

Discernment Process for Leadership Teams and Boards of Marianist-sponsored Institutions

Decision making is a normal activity for leadership teams and governing boards. When faced with major decisions, however, more diligence may be required to promote a process of discernment before finalizing decisions and implementing plans. A discernment process that is characteristically Marianist is mission-focused and promotes clarity, reflection, consultation and dialogue. The following outlines a process to help leadership teams and governing boards in their decision making.

1. AWARENESS / PRESENCE

- Begin with silence and pray for discernment and courage.
- How do we clearly define the issue to be discerned? Why is this important to us?
- Does anyone have any existing bias or conflict on this issue that needs to be acknowledged?

2. REVIEW THE CIRCUMSTANCES

- What are the relevant facts?
- What are the key questions to address?
- Are there any key ethical or moral questions to address?
- Are all of the necessary perspectives, areas of expertise, and stakeholders represented?
- What additional information is needed to discern this issue?

3. CONSIDER OPTIONS

- What is the optimal way to address this issue? What might be the positive, negative, and possible unintended consequences of an optimal solution?
- Might a sub-optimal solution be necessary? If so, why, and what might be the consequences?

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY MARIANIST VALUES TO BE CONSIDERED?

- Is the proposed action compatible with the Marianist mission?
- Is the proposed action compatible with Marianist characteristics (i.e., *the Principle Characteristics of Marianist Administration, Characteristics of Marianist Education, or Characteristics of Marianist Retreat Ministry*)?

5. IDENTIFY KEY INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS AFFECTED BY THIS DECISION

- Who is affected by this decision (i.e., staff, faculty, retreatants, students, greater community, the marginalized and the poor)? In the Marianist spirit of consultation and collaboration, can they be included in the discernment and/or implementation process?

6. DECIDE, COMMUNICATE AND IMPLEMENT

- What option will we choose?
- How will we communicate this decision/action?
- What are the key steps in implementation and who is responsible for each step? What are the key milestones and dates for implementation?
- Pray for the continued guidance of the Blessed Mother and Blessed Chaminade, and the grace of the Holy Spirit.