

**ELON** UNIVERSITY



## INTRODUCTION

Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) is a religious life student organization at Elon University, a vibrant and welcoming community on Elon's campus that, together with the Catholic Life staff, serves Catholic and non-Catholic students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community.

As expressed by the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter Empowered by the Spirit, "Campus ministry gathers the Catholics on campus for prayer, worship, and learning in order that they might bring the light of the Gospel to illumine the concerns and hopes of the academic community." The program seeks to enhance student life on the university campus and create a safe place for students to actively engage in their Catholic faith during this pivotal stage of formation in their lives. Catholic Life shares Elon University's vision of "an academic community that transforms mind, body, and spirit" and is dedicated to educating and preparing students to be global citizens and leaders who make a positive difference in the world.

## BACKGROUND

Catholic Life has existed on the Elon campus as far back as 1978; it began in response to a growing Catholic student population at Elon and their passion to appropriate their Catholic faith. March 1989 is the earliest SGA record as an official student organization, marking this current year as the 30th anniversary of Catholic Campus Ministry at Elon.

According to the university's latest enrollment report, over 1,800 undergraduates self-identified themselves as belonging to the Catholic faith tradition. This comprises nearly 30% of the total undergraduate population, making Catholicism the largest single religious denomination on Elon's campus (among students who disclosed their religious tradition).

CCM's programming aspects are led largely by a student Servant Leadership Team of 18 students. They serve as role models to the Elon community and invite them into a deeper engagement with their faith through personal relationships and social, spiritual, and service-based events. In addition, an internship program was formed out of the need for greater music ministry at Sunday Mass, and that internship currently employs three students who lead the music efforts.

The program is served currently by Associate Chaplain for Catholic Life, Fr. Peter C. Tremblay, OFM Conv. He is the seventh priest appointed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh and the Our Lady of the Angels Province (Order of Friars Minor Conventual) to Elon University. The Diocese of Raleigh employs four additional staff members toward Catholic Life at Elon – a Director, Campus Minister of Faith Formation, Student Ministry Coordinator, and part-time Music Director – who all support and mentor the students. The Catholic Life Advisory Board also supports the ministry and consists of Catholic parents, alumni, students, staff, and other stakeholders.

Elon University provides Catholic Life staff with office space in the Numen Lumen Pavilion. Catholic Mass is held in various locations, including the Elon Community Church, Numen Lumen Pavilion, and Holt Chapel. Masses are attended not only by students, but also by faculty, staff, and members from the

surrounding Elon and Alamance communities. A Eucharistic chapel, accessible only to Catholic students, faculty, and staff, exists in Holt Chapel. Through negotiations with the university, the Holland House was acquired, moved to South Campus, and in September 2009, dedicated as the Catholic Newman Center, the first religious life house and residence at Elon. The downstairs of the Holland House is used for CCM meetings and programming while the upstairs serve as residences.

## **MISSION**

Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) at Elon University forms a strong faith community on campus. We gather Catholics and friends for prayer, worship, service, learning, and social activities in the manner of the Gospel. By nourishing the faith of our students and fostering discipleship in Christ, we inspire responsible and passionate leaders for the Church and our society.

## **VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

It is essential for the Elon community to have a strong and dynamic Catholic Campus Ministry to effectively serve the personal and spiritual needs of the Catholic community.

Beginning in the fall of 2017, Catholic Life staff began re-forming the Advisory Board to serve in the capacity of helping to create and implement a strategic plan. Through the course of several meetings, board members, together with staff and student leaders, created a snapshot of the current operations of Elon CCM, performed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the organization, and established a short-term action plan. These steps led to the Catholic Life Summit, a visioning session held at Elon University in March 2019. The Summit engaged a broad range of constituents, including students, alumni, parents, faculty, board members, and university officials. With the completion of the Summit, six key priorities were identified to grow Catholic Life and increase its impact on the university community. These priorities will make up the backbone of a new five-year strategic plan. What follows are the objectives necessary to fulfill the goal of each priority.

As a strategic plan, this document is meant to guide while not constrain the growth of Elon CCM over the next five years. It should keep us focused on priorities while allowing us the freedom to adapt as conditions warrant. Ultimately, the fundamental goal is to reach and engage more students on campus, helping them to develop a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and to work toward the common good. It will be the work of the Catholic Life staff, in conjunction with the student leaders, to carry out these initiatives. The various committees of the Catholic Life Advisory Board will be tasked with monitoring regular updates from the staff on the progress of the plan.

**PRIORITIES** (not in any particular order)

- A. Engagement and Outreach
- B. Faith Formation
- C. Facilities
- D. Advancement and Financial Stability
- E. Communications
- F. Staffing

- A. **Engagement and Outreach** – Make more students aware of the presence of Catholic Campus Ministry. Increase the number of engaged students from 14% to 30%.
  - i. Communicate our desire to intentionally engage more students.
  - ii. Continue discipleship training with existing student leadership team to enable them to engage more effectively.
  - iii. Partner with Elon Admissions to reach incoming students and their families before they arrive at Elon, including a CCM presence at Admissions events on- and off-campus.
  - iv. Create focus on reaching the majority of incoming first-years within the first fall semester.
  - v. Extend events to neighborhood communities to increase visibility.
  - vi. Get away from “one size fits all” mentality of student events.
    - 1. Create gender specific events as to increase male involvement.
    - 2. Develop programming to attract and serve upperclassmen.
    - 3. Work with appropriate campus organizations to engage underserved populations, including FSL, Latinx, LGBTQIA, and athletics.
    - 4. Improve opportunities to dialogue with other faith groups.
  - vii. Increase engagement among graduate students and faculty/staff.
  - viii. Become more intentional in increasing outreach on social media.
  - ix. Continue Music Internship program and evaluate progress.
  - x. Develop Engagement Internship program.
    - 1. Research how Hillel manages their Engagement Interns
    - 2. Discuss how interns fit into the overall CCM leadership structure
    - 3. Lay the groundwork for internships, including job description, training program, benchmarks, and stipend
    - 4. Decide ideal number of interns and who oversees them
    - 5. Create application and hiring process
- B. **Faith Formation** – Increase the spiritual/religious/educational aspect of CCM.
  - i. Continue developing an exceptional experience of Mass and increase Mass student attendance from 4% to 10%.
  - ii. Create intentional opportunities for catechesis and spiritual formation for student leaders.

- iii. Expand small group program, including stronger training and preparation of leaders, and increase participation from 1% to 5%.
  - iv. Expand CCM retreat experience to more students and increase participation from 5% to 10%.
  - v. Incorporate spiritual/prayerful component into every CCM event.
  - vi. Begin to change the Catholic culture at Elon
    - 1. Move students from an “obligation” to a “desire” to be Catholic
    - 2. Foster an experience of Church characterized by “joy” rather than “guilt”
    - 3. Face/break down negative stereotypes of Catholicism within specific student populations and Religious Studies department
    - 4. Develop a discipleship model that encourages a relationship with Jesus Christ and is evangelical by nature
    - 5. Create a vision of Franciscan spirituality, especially St. Francis of Assisi’s understanding of seeing Christ in the poor and caring for creation
    - 6. Allow CCM to become a moral voice for justice on the Elon campus and partner with appropriate campus organizations
  - vii. Work with Student Life to instill a spiritual focus into the Health & Wellness initiatives.
  - viii. Create more opportunities for discerning vocations and life after Elon.
- C. **Facilities** – Determine the best facilities to serve the changing needs of the Catholic student population.
- i. Evaluate and update existing spaces in the Holland House to make them more functional and welcoming.
  - ii. Evaluate the desires of Catholic students for spaces within a new Catholic center, including the relocation of the Eucharistic Chapel (currently located in Holt Chapel).
  - iii. Evaluate the need for offices for Catholic Life.
  - iv. Begin to lay out architectural plans for an ideal Catholic center.
  - v. Research and engage donors who can help fulfill this vision.
  - vi. Work with the university to research potential new locations for a Catholic center.
  - vii. Work with the university and the Diocese of Raleigh to determine lease.
  - viii. Continue process of creating a capital campaign.
- D. **Advancement (fundraising) and Financial Stability** – Create and maintain a sustainable financial plan that will serve the current and future needs of the ministry.
- i. Increase partnerships with University Advancement to meet CCM’s financial goals and determine where CCM gifts can fit into the Elon LEADS campaign.
  - ii. Evaluate current operating budget and advancement plan and adjust as necessary.
  - iii. Develop research goals and increase number of off-campus visits to prospective families and donors.
  - iv. Increase outreach and number of donations on Elon Day.
  - v. Develop a culture of giving among current CCM students.

- vi. Work with University Advancement to determine new members of Advisory Board and evaluate minimum giving of members.
- vii. Partner with Office of Alumni Engagement to effectively engage CCM alumni, including the creation of a CCM Alumni Board.
- viii. Increase effective usage of fundraising databases, including CCM's Raiser's Edge database (Diocese of Raleigh). Ask for access to CCM's donors and donations within Elon's Raiser's Edge database (University Advancement).

**E. Communications** – Increase effective communication to all constituencies of CCM.

- i. Evaluate current communications of CCM and decide who best manages overall communications for CCM.
- ii. Re-design the CCM website.
- iii. Research current trends in social media and develop a more strategic social media plan.
- iv. Create weekly/monthly emails to the following constituencies:
  - 1. Students
  - 2. Faculty, staff, community members
  - 3. Parents
  - 4. Alumni
- v. Expand the reach of CCM's direct mail pieces, including bi-yearly newsletters.
- vi. Create a student calling plan for Elon Day asks and thank-a-thons.
- vii. Work with University Advancement to determine effectiveness of online giving campaigns.
- viii. Communicate more effectively with the following groups:
  - 1. Advisory Board
  - 2. Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life
  - 3. University Advancement
  - 4. Office of Admissions
  - 5. Office of Alumni Engagement
  - 6. Diocese of Raleigh

**F. Staffing** – Determine the best staffing structure to minister to the university population.

- i. Re-define roles for existing staff and create a sustainable staff structure.
- ii. Hire a Director of Development, who possibly also oversees an expanding communications program.
- iii. Determine who oversees an expanding internship program, possibly deciding to hire a new position for this role.
- iv. Research potential partnership with Evangelical Catholic for training of student leaders and student interns.
- v. Create ongoing professional development plan for staff.
- vi. Continue working with Advisory Board for regular evaluation of Associate Chaplain for Catholic Life and for progress on the strategic plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

Catholic Campus Ministry at Elon University is expanding its ministry in significant ways. By focusing our efforts and resources on the priorities identified above, we can engage more students at Elon and help them develop a more intimate relationship with Christ and a more profound love for their fellow brothers and sisters. This will ultimately enrich campus life at Elon, the Catholic Church, and the entire world.