control over the legacy it bequeathed to the college. When Sister Mary Andrew announced that she would be stepping down after twenty-two years as president in June 2001, the board of trustees elected Dr. Jack P. Calareso, president of Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Iowa, to succeed her. As the college's first lay president endeavors to build on the achievements of his predecessors and continue faithful to ODC's mission, a new era has begun.

In the course of its growth, Ohio Dominican College developed a life of its own, much broader than that which characterized it before the 1960s. It was inevitable that the great changes during the sixties and subsequent changes in the constituencies of the college would result in a new mission statement that would reinterpret the mission and tradition given the college by the sponsoring congregation. Certainly there were, and are, strong continuities. In accord with its tradition, ODC reaches out to educate those who especially need what it has to offer. This outward reach to fill a need is not new. One reason for founding the college was to provide a

good Catholic education for women in a geographical area where it was not available to them. The other reason, perhaps even more important than the first, was to educate the Sisters of the congregation to teach in Catholic elementary and high schools across the nation. Always the Sisters had welcomed into their schools students of different backgrounds and religious faiths and, even during the Depression, took in some students who could not afford the tuition. ODU's atmosphere is still warm, welcoming, and caring, and the tuition is the lowest of any comparable private college or university in the area. Professors still give students individual attention, devoting their energies more to teaching than to research, publishing, or the lecture tour. In academic and disciplinary matters, the student gets the benefit of the doubt. Overall at ODU there is still a pervasive charity—"doing the truth in love."

From the beginning the Dominican Sisters read the signs of the times and discerned those societal needs they could effectively address in carrying out their mission in the Church. Throughout its history the school introduced programs needed at the time—for example, in 1944 a degree in nursing in collaboration with area hospitals, then library science certification when no other institution in the area offered it, and, in the aftermath of Vatican Council II, a certification program in religious education to assist the diocese.

Sister Suzanne's letter to the Sisters of the congregation in 1967 telling them about the college's name change gives a good insight into the heritage. Taking the Catholic character as a given, she wrote, "Dominican' specifies the whole name. It connotes a long tradition of learning, sanctity and culture." The letter concluded: "The College of St. Mary of the Springs would not exist today were it not for the vision, dedication, and sacrifice of the Dominican Sisters. The name *Ohio Dominican College* is a constant reminder of this debt. We feel that the name best expresses what we are."

Another vigorous element of continuity in the history of ODU is collaboration with clergy and laypersons, without whose help the Sisters could not have founded or continued the college. Before the college was built the Sisters consulted the bishop of Columbus, set up a lay advisory board, and relied on excellent clergy and lay faculty members and staff to further its mission. Nor have all its collaborators been Catholic. Another blessing for the tuition-driven college has been the benefactors who assisted it through periods of financial hardship.

At Ohio Dominican today there are other important continuities. These vital elements of the heritage are still strong—the conviction that the life of the mind is important, that truth is freeing, and that there is an obligation to serve, to reach out to others and "share the fruits." And there are faculty, lay as well as religious, who continue to sacrifice for the mission of the university and to hope that their students will learn to know and to contemplate not only truths, but Truth.

SUGGESTED READING

Alice Gallin, Preface to *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents, 1967-1990* (Notre Dame University Press, 1992); Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1995), and "Neoscholasticism as Preconciliar Ideology," *Catholic Historian* 7 (1988): 401-11; George M. Marsden, *Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Unbelief* (Oxford University Press, 1994).