



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION SPONSORS AND BISHOPS ENJOY THOUGHTFUL DIALOGUE

On February 28, 2016, representatives from Wisconsin Catholic colleges and universities and the bishops of Wisconsin came together at St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee for several hours to reflect upon the unique relationship that higher education institutions have with their local Catholic community. The group discussed some of the major issues facing Catholic higher education and how, as Catholic leaders, they can form students in the Catholic tradition.

At the meeting, the bishops of Wisconsin joined representatives from each of the sponsoring religious orders for Catholic colleges and universities in Wisconsin. Archbishop Jerome ListECKI of Milwaukee opened the meeting with a brief introduction, followed by a prayer offered by Bishop Ricken and participant introductions. Sister Sharon Euart, RSM, Executive Director for the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI), then provided a presentation and reflection on what guidance Church teaching provides for Catholic higher education sponsors, ministry leaders, and bishops.

Sister Sharon is a Religious Sister of Mercy who holds a doctorate in canon law. Prior to coming to the RCRI in 2014, she was the Executive Coordinator of the Canon Law Society of America. She has served as a canonical consultant for religious institutes and diocesan bishops and as Associate General Secretary to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

After the presentation, the twenty-five attendees discussed how to communicate and collaborate more effectively. Participants noted that as lay Catholics take an increasingly active role in the governance of Catholic universities and colleges, it becomes all the more important to make certain they understand and appreciate Church teaching. Those present acknowledged that Catholic higher education is a unique opportunity for adult formation that provides witness to God's truth through academics, evangelization, and fellowship, and its presence in society must be maintained.

The bishops and sponsors agreed that all Catholics – ordained, religious, and laity – have an essential role to play in maintaining the tradition that is Catholic higher education. The day ended with a renewed sense of commitment to continual formation, genuine dialogue, and ongoing collaboration between bishops, the sponsors of Catholic colleges and universities, higher education leaders, and the larger Catholic community.

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Attachments: Two meeting photos

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