CHANGING the FACE of higher education

Year-Round Campus: Education for All Seasons
Our new Year-Round Campus program was created to ensure that today’s college graduates have the freedom to dream and serve and live.

The University of Mary is both humbled and proud to be guided by the courageous and innovative spirit of our founders and sponsors, the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery.

The same faithful commitment to service that led a group of Benedictine Sisters to Dakota Territory in 1878, to bring education and health care to the people of these prairies, still leads the University of Mary today.

And so we are profoundly excited to share with you, in this special issue of Momentum magazine, the University of Mary’s revolutionary Year-Round Campus program. This opens up an exciting degree path that will truly change the landscape of higher education.

The first word in the Rule of Benedict is ‘listen.’ Our mission at the University is to listen, to care, and then to act. We’ve listened to the deep concerns of students and parents over the rising cost and debt of getting a college education.

Out of that concern, we have taken action, creating Year-Round Campus, which will allow our students a phenomenal opportunity to receive a top-quality, values-based education in less time and with less debt.

Year-Round Campus is truly a game-changing approach to earning a degree. With Year-Round Campus, earning a bachelor’s degree is possible in just 2.6 years or a master’s degree in 4.

This is not a shortcut or a fast-track program. We’ve taken the traditional eight-semester degree and are offering those terms consecutively so students can save time, save money and graduate sooner.

This option dramatically shortens the time to graduation, with the result of reducing overall student debt. Furthermore, over a lifetime, those extra earning years can secure impressive financial benefits.

We at the University of Mary want to make the benefits and blessings of higher education available to all who aspire to learn more about their world, to expand and develop their gifts and talents, to lead and to serve.

We invite our alumni and friends to join us in celebrating the launch of Year-Round Campus. God bless you!

In Mary,
Skyrocketing costs of a four-year education over the past several decades are creating tremendous anxiety for parents and students, who are asking themselves how they can afford a college degree. The result for many is to postpone or abandon entirely their dream of getting their four-year degree. In addition to the cost, the time it takes to complete a degree has also risen. In many cases, it is taking five, even six, years to earn a four-year degree. Ultimately, what many students carry away from their college years is a crushing load of debt, a burden which may lead them to postpone dreams of getting married, having a family, or buying a home.

At the same time that many students are tempted to bypass a college degree and enter directly into the workforce, employers find they need greater and greater numbers of skilled and educated workers to compete in today’s increasingly technological world. Driven by the same mission of service, teaching, and healing that brought a small group of Benedictine Sisters to Bismarck, Dakota Territory in 1878, officials at the University of Mary began to look more closely for a solution to these challenges and the impending crisis they signal.

After careful research and deliberation, including input from faculty and administrators system wide, the University of Mary launched a revolutionary degree path in November 2014, one that gives students the option to earn a bachelor’s degree in 2.6 years — Year-Round Campus.

Leaving the four-year degree option intact for those who want it, Year-Round Campus enables students to earn a traditional degree with less time, cost and debt by offering full summer semesters. Much like the GI Bill revolutionized higher education following World War II, bringing a college degree for the first time to broad swaths of Americans, Year-Round Campus is certain to change the landscape of college education for decades to come.

Growing Tomorrow’s Workforce Faster

For entrepreneurs like Jim Roers of Fargo, founder of Roers Companies Year-Round Campus offers companies like Roers the opportunity to start grooming successful employees much earlier in their career path.

“Much of our success lies in our ability to groom students and young professionals. Year-Round Campus enables us to begin that process much sooner, which benefits everyone involved,” said Roers. “Because graduates of the program will be years ahead in their development, so will our business and, most importantly, so will our customers. We’re very excited about the opportunities Year-Round Campus provides us.”

Earnings, Savings Advantage

For those looking to get a head start on their career, Year-Round Campus offers more than just an earlier graduation date.

“It dramatically increases the student’s long-term earnings and savings potential,” said Monsignor James Shea, president of the University of Mary.

“Our studies show a potential lifetime financial benefit of over $322,000 for those earning a bachelor’s degree and over $529,000 for those getting their master’s. Granted, every individual situation is unique, but when you factor in the chance to earn, save and invest — more and sooner — you can see the difference Year-Round Campus makes.”

To learn more, visit YearRoundCampus.com.
When Karly Palczewski of Bowman sat down with her parents to explore the option of Year-Round Campus at the University of Mary, they were as excited as she was to have this choice available.

“Ultimately, the decision was up to me,” Karly said, “but they both felt like this was an awesome opportunity for me to save money and get done sooner, if that was what I wanted.”

Karly attends Bowman County High School and will be an incoming freshman at the university. She is the daughter of Ron and Sheila Palczewski.

“My dad thought this was a great opportunity that he wished was available when he was in school,” she said.

Choosing Year-Round Campus was an important conversation that Sarah Frank also had with her parents, Conald Frank and Lori Frank. Sarah is from Foxfield, Colorado, and attends Grandview High School.

Like Karly’s family discussion, Sarah’s parents also agreed that Year-Round Campus was, in the end, Sarah’s decision.

“It is a huge decision,” she said, “and I felt like I needed the help and guidance of my parents.

“They love the idea,” Sarah said. “They think it is an amazing opportunity that I should take advantage of.”

Karly learned about Year-Round Campus from her University of Mary admissions representative, Alexandria Bauer, and the university’s admissions materials.

When making her decision, Karly decided this option worked best for her because she is planning to pursue a master’s degree.

“I am planning to major in marketing and receive my Master’s in Business Administration. I would like to become a marketing manager at a larger company or advertising firm,” Karly said.

“The Year-Round Campus option will allow me to finish my schooling about two years earlier than traditional schooling, which will get me into the job force that much quicker,” she said.

Also, she said, by going to school year around, “you open yourself up to summer internships and job opportunities that I wouldn’t be able to pursue in my small hometown.

“If I can work for a company and assure them I will be done with school in half the time, I think it will give any student taking the year-round path an advantage.”

Sarah and her family came from Colorado to take the university tour and found it informative and individually tailored to her interests, she said.

“During the tour we talked to a few people about the occupational therapy program, which included the possibility of getting a doctorate degree in six and half years,” Sarah said.

“I was very interested in saving money and time with this program that involved Year-Round Campus.

“I decided that this option would work best for me because of the fact that a doctorate degree takes so long to achieve, and the Year-Round Campus would save me time, so that I can continue toward that degree.

“The Year-Round Campus would be a huge advantage to me because of how much time I have to spend in school to reach my goals, and I feel as though a Year-Round Campus would keep me motivated rather than taking long breaks where I could potentially get off track.”

– Sarah Frank

Sarah is planning to major in occupational therapy after first getting her undergraduate degree in exercise science.

“I have been accepted into the occupational therapy program already, and I am incredibly excited to be a part of that program,” she said.
The University of Mary is dedicated to educating the whole person — body, mind and soul.

Founded in and guided by the Benedictine values of community, hospitality, moderation, prayer, respect for persons, and service, the university seeks to instill a vibrant spiritual dimension throughout a student’s experience here — in the curriculum, in the campus community, in athletics, and in a rich spectrum of spiritual opportunities.

Our joy is to see those students become committed servant leaders, carrying their talents and these values with them as they go forward into the world.

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

—Mark Twain
Q. Will the summer semester cost more?

Yes! Our campus will operate in the summer in a very similar way to the traditional fall and spring semesters, including the amenities our students enjoy.

Q. Do traditional scholarships still apply?

Yes! All merit-based scholarships may still be received for the summer.

Q. How will I benefit from this quick completion program?

There are so many ways that students will benefit from this program. While the long-term financial benefits are best described using our total financial benefits chart or calling us for a personal consultation, here are some quick points to consider:

1. Early completion adds an extra year in the workforce, meaning an extra year of salary.
2. That extra year produces incredible value in terms of annual "cost of living" increases during employment, as well as compound interest in 401k contributions.
3. Students benefit by not incurring an extra year of tuition increases, as they complete their degree under two annual tuition adjustments rather than three.
4. With more open summer beds as the program grows, Year-Round students will take advantage of discounted housing costs and priority choices, along with many other benefits.

Q. Do Year-Round students have to sacrifice all their vacation?

Students in the Year-Round Campus will still enjoy vacations throughout the year. In addition to an extended Christmas break and built-in breaks at times such as Easter and Thanksgiving, there will be generous breaks on either side of the summer term. In addition, summer courses will be constructed in block format, resulting in added flexibility for students who have important events in the midst of the summer term.

Q. Can I opt out of the program if I decide it's not for me?

Yes. Year-Round Campus students can opt for a traditional four-year model, and we will work with them to develop a degree plan that still minimizes their time to completion.

Q. Are athletes still eligible for NCAA Division II Athletics?

NCAA Division II Student Athletes can use the summer term to decrease their time to completion, perhaps even allowing them to obtain a master’s degree prior to exhausting their eligibility. However, student athletes will take less than 12 credits in the summer, so as not to use a semester of athletic eligibility.

Q. Will this benefit athletes planning to be at Mary during the summer?

Due to the highly competitive nature of Division II athletics, many student-athletes already stay at Mary over the summer, working out with their respective teams, and taking a class and working a part-time job. This program will allow these student-athletes a more robust and vibrant experience.

Q. Will work be available on campus?

We anticipate many of our students working on our campus—or perhaps in a meaningful work or internship experience in the Bismarck-Mandan community—over the summer term.

Q. Can I still study in Rome or Peru?

Yes! Students in Year-Round Campus will absolutely have the opportunity to encounter history and faith in the Eternal City with a 5-week program in Rome. In addition, students can work with advisors to investigate our study abroad opportunities in Peru or else where around the globe.

Q. Will amenities be available in the summer?

Yes! Our campus will operate in the summer in a very similar way to the traditional fall and spring semesters, including the amenities our students enjoy.

Q. Does this program only start at fall semesters?

Most Year-Round Campus students will still begin their coursework in the fall semester following their final year of high school. While some students may begin in spring due to various circumstances, our advisors will work with them individually to set up a degree plan that best utilizes the year-round campus model and decreases time to completion.

Q. Are housing and meals available?

The summer semester will be treated just like the fall and spring, offering students full housing and meal plans to meet their needs. The other great thing about Year-Round Campus is you’ll also get these summer amenities at a discounted rate.

Q. What minimum course load will I need?

Students in the Year-Round model will maintain an average course load for nearly every term. Average load is 15-16 credits.

Q. Will all my required classes be available?

To ensure that the summer courses have sufficient numbers, the courses offered will be high-demand courses in the liberal arts or those required for multiple academic programs.

Q. Can transfer students participate?

Many transfer students will benefit from the Year-Round Campus model. While a transfer student may not be able to complete in less than three years, nearly any student could utilize this program to reduce their time to degree completion and receive financial benefit.
A bundant career opportunities will always await University of Mary nursing graduates, said Dr. Glenda Reemts. Reemts, who chairs the Nursing Division of the university’s School of Health Sciences, said that the great competition today for nursing graduates is an impelling need that Year-Round Campus can address.

“There will always be job opportunities for our candidates,” she said. “If we can put graduates out faster, we are meeting our mission.”

As the Baby Boom generation ages into retirement, nurses of that generation will begin retiring with it in greater and greater numbers, she said. Expanding needs of the geriatric population will require more nurses at long term care facilities, and all these compete with acute care to attract nurses, she said.

In addition to nursing students of traditional college age, the Year-Round curriculum is perfect for older-than-average students, or those entering a second career later in life, Reemts said.

“Parents (are among those) that want to get their education,” she said. For nursing students who have children and family obligations, Year-Round Campus gets them through the program in a faster time frame, which is attractive to those to whom time is very important, she said.

At the same time that the need for nurses is accelerating, standards for education are trending upward. Nationally, nursing groups are setting the expectation that within a few years, 80 percent of nurses should be educated at the baccalaureate level, Reemts said.

“We want our nurses to be prepared to practice at the full extent of their capacities,” she said.

In North Dakota and other rural areas, the university can prepare nurses to practice in those areas, pulling from populations who may be part of a farm couple, whose family obligations make it difficult to go to school far from home.

“Year-Round curriculum gets them through sooner,” she said.

“A number of factors are driving innovations like Year-Round Campus, not the least of which is the dynamic economy here in North Dakota,” said Dr. John Warford, Dean of the university’s Gary Tharaldson School of Business.

“Employers in the Peace Garden state are more than eager for well-formed, job-ready graduates,” he said. Business leaders have repeatedly said they want professionals both knowledgeable as well as informed consciences.

“The University of Mary finds itself at that critical point where preparation meets opportunity,” Warford said.

Year-Round Campus offers the same serious education and formation for which the University of Mary is known, but at less cost, in less time and with a greater long-term return, he said.

“Year-Round Campus is a ‘win-win-win’ — a win for students and their parents, a win for employers, and a win for the university’s mission to serve the needs of the people in this region and beyond.”
Year-Round Campus ‘sets us apart’

Brian Ritter
President and CEO
Bismarck-Mandan
Development Association

“We have to be very selective,” he said, “targeting alumni, expatriates, people from communities with climates similar to ours.”

Or, Ritter said, “grow our own.”

Right now, there are 8,000 college students in the community, and it’s a disservice to overlook what colleges and universities can bring to a community.

The Year-Round Campus option at Mary is a huge advantage, he said — “it’s keeping us going forward.”

To graduate in 2.6 years, to come out in less time, with less loan debt, and to enter the job market faster, Ritter said “is critical to filling those 4,000 positions.”

Highly motivated students can carry a reasonable class load and still get a jump-start on their careers, he said.

When Ritter overviews the critical employees needed today, he ticks off the top needs immediately — nursing, information technology and computer information systems, and engineering.

“Our healthcare community is growing so quickly, the community has a growing technology section, and engineers, whether chemical, electrical, or mechanical, are in high demand.”

Year-Round Campus, with its 2.6 years to a bachelor’s degree, “it what sets our community apart, if we are competing for students on a nationwide basis,” he said.

University of Mary in Bismarck, N.D., will offer a “Year-Round Campus” program allowing students to complete their undergraduate degrees in a little more than two-and-a-half years, the University recently announced. The program is the “first of its kind” and serves as a “new and radical pathway” to receive a full college education while saving time and money, according to the U-Mary news release.

University President Monsignor James Shea reportedly called the program an “innovative and student-centered response to changing dynamics of today’s higher education market.”

“It also dramatically increases the student’s long-term earnings and savings potential while meeting the growing demand for educated, and work-ready employees,”Mgr. Shea said in the release.

The traditional programs will remain intact and as excellent as before” for students who wish to pursue them, Monsignor James Shea explained in the release. “But all the evidence tells us that yesterday’s model will not be the norm of the future. In fact, what we are doing with Year-Round Campus is establishing the new norm.”

“We think that's going to give students a great opportunity to get out into the world sooner. It shortens your college experience, but I think that's a good thing to give up to pursue your dreams.”

He also said local businesses have said they will fund scholarships for students who decide to finish faster, because workforce needs are so dire.

A condensed education is “so attractive to them that they’re willing to fund this,” he said.

BISMARCK Tribune

BISMARCK – Students at the University of Mary next school year will have the option to take year-round classes, allowing them to complete a bachelor’s degree in as little as 2.6 years or a master’s degree in four years.

Monsignor James Shea, the school’s president, announced the plan Thursday morning, citing the need for a solution to the high cost of attending college, student loan debt and workforce demand.

“Year-round campus offers the same course load and the same study pace of traditional four-year college degrees by utilizing the full, vibrant summer semesters,” Shea said.

Shea also said students would save money taking classes year-round. Employers eager to hire more U-Mary graduates have promised to fund scholarships specifically for year-round students, he said.
NEW University of Mary CHI Health Scholarships

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