

# MMC

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## CHANGES IN DIRECTION

Throughout its first 33 years, Mount Marty College was recognized as a women's college. However, Sister Stanislaus said the original charter for the four-year college never specified enrollment limited to just women.

"When we wrote the charter for the four-year college, I went to see Frank Biegelmeier. He just asked this question while we were working on the charter, 'What about men? Will you ever have men coming to college?' I said, 'I don't know.' 'Well,' he said, 'some Catholic colleges now have men coming to college. Don't mention man or woman.' And that's the way it was. I know the charter has been rewritten since that time to meet other conditions, but there

was nothing against it in the charter."

However, in 1968, the Mount Marty community recommended that coeducation be promoted. Acting on that recommendation, the Mount Marty College Board of Trustees established the college as a coeducational institution in the fall of 1969.

With the growing concern for college education during the 1960's, the convent realized the declining interest among Midwest parents to send their girls to private high school. After 47 years of operation, Mount Marty Academy, later renamed Mount Marty High School, closed in 1969.

Closing the high school allowed more room for the growing enrollment at Mount Marty College. A new facility completed in 1966 as the high school's new home was converted into Mount Marty College's library and gymnasium facility.

Among its 21 majors, Mount Marty's baccalaureate degree in

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anesthesia, established in 1971, was the first of its kind in the nation. In 1983, the anesthesia program expanded to create Mount Marty's first master's program. Only three other schools in the nation offer similar master's programs in anesthesia.

During its first 50 years, Mount Marty College had been under the leadership of five presidents. In addition to Sister Jerome and Sister Evangeline, other past presidents include Dr. Bruce Weier and Dr. William Tucker. In 1983, Sister Jacquelyn Ernst assumed the duties as Mount Marty's fifth president.

Throughout its history, Mount

Marty has been guided by leadership which has adhered to the founding philosophy brought by immigrating Sisters who came with a vision to the bluffs overlooking the Missouri River.

"The general philosophy that has always been Mount Marty's — both the high school and the college — is to help people grow to become good Christians," said Sister Stanislaus. "To be that has always been the most important thing from the very day when we started the academy. The living of the Christian life, the living of the gospel, you might say, is what we would like to see in our students and our graduates. It was their lives as

Christians that mattered. And I think that has always been true and I think it is in the backs of the minds of the people who are working over there now, just as it was in 1922."

Today, MMC still strives to help their students live meaningful, holistic, Christian lives. Primary emphasis is placed on the development of each person as a complete human being with special attention paid to intellectual, professional and personal skills as well as moral, spiritual and social values. MMC believes that tomorrow's successful leaders will be critical thinkers, articulate communicators, ready problem solvers and accomplished learners. It is their hope that all of their students will find themselves, their passions, their purposes and ultimately, their meaningful careers through MMC's welcoming and supportive, yet challenging educational experience.

# Expansion

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chemistry professor and director of the forensic science program.

"This has really opened up opportunities. At a small school like this, it's really great," she said. "We can have new programs for students, and we can conduct more research. It can open up new experiences and instruction."

She foresees new possibilities for the forensic science program, which has grown in recent years. The program accepted more than a half-dozen students in the past year and looks for further expansion, she said.

MMC will benefit from the Avera Science Laboratories, and the nursing center to follow, for years to come, Pease predicted.

"This makes Mount Marty so much more competitive (for student and faculty recruitment)," she said. "It puts us on an even keel, knowing our facilities are more than adequate."

The new facilities provide important safety features, Pease said.

"At Bede, we didn't have air conditioning in the rooms. We had the open windows," she said. "But when we opened the windows, we had chemicals that were sensitive to water and humidity."

In addition, the new laboratories come equipped with the adequate number of electrical outlets, wi-fi and other modern needs, Pease said. The labs also come with interactive features for student learning.

Most of the science students are pursuing graduate school and health careers, Pease said. The fields include medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, physical therapy and radiologic technician.

"We also have a large number of nursing students," she said. "But it isn't just these groups. All of our students will benefit."

In a neighboring lab, assistant chemistry professor Chun Wu and student Jessica Tice were finishing work. Tice, who formerly worked for Mount Marty, has enrolled to finish pre-requisite courses for medical school.

"I'm taking organic chemistry, and the facilities are so updated," she said. "Bede is such an old building. Here, there is so much more lighting, and you have the safety features here in the chemistry lab."

The new facilities should make MMC much more attractive, Tice said. "It's a real attribute and should make a positive impression on incoming students," she said.

## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The new labs impress more than just the current and prospective MMC students and faculty.

Doug Ekeren, interim CEO at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital (ASHH) in Yankton, toured the labs after the recent dedication ceremony. He sees the new facilities as a long-term investment for regional health care. ASHH donated \$750,000 for the Avera Science and Nursing Complex, covering the entire project.

"We have a good relationship with Mount Marty," he said. "The

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## TAMARA PEASE

college always does a good job of preparing students for health careers. We have students who complete their clinical experiences at the hospital, and we have a number of Mount Marty graduates on our staff."

While MMC has been successful in the past, the new science and nursing complex will take things to the next level, Ekeren predicted.

"This type of facility will allow Mount Marty to be competitive in recruiting top-notch students," he said.

In turn, MMC students tend to remain after graduation, boding well for both Yankton and the surrounding region, Ekeren said.

"This will really help with workforce development. There's a shortage of workers in the region, and you're seeing the impact," he said.

"There are certain areas that are more challenging than others to recruit. The economy has ramped back up, and we need more people. You're even seeing signing bonuses (at fast food restaurants). It's a very competitive environment."

MMC's new facilities will help make the college more competitive and responsive in the rapidly changing environment, according to an Avera Health official.

"This new facility is absolutely fabulous," said 1977 MMC graduate Deb Fischer-Clemens. "It looks nice without being over the top."

She toured the new labs while on campus to receive the MMC Alumni Professional Achievement Award. She currently serves as the senior vice president of the Avera Center for Public Policy, based in Sioux Falls.

Fischer-Clemens graduated from MMC with a bachelor's degree in nursing. She also holds a master's degree in health services administration from the College of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

"I grew up on a farm near Parkston, and my dad always said, 'You're going to get a four-year college degree for a career where you can sustain yourself,'" she said.

"It was so important for me to have had that liberal arts education. I studied nursing, but all the other required courses have helped me with studying and developing policy. Attending a Catholic college also taught me about people, following a mission and doing the right thing."

Ekeren agrees with the desirability of a bachelor's degree. "With the four-year degree, you have more flexibility. You can enter management or teaching," he said.

Ekeren and Fischer-Clemens emphasize the need for today's students to obtain the skills and flexibility need in health care fields. In that respect, the improved MMC facilities will help students prepare for changing demands.

"There will be changes in the delivery of health care," Ekeren said. "We will be seeing more outpatient care. Patients will receive care in their home environment. We will have the physician, nurses, social workers, nutritionist and other professionals working together as a care team. We need staff trained to do it."

Fischer-Clemens noted the increasing demand for all types of health care workers, with the MMC science and nursing complex playing a key role.

"Right now, you can't find nurse aides. We need pharmacists and nurses," she said. "This country is facing a shortage. There is just a real push across the board."

Fischer-Clemens advises today's health care students, particularly nurses, to realize the changing environment and to have an idea of which setting they want to work.

"You have in-patient nursing, but it's not just limited to that," she said. "You have long-term care facilities, you have home care and you have other options."

In the end, the new MMC facilities — and the values found at the Catholic liberal arts college — will help today's students prepare for what can be a wild ride during their careers and lives, Fischer-Clemens said.

"My advice: Be a generalist," she said. "Get the basic skills and understand why something is done. Then remain flexible."

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Future Success



The education of our youth and current workforce is a critical factor in the growth and competitiveness in the market for Applied Engineering. Applied takes a proactive role in working with our educators and youth on what career opportunities are available in Yankton. We have worked with elementary students on how the science and math they are learning applies to the real world. And we share with the high school students and teachers the future opportunities and expectations. We are fortunate to be in a community where the educators and businesses support one another.

RTEC is a great asset to Yankton for educating skilled trades to our current and future workforce. They have partnered with MTI to provide Industrial Maintenance and RTEC has also partnered with BHSU to bring Manufacturing Leadership courses to our community. This has been beneficial when developing employees for future leadership careers.

Without a knowledgeable workforce to recruit from, it would be impossible to grow as a company or continue to improve our practices.

Thank you to our educators for continuing to pave the way for a successful future!

