Old Wine in New Skins: *The Ratio Studiorum* and Modern Jesuit Liberal Arts Education

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Occasionally, we see stories in the press which describe the discovery of a very old bottle of fine wine. It is opened with great excitement and anticipation, and it is discovered either that the old wine has turned to vinegar and is useless, or has aged well and is absolutely delicious. The *Ratio Studiorum*, the document which has stood at the heart of Jesuit education for nearly four hundred years, is like a bottle of fine old wine. And I maintain that it has not turned to educational vinegar, but has retained its flavor and vigor and still has the ability to challenge and delight us today with its sane and salutary advice about the nitty-gritty of education. In this article, I am going to talk about Jesuit education, and especially about a particular document, the *Ratio Studiorum*. I shall first discuss the general theory of Jesuit education, and then concentrate on the *Ratio Studiorum* itself, its history and contents. And finally, I shall attempt to apply the concepts embodied in the *Ratio Studiorum* to Spring Hill College in 1997, and make some highly personal, but I hope not idiosyncratic or eccentric, suggestions for the improvement of teaching at this institution.

Consider first the following list: St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, Descartes, Moliere, Charles Carroll, Goldini, Arthur Conan Doyle, James Joyce, Fidel Castro, Alan Alda, Tip O'Neill, and Bill Clinton. This startling list of mystics and mystery writers, philosophers and politicians, believers and unbelievers, saints and scoundrels--are all the products of Jesuit schools. But the real glory of Jesuit education is not in the above list, however illustrious or infamous its members might be. The real glory of Jesuit education lies in the hundreds of thousands of ordinary young men and women who have been educated in Jesuit institutions to be able and articulate Christian citizens.

Jesuit education, both its theory and practice are rooted in the life and spiritual vision of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus. And to begin to understand the mind and heart of Ignatius, we must turn to two basic sources: *The Autobiography* of St. Ignatius and The *Spiritual Exercises*. *The Autobiography* records, as does, for example Wordsworth's *Prelude*, the growth of a man's soul, the life experiences which produced Ignatius' conversion and his particular spiritual vision. And it is in *The Spiritual Exercises* that this spiritual vision is distilled.

Two fundamental concepts of Ignatian spirituality, at least or me, are found in these two words: immanence and instrumentality. Like his fellow Jesuit, Gerard Manly Hopkins, Ignatius was acutely aware that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God". In the climatic meditation which concludes the *Spiritual Exercises*, he writes

See God living in his creatures:
in matter, giving it existence,

in plants, giving them life,
in animals, giving them consciousness,
in humans, giving them intelligence.
And so He lives in me, giving me
existence, life, consciousness, intelligence.
Think of God energizing, as though
He were actually at work, in
every created reality. (Corbishley 80)

This idea of the immanence of God in creation leads Ignatius to understand that it is through human experience of the things of the world that God is found. Therefore, the things of the world lead humans to an understanding of the end for which they were created. They are, as it were, instruments which lead humans to God and the salvation of their souls. And so, in the opening pages of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius lays out an approach to how the things of this world are to be viewed and used:

Man has been created to praise, reverence and serve God
our Lord, and thereby to save his soul.
Everything else on earth has been created for man's sake,
to help achieve the purpose for which he was created.
So it follows that he has to use them as far as they help
and abstain from them when they hinder his purpose. (22)

It is into such a view of reality that education is placed as a means to develop students' consciousness of the end for which they were created. Studies are, for Ignatius, instrumental to a spiritual aim. But Ignatius was not a philistine. He understood and valued education and studies in themselves as humanizing, civilizing, and character-building pursuits, but always understood them as part of God's creation and thereby as pathways to a Christian understanding of the world and of humanity's place in it.

The educational vision of Ignatius, although firmly rooted in a spiritual vision, may broadly be termed humanistic:

The humanistic dimension of Ignatius's own thought is more radical than any particular curriculum can adequately represent. It is a humanism for three chief reasons among others: because it affirms the exceptional dignity of man in the contingent universe and advocates his full and ideal development; because its precise concern isŠfor the entire human race rather than for some select portion of it; and because it takes seriously the historic process in which men live and which forms themŠ. (Donohue 20)

But the educational vision of Ignatius is humanism with a particular twist which is both startling and challenging:

This vision of instrumentality must be emphasized as strongly as possible because it was not only central to Ignatius's own thought but lies at the very heart of the Jesuit concept of education and is encountered at many levels from specific question of curriculum to generalized formulations of broadest goals. It is bound to scandalize both the absolute positivist because on the one hand it assigns a subordinate function to art and knowledge and on the other it denies the final self-sufficiency of the visible world. (21)

And so we may conclude:

This Ignatian humanism is not merely humanistic. Any Renaissance theorist might have set man on a pinnacleŠ.Ignatius, as a man of faith, goes beyond this for he entertains a conception of life that is Christian as well as humanisticŠ.the most important truth about man when he is placed within this Christian perspective is that of his relationship to God. (22-23)

The Ignatian perspective stresses that a person is much more than merely an accountant or lawyer, and that a professional career is not the final purpose of human life. For Ignatius, all of life is ordered towards an absolute and transcendent value. The prime relation is to God, and all other things assume a necessarily instrumental character in light of this, including education.

The educational vision of Ignatius was incarnated in two basic documents: *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, written by Ignatius himself between 1547 and 1551, and the *Ratio Studiorum* (Plan of Studies), the definitive version of which was published in 1599. But all of this is rooted in an earlier experience as Ignatius reeduated himself in preparation for his apostolic mission. In the *Autobiography*, Ignatius writes: "having done his studies in haste and confusion, he found that he was poorly grounded in them. So he began studying with small boys, passing through the order and method of Paris" (Ely 4). This "order and method of Paris" became the foundation of Jesuit education. Ignatius believed that education, in imitation of the techniques employed at Paris, should be methodical, orderly, and progressive. Ignatius founded the Society of Jesus in 1540, and in 1548 the first Jesuit school was opened at Messina in Sicily for the education of lay students. By 1599, the year of the formal promulgation of the *Ratio Studiorum*, there were over 245 Jesuit schools scattered throughout Europe.

The apostolate of education was carefully and deliberately chosen by Ignatius and the first Jesuits. In the era of the counter-Reformation, they saw a pressing need to educate Christian leaders for society. In the Preamble to Part IV of *The Constitutions*, Ignatius writes of the basic and underlying purpose of any Jesuit educational institution:

The end steadfastly pursued by the Society is to aid its own members and their neighbors in attaining the ultimate end for which they were createdŠ.for thisŠIt will be necessary to provide the edifice of learning, and of skill in employing it so as to help make God our Creator and Lord better known and served. For this the Society undertakes colleges as well as some universities (IV.307)

This formulation of the purpose of Jesuit education is universal and does not tie Jesuit education to any one cultural context. The ideal of Jesuit education is simply the Christian ideal: "*The*

Constitutions make it very clear that the Society of Jesus is impelled to the work of education from an apostolic motive since it believes that sound schooling can conduct men to salvation" (Donohue 8).
It is also important to note that:

the true source of vitality in Jesuit education is indicated by the answer to a *why* rather than a *what*Šthe Society's enduring purposes and motives in conducting schools are the forces that have made it possible to sustain this work across space and time. If an educational theory did no more than answer questions about curriculum and methods, the schools built upon it would inevitably become obsolete and perish. (9)

Ignatius characteristically took an active role in supervising the activities of the early Jesuits, as is seen clearly in his preserved letters. Although he did not write anything like a complete theory of education, he nevertheless had a firm grasp of the ends he sought in the educational apostolate of the Society:

It was not love of learning for its own sake that inspired him but an implacable and practical devotion to a purpose which learning might serve. This is the characteristic Ignatianviewpoint in which the finality of education is directly governed by a Christian concept of the finality of life itself and schooling is made to minister to the overarching aid of love of God and love of mankind for the sake of GodŠ.it is this attitude, of course, which distinguished Ignatius from the conventional Renaissance humanists. (13)

Ignatius was primarily interested in the education of character, and the aim of Christian education was to be both intellectual and moral formation. The goals and vision of Ignatius received explicit Papal approval in 1550 in the Bull of Julius III, *Exposcit Debitum*, which declared that the Society of Jesus was to defend and advance Christian faith through the founding and administration of educational institutions.

The early Jesuit educational institutions were tuition-free and enjoyed income from endowments and foundations established by benefactors. In many regions of Europe, the Jesuits had a virtual monopoly on secondary education. Indeed, it could be asserted that the Jesuits virtually invented organized secondary education in Europe. By 1599, Jesuits were staffing some 245 educational institutions throughout Europe. Most of these were *collegia*, that is secondary schools for the training of lay students. The *collegium* is the classic Jesuit secondary school and was both admired by friends and attacked by ideological enemies. For example, Francis Bacon, in his treatise *The Advancement of Learning*, said that he "wished the Jesuits had been free of their superstitions and enrolled on his side" (64). He added that the Jesuits and their schools "partly in themselves, and partly by the emulation and provocation of their example, have much quickened and strengthened the state of learning" (64).

As Jesuit schools expanded and multiplied rapidly after the initial foundation in Messina in 1548, Ignatius saw a need for some sort of uniformity. In *The Constitutions*, he states:

And although the order and hours which are spent in these studies may vary according to regions and seasons, there should be such conformity that in every region that is done which is there judged to be most conducive to greater progress in learning (IV 454).

He then calls for the formulation, at a later date, of a treatise which will set forth the goals and methods of Jesuit education :

Concerning the hours of the lectures, their order, and their method, and concerning the exercises both in compositions (which ought to be corrected by the teachers) and in disputations within the faculties, and in delivering orations and reading verses in public--all this will be treated in detail in separate treatise approved by the general. This present constitution refers the reader to it with the remark that it ought to be adapted to places, times, and personsŠ.(IV. 455)

Ignatius died in 1556, before this envisioned treatise could be written. But the treatise was finally promulgated in 1599, 43 years after the death of Ignatius, by Claudio Aquaviva, fifth superior general.

In 1581, Aquaviva appointed a 12-man committee to begin work on this educational treatise. In 1586, a first draft was completed and circulated among Jesuit institutions for reflection and comment. The draft was then revised and the revised version appeared in 1591. The process of circulation and consultation was repeated. The final version was promulgated in 1599 by Aquaviva and made mandatory in all Jesuit educational institutions. The full title of the document was: *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum* (Method and Plant of Studies). It remained in force until the suppression of the Society of Jesus by Papal decree in 1773. After the Restoration of the Society of Jesus, the *Ratio Studiorum* was reviewed and revised in 1832, but the version of 1599 remains the classic text.

The *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 consists of an introductory letter by Aquaviva, followed by 30 sets of rules which cover every aspect of administration and teaching in a typical Jesuit institution. The *Ratio*, at first glance, appears to be a dry and excessively rigid document, prescribing all aspects of education--administration, teaching methods, curriculum--in minute detail. But, we must remember that Ignatius himself was not a rigid leader, but rather a visionary, and the concept of adaptation is central to his educational vision. According to Ignatius, Jesuit educators should be always "taking into account circumstances of times, places, persons, and other such factors, as seems expedient in Our Lord" (*Constitutions* IV. 351).

The educational program in the early Jesuit schools closely resembled what was on offer in other Renaissance schools: the development of eloquence in the use of the Latin language. The model of culture was decidedly Classical:

It neglected education for social action and service in favor of a privileged dilettantism. It had is gaze fixed too uncritically on an elite which was often, in fact, simply an aristocracy of wealth and birth rather than one of talent. (Donohoe 7)

Mastery of the Latin language was the criterion for intellectual respectability and upward social mobility: "The world in which the composers of the *Ratio* lived was one which made Ciceronian eloquence a prime aim of what we would call general education" (69). The Jesuits, as men of their time, operated educational institutions based on "the conviction that the truly human man must possess both wisdom and eloquence; must know something and be able to say what he knows; must be able to think and communicate" (70).

The early Jesuits decided to concentrate their efforts on secondary education and they achieved noteworthy success. Teaching literacy to small children was ruled out and competing with long-established universities seemed redundant. The rising middle classes were demanding Classical education for their children, and Ignatius was ready to give them what they wanted, but with a difference. The Jesuits shrewdly saw a gap between elementary and university education which needed to be filled and so they became the school masters of Europe with an eye towards training committed Christian leaders.

The largest Jesuit institutions consisted of three distinct divisions: the Faculty of Letters, which was devoted to the study of Latin grammar, poetry, and rhetoric; the Faculty of Arts, which centered on philosophy; and the Faculty of Theology. Smaller Jesuit schools comprised basically a Faculty of Letters. Indeed, most of the pedagogical material in the *Ratio Studiorum* deals with the Faculty of Letters. The Jesuit stress on order saw the studies in the Faculty of Letters as preparatory to more advanced studies in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Theology.

In his seminal study of Jesuit education, John Donohue demonstrated that much of what has traditionally been viewed as distinctively Jesuit in educational theory and practice was actually typical of the general Renaissance approach to education. For example, the prelection, hailed as the hallmark of Jesuit educational innovation, can actually be traced to Easmus, and back to the first-century Roman rhetorician and teacher, Quintilian, who recommends it as a teaching device in his book *Education of an Orator*(37). Quintilian was enshrined as the model for Renaissance education, but some believe that his pedagogical innovations were actually based on an earlier teacher and scholar, Isocrates of Athens. Isocrates stressed eloquence as the supreme goal of education, and demanded that students be active in their own education through rigorous and constant practice (37-38). And so, Father Donohue concludes that:

Jesuits taught the learned languages by methods built upon the Quintilian inspiration and honored in practice at the University of Paris in the first decades of the sixteenth century after having been successfully employed, even earlier, in the Low Country Schools conducted by Erasmus's first teachers, The Brethren of the Common Life (38).

The originality of the *Ratio Studiorum* and of the Jesuit system of education does not lie in either in curriculum or in pedagogical methods. What is distinctive is that the Jesuits for the first time applied current and traditional curriculum and methods systematically throughout a wide network of uniform educational institutions. All Jesuit schools, no matter where they were located, operated under a common, standardized educational blueprint. According to Father Donohue, the Jesuits invented what might be termed "child-centered education" in schools which stressed the importance of the pupil and insisted on lessons filled with innovation and delight (39). What the Jesuits distinctively contributed to Renaissance education can be summed up as follows:

In any case, those early Jesuit schools were usually characterized by three notes which together constituted an authentic innovation: a certain originality in the school program itself; a firm belief in the value of order, graduated curricula, and tested methods; and, finally, a staff of teachers devoted to their work and professionally well preparedŠ.the *Ratio's* program and methods were not strictly original, but it is not unreasonable to maintain that its arrangement of borrowed materials into a firmly organized system of progressive steps was newŠ.the care for exact order and method which this organization incarnated was not only a characteristic of Jesuit educational theory but also a novel element in its era (39).

But as Jesuit schools grew more numerous and complex,

What was needed first of all was an organization of the administrative and teaching offices which would be clear, exact, and thorough, but would not eliminate all room for spontaneity and initiative on the teacher's part and would not encase the student in a passive routine of monotonous regularity (40).

The *Ratio's* rules were aimed at securing order and unity without sacrificing freedom and diversity.

From a study of the *Ratio Studiorum*, the following main characteristics of Jesuit education may be discerned:

1) the ultimate purpose of Jesuit education is spiritual, to develop in the individual a deep sense of love of God and service to the neighbor. In the Preamble to Part IV of the Constitutions, Ignatius states: "The objective which the Society of Jesus directly seeks is to aid its own members and their fellow men to attain the end for which they were created. To accomplish thisŠlearning and a method of expounding it are necessary" (IV.307).

2) an integration of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects of education, to produce both solid learning and Christian virtue.

3) a stress on formation rather than on information, the development of character as well as the development of abiding skills and habits of thinking.

4) a stress of method and order; students are taken where they are, grounded and drilled in fundamentals, and then advanced in orderly progression to more and more complex material.

5) students are required to be active in their own education rather than passive.

6) an emphasis on the humanities, the liberal arts and sciences; the study of the classics

(great books) as sources of abiding wisdom and knowledge.

7) a final emphasis on developing *eloquentia perfeca* in all students--the ability to think critically, speak forcefully, and write persuasively and gracefully (Ely 6-7).

How are these goals to be accomplished? The *Ratio Studiorum* lays it all out in both curricula and effective teaching methods. I will now highlight some key ideas from the *Ratio* which might effectively be employed to enrich and renew teaching here at Spring Hill College.

First of all, I suggest that each course begin with a short prayer on the first day and also end with a prayer at the final class meeting. This serves to remind the students of the seriousness of what they are doing, and of the Christian purpose of learning itself. In its rules for teachers of the lower classes, the *Ratio* states:

1) the teacher shall so train the youths entrusted to the Society's care that they may acquire not only learning but also habits and conduct worthy of a Christian. He should endeavor both in the classroom and outside to train the impressionable minds of his pupils in the loving service of God and in all the virtues required for this service.

2) At the beginning of class let one of the pupils recite a brief but suitable prayer (Farrell 62).

The prelection has been one of the most basic and effective educational tools in Jesuit institutions and it can still be most effectively employed in the college classroom. It is a given that students who are taught *how* to study or given the rationale of what they study will learn more successfully than students left on their own (Donohue 149). The goal of study is a mastery of the material and the prelection "prepares students for their own immanent intellectual activity which alone can generate true learning" (150). The prelection can be used to give students clear goals and objectives for private reading and study, to help them focus their minds and energies. The prelection should take place during the final 10 minutes of class. It is an interactive preview of material assigned for private study in preparation for the next class. It is *not* a lecture, but an interactive process to elicit the curiosity of the student and to prime the student for private study. The prelection primes the student about what to look for in reading, provides a plan of attack. It helps students see the main ideas and structure of what they are about to study, provides key questions for the students to answer as they read. Ideally, students shouldn't be writing during prelection, but paying close and careful attention. The professor should dialogue with the students to make sure they grasp the points made. Alternatively, the same goals may be accomplished by handing out study guides or study questions keyed to material to be studied for the next class. These guides and questions help to focus the students on the goals to be achieved in private reading and study. A student who can answer his/her study questions is thoroughly prepared for the next class, and will be able to participate much more effectively in discussion, but "It is only too easy, unfortunately, to neglect this work of preparing students for individual study since it is always easier to tell them *what* than to teach them *how*" (151).

After basic understanding is achieved, then comes mastery, which is achieved through the device of repetition. Repetitions--daily, weekly, monthly--were at the heart of Jesuit institutions. The *Ratio* states "what is most often repeated will more deeply be impressed on the mind" (Farrell 49). The early Jesuits understood that the mind is a muscle, and muscles are developed through regular exercise. This idea of repetition is verified by modern learning and study theories, such as the SQ3R study method. One way of incorporating daily repetition in the classroom is through a brief daily quiz. The quiz checks whether private study was effective and also primes students for the work of the class ahead. Also, a comprehensive final examination is very important for effective learning. This type of final examination makes students synthesize the material of a course, makes them see progressions of thought and connections. What is most important here is the process of review and synthesis which a student goes through in preparation for the final examination. Professors who downgrade the final examination to a mere period test are losing one of the most effective means of learning for their students.

Along with repetition, the *Ratio Studiorum* stresses what is known as recitation. This is not to be confused with rote memory. In the college classroom, the technique of recitation involves an interactive dialogue between teacher and students. This is where mastery, the goal of prelection and private study, is to be demonstrated. The students should, through discussion, be pushed to connect new material with old material, to draw similarities and contrasts. Guided discussion and debate, rather then mere lecture, makes the students active in their own education, and the professor must be alert to involve all members of the class.

Written work, especially formal papers, is another important form of student recitation, the demonstration of mastery. The *Ratio* encourages especially the public evaluation of student work. Excerpts from student papers can be distributed to students for evaluation. Good as well as poor test answers can be analyzed in class as a way of helping students learn. Analytical and argumentative papers can be used to help students learn to think clearly and analyze precisely. Regarding written work, the *Ratio* counsels:

Written work is ordinarily to be corrected individually and in a low voice with each of the pupilsŠ.It will be useful, however, to select some exercises each day, now from the best, again from the worstŠand read and examine them publicly (65).

The *Ratio* also mandates that written work is to be corrected and returned to the student promptly: "The written work of each pupil ought to be corrected daily by the teacher since this leads to the very best results" (65). The revision of papers is another very powerful learning tool. If a student can articulate why the revised version of a paper is better than the original version, that student has really learned something important. Professors can also reward students for making the extra effort to revise and improve their written work by raising the grade for the revised paper. This goads students to be active in improving themselves.

St. Ignatius, in *The Spiritual Exercises*, showed a remarkable grasp of human psychology. Likewise, the *Ratio Studiorum* shows an insightful understanding of the dynamism of motivation in education. Perhaps the most powerful motivators for students are the desire for praise and the fear of failure. Academic competition, wisely used, can provide a dynamic element to the learning process. The *Ratio* states that

Class contests are to be highly valued and are to be held whenever time permits, so that honorable rivalry which is a powerful incentive to studies may be fostered. It iscustomary in these contests to have the teacher ask thequestions and the rivals correct the errors or to have therivals question to one another. Individuals or groupsŠmaybe pitted against each other, or one pupil may engage several opponents (68).

In the early Jesuit schools, prizes, rewards, and special places in the dining hall were reserved for the victors in academic disputations and competitions.

How can this Jesuit ideal of healthy competition be used in the college classroom today? Student panels, with both presenters and respondents, make for a lively class. Likewise, class debates between individual students or teams of students serve to sharpen analytical ability as students argue for or against a proposition or position. In designing and conducting classroom debates, the teacher plays an important role, according to the *Ratio*:

The professor should consider that a day of disputation demands as much effort and bears as much fruit as a day of class, and that the whole effectiveness and zest of the disputation depends on himself. While presiding he should appear to be arguing with both defendant and objector. He should applaud a point well-made and call it to everybody's attentionŠ.He should neither keep silent too long nor speak too often, so that the student disputants will be able to demonstrate what they know. He should, however, correct or elaborate the arguments made by the disputants (28).

Nothing will engage student attention better than to have debate about controversial issues which touch upon the subject matter of the course.

The *Ratio Studiorum* places great emphasis upon public debates and disputations among scholars. At Spring Hill College, a faculty debate program could be developed, along with the faculty lecture series. For example, faculty from the departments of business and philosophy could debate issues of business ethics. Such scholarly debates would spark great student interest as well as teach them how to engage in thoughtful discussion on controversial issues.

Nothing better illustrates the Jesuit ideal of healthy academic competition and emulation than the traditional Academic Honors Convocation, one of the most revered Jesuit educational traditions. The *Ratio* specifies that it should be held only once a year and should be one of the highlights of the academic year. It should be conducted with no little solemnity and with a great deal of pizzazz:

> Then on the appointed day, with as much eclat and before as large a gathering of people as possible, the names of the winners should be publicly announced. The winners should come before the whole assemblage and each receive his award with due honor.
>
> The herald shall announce the prize winnersŠ.then he shall hand the prize to the winner, generally reciting a few lines of verse especially appropriate for the occasion, which are to be taken up and repeated by the chorus, if this can conveniently be arranged (61).

The 1586 version of the *Ratio* even recommends there be also a special bench for those who have failed most spectacularly!

The idea of academic competition brings up the subject of grades. All faculty need to be serious and exacting about grading student performance. Nothing could more pernicious, or against the whole Jesuit tradition of excellence in education, than the modern antipathy against elitism in favor of egalitarianism. There should be no reward for the mediocre, the second-rate. Having tried is not enough, and the Dodo's race in *Alice in Wonderland* should serve as a stark reminder of the importance of true achievement. That race ended with the wildly popular decision that: Everybody has won, and all must have prizes! I think that professors need to be reminded themselves, and need to remind their students, that the grade of "C" stands for average, satisfactory achievement, and that "B" and "A" grades are to be reserved for clearly above-average and exceptional performance. A recent article in *Newsweek* magazine on grade inflation observed that twenty years ago roughly 30% of college grades were "C" and 7% were "A" while today that ratio has been reversed, with 30% of grades being "A" and only 7% in the "C" range. And yet, at the same time test scores and general literacy of students have declined markedly! The Jesuit tradition is that only real excellence is to be recognized and rewarded. And this recognition of excellence should spur and motivate other students to do their best and excel.

The *Ratio Studiorum* indicates that drill and practice were at the core of Jesuit education, all designed to move students towards developing that characteristic quality of *eloquentia perfecta.* At a Jesuit institution such as Spring Hill College, there should be clear, college-wide standards of competence in speaking and writing. All departments and professors should demand increasing competence in written and verbal communication, and standards, especially in written work, should be uniform throughout the college. The development of standards in oral and written communication is not the exclusive responsibility of the Department of English, but is a general faculty responsibility. Likewise, the *Ratio* stresses the importance of homework as an essential part of the teaching-learning sequence. I think we need to ask ourselves whether we are challenging our students enough. Are we demanding excellence from our students or are we settling for merely average performance?

The *Ratio Studiorum* also pays special attention to the role of the teacher in building that genuine sense of community which is a hallmark of Jesuit education. The Jesuit tradition of *cura personalis* means that every faculty member takes a deep and abiding interest in fostering the intellectual, social, and spiritual growth of every student. The teacher's role is to praise and encourage, to correct and guide, and sometimes to discipline students. I hold that "tough love" is very much part of the Jesuit educational vision. Teachers do not help their students to develop into mature and responsible adults if they are pushovers and unwilling to set and enforce clear standards of performance and behavior. For example, regular class attendance, punctuality, and the handing in of assignments on time all serve to build habits of personal dependability and responsibility which will be critical for success in professional life. I am not talking about the teacher as martinet, but about the development of a wise flexibility which manifests itself in turning disciplinary situations into learning opportunities for the student. For example, a student who over-cuts a course might be required to write an extra paper in order to avoid the penalty of exclusion. A late paper might be accepted from a student only on condition that the student receive time-management counseling from the Student Development Office. But the *Ratio* also says that student failure is a reality and must be dealt with firmly and honestly:

> When neither verbal reproofs nor the services of the corrector avail and the pupil seems to be incorrigible and might be something of a scandal to others, it is better to dismiss him from the school than to keep him where he will profit himself little and harm others (56).

The Jesuit ideal is to make students engaged and active in their own growth and education. The *Ratio Studitorium* strongly suggested the employment of student leaders, called *decurions*, who supervised the private study of their younger peers and heard the recitation of lessons from fellow students. Here is a challenging idea which might very well be adapted to an institution like Spring Hill. Senior majors could be assigned to individual professors as assistants. They might work with freshman/sophomore students as tutors. They might deliver introductory lectures in lower-division courses, as well as run small discussion groups. This might be an excellent way to incorporate senior majors better into the academic life of their department. It would benefit students and encourage them to develop themselves as teachers and guides to their fellow students.

My final suggestion is that an institution like Spring Hill develop a formal matriculation ceremony. Such a ceremony would be paired with the graduation ceremony as markers of the beginning and successful end of college education. St. Ignatius realized that the beginning of advanced studies marked an important transitional moment in the life of young person. The student is leaving the community of the family and is entering into a new sort of community--an academic community with specific rights as well as obligations. Ignatius writes in *The Constitutions*:

> If they attend regularlyŠ.it is good to invite them to enter their names into the register. The Constitutions should be read to them, not in their entirety, but those which student

ought to observe. A promise, but not an oath, should be exacted from them to obey and observe the statutes proposed (IV.496).

Such a ceremony--a matriculation ceremony--might well be held on the day of arrival for freshmen and their parents. The meaning of joining an academic community of adults should be made clear, and the challenges and opportunities of the college years should be laid out. The *Ratio* suggests that "The rector shall see to it that the convocation address at the beginning of the year is delivered by one of the more distinguished members of the faculty" (Farrell 17). Some sort of symbolic action should mark entrance into the academic community, such as the signing of the matriculation roll. Such a ceremony would be impressive to both students and their parents and set a serious tone to the beginning of the students' academic career. There was such a ceremony at Spring Hill College in years past, and it might profitably be revived, but only if it is done carefully and well.

The heart of any educational institution is its faculty. It is they who interact with students on a daily basis. Jesuit documents such as the *Ratio Studiorum* counsel teachers to take as their model Christ Himself, the perfect teacher, and to imitate Christ's patience and kindness in dealing with young people. It is critically important that Jesuit institutions take great care to hire faculty who are in harmony with the Christian atmosphere of the institution:

ŠJesuit institutions must have capable professors who are not only well versed in their subjects and concerned for their students' moral formation but are also men who can impart a religious spirit to the whole school and illuminate it by their good example (Donohoe 169).

Ignatius himself stressed that students should absorb Christian values along with their studies (169). This is not to say that Jesuit institutions must be turned into Catholic ghettoes, but Jesuit institutions do themselves no favor if they hire faculty who are indifferent or even dismissive towards the Christian vision which lies at the heart of the institution.

The goal of Jesuit education is to generate excellence through learning. But there can be no true learning without the learner's intelligent activity, and there is no mastery of subject matter without motivation. The Jesuit educational philosophy, as exemplified in the *Ratio Studiorum* is to activate students, to empower them in their own learning process by engendering curiosity and enthusiasm through a rich diversity of classroom techniques and activities. By developing in students abiding habits and intellectual skills, the Society of Jesus seeks to provide modern society with articulate, clear-thinking, and socially involved young Christian adults.

Let me close this essay by returning to the beginning and to a restatement of the underlying religious vision of Jesuit education. The *Epitome* of the Institute of the Society of Jesus states:

> Since the purpose which the Society proposes to itself in conducting schools is to bring the neighbor to a knowledge and love of God, our first concern in the education of youth should be to see that our students acquire along with letters the habits worthy of Christian. Men should be formed who are not merely cultured but authentically Christian in both their private and public lives and willing and able to live every day apostolically (131).

Doctors today tell us that taking a glass of good red wine each day is good for the heart and for health in general. So, too, if Spring Hill College continues to sip from the educational wisdom contained in the *Ratio Studiorum*, it will continue to be a happy and healthy Jesuit institution.

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