

April 3, 2009

To: St. Mary's University Board of Trustees

From: Charles L. Cotrell, Ph.D., President

Re: Rev. Rudy Vela, S.M., appointed Vice President for Mission and Identity

I am pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Rudy Vela, S.M., as vice president for Mission and Identity. As called for in the Bylaws, this appointment is made in consultation with the Marianist Province of the United States and the recommendation was presented by this Office and the Province to the Board of Trustees for confirmation at their annual meeting this morning.

Vela is the second person to hold the position that was originally established in 2002. The vice president's primary responsibility is to work collaboratively within the University to ensure the Catholic and Marianist identity of St. Mary's. In addition, he will oversee the Office of University Ministry, the Marianist Forum, and the Marianist Educational Associates program.

A 1976 graduate of St. Mary's, Vela has been an assistant professor in the Department of Theology since 2003 and the director of the Study Abroad Program in Spain since 2007. He received his Doctor of Ministry from the Chicago Theological Union; Master's in Science and Administration from the University of Notre Dame; Master's of Divinity from the University of Toronto, St. Michael's College; and a Bachelor's of Arts from St. Mary's.

Most recently at St. Mary's, Vela has served on the Core Curriculum Review Committee, Strategic Initiatives in International Education Committee and the President's Peace Commission. He has served on several local, regional and national boards, among them the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation, the National Catholic Congress of Hispanic Ministry, Santa Rosa Health Care Corporation Home Health Care and Hospice Professional Advisory Board, Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States, and the St. Mary's University Board of Trustees

Vela has published and presented on topics related to liturgy, Pastoral Theology and multiculturalism, including his most recent paper on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, "Probing Marianist Culture at St. Mary's University – Extreme Marianist Witnessing: Martyrdom." Vela was a visiting lecturer for the Deaconate Formation Program in the Diocese of Fort Worth and at that time addressed topics related to liturgical reform and multicultural ministry. Prior to that, while in Chicago, he assisted with the development of the Cultural Audit and introduced it to the Province to look at the interaction of faith and culture issues.

As the program director for the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio from 1996 to 1999, Vela was involved in administration, and giving workshops, lectures and presentations on intercultural celebration of liturgy and ministerial leadership to national organizations. Many of the organizations were involved in promoting the social teaching of the Catholic Church while addressing issues of racism and cultural diversity.

Vela assumes the position held by the Rev. Bernard Lee, S.M., who was originally appointed assistant chancellor, until his title was changed in 2005 to vice president for Mission and Identity.

Please join me in welcoming the Rev. Rudy Vela, S.M., to his new position as vice president for Mission and Identity at St. Mary's University.