

# THE MISSION OF LEWIS UNIVERSITY

Faithful to the Lasallian Heritage in Catholic Higher Education



**SIGNUM FIDEI**

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SIGN OF FAITH

# Faithful to the Lasallian Heritage In Catholic Higher Education

## INTRODUCTION

When the De La Salle Christian Brothers accepted sponsorship of Lewis University in 1960, the University adopted the seal of the Christian Brothers. The Signum Fidei (the Sign of Faith) symbolically represents the integration of the distinctive values of knowledge, fidelity, wisdom, justice and association. Each of these values is significant, but it is only in their union that the Mission is realized. The Signum Fidei is a symbol of the Lasallian spirit which unifies these distinctive values proclaimed by the University.

Faith may be understood as the search for truths that cannot be understood by reason alone. In this context the University seeks to develop the relationship between faith and daily life in each individual and in the situations in which individuals live and act.

Just as the seal of the University provides a common symbol for identification, the Mission defines the values of the institution and inspires and unifies the work of its members.

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## THE MISSION STATEMENT

Lewis University, guided by its Catholic and Lasallian heritage, provides to a diverse student population programs for a liberal and professional education grounded in the interaction of knowledge and fidelity in the search for truth.

Lewis promotes the development of the complete person through the pursuit of wisdom and justice. Fundamental to its Mission is a spirit of association which develops community in all teaching, learning and service.

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## THE MISSION AND THE HERITAGE

Lewis is a university dedicated to the sharing of knowledge, grounded in its Catholic character, and animated by the Lasallian heritage of the De La Salle Christian Brothers and their colleagues.

As a **university**, it is committed to blending liberal and professional education effectively by engaging all dimensions of human experience. Such learning is freely pursued, value-centered, and disciplined. This process seeks to develop educated persons with the knowledge, critical judgment and wisdom required throughout their lives.

As **Catholic**, Lewis University fosters the creative interaction of faith with all forms of knowledge in an environment of open inquiry in the belief that all of created reality is intelligible and coherent. The University seeks a world of justice, rooted in community.

As **Lasallian**, Lewis University seeks to promote a spirit of association based upon a shared Mission, a commitment to mutual and respectful service by the academic community, and a sensitivity to poverty, injustice and oppression.

## THE MISSION AND ITS DISTINCTIVE VALUES

These five interconnected values are distinctive features which guide the University in fulfilling its Mission: Knowledge, Fidelity, Wisdom, Justice and Association

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**KNOWLEDGE** *The result of a lifelong pursuit of learning fostered through creative and critical interaction in a community of learners.*

Knowledge is achieved through respectful and disciplined dialogue, the development of intellectual skills and methodologies, and the valuing of open inquiry and academic freedom.

Knowledge preserves what is of perennial value from the past, tests what is current and new and seeks to discover the future in the secrets of the physical universe and the mysteries of the human spirit.

It evolves from the lifelong pursuit of intellectual, professional, cultural and religious learning. Knowledge allows one to experience autonomy of thought grounded in discipline and structure, which enhances personal growth, responsibility and leadership.

The University is dedicated to academic excellence, particularly in the promotion of a high quality of student-centered, interactive learning and instruction. To this end, the University places major emphasis on instructional excellence and student/faculty relationships.

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**FIDELITY** *The spirit which recognizes God as ultimate reality, unifying the diverse forms of knowledge in the pursuit of fullness of truth, while recognizing the diversity of human experience.*

In a Catholic community of higher learning, fidelity is an important dimension in the search for truth.

Fidelity is the recognition that God as Ultimate Reality is encountered in all of creation. As a result, creation is seen as dynamic, yet ordered, and thus open to inquiry. This dynamic order provides a stimulus for an active, free, and continuous exploration and understanding of the meaning of life.

In the Catholic and Lasallian heritage, God is understood to be the central source of wisdom, inspiration and conviction. This heritage is inspired in part by the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, and is reflected in the values of the Gospel. At the same time, an ecumenical openness affirms a commitment to diversity and the importance of other faith traditions, thereby respecting their contributions to the life of the University and to the pursuit of truth.

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**WISDOM** *The result of the integration of reflection and action achieved through life-long learning.*

Wisdom is attained through the development of a critical perspective that respectfully examines and creatively responds to contemporary society, culture, Church and human experience. This perspective results from an emphasis on critical thinking skills and the application and integration of knowledge with experience leading to creative problem solving.

Wisdom includes a consistent and committed vision based upon one's faith. It provides an understanding of the nature of the human community, the importance of ethical and just behavior, and the rewards of service.

Wisdom empowers Lewis University to plan creatively in providing learning experiences that meet the needs of a changing pluralistic society while maintaining faithfulness to its Catholic and Lasallian heritage.



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**JUSTICE** *The affirmation of the equal dignity of each person and the promotion of personal and social responsibility.*

The University values the sacredness of all of human life, affirms the dignity of work, seeks to overcome prejudice, and promotes change in oppressive systems.

The University is committed to enhancing a sensitivity to and an understanding of the causes of poverty, injustice and oppression, leading to service and social action within the local community and beyond.

Justice directs one to promote moral and ethical action which fosters tolerance, sensitivity, concern for the poor, peace and generosity. Justice is pursued through regular reflection upon personal responsibility, and through programs which promote social action.

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**ASSOCIATION** *The process of forming a community of mutual respect, collegiality, collaboration and service.*

Association invites Lewis University to achieve its goals through the shared efforts of faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, alumni, family members, benefactors and others. Although each contributes significantly to the attainment of the Lewis Mission, special emphasis is placed upon the collaboration between teachers and students.

Such an association fosters a bonding among persons, which leads to the creation of an authentic community and promotes a commitment to meaningful purposes within the University and beyond it. Association honors and respects diversity while fostering unity.

The strength of Lasallian Association lies in the University's shared vision and unified effort directed toward the common goal of providing high quality, values-based and relevant learning experiences for all students.