



ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

During this year we commemorate the 200th birthday of Blessed Pauline von Mallinckrodt, foundress of the Sisters of Christian Charity, and the inspiration for Assumption College for Sisters.

This has been an exciting year during which we feel we have made great strides in ensuring fidelity to the mission of the college and its continuance into the future while always striving to, maintain educational excellence.

In our second year in our new location, we have encountered both challenges and blessings, the latter far out weighing the former! We have found ourselves more immersed in the life of the surrounding community and have raised awareness of who we are and what we do. We have repeatedly said to our 20 international resident students that people really appreciate why you are being educated—to return to your country to help your people.

Our friends and benefactors have been very good to us and we are cautious to be good stewards of the gifts we have been given. We share the financial challenge of all institutes of higher learning as we upgrade and improve our facility for both learning and living.

As you read, you will see just how successful we have been. And of course, we count on the support of you, our friends and benefactors, to continue believing in the mission of our little college — to “Teach a Sister...Touch the world.”

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC
President

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Assumption College for Sisters (ACS), sponsored by the Sisters of Christian Charity and founded in 1953, first as an extension of Seton Hall College (now University) and then separately incorporated in 1961, is now an independent college, authorized to confer as AA degree on religious women and those in formation for a religious congregation.

Originally ACS had been housed within the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Christian Charity in Mendham, NJ. As of August 2015, it has found a new home on the campus of Morris Catholic High School (MCHS), Denville, NJ. The administration, faculty and students of MCHS have welcomed the presence of religious women from the United States and developing nations on their campus. ACS students have enjoyed a first-hand glimpse of Catholic secondary education.

We can assure you that at our new site, the College is, and will still remain, the embodiment of the heritage received from Blessed Pauline von Mallinckrodt who founded the congregation in Paderborn, Germany in 1849. It witnesses to her conviction that the Sisters should be well-prepared, both spiritually and professionally, to spread the Kingdom of God through sound education, from which, in her words, “flows the temporal and eternal welfare of the individual and of society.”

Assumption College for Sisters is licensed by the Commission on Higher Education of the State of New Jersey and accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The College earned its initial accreditation in 1965 and reaffirmation of accreditation in 1975, 1985, 1995, and 2016.

MSCHE is also recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit degree-granting institutions which offer one or more post-secondary educational programs of at least one academic year in length in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other geographic areas in which the Commission conducts accrediting activities.

The Commission is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association that defines, maintains, and promotes educational excellence across institutions with diverse missions, student populations, and resources. It examines each institution as a whole, rather than specific programs within institutions.

The College is a member of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19104, (267)284-5000 and the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. It is an approved member of the Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS) of the United States Department of Homeland Security.

Mission and History

Assumption College for Sisters exists primarily to educate women called to a life of service in the Roman Catholic Church. (Mission Statement) In 2017, the following addition was added to the explanation in the College Bulletin: “Assumption College for Sisters welcomes lay persons to pursue the Certificate in Theological Studies and earn credits in academic offerings that will support them in our common goal of service to the global church.”

Rooted in its 63 year history, the education of women called by God to the consecrated life remains the heart of the mission of Assumption College for Sisters. Blessed Pauline von Mallinckrodt, foundress of the Sisters of Christian Charity, always intended that her Sisters be as well prepared professionally as their lay counterparts.

Since its actual founding in 1953, Assumption College for Sisters has provided a religious environment in which a young religious’ spirit would be nurtured while she is in the process of attaining an academic degree.

In the initial years, ACS educated incoming women for the Sisters of Christian Charity. In the early 1970s the college opened its doors to young women from surrounding religious congregations.

Subsequently the number of women entering both the Sisters of Christian Charity and the other religious congregations dwindled.

Almost simultaneously, the administration began receiving requests from Sisters from developing nations and the Sisters were admitted, adding a rich cultural diversity to ACS.

In 2014, due to the repurposing of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Christian Charity which housed ACS, the College explored various venues for the institution. In the summer of 2015, the actual legal transactions and move occurred, transferring the College from the Motherhouse in Mendham to the former convent on the Morris Catholic High School campus where it is presently located today.

Since 1999, ACS has served 43 Sisters from Asia and Central America:

- 18 Lovers of the Holy Cross (2 congregations)
- 11 Daughters of Our Lady of the Rosary
- 9 Daughters of Our Lady's Visitation
- 2 Sisters of Providence of Porteaux
- 3 Oblates of Mother of Orphans

Since 1999, ACS has served 61 Sisters from African Nations:

- 4 Sisters of St. Therese
- 9 Franciscan Sister of St. Bernadette
- 7 Daughters of Mary
- 11 Benedictine Sisters of St. Agnes
- 3 Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians
- 2 Servants of Mary Our Queen
- 1 Sister of the Holy Rosary
- 1 Sister of St. John the Baptist
- 4 Bene Maria Sisters
- 1 Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception
- 4 Daughters of St. Francis
- 13 Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood
- 4 Our Lady Queen of Apostles
- 1 Sister of St. Therese
- 2 Little Sisters of St. Francis

This represents a total of 104 Sisters from 20 different religious congregations.

At the annual Board of Trustees Retreat in May 2017, the following statistics were presented:

Since 1953:

415 Sisters have been awarded AA degrees.

Since 2005:

- 105 Sisters have been awarded AA degrees
- 90 have continued to receive BA degrees
- 28 have attained or are in process of receiving Master's degrees.
- 1 is pursuing her Doctoral degree.

The countries of origin of our present student body are:

- Bangladesh
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Indonesia
- Netherlands
- Philippines
- Tanzania
- United States
- Uganda
- Vietnam

This represents a total of 110 Sisters from 20 different religious congregations.

Institutional Goals

The goals of Assumption College for Sisters clearly support its mission.

- Integrated Religious Formation
- Leadership
- Community
- Service
- Social Justice

This is demonstrated by the involvement of the religious women who are students at the college, whether they are members of the sponsoring congregation, those of neighboring religious congregations, or international Sisters here on scholarship.

- **Integrated Religious Formation**

“Throughout its history, Assumption College for Sisters has consistently maintained its focus and distinctive mission of educating women religious. By providing sound theology and philosophy courses in an atmosphere of integrity and shared vision, the administration and faculty strive to enhance the religious formation of the students within the context of their own distinctive community charisms.” (*Bulletin* 2013-2016)

- **Leadership**

“ACS strives to form women who will be a light for the world and a leaven in society. Whatever form their service may take, Assumption’s students need to be prepared to assume the responsibility of Christian leadership and the commitment to bring, through countercultural witness, the Gospel message to God’s people. The College aims to instill qualities of leadership in its students...” (*Bulletin* 2013-2016).

- **Community**

“Community, founded on service and respect for each person’s dignity, ranks among Assumption’s most cherished values. Intrinsic to its heritage, the College strives to further the vision of

Blessed Pauline and the spirit of Christian Charity she imparted to her Sisters” (*Bulletin* 2013-2016).

- **Service**

“Service, central to Christian discipleship, is an essential aspect of ACS. Students are expected to avail themselves of opportunities to prepare for a life of service in the Church” (*Bulletin* 2013-2016).

- **Social Justice**

“Growing out of a firm belief in the dignity of each person, faculty and students at ACS strive to see the face of Jesus in all. They seek ways to embrace the poor and eliminate systems of oppression worldwide” (*Bulletin* 2013-2016).

Curriculum

The liberal arts curriculum at Assumption College for Sisters is designed to reflect a global perspective that incorporates an awareness of and respect for the viewpoints, cultures, and customs of all peoples. Through the teaching and study of the contributions of the world community to humankind, ACS strives to broaden student horizons by realizing the connectedness of all individuals whose common needs call each person to strive for the peace and justice of Gospel teaching” (*Bulletin* 2013-2016).

ACS meets the challenges of the General Education Standard by striking an appropriate balance between specialized and more general knowledge. The institution’s ability to demonstrate that its students are able to integrate and apply in different cultural contexts including the core knowledge and skills learned in their coursework is a critical component of successful undergraduate educational programs.”

At the College, both Administration and Faculty are convinced that all curricular offerings are faithful to the mission and goals of Assumption College for Sisters and faithful to the Catholic intellectual tradition in which every discipline is open to searching for the good, the true and the beautiful.

Enrollment

At the conclusion of the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 49 students enrolled, including both full-time and part-time: 20 international Sister students, 12 Sisters from local religious communities, 9 lay students and 8 Concurrent Enrollment high school students.

Student enrollment was comprised of 12 different religious congregations representing 15 different countries. The following communities were enrolled:

- Bene Maria Sisters (Burundi)
- Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians (Tanzania)
- Little Sisters of St. Francis (Uganda)
- Lovers of the Holy Cross—Nha Trang (Vietnam)
- Lovers of the Holy Cross—Thu Thiem (Vietnam)
- Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Canada, Philippines, Vietnam, USA)
- Daughters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary (Vietnam)
- Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (Tanzania)
- Oblates of Mother of Orphans (El Salvador, Guatemala)
- Religious Teachers Filippini (Bangladesh)
- Sisters of Divine Vocation (Indonesia)
- Sisters of Providence of Portieux (Vietnam)
- Sisters of St. Therese (Cameroon)

Administration and Faculty

Administration and Faculty of ACS met on a regular basis to formulate the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. With advice from two outside consultants, Sister Ann Heath, IHM, Ph.D., director of the Doctoral Program at Immaculata University and Janice Jacobs, Ph.D., Professor of Organization Leadership, the plan was developed and will be presented to the ACS Board of Trustees at the September 2017 meeting.

The main goals of the plan encompass the following:

1. To ensure fidelity to mission and academic quality
2. To ensure sustainability
3. To enhance campus infrastructure
4. To engage in courageous risk-taking

The report back on the progress of this plan will be the main focus of the 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Alumnae Achievements

ASC's cumulative graduation rate for the 2005–2012 cohorts is 93%, far superior to the national graduation cohort rate for private non-profit two-year institutions. This was highly commended by the Middle States visiting team.

Seven new members were added to the cadre of ACS alumnae with Graduation 2017, all of whom received an AA degree. Six of the seven graduates are continuing their studies to obtain their BA degree. They have received full scholarships to the following colleges and universities: Divine Word College, Epworth, IA; Georgian Court University, Lakewood, NJ; Mount Marty College, Yankton, SD; Siena College, Loudonville, NY; Silver Lake College, Manitowac, WI.

One of the graduates has been assigned to congregational ministries in her native land.

Two Salesian novices, one Religious Teacher Filippini postulant and a layman received their Certificates in Theological Studies during the commencement exercises.

Also recognized at the Commencement exercises were two students who exhibited the characteristics of "life- long learners" in a special way. One student had audited sufficient credits (30) for a Certificate in Theological Studies and is now taking the courses for credit to complete the Certificate; another student, having completed her BA at the College of Saint Elizabeth, has audited a total of 119 credits over the course of several years.

In a recent Alumni survey sent to graduates within the past ten years, it was revealed that our graduates are in active ministry in their native lands, holding a variety of positions: teacher, Human Resource officer, Emergency Room technician, Emergency Room nurse, catechist, counselor of individual and group therapy, spiritual director, Pre-K teacher and teacher working with individuals with special needs. Sisters of Christian Charity, alumnae of ACS, are now ministering on four different continents: North America, South America, Europe and Asia.

Academic and Cultural Enrichment

Some of the academic and cultural enrichment programs offered by ACS in 2016-2017 were:

- On September 11, several students attended a memorial service conducted in Parsippany, honoring all those from Morris County who perished.
- On September 21, international resident students of Assumption College for Sisters, Denville, gathered in the convent chapel to pray a special Evening Prayer commemorating the International Day of Peace. Flags of the various countries represented by the students were depicted surrounding a globe placed in front of the altar.
- Ar 101 students, accompanied by their instructor and the Coordinator of International Student Services, visited the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton Township.
- First year international students participated in the annual *Transitus* service at the Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth.
- Several international Sister students joined ACS instructor Jean Wedemeier at the annual Denville Rosary Rally on October 14.
- Several international students attended the Mass and blessing of the newly erected Shrine for Blessed Miriam Teresa

Demjanovich celebrated by Bishop Arthur Serratelli at the Motherhouse chapel of the Sisters of Charity.

- The entire student body traveled to New York where they visited St. Patrick's Cathedral, met with Archbishop Auza's staff member at the office of the Holy See Mission to the UN and then had a guided tour of the UN.
- A lecture, "A Merciful Heart: Blessed Pauline and the Year of Mercy, " was presented to the international Sisters students, several faculty and guests at Assumption College for Sisters. The presentation concluded with Vespers highlighting some of the writings of Mother Pauline in honor of the year in which we celebrate her 200th birthday.
- Ten international Sister students participated in the evening of Thanks and Remembrance held at St. Mary's School cafeteria. After each one artistically sculpted her luminaria, all assembled in St. Mary's Church for a prayer service. The kiln-fired luminaria were returned to the owner before Christmas.
- The Vietnamese international Sister students of ACS participated in 25th anniversary liturgy for the Vietnamese community at St. Cecilia's.
- International Sister students participated in two morning liturgies on Sunday, January 22 at St. Teresa of Avila Church. The pastor, Rev. Brian Plate, was honored at the ACS 16th Annual Caring Basket Gala.
- Two students from ACS joined tens of thousands from all walks of life who descended on the National Mall to rally against abortion.
- Tết, or Vietnamese New Year, is the most important celebration in Vietnamese culture, was celebrated by all the international Sister students residing at ACS..

- Fifteen Sisters from Assumption College for Sisters Convent attended the Evening Prayer for the World Day for Consecrated Life with the bishop and Sisters from around the diocese. A very powerful reflection was given by Sister Patricia Anastasio, PVM.
 - On Divine Mercy Sunday, one student participated in a pilgrimage to the Divine Mercy Shrine in Stockbridge, MA. The remainder participated in the Divine Mercy devotions at our local parish
 - On Good Friday evening, many of the Sister students traveled to St. Catherine Church where the Franciscan Mystery Players led the congregation in a prayerful reflection on the passion and death of Jesus.
 - First year international Sister students participated in the 66th annual National Day of Prayer on May 4 at the Denville Municipal Building.
 - FA 101 Drawing Students visited the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Summit, NJ.
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- ACS hosted a special Vesper service followed by a reception to which members of the ACS Board of Trustees, major donors, Cornerstone Sisters, and Gala committee members had been invited. The international Sister students from Africa sang a Swahili hymn as the opening song and the Sisters from Vietnam sang a Vietnamese hymn and performed a liturgical dance for the Magnificat. At the conclusion of the reception, a coffee mug with the ACS logo and filled with Christmas candy was given to each participant.
 - Students of En 101 experienced the religious, architectural and cultural wonders of the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark. On this same trip, students were treated to a luncheon at the *Casa Seabra* Portuguese Restaurant where they had the opportunity to sample one of the many cuisines represented in New Jersey.

- An integral part of the Th 098 course, Fundamentals of the Catholic Faith, is to familiarize the international Sister students with aspects of ministry in the American Church. For the fourth consecutive year, Sister Margaret Dincher, SCC, Pastoral Associate for Spirituality (ACS '64), has invited the class to visit Corpus Christi Parish for a tour of the facility and an explanation of the various ministries and outreach of the parish.

ACS Board of Trustees

At the annual ACS Board of Trustees Retreat, this year held at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club, committee chairs reported on a summary of accomplishments for 2016-2017;

Executive Committee: This Committee coordinates the activities of the other Board Committees. They were actively involved in the various focus groups in the Strategic Planning process. Their three main tasks were to lead a discussion on the ACS mission statement; to oversee the necessary revisions to the By-laws; to create a succession plan, all of which were successfully completed.

Governance Committee: The tasks assigned to this committee were to review the bylaws and suggest adjustments, to provide Board education, to conduct a Board evaluation, to recruit, vet and present new trustees and to recognize retiring trustees all of which were successfully completed. An outstanding accomplishment was to once again revise bylaws dealing with Board size, composition, and term limits to reflect the reality of ACS.

Facilities Committee: This committee has been entrusted with preserving and enhancing the integrity of the building for both learning and living. To that end, many improvements have been made: Front steps were repaired as well as masonry concerns addressed, handrails installed, repairs made to the garage roof, extensive landscaping around the building was completed. An outdoor patio with seating for 24 will be installed.

Inside the building the computer lab was improved by the installation of modern table-style desks housing all external wiring, computer chairs purchased and a ceiling mounted projector installed. The Heritage Room will be renovated with heating and improved lighting to house a language lab.

Finance Committee: This committee has been diligent in merging the five-year projected budget with both the technology plan and the facilities plan. The Endowment Resolution and Memorial Scholarship Resolutions were updated and a socially responsible investment policy was established.

Institutional Advancement Committee: The goals of this committee have been to secure the economic future of the College through Development activities and marketing. They have designed a job description for a part-time Director of Institutional Advancement, have explored alternatives to the annual Caring Basket Gala, have been instrumental in producing a promotional video and have formed a group of Young Professionals to advance the mission of the College.

Academic Affairs Committee: The role of this committee is to monitor the college's educational quality and keeps the full board informed of the process of continuous improvement. The Committee, in cooperation with the administration, articulates the academic mission of the college, enhances the quality of the academic program, considers new academic programs and significant modifications in existing academic programs

Finances

The Middle States report praised the financial stewardship of the College. You, our donors, can be sure that your contributions are carefully guarded and wisely used. The report states:

“ACS has made significant progress in planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal. Although not a fully systematized process, the culture of planning at ACS is definitely in development. There is evidence that the institution is using data

from various sources to make good, sound academic, fiscal and policy decisions. Because the ACS mission is clear and visible by the various constituents, it is easy to see that the College has a willingness to seek improved approaches and resist complacency (as evidenced by the courageous physical move of the location of the College in 2015). ACS is certainly open to growth, development and change, as well as, a rational process of self-examination, which requires it to remain open and flexible enough to respond to the dynamic environment in which it exists...

The College has made great strides in effectively allocating resources toward its academic programs, student support services and technology as a result of the data resulting from components of the planning process. While each of these also represents institutional renewal, the most important evidence of fiscal responsibility and institutional renewal is the courageous decision to move the physical location of ACS to co-locate with Morris Catholic High School.”

The team recognized and praised ACS “on its commitment to providing full tuition, room and board scholarships to all religious communities of developing nations.”

Many donations which make this possible were received in the form of scholarship aid, Memorial Scholarships and “Sponsor a Sister.”

Grants received were:

- Paragano Family
- Lipari Family
- Catholic Human Services
- William E. Simon Foundation
- Koch Foundation
- Conrad Hilton
- John F. Byrne Family Foundation

Once again, The Sixteenth Annual Caring Basket Gala marked a great success with the highest financial returns in its long history. This year's honorees were:

Spirit of the Heart: Prudence and Terry Pigott
Family Life: Eileen and Leslie Quick
Servant Leader: Rev. Brian G. Plate

The success of our development efforts and the extraordinary generosity of our friends and benefactors enabled Assumption College for Sisters to approach a more sound financial basis in order to ensure its continuance into the future..

Conclusion

With the graduation of 2017, Assumption College for Sisters awarded an AA degree for the 55th time.

At this year's commencement I reminded the graduates that when we say, "Teach a Sister...Touch the World," the Administration and faculty have done their part. Now it is up to each graduate to "Touch the World."

As you read this report, we ask you to help us thank God for his manifold blessings on ACS and ask His blessing for its continuance.

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC
President, Assumption College for Sisters
August 2017



Founded and sponsored
by the Sisters of Christian Charity

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