

LE MOYNE **DOLPHINS**

INSIDE THE



**A DISTINCTLY JESUIT APPROACH
TO INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS AT
LE MOYNE COLLEGE**

Matt Davidson, Ph.D.,
with Matt Bassett and Vlad Khmelkov, Ph.D.

INSIDE THE L



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By Matt Davidson, Ph.D., with Matt Bassett and Vlad Khmelkov, Ph.D.

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Special Thanks To:

The Le Moyne College coaches, administrators, staff, student-athletes, parents and alumni.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Version: 20140813

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INTRODUCTION

Letter from Matt Bassett

Assistant Vice President and Director of intercollegiate Athletics

I am so proud and grateful to be sharing the collective voices of so many wonderfully dedicated individuals that helped to create this deeply meaningful approach to our athletic experiences here at Le Moyne. “Inside the L — a distinctly Jesuit intercollegiate athletic experience at Le Moyne College”, represents all of our stakeholder groups—coaches, student athletes, administrators, parents, alumni, boosters, and the Le Moyne campus community—all of whom care deeply about how we are delivering on our commitment to be a “nationally premier Division II athletic program in the Jesuit tradition”.

We began this process back in the fall of 2011 by engaging our coaches, administrators, and student athletes with the question, “What does a distinctly Jesuit intercollegiate athletic experience mean to you and what would it look like in action?” We conducted lectures, seminars, team and individual meetings, while inviting experts from both on and off campus to help us search for answers.

We did not set out to simply recite a mantra replicating the values inherent to Jesuit education. Our deepest aspirations were to translate those values into the daily activities and actions of our athletic community. Once we began to uncover and to more fully embrace the values and traditions of Jesuit education, we quickly came to understand that many of those values and traditions aligned perfectly with the most aspirational goals of intercollegiate athletics.

What emerged for us over time was the realization, in very practical terms, that we were defining a very distinctive culture. “Inside the L” has become the framework for a deeply intentional, shared, and sustainable culture for Le Moyne College athletics. We have developed a culture based on the most fundamental Jesuit ideals, translated into the highest aspirational goals of intercollegiate athletic participation, which can be monitored and measured for predictability and success.

I am thankful to so many people for their willingness to join in this exploration and ultimate discovery. I would like to thank the coaches, administrators, and student athletes, who did so much of the heavy lifting in unearthing the Jesuit ‘artifacts’ that stand as our core values. I am particularly thankful for the amazing commitment and contributions of our Head Coaches Council who volunteered countless hours of their personal time - at any and all hours of the day - to make sure we would get this right. I would like to acknowledge Roger Stackpoole, Fr. David McCallum, Fr. Dan Mullhauser, Jeanne Murphy, Jennifer Fabian and Dr. Vladimir Khmelkov for their support and dedication to this process.

Lastly, I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to Dr. Matthew Davidson, President of the Institute for Excellence & Ethics. Matt and his team at IEE joined us in the fall of 2013. It was when IEE came on board that we were able to more fully articulate the depth of our desires to create something highly special—highly distinctive. Matt has gifts and talents in abundance as a facilitator. He has become one of us as he guides our conversations, considerations, and reflections on how to deliver a distinctly Jesuit athletic experience here at Le Moyne. I simply can’t say enough about his commitment to us, his leadership for us, and his friendship with us.

“Inside the L” for me, has become a vision realized. It is a stake in the ground that says, This is what we believe in! This is what we are inspired by! We share a passion to live it! We will be unwavering in our commitment to sustain it! We are....

All In.

All One.

All Dolphins!

With Gratitude,

Matt Bassett



Assistant Vice President and
Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

Letter from Fr. David McCallum, S.J.

Executive Assistant to the President for Mission Integration

Inside the L is a thoughtful and illuminating inquiry into what makes Le Moyne College's Division II athletic program distinctive and special. As good questions often do, it prompted an investigation, research, and process of discovery that involved the input of student-athletes, coaches, alumni, parents, and a number of other members of our community. What did we discover? We found that what makes us a premier Division II athletics program is identity and sense of direction that derive from our Jesuit, Catholic background.

The sense of purpose, meaning, and the “ways of proceeding” that guide us came from a deep reflection on our experience of what inspires our desire for excellence in athletics and scholarship, how we desire to treat one another as players, coaches, and educators, how we want to define success, and how we seek to realize our full potential.

The attention to our experience, deep desires, motivations and aspirations is *Ignatian* in the sense that it is the way of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. While the language used to express this experience is rooted in the Catholic tradition, there is also a way in which what is offered here transcends any one religious tradition, and indeed, our hope is that whatever your background, you will find resonance with what is presented here.

Through the leadership of Matt Basset, our Assistant Vice President for Athletics, and the support and consultation of Matt Davidson, director of the Institute for Excellence & Ethics, this handbook proposes a foundation for the intentional culture that the Le Moyne Athletics Program aspires toward in the Jesuit and Ignatian spirit. In this book, we hope that you will find inspiration, guidance, and encouragement to seek out and experience what the *L* stands for as part of the Le Moyne team!

Fr. David McCallum, S.J.

Executive Assistant to the President for Mission Integration

Letter from Matt Davidson

President, Institute for Excellence & Ethics (IEE)

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The journey is the reward.—Chinese Proverb

In August of 2013 I joined the athletics department family at Le Moyne College (LCA) in my role as President of the Institute for Excellence & Ethics (IEE) to assist them along a journey initiated a few years before. The journey was founded on a desire to explore more deeply what it was that made (or could more fully make) the experience of Le Moyne student-athletes unique, powerful, and transformative. In my own words, we sought to understand the “Secret Ingredient” inside the Le Moyne College Athletics experience. By mission, the athletic department aspires to be a “***nationally premier Division II athletic department in the Jesuit tradition.***” I understood this to mean: student and athlete, nationally premier in the classroom and in athletic competition, AND rooted in the Catholic Jesuit tradition—not a class you studied while at Le Moyne as student-athlete, but a Jesuit way of being a student-athlete.

I often framed our work together using the words of a long-time colleague, arguing that the goal of our work was to “***more intentionally practice what we preach and preach what we practice.***” In other words, seeking alignment between the espoused values and lived behaviors (practice what you preach), and being able to communicate, educate, and motivate others regarding why things are done the way they are (preach what you practice). The department wasn’t looking for IEE to come and fix an acute problem, but rather to assist as they tried to fulfill their deepest aspirations: (1) to ensure that how LCA achieved its mission was consistent with best practice for achieving excellence with integrity; and, (2) to ensure that they would be better able to communicate the animating theory, practices and outcomes to all stakeholders—within the department, within the college, within the wider community of alumnae, and *especially* to prospective new department hires, prospective student-athletes and their families.

Over the course of the 2013 Fall semester we spent time utilizing the IEE’s *Intentional Culture Conversation* process to identify the drivers and preventers of the LCA mission and vision. Those conversations produced a blueprint for things to start, stop, continue and/or improve within the department. We looked for alignment across and within stakeholder groups for things that could best enhance the mission, including policies, practices,

procedures, and facilities. We knew that certain changes would take place over time, but that some changes could and should take place immediately. And, we knew that some results required further dialogue.

One essential area requiring further dialogue was a shared belief that they struggled as a department to connect the “student-athlete development mission” to the “distinctly Jesuit mission.” In other words, if you take the mission as separate end-goals—nationally premier (1) student, (2) athlete, and (3) Jesuit—you could imagine these as three separate goals, each with their own metrics determining success, and means for achieving success. However, what Athletic Director, Matt Bassett, envisioned was a more integrated solution, namely: A nationally premier student-athlete experience built on the Jesuit Foundation as both the way (i.e., means) and the end-goal. In this vision it’s not that the professor is responsible for student, the coach for athlete, and the priest for Jesuit. Rather, in and through the experience of athletics at Le Moyne the coaches and staff of the department would assume responsibility for student-athlete AND Jesuit mission goals. While they aspired to this vision, they did not feel it was being consistently implemented or effectively communicated.

LCA coaches and staff were not resistant to the fuller and more challenging mission they were being challenged to assume. However, they did struggle to understand the challenge in terms of two very real questions: *what’s in it for me to get?* And, *what’s in me to give?* They authentically needed to see and understand how their day-to-day struggle to win games and championships and achieve excellence as an athletic department—their core mission—would be positively impacted by a distinctly Jesuit approach for doing so. And, they wanted to know how they were to understand themselves as conduits for the Jesuit mission, even though they felt unworthy by experience and formation for the responsibility. So at the outset I would say coaches were open, not resistant, but wanting to translate this big vision into a fuller understanding of how it might play out in the realities of their day-to-day world.

It was conceivable that the *Intentional Culture Conversation* process could have revealed many outcomes that would have led to a different state of readiness. For example, it could have revealed that the administrators of the department weren’t on board, that the coaches weren’t on board, or for that matter, that any of the stakeholders groups could have fought with the fundamental assertion that the LCA approach should NOT aspire to be pre-

mier, or that it should NOT use the Jesuit foundation as the way of achieving it. However, that was not what emerged. There wasn't resistance to the big vision; rather, there were some very important questions being raised at the intersection between the philosophical and the practical—where the mission to develop premier student-athletes was linked pragmatically to the “distinctly Jesuit approach.” For example, we heard in the *Intentional Culture Conversations* stakeholders asking things like:

- ***What does it mean to be premier and Jesuit?*** Can you be premier in athletics and academics and do it according to Jesuit values? Don't good guys (and gals) finish last? Do we really aspire to be premier, or is this a nice place where as long as we have good kids and do no harm, then good enough is good enough? Within the context of this courageous conversation amongst our stakeholders we saw potential connectivity to explore within the Jesuit notion of *magis*.
- ***What does it mean to care for whole-person development—mind, body, and spirit—and to aspire for excellence?*** Can this be done? Coaches have to push and prod and seek to pull out more from student-athletes in order to achieve excellence in athletics and academics. Is this kind of love and care aligned with or at odds with Jesuit values? And from this area of debate and dialogue, we saw potential connectivity to explore with the Jesuit notion of *cura personalis*.
- ***What does it mean to be a teammate, a leader, an individual committed to the collective good?*** We want premier coaches and student-athletes, individuals with a passion for greatness. However, collectively we needed individuals with a commitment to others, a commitment to “service above self,” a commitment to be the best while being servant to the least among us on our team, in our community, and in our world. Within this set of questions we saw connectivity to the Jesuit ideal of men and women built for others.

It was these points of interest and intersection—as well as others—that lead Matt Bassett and me to conclude at the close of the *Intentional Culture Conversation* process, around December of 2013, that we needed to translate the Jesuit building blocks into an accessible form and then create a space for dialogue and inquiry that would ultimately connect those foundations back to some fuller and more distinctly Jesuit ways of thinking and being as a department. We hoped that these ways of thinking and being would be

helpful in solving the day-to-day challenges before coaches as they sought to achieve their goals for and with student-athletes.

Here's the process that ensued. For each of the topics identified, Matt Bassett and I would meet and discuss some of our big ideas, some essential issues and angles that we believed should be included for consideration. I would then go and take a crack at creating what we call at IEE *Excellence & Ethics Learning Modules* (EELM's, pronounced *EE-lim*). These reflections were designed to integrate the religious, philosophical, cultural and psychological underpinnings of the topic—but to do so with the intent of accessibility for coaches coaching in the real-world of college athletics. I'd submit for review and often Matt would offer feedback and suggestions of what had been omitted, over-played, or perhaps needed to be simplified and clarified. I'd revise and eventually we would share out for the coaches to read in advance of our in-person meetings. Participants would read in advance and then we'd gather for discussion.

From January through May monthly—and often bi-monthly—we assembled a group of coaches and administrators (see the list included for names and role), early in the morning for a dialogue about the content presented. It was in these conversations that we challenged the content, and each other, often around the points of intersection where our mission ideals met a real-world example. These discussions made clear the difficulty of finding *optimal implementation* of the ideas amid the real-world circumstances, our different capabilities and sensibilities, and within the emerging expectations to which we were committing ourselves. The meetings, which lasted 2 hours or more, were amazing grace-filled moments, where more than ideas were shared: people shared their hearts, their best and their worst experiences, their convictions and their uncertainties. I had a sense throughout that by grace we had created a sacred space, a place of trust—trust both of the people in the conversation and the overall process. We truly did not know where the conversation would lead, and yet we were always surprised by grace when it went someplace different and better than we could have imagined.

From the reflections and conversations we simultaneously harvested and worked on the creation of three separate but related deliverables:

1. A set of *optimal performance indicators and practices* around each topic. These provided the indicators of what these topics look like in action, what we think, and feel and do that are indicators or manifestations of this distinctly Jesuit approach to athletics.

2. A customized *Inside the L Culture of Excellence & Ethics Assessment (ITL-CEEA)* survey, adapted and customized from IEE's assessment for sport to measure the core elements of the Jesuit approach identified in our conversations, and becoming the first element to gather data at the team level on the lived experience of these ideas for a data-driven approach to planning and improvement (see page 76).
3. An *Inside the L Touchstone*, crafted as a distillation of the deepest ideas animating the overall vision, and designed to be a living articulation of the mission and the cornerstone of efforts moving forward to ensure that we consistently practice what we preach and preach what we practice (see page 74).

It's important to remember that these reflections were meant to be the definitive authority on all things Jesuit. They were intended to translate deep, substantive, and long-standing Jesuit ideas into language that would resonate for our shared task—to create a Premier Division II student-athlete experience in the Jesuit tradition. These were never meant to be the end of the conversation, but rather the starting point. The last two topics in particular were two of the most challenging to represent in a way that was sufficiently authentic and substantial, and yet not overwhelming or threatening. All of these reflections go after topics which formed the foundation of the *Inside the L Touchstone*. As such they will be an ongoing source of action and reflection; hopefully for a long time to come. These topics will continue to be translated into more and different forms to enhance the department's ongoing education and communication efforts. Thus, we hope these will be the beginning of a long and fruitful process of action and reflection in the quest to realize the vision around which we collectively united ourselves.

I personally want to thank Fr. David McCallum, Director of Mission and Identity, who first connected Matt and me, and whose trust in us empowered us to find ourselves in the Jesuit vision, rather than simply giving to us what he thought it should be. As we shared the reflections and updates with Fr. David, we often felt like students handing our paper to the master practitioner. Fr. David's unwavering trust in us and in the Jesuit mission and vision is something I will forever respect and admire.

I want to thank my professors and mentors at both The University of Scranton (where I earned my undergraduate degrees) and Le Moyne College (where I earned my masters degree) for the foundations they provided. Not just the religion and philosophy, but the skills of listening, communicating,

and leading—these were the tools that they provided me, which I in turn utilized in this work. I am truly grateful.

I also want to thank Matt Bassett for his leadership in the creation of these reflections and the shaping of our overall process. I truly believe that he was a faithful steward to the Jesuit mission, caring very little about the credit or recognition he would receive, wanting only to get it authentically right. Matt would provide just the right challenge or nudge when he thought we just weren't quite there. We trusted each other to a point that neither was willing to force the other on an idea of direction. When we weren't sure, we stepped back, prayed a bit, and took another crack at it. I can't fully express my respect for Matt's leadership: he's a servant leader who truly aspires to deliver excellence with integrity for every member of the Le Moyne College Athletics family.

Finally, I want to thank the staff, administrators, and coaches who gave so fully of themselves to this work. An educator friend of my mine is fond of saying, "you can't teach where you won't go." I believe this. You can't teach about vulnerability if you aren't willing to make yourself vulnerable. You can teach about compassion, if you don't suffer with others yourself. Well, I can tell you those who participated in the *Intentional Culture Conversations*, in the formal discussions around the reflections, and the informal conversations around the corridors of the athletic department will be able to teach about these concepts, because they allowed themselves to travel to new places, to explore new ideas, to challenge themselves, and to expose themselves. I will forever have a vision in my mind of us gathering outside on those cold spring mornings in upstate New York, to begin yet another authentic and courageous conversation about what it could mean to even more fully create a Premier Division II student-athlete experience the Jesuit way. Thank you.

For what is good and right and useful in these reflections, to God be the glory. For what is missing, not right, not clear enough or simply not useful, I take responsibility for and recommit to make it right and better in our ongoing work together.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Matthew L. Davidson, Ph.D.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew L. Davidson".



MAGIS



Excellence with integrity. A relentless
discontent for continuous improvement, never
accepting anything less than my personal
best.



“A precious crown is reserved in heaven for those who perform all their actions with all the diligence of which they are capable; for it is not sufficient to do our part well; it must be done more than well.”

~ Saint Ignatius of Loyola

“Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives — choice, not chance, determines your destiny.”

~ Aristotle



Magis: Excellence with integrity

By Matt Davidson

excellenceandethics.org

From everyone to whom much has been given much will be required; and from the one to whom more has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.
~ Luke 12:48

One of the seminal ideas in the Ignatian Tradition is the notion of *magis* (Latin for *more*). This idea is a fertile ground for anyone engaged in education in the Jesuit tradition, especially for coaches and all involved in athletics. *Magis* embodies quality, continuous improvement and what is often described as “a restless discontent” with mediocrity and the status quo. For me, the simplest translation of *Magis* is excellence. In my opinion, if you’re a Catholic Jesuit institution and you have an athletic program, that program and all in it must be committed to excellence. If you’re satisfied with good enough, if you’re happy to show up and be mediocre, you’re simply not aspiring to or modeling *magis*.

Magis empowers coaches to push, challenge and stretch student-athletes. It evokes for me biblical connectivity to the parable of the talents (c.f., Matthew 25: 14-30), where God has given each person talents—not coins, but literally gifts and abilities—and he asks that we be good stewards who develop the full potential that lies within our gifts. This certainly speaks to student-athletes who are both student and athlete, asked to develop and deliver on their talents for both. However, it also speaks with equal if not more responsibility to the coaches, trainers, and athletic administrators who are entrusted with the development of student-athletes. God has entrusted these human talents to their care and much will be demanded.

Our work at IEE is deeply aligned with the idea of *magis* (the Jesuit priests and professors of my formation would probably argue that our work at IEE grew out of my Jesuit formation—and I wouldn’t disagree). In our efforts to create high functioning, optimally performing individuals and organizations, we seek to uncover the catalyst, which we argue is character. We argue

that optimal performance is rooted in a balance of what we call “performance character” and “moral character.” Character is most simply defined as “values in action.” High performing individuals and teams put into action performance character values like work ethic, positive attitude, grit, and toughness. They also put into action moral character values like teamwork, leadership, fairness, kindness, joy and gratitude. The best athletes have both; the best coaches recruit for and develop both.

Moral and performance character integrated together, balanced, whole. This is where our understanding of integrity comes in—integrity, from the Latin, *integras*, meaning integrated or wholeness. A person of integrity has BOTH moral and performance character. An athletic program dedicated to the Jesuit, Ignatian mission and vision delivers *excellence with integrity*. This is what I would argue is the fullest and best translation of *magis: excellence with integrity*. In the graphic below we present what we call the values map, depicting performance and moral character values that operate in an integrated way in an ideal Catholic, Jesuit, athletic environment.



In our work striving for optimal human performance the secret ingredient is activated when we find the right balance of moral and performance character—that is excellence with integrity. But here’s the challenge of realizing *magis*, or excellence with integrity: balance. *Magis*, I believe, strives for the perfect balance, not too much, not too little. If the weight of our foot becomes disproportionately tilted to performance character, we work harder, not smarter and begin to erode the humanity, approaching athletes as means to an end rather than as ends. If we let the weight of our foot slip to the moral character side in neglect of performance character, we lose the “restless discontent with mediocrity”; we become complacent and settle.

Too often interpreted as simply more—more is better, work harder, more, more, more. When coaches and athletes fall prey to the *magis* meaning “more, more, more”, there is no life in the balance, and burnout, fatigue, stress, anxiety, and lack of joy result. (Full disclosure: finding excellence with integrity, balance, *magis*, is a personal struggle). Recently, Fr. David McCallum spoke to me of the corollary term to the idea of *magis*, which is *satis*—meaning enough or optimal.

In training for athletic excellence—and human excellence in any field of endeavor—finding optimal is, I believe, the master virtue. Pushing for limits, getting out of the comfort zone, without slipping over into burnout, injury, and stress. Pushing for excellence without being plagued by perfectionism. *Magis* with *satis*, excellence with integrity: or what I’ve recently been calling excellegance—excellence that is elegant, powerful and beautiful. In our work with diverse individuals and organizations what I know is this: achieving excellence with integrity is a most difficult, much needed, widely sought after commodity. Teachers, coaches, parents, friends and colleagues that I know and serve are craving this, and they are deeply impacted by the excesses and deficiencies of the other alternatives. So, yes, the idea of *magis* is hundreds of years old but it is no less relevant for today’s coaches and athletes. Student-athletes (and their parents) want to win, they want to experience excellence; they want to have their talents and abilities fully developed. But they also want and need joy, love, and balance.

As coaches within a department grounded in notions of *magis* we must be able to sell it, since like any good sales and marketing we have a product and we must connect that to our “customers” needs. Much of what is happening today in athletics tends to miss optimal going instead for excess or deficiency. I believe student-athletes and parents are tired of the way we’ve been doing sport. I believe they want an experience that delivers *magis*—excellence with integrity. I believe this is a product that has a target market. But in a day when so many would settle for less, we must convince them they care about more. We must connect our unique and distinct idea of *magis*, a deep spiritual if not religious ideal to a felt universal need.

Regardless of their religion or ideology human beings crave happiness. And, as Abraham Maslow said, “If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.” One way that you know you’re missing the mark on *magis* (by excess or deficiency) is unhappiness. But here’s the real kicker: *magis* is the end-goal and the pathway! So coaches must live what they want to give: “I want you to have *magis*, therefore I must coach with *magis*.”

But how? How do we avoid the excesses and deficiencies that lead to so much “weeping and gnashing of teeth”? How do we realize optimal performance, excellence with integrity, *magis*? It begins, I think, with some deep reflection on some very practical realities.

Excellence & Ethics™ Tools

MAGIS - Excellence with Integrity



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

MAGIS Optimal Performance Self-Study

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... striving to continuously improve.		
2) ... pushing oneself outside of comfort zone.		
3) ... learning from and letting go of mistakes, set-backs and failures while focusing on performance improvement.		
4) ... using constructive criticism to improve.		
5) ... working on areas of weaknesses.		
6) ... working hard and smart—especially when things are not easy.		
7) ... being open to suggestions for improvement.		
8) ... exhibiting the positive attitude and persistent effort needed to continuously improve.		
9) ... seeking external help as needed.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when the way you put *magis* into action was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to put *magis* into action in a way that would be more ideal:

MAGIS Optimal Performance Coaching Practices

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as 'last month', 'last quarter', or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the 'thumbs-down/thumbs-up' line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... motivating and challenging growth and improvement.		
2) ... demanding excellence.		
3) ... communicating in a way that promotes growth and improvement.		
4) ... communicating in a way that respects and motivates.		
5) ... NOT belittling, demeaning, or embarrassing.		
6) ... providing clear steps for improvement.		
7) ... providing feedback that includes both praise and polish (feedback for improvement).		
8) ... helping to learn from mistakes.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when you were able to teach/model *magis* in a way that was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to teach/model *magis* in a way that would be more ideal:

Reflections

1. How do we *market and communicate* the *magis* brand of athletics?

2. How do we *recruit* for parents and student-athletes who desire a *magis* experience?

3. What in our current practices *support and enhance* the experience of *magis*—excellence with integrity?

4. What in our current practices *contradicts, interferes, or undermines* the experience of *magis*?



CURA PERSONALIS



Tough Love! Total care for the development of
the whole person – mind, body, and spirit.



I have come to a frightening conclusion,
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.

I possess tremendous power
to make a young person's life miserable or joyous.
I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.

In all situations it is my response
that determines whether a crisis will be escalated or resolved,
and a young person left to feel humiliated or humanized.

I am "Coach".

~Anonymous

"At the end of the day, it's not the wins and the championships that
you appreciate the most, it's the relationships with the players that
you develop."

~ Pat Summit



Cura Personalis: Tough love.

By Matt Davidson

excellenceandethics.org

Previously we have explored *magis* as a first cornerstone of education of student-athletes in the Ignatian tradition. We discussed a notion of *magis* as *excellence with integrity* and presented the values map associated with this concept as the *magis* visual shown below.



In laying out a coaching approach rooted in *magis*, we immediately began considering what we might call “optimal coaching practices” for the development of *magis*. If as coaches we desire to create a culture of *magis*, a culture of continuous improvement and of “a restless discontent” with mediocrity and the status quo, then how do we go about it so that the means justify the ends? Reflecting on strategies for creating a *magis* culture immediately draws into focus a second cornerstone of Ignatian tradition—*cura*

personalis, or care of the individual person with an interest in and an advocacy for their unique potential. So we aspire for excellence with integrity, whole-person development, continuous improvement; BUT, we do so within a philosophical approach that is rooted in love and care for the person. This approach is not on the face of it without some obvious tensions. We see an awful lot of coaching practices today that seemingly go after excellence, but do so with tactics that are NOT loving, or at best are based on a warped “ends-justify-the-means, whatever-doesn’t-kill-you-will-make-you-better” philosophy.

In our previous discussions of *magis* I argued that an athletic program in a Catholic Jesuit institution, and all in it, must be committed to excellence, and that a commitment to *magis* empowers coaches to push, challenge and stretch student-athletes. *Magis* demands performance character values from coaches and student-athletes. However, as our *magis* values map above indicates, excellence (or performance character) must be balanced by integrity (moral character). This is true for the end-goals, or distinguishing mark of a Jesuit student-athlete that we seek to instill, as well as the means by which we must seek to achieve those goals. The experience must be integrated and whole. We cannot beat you down, haze you physically and psychologically in pursuit of performance character needed for excellence—and then offer you a religion or philosophy class on moral character values. That doesn’t have integrity.

An approach to student formation that is rooted in *cura personalis* is an experience rooted in love. “I love you, therefore I must demand high standards from you, but I must do so in a way that honors your humanity—and your divinity.” This is no easy thing to achieve; in fact it’s very tough. That’s why I might translate *cura personalis* as “tough love.” As a coach seeking to maximize your human potential, I must be demanding; I must have high standards, and be vigilant in your formation in those standards. And yet, I must always do so out of love, and in love. Scripture instructs that we “proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2).

An athletic program dedicated to the Jesuit, Ignatian mission and vision must deliver excellence with integrity, *magis*; which must be done through tough love. We are told in scripture that “God is love”; Jesus, God’s son, the Word made flesh, came to the world as a sign of God’s love (c.f., John 3:16). The message of Jesus is very simple: “to love God with all your heart and mind and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself.” It’s all about love for one another. Simple, maybe, but definitely not easy. So too with the message of Jesus: love your enemy; do good to those who hate and hurt you; turn the other cheek—and on and on it goes; simple, not easy. It is tough to be a follower of Jesus; it is tough to be a coach committed to the integration of both *magis* and *cura personalis*. There are no doubt easier and more popular ways to coach, but: 1) it’s not OUR way; not the Jesuit way; 2) and there’s plenty of evidence that those ways aren’t working too well.

Aristotle argued that “virtue is the mean between excess and deficiency”. In both excess and deficiency—too much and too little—we lose touch with the care of the individual and begin to operate in a way that conflicts with the *cura personalis* philosophy and practices. In our work at IEE to foster optimal human performance, we argue that the secret ingredient or catalyst to human performance is activated when we find the right balance of moral and performance character. In the Jesuit tradition one could argue that the sweet spot for optimal human performance is found in the right balance of *magis* (performance character) and *cura personalis* (moral character). The old adage says, “they don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” I would argue that the simplest distillation of the Jesuit mission for athletics might be expressed as “*excellence with integrity through tough love and care of the person in mind, body, and spirit.*”

Across the landscape of athletics today many coaches (and parents) struggle to find the right balance. Many are too worried about self-esteem and everybody getting a trophy; many others are so worried about the scholarship, trophy, or prize that they’ll use any tactic to achieve their ends. No one coach or coaching strategy works for every person or situation. However, there are clearly tactics and strategies that are at odds with an approach whose cornerstones are *magis* and *cura personalis*.

In our work at IEE we argue for the creation of an *intense and intentional culture*. Mission-driven organizations must be intense and intentional because there are lots of ways of doing things, but we're trying to row as one, to do things OUR WAY. We cannot just assume that the coaches, teachers, and parents that have shaped our student-athletes are aligned with our way. We must define our way, refine it, promote it, and practice it with fidelity and persistence. The rubber meets the road in the quest to balance *magis* and *cura personalis* in the day-to-day practices shaping the student-athlete experience. Everything either contributes to and is aligned with excellence and the care of the person—or it is at odds with and detracts from these goals.

One clear place where the balance between *magis* and *cura personalis* is constantly being tested is our communication and motivation practices. St. Ignatius famously said, “love consists in communication.” Many, many examples drawn from present and past coaches would clearly support this statement; many would be completely at odds with it. Most coaches believe “they know it when they see it”; however, this is not an intentional approach, and often leaves both coaches and student-athletes vulnerable. Scripture tells us “let your love for one another be intense” (1 Peter 4:8), thus I don't think there's no place for intense coaches who instruct, enforce, advocate, implore, motivate, insist, and admonish. However, I do think that coaching practices that bully, demean, degrade, insult, embarrass, harass, and humiliate fail to meet both the standard of “communication in love” and the standard of “care of the person”.

In the quest to find the balance between *magis* and *cura personalis* I would argue there are practices that are inadequate and there are practices that are optimal; there is no one perfect way. The goal is to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, the coaching practices that are inadequate and to find those optimal coaching practices that support the goal of *excellence with integrity through the care of the person in mind, body, and spirit*.

We would argue that for the development of the values essential to Le Moyne College Athletics coaches need to have command of multiple coaching practices, which they need to be effectively implementing in pursuit of their tar-

geted goals amid the challenges of real-world circumstances. No individual would be expected to be equally proficient in all skills, or to implement them with equal effectiveness in every circumstance or situation. Optimal Coaching Practices are practices that avoid EXCESS or DEFICIENCY relative to the department's MISSION/VISION/GOALS/EXPECTATIONS, the student-athlete's SENSIBILITIES & CAPABILITIES, and within real-world CIRCUMSTANCES faced by coaches and student-athletes.



Excellence & Ethics™ Tools

MAGIS - Excellence with Integrity



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

CURA PERSONALIS: TOUGH LOVE.

CURA PERSONALIS Optimal Performance Self-Study

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... recognizing and responding to the feelings of others.		
2) ... showing flexibility and willingness to make necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.		
3) ... supporting one another and desiring the best for and from each other.		
4) ... avoiding bullying, hazing, or other negatives habits and traditions.		
5) ... having a healthy self-image.		
6) ... maintaining overall health and care for oneself—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.		
7) ... communicating in positive and productive ways.		
8) ... contributing to teamwork, cooperation, and fellowship.		
9) ... reaching out to and caring for those who are struggling or suffering—physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, or socially.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when the way you put *cura personalis* into action was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to put *cura personalis* into action in a way that would be more ideal:

CURA PERSONALIS Optimal Performance Coaching Practices

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

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Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... developing a personal relationship with each player.		
2) ... providing one-on-one guidance and formation of players.		
3) ... treating each player with care and respect.		
4) ... caring for those who are hurting—physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, or socially.		
5) ... communicating with honesty and transparency regarding sport performance expectations (role, playing time, etc.).		
6) ... providing feedback that promotes growth through a focus on both praise and polish.		
7) ... creating a healthy atmosphere for personal development—physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually.		
8) ... NOT bullying, demeaning, embarrassing or belittling.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when you were able to teach/model *cura personalis* in a way that was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to teach/model *cura personalis* in a way that would be more ideal:

Reflections

1. How do we *market and communicate* the Jesuit brand of athletics (*magis AND cura personalis*)?

2. How do we *recruit* for parents and student-athletes who desire experience of a Jesuit brand of athletics (*magis AND cura personalis*)?

3. What in our current practices *support and enhance* the Jesuit brand of athletics (*magis AND cura personalis*)?

4. What in our current practices *contradicts, interferes, or undermines* the Jesuit brand of athletics (*magis AND cura personalis*)?



MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS



Leadership, service and love of neighbor —
everywhere, all the time.



“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

~Pablo Picasso



Men and Women for Others

Leadership, service, and love of neighbor—everywhere, all the time.

By Matt Davidson

excellenceandethics.org

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10: 42-45)

Ask most anybody what comes to mind when they think of the concepts of sport, character and service to others and they might likely—and not illogically—think of a human interest-type story, drawn from the Super Bowl pre-game show, the Olympics, ESPN’s E:60 show, or their local newspaper. We are drawn to stories of athletes working with Habit for Humanity, doing service for Special Olympics, or rallying around the sick or suffering. I’ll admit it: I like these stories as much as the next person. However, increasingly I am cautious about these displays; actually, to be perfectly honest, I’m often skeptical. How could this be? What kind of a jaded person thinks like that?

Here’s what drives my concern: there are countless stories of athletes profiled in these stories of service who are actually lying, cheating, nasty people. I’ve also worked with and observed many schools, teams, and companies who used their service as an easy way to “check off the requirement.” ‘You’re supposed to do these things; we did it. Service to others: check. Sport and character: check.’ Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that every person who does community service is running a front for some values void or to cover up who they really are. Many do it for all the right reasons. However, when I see public displays of service to others, it makes me wonder if it is performed for others to see, while in fact neglecting to show the same kind of love for the neighbor next door—in their family, in their office or department, or on their team.

Here's a parallel from my personal life: one thing that makes me crazy is at home if we've had a house full of family or friends and we've been kind and generous and hospitable for the entire time, and then the guests leave and suddenly we get that sullen look on our faces and we're short and chippy with each other (and I can be as guilty of this as the kids). It makes me crazy and I'll say: "Come on, man! We cannot be more kind and loving to our guests and friends than to our own family! We can't turn it on only when we're volunteering, or at church, or some other service event or experience." The call to love and serve one another is not an event; it's a mindset and a way of being—everywhere, all the time.

When we consider the Jesuit idea of "*men and women for others*" as a cornerstone of the athletic experience at Le Moyne, I think there are a range of ways to go after this ideal. And, as with other values animating the vision, like *magis* and *cura personalis*, in the quest to find optimal we must explore the continuum, from inadequate to ideal. I am not saying that service to others that takes the form of social justice, or social action, or service learning is wrong. I am saying two things: 1) if that's all we do, it's not nearly enough. And, 2) if what happens in and through the experience of athletics at Le Moyne—player to player, coach to player, staff to player, coach to coach, administrator to coach—does not also reflect love and service and care of our neighbor, then we risk being hypocrites. When parents and student-athletes ask us "what does *men and women for others* look like?" we must be able to share more than our service and outreach, more even than our heroic actions for those most in need.

The big vision for the idea of *men and women for others* is often traced back to the address delivered in 1973 by Father Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Jesuits, on [Education for Social Justice and Action Today](#). This seminal document indeed provides a big vision, which has challenged those in Jesuit education since its publication. However, it's the call to transform our personal lives that I think can be missed—and which I think has so much to offer to our specific goals to integrate mission and identity in and through athletics. It's hard to imagine a culture in which we aspire for *magis*—excellence with integrity, in conjunction with a commitment to *cura personalis*—tough love and care of the whole person, where teamwork, leadership and service to one another are not essential.

In athletics today, there is so much attention on the individual. I would venture to guess that 90% of ESPN Sport Center highlights feature and draw attention to the individual—to the dunk, to the homerun, to the winning touchdown catch. Team sports are marketed as “Manning versus Brady”, “Kobe versus Lebron.” In individual sports, the focus is typically on the fist-pumping tennis or golf player, or the track star running with the flag on his or her back. And still, coaches preach teamwork and know now more than ever that it is essential to recruit players who buy into the team, who are willing to do whatever it takes for the shared goals.

Men and women for others offers a vision that is different from what many athletes today have grown with, one that would play out in very practical day-to-day, moment-to-moment ways. Here are five big opportunities to make the vision come to life:

1. *Welcome, serve, and lead new members of the LCA family.* In the focus groups we have conducted around the country at other colleges, student-athletes have described what they call “the show.” They describe the disconnect between the recruiting process where coaches and student-athletes loved them and welcomed them and their arrival as a student-athlete to feeling unwanted and unloved. Sometimes this involves hazing rituals and rites of passage that demean and insult. In other situations it involves upperclassmen being hostile towards the newcomers who might take their spot or cut into their playing time. This extends to parents who feel left on the outside and struggle to figure out their place, literally and figuratively. In fairness, there’s no evidence that I’m aware of the extremes of “the show” as described above at Le Moyne. However, it’s not just that we want to do no harm; we want to do maximal good. *Men and women for others* should offer a different vision: one where our rituals, routines and habits seek to welcome, serve, and lead newcomers. In scripture we are given a vision of what *men and women for others* should look like: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” (John 13: 15-17).

2. *Teach and practice core leadership practices.* In a premier program we don't leave essential sport techniques to chance. We design and develop athletes' skills for sport performance. Why would we leave it to chance that athletes know how to lead? Leadership is one of the primary ways that the idea of *men and women for others* plays out in the day-to-day experience of sport. If this is to be a hallmark of what's **Inside The L**, then the skills must be taught and practiced with intentionality. So, if you asked me, "in a sport setting, what is it that *men and women for others* do?", I would probably present our Excellence & Ethics Core Leadership Practices framework:

men and women for others:

- 1) commit to shared goals and the collective good;
- 2) motivate and empower others; and
- 3) hold themselves and others accountable (see below).

It is essential to teach what leadership looks like across a continuum—in its absence, in its partial presence, and in its optimal implementation. Leadership isn't a dichotomous, YES/NO, GOT IT/DON'T HAVE IT skill. For example, our Excellence & Ethics Leader-to- Detractor Scale and Rubric present a template for teaching leadership in an applied way in all its forms (see below). Leadership skills are NEEDED FOR the athletics experience; and if what student-athletes experience **Inside The L** is intense and intentional, leadership skills would be DEVELOPED FROM the athletics experience. Thus, *men and women for others* is the means and the end.

3. *Support each other in times of desolation and hardship.* It's not a matter of *if*, but rather a matter of *when* a student-athlete will experience a period of desolation—stress, fatigue, sickness, a slump, an injury, a death or hardship at home. If we are an intentional culture, we don't wait and respond reactively; we teach and prepare proactively. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius makes two important and particularly relevant suggestions: 1) in times of consolation (when you're feeling good and doing well) prepare and fortify for the struggle, and 2) in times of deso-

lation (spiritual, physical, emotional pain and struggle) avoid isolation. Regarding the first, this means that within our teams and across our department we should be talking about and preparing for moments of desolation. Such preparation may not prevent hardship, but it will make it less painful and scary. Skills should be developed for prayer, meditation, use of scripture and sacraments, fellowship and other things that prepare us to thrive in the face of adversity. Regarding the second, this means looking for help when we're struggling; and looking to give help when we see others in need. We teach one another and set up structures to avoid the isolation that makes desolation so much more painful and dangerous. As Gandhi famously said, "You will find yourself in service to your fellow man, your country, and your God."

4. *Care for the least among us.* We know from scripture that Jesus tells us, "Whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me"; and that "what you did NOT do for one of these least ones, you did NOT do for me" (c.f., Matthew 25:40; 25:45). This certainly applies to our need as individuals, teams, department, and college to serve those in our community (which is foundation for the call for social action and social justice). However, **Inside The L** should exhort us to care for the least within our teams and department—those poor in spirit, psyche, talent, physical ability, or character. To the degree that we do the most for the least among us, we fulfill our gospel call to care for those in need who are truly our closest "neighbors". And if we love and care for each other well, that is also the context in which we will perform at our highest. We must support and challenge one another in the quest for our shared goals—athletic, spiritual, and human. In his book, [Season of Life](#), Jeffrey Marx describes the coaching ritual of Joe Ehrmann who each day asked his players, "What's our job as coaches?", to which the players responded in unison, "To love us!" This was followed with the question, "And what's your job as players?", to which they responded, "To love each other." Coach Bob Ladouceur, whose DeLaSalle High School Football team won 151 consecutive games, argues, "If you get kids to care about each other, and I mean really care about each other, they become awfully hard to beat."

5. *Provide powerful social justice and social action education and experiences.* A premier Jesuit athletic program must provide these. There are so many rich opportunities to impact the community from the pulpit of athletics, so many worthy causes and needy people. To ignore them or neglect them would be hypocritical, to say the least, and we would risk misalignment between the deepest values we espouse and the values we live. There are so many alums who have dedicated their lives to these works. A premier athletics program isn't a service program, or even a leadership camp for youth. But a premier Jesuit athletic program can achieve optimal performance in and through a commitment to developing *men and women built for others*.

In my opinion, the simplest—and yet most complete—translation of *men and women for others* would be: leadership, service, and love for others—everywhere, all the time. Not an event, but a mindset and a way of being—a way of being Christ to others, most especially the least among us.

Excellence & Ethics™ Tools

Core Leadership Practices



Excellence & Ethics™ Tools

Leader-to-Detractor Scale

Detractor

Participant

Leader

*Not responsible
for self or others.*

*Responsible
for self.*

*Responsible for
self and others.*

*Doesn't meet the
standards personally
and prevents
others from meeting the
standards.*

*Carries out personal
responsibilities in an
adequate way, but does
not demonstrate collective
responsibility for shared
goals or collective good.*

*Demonstrates personal
commitment and mastery,
and encourages others
by word and deed
to do the same.*

Adapted from Jeffrey Beedy.

Excellence & Ethics™ Tools

Leader-to-Detractor Rubric

Leader

Demonstrates personal commitment and mastery, and encourages others by word and deed to do the same.

- » Demonstrates teamwork, initiative, and willingness to work with others.
- » Demonstrates the ability to organize and lead group toward stated goals, but also does his/her part in the actual group tasks.
- » Encourages teamwork and leadership in others.

Participant

Carries out personal responsibilities in an adequate way, but does not demonstrate collective responsibility for shared goals or collective good.

- » Demonstrates adequate teamwork and willingness to work with others.
- » Rarely, if ever, demonstrates the ability to organize and lead group toward stated goals.
- » Assumes adequate responsibility for group tasks — not leading others, but not detracting either.

Detractor

Doesn't meet the standards personally and prevents others from meeting the standards.

- » Demonstrates poor teamwork and inability to work with others.
- » Demonstrates inability to organize and lead group toward stated goals.
- » Assumes no responsibility for group tasks, and detracts from the group's ability to function adequately.

Adapted from Jeffrey Beedy.

MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS Optimal Performance Self-Study

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... willingness to put needs and goals of the team first.		
2) ... working hard to ensure the success of teammates.		
3) ... providing positive energy, enthusiasm, and encouragement to teammates.		
4) ... helping teammates improve by giving constructive feedback and providing help when needed.		
5) ... contributing to teamwork, cooperation, and fellowship within the team and showing a genuine commitment to teammates success.		
6) ... finding ways to welcome and include all teammates—especially those who are new, and those who are poor in spirit, psyche, talent, physical ability, and/or character.		
7) ... supporting teammates in times of desolation and hardship; celebrating and encouraging them in times of success.		
8) ... holding self and others accountable for team goals, values, and commitments.		
9) ... motivating, empowering, and persuading others to buy into team goals, vision, and values.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when the way you put *Men and Women for Others* into action was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to put *Men and Women for Others* into action in a way that would be more ideal:

MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS Optimal Performance Coaching Practices

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

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IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... creating authentic roles and responsibilities for all team members.		
2) ... having courageous conversations as a team regarding rumors, cliques, dissension, or other potential distractions and detractions.		
3) ... getting teammates to really know and care for one another.		
4) ... creating opportunities for service to fellow teammates.		
5) ... engaging in community service and social justice activities.		
6) ... providing leadership training and development opportunities.		
7) ... making “individual problems” become team opportunities for love, leadership and service to one another.		
8) ... having the courage to confront the tough issues—the “elephants in the living room”.		
9) ... teach expectations for the bench, locker room, bus, and all areas surrounding the sport.		
10) ... empowering all players to lead through their words and actions.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when you were able to teach/model *Men and Women for Others* in a way that was **IDEAL (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:**

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER in the future to teach/model *Men and Women for Others* in a way that would be more ideal:**

Reflections

1. How do we *market and communicate* the Jesuit brand of athletics (*magis AND cura personalis AND men and women for others*)?

2. How do we *recruit* for parents and student-athletes who desire experience of a Jesuit brand of athletics?

3. What in our current practices *support and enhance* the Jesuit brand of athletics?

4. What in our current practices *contradicts, interferes, or undermines* the Jesuit brand of athletics?



FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS



Spiritual beings who seek and embrace
the sacred.



“The chief beauty about time is that you cannot waste it in advance. The next year, the next day, the next hour are lying ready for you, as perfect, as unspoiled, as if you had never wasted or misapplied a single moment in all your life. You can turn over a new leaf every hour if you choose.”

~ Arnold Bennett

“Honoring the sacred means simply choosing to make each moment count. It means stopping to notice the beauty and love around us and within us. It means being fully present in each moment, because only the present moment exists.”

~ Wings for the Heart



Seeking the Sacred; Discovering the Divine

Seeking, accepting, and embracing the “Sacred Story” in daily life

By Matt Davidson

excellenceandethics.org

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. –Reinhold Niebuhr, Serenity Prayer

Our reflections regarding the animating role of the Ignatian spirituality on athletics in the 21st century have focused thus far on what I consider to be the three most obvious: *magis* (or excellence with integrity), *cura personalis* (or tough love), and *men and women for others* (leadership, service and love of neighbor). These are obvious in the sense that, while the terms may not be obvious or familiar, the concepts unpack in a way that provides close alignment with ideas at the core of the art and science of sport psychology and the practice of coaching. It is not a stretch to see the importance of pursuing high standards in an atmosphere of strong personal relationships rooted in a sense of personal and collective responsibility, with teamwork and dedication to others, and a shared goal.

What we have articulated thus far is important and distinct, and offers a vision for whole-person development that is rigorous and even praiseworthy. (Sadly, these three ideals are NOT the experience of many student-athletes today). However, were we to stop with a vision based simply in these three pillars of Ignatian spirituality, then we would sadly stop short of the heart of the matter and the core of the Jesuit vision. It could easily be labeled as a blend of contemporary philosophy of sport, sport psychology and sociology, with perhaps a hint of secular humanism.

Our goal for a deep exploration of our Ignatian roots is to courageously grapple with the foundations of mission and to see if contained therein might be some unique, differentiating, empowering force for achieving our

goals—a Secret Ingredient. Therefore, we must continue to push beyond the familiar, the comfortable, and the obvious to see what lies beyond what everybody else might know and do in athletics today. In the Jesuit tradition of Ignatian spirituality, this means exploring the role of God, or *finding God in all things*, as Saint Ignatius described it. No experience or vision of Ignatian spirituality could ignore this core invitation, if not mandate. It will take courage for us to express and agree to the following audacious goal: “We intend to dialogue about *finding God in all things* in and through the experience of athletics.” You might even think, “Hold on now! Are we going to really talk about God in sport, with professional colleagues and people of different faith perspectives and religious traditions—even some who might profess neither a spiritual nor religious persuasion?” Indeed we are, and we must; or risk professing to uphold and transmit the Jesuit mission of Le Moyne College while in reality never even exploring our own beliefs about it or experience with it.

We are challenged by our very role at a Jesuit college to *find God in all things*, and to teach those we coach to do the same. However, it’s important to remember as we do this that our investigation is not an all or nothing deal: this can be accomplished by degree and in numerous and varied ways. We want to try and engage the discussion in a way that leaves room for lots of perspectives (including those who do not believe in God), but without removing God from the discussion altogether. Remember, we are seeking OPTIMAL performance, which finds the balance between deficiency and excess—for the circumstances and for the abilities and sensibilities of both coach and student-athlete. The key to accessing the power of this concept, like the others we have considered before it, is to see its relevance for today’s student-athletes and for us as coaches and administrators.

Let’s start here: many today have forgotten that student-athletes are “human beings, not human doings.” Student-athletes are spiritual beings first, and physical and intellectual beings second. They are not a means to an end; they are an end-in-themselves; created with a divine spirit animating a human body. Sadly, too many coaches, professors (and even parents) have forgotten this, diminishing the divine and replacing with a set of human

expectations: be successful; get A's; win championships; get great jobs; share your wealth; and repeat with your own children. When we forget the divine spark in each student-athlete, they can quickly become something closer to indentured servants, rather than divine gifts to care for and develop. Even if you profess no formal religion, we must collectively agree upon the inherent worth and dignity of each human person. For those who do profess a faith perspective, we begin with an understanding that the human person reflects the divine (is made “in the image and likeness of God” is how Christian Catholics understand and express it). Thus, at a deep level we experience the Creator, in the created.

Human beings have value not simply for the function they serve. In this sense they are sacred, which is often defined as “perceived to be associated with divinity or considered worthy of spiritual respect or devotion; or inspiring awe or reverence.” Religious or not, Catholic or not: human beings are worthy of respect and awe; but we must look to find it because at times our sacredness is hidden beneath our humanity. Our experiences also have a sacredness to them: they too are worthy of respect and awe. A walk on a beach at sunrise, a mountain top view, the birth of a child, the death of a loved one, acts of heroism and love—all of these are sacred.

Fr. Bill Watson, S.J., writes and works on what he calls the “sacred story.” There are many dimensions to his notion of “sacred story” but I want to use it as a way of translating what I think Saint Ignatius means by *finding God in all things*. We each are experiencing a “sacred story”—the story of our unique life-story as it unfolds. So too our overall life-story is shaped through a series of smaller “sacred stories,” which are the moment-to-moment experiences of day-to-day living. Saint Ignatius taught a process for examining both of these sacred stories; so too do those from Buddhist traditions, as do those from most every religious and spiritual tradition. There is a sacred story that unfolds in the interaction between sacred beings and their experiences, which leads ultimately to God, a Divine Creator, but which all peoples and perspectives are seeking to understand. Wherever it ultimately leads for each person, it begins with the commitment to seek and find and explore the sacred.

Here are a few essential steps for *finding God in all things* and how I believe it connects to the formation of student-athletes:

1. **SEEK:** So much of our internal thinking and reflection is focused on the past or the future. Seeking the sacred requires that we focus more consciously on the present. That we remain conscious, awake, and watchful. This is true for big picture things, but also true for the moment-to-moment focus that athletics demands. Fear, anxiety, jealousy—these result in our mind and spirit when we dwell in the past or the future. Framing the moment becomes essential for seeking the sacred. As coaches we must constantly remind student-athletes that this day, this opportunity, this moment is precious and sacred, unrepeatable. When you believe something is sacred, beautiful, and fleeting, you don't take it for granted. There is awe and respect. The “discernment of spirits” that Saint Ignatius spoke of was to help us reflect on our actions and to make sense of what we're doing and how we're feeling.

This is where an attitude of gratitude becomes so very important. If we believe that ours is a sacred story unfolding in a series of sacred moments, we're grateful for each one of them. We're mindful of them and we're trying to be fully aware of what they are and what they point to. Narcissism or pride is the belief that I'm the center of the universe. I'm the only thing that's sacred, and my thoughts and feelings are all that matter. As the saying goes, “people all wrapped up in themselves are a pretty small package.” For many young student-athletes, this is where the lack of gratitude is rooted, and where they are blinded to the sacred stories in lives of others unfolding around them. Seeking the sacred, being aware of it and grateful for it pushes one outside of selfish self-interest.

Mindfulness practice—even when it has no connection to formal religion—encourages individuals to be present and fully aware of our moment-to-moment experiences, believing that if we do, we experience a sort of enlightenment. A simple moment, otherwise ignored or missed, can become a powerful experience when we are awake and aware (important to note how often Sacred Scripture encourages us to stay awake

and aware; to be ready). I look inside myself; I look outside myself; I monitor my actions and what response they evoke from others and the feelings that result in me. This is the core task in the “discernment of spirits” and the core habit that is formed through the *Examen* of Saint Ignatius.

2. **ACCEPT:** Our sacred story is unfolding, and nearly every religious and spiritual tradition affirms that what causes us to suffer is our inability to accept what is, as it is. Acceptance is a core skill and mindset for *finding God in all things*; it is where we begin to move from a mindset of “what’s in it for me?” to “what’s in me for it?” Adversity, hardship, and suffering are a part of life—period. In fact, some books like [*The Adversity Advantage*](#), make the argument that the most significant aspects of our sacred story are realized in and through the adversities of our life. So much of today’s student-athlete formation is designed to build them up and keep them safe; this is the trophy generation, over-praised, over-awarded, over-coached and entitled. This is no doubt a broad generalization, but much research and experience supports the assertion. Most parents are either helicopters, hovering to protect, or bulldozers, removing all obstacles in the way. At some point we realize that the best performers, the toughest, most determined, most resilient are made from learning to confront and accept adversity. We don’t have to seek out adversity, but we do need to embrace it when it comes, believing that in and through it we will find ourselves and our God. As Helen Keller said, “I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found myself, my work and my God.”

We offer all to God and see all as coming from his hand. We “detach” from how we think our sacred story should unfold and accept that it is unfolding as it should. It is precisely our attachment to what we think and believe and want that causes our pain. The Buddha argues, “attachment is the root of all suffering.” Detachment and acceptance doesn’t mean apathy, or I-don’t-care attitude; it means ‘I strive for excellence with integrity and trust that all will work out as it should for my betterment.’ ‘But I want to become a star; to be the best, to be healthy and set

records and impress my friends and make my family proud’—nothing wrong in those aspirations, except they reflect what you desire; not what might come to be. Now, you can choose to accept and learn what’s in you for this, and in this for you, or you can be angry, disappointed, anxious, sad and ungrateful.

Student-athletes and coaches are competitors, striving for excellence, pushing the limits of their abilities, seeking to achieve goals to distinguish themselves. This reality is a two-edged sword: striving is good, and reflects that “restless discontent with mediocrity” which is a hallmark of a *magis* mindset. However, it also has the potential to be neurotic and narcissistic. Teaching the ability to see and accept the sacred moments as they unfold in this game or practice, this season or career is the pathway to peace and joy—and ultimately to God.

As Saint Paul exhorts us, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-8).

3. **CHOOSE:** The Jewish Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl said, “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.” We choose how to respond to our sacred story. Frankl realized, when in a concentration camp with everything he held dear stripped from him, that he still retained the power to choose his response—what he would think, and feel and do. They could not take that from him. From out of the pain and suffering, in confinement, he found freedom. When we seek and accept our sacred story, we are empowered to choose how we will respond to whatever life throws our way. I can fail out, drop out, or blow out my knee, and I still get to choose to frame it as the pathway to my God and myself, or to see it as evidence that there is no God, that life is miserable and has no value. Finding God in all things is about framing

and reframing challenge as opportunity, suffering as simply part of the journey, loss as having as much potential value as victory.

Christ himself suffered and died, and yet many of us approach life with the expectation of ease and comfort, free of suffering and hardship, as if we are entitled to everything we want, as we think it should be. My needs, my wants, my injuries and wounds, my goals—me, me, me; my, my; my! Our happiness is completely contingent—if....then; if....when. If I get into college, when I make the team, if I'm a star, when I make enough money—then I'll be grateful and happy. This is very different than believing our sacred story is unfolding moment-by-moment, to which we must simply be awake, and accept, and ready to choose our response.

To *find God in all things* we must seek, accept, and choose. If we do it well, serenity, peace, even joy and happiness are our promised reward. I think the Serenity Prayer (attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr) is a powerful and concise prayer, or mindset for *finding God in all things* in a truly Jesuit way. The full text of the Serenity Prayer reads as follows:

God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

It is not surprising, really, that the Serenity Prayer became a part of the Alcoholics Anonymous (and other 12-Step programs): those struggling with the burden of powerful addictions and destructive habits know all too well that life must be lived one day at a time, through acceptance of what is as it is, through perseverance and with courage, through grace and through grit.

In my opinion, the simplest—and yet most complete—translation of *finding God in all things* would be: **seeking, accepting, and choosing to embrace our sacred stories.** *Finding God in all things*: Not so much an event, like going to church, but rather a mindset and a way of being.

SEEKING THE SACRED; DISCOVERING THE DIVINE Optimal Performance Self-Study

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as 'last month', 'last quarter', or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the 'thumbs-down/thumbs-up' line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... finding the beautiful, the positive, the good in all situations.		
2) ... showing compassion for others.		
3) ... persevering in spite of difficulties or challenges.		
4) ... NOT seeing oneself as the victim.		
5) ... enjoying the simple things in life.		
6) ... reframing challenges and setbacks as opportunities for growth.		
7) ... showing gratitude and appreciation for the gifts and blessings of each day.		
8) ... embracing adversity without whining, complaining, blaming or making excuses.		
9) ... possessing a sense of purpose and hope.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when the way you put *Seeking the Sacred; Discovering the Divine* into action was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to put *Seeking the Sacred; Discovering the Divine* into action in a way that would be more ideal:

SEEKING THE SACRED; DISCOVERING THE DIVINE Optimal Performance Coaching Practices

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... cultivating an attitude of gratitude.		
2) ... proactively providing opportunities to confront sickness, death, and other tragedies and difficulties.		
3) ... exercising mindfulness, centering, and meditative practices.		
4) ... practicing yoga and other.		
5) ... providing opportunities for prayer, reflection and the Sacraments.		
6) ... teaching skills and mindset for suffering well.		
7) ... creating an atmosphere that supports and encourages spiritual growth.		
8) ... providing access to spiritual and religious role models and mentors.		
9) ... being willing to share your own personal journey of faith and spirituality.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when you were able to teach/model *Seeking the Sacred; Discovering the Divine* in a way that was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to teach/model *Seeking the Sacred; Discovering the Divine* in a way that would be more ideal:

Reflections

1. How do we *market and communicate* the Jesuit brand of athletics?

2. How do we *recruit* for parents and student-athletes who desire experience of a Jesuit brand of athletics?

3. What in our current practices *support and enhance* the Jesuit brand of athletics?

4. What in our current practices *contradicts, interferes, or undermines* the Jesuit brand of athletics?



SOCIAL JUSTICE



Transformational love and a commitment to
be the change.



“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

~ Gandhi

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

~ Leo Tolstoy



Transformed in Love for Justice

Be the change.

By Matt Davidson

excellenceandethics.org

You must be the change you wish to see in the world—Gandhi

What's it all for, these efforts we have taken to reflect on animating role of the Ignatian spirituality in 21st century athletics? What's the end goal if we're successful in creating an intentional culture dedicated to excellence with integrity? Is it that we do no harm (or at least *less* harm) than other approaches found in athletics today? Is it simply to advance mission through a more intentional educational approach? Or, is it to prove that we can win more than others—and do it our way, the Jesuit way? None of these reasons seem entirely off the mark; and yet individually and collectively they seem to fall short in offering a truly captivating and motivating end goal.

Here's what I see as the end game, what we're striving for in our efforts to define *What's Inside the L* and to pursue it with every available resource: TRANSFORMATION—personal and collective. Transformation is what we are striving for, a transformation from the Jesuit ideals and values being something we *do*, to something we *are*. Okay, now that probably freaks you out, right? Transformation? Sounds a little scary. Stay with me, though; I believe like so many things in the Jesuit approach, there's a great profoundness matched with blessed simplicity and everyday practicality.

Magis, cura personalis, men and women for others, finding God in all things—at their deepest levels these aren't simply things you do, like an exercise, diet, or some self-help strategies; they are meant to contribute to a profound change, metamorphosis, or transformation. These concepts are not stable states of being or traits of character that you check off (Got *magis*? Got it; check!). These are rather a WAY of being. If we do these with great fidel-

ity and persistence, we are transformed by them and ultimately we embody them.

The animating force of our transformation in the Ignatian tradition is love. Not aspirations of personal or collective greatness, or fear of punishment, or negative consequences, but love. We are transformed by love, which is also how we come to know the divine and become like the divine. Consider that twice in the Gospel of John, he emphatically states “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16). God is love and we are transformed when we become models of love. Our transformation then is from students and coaches of love, to embodiments of love. Sounds complicated, but here’s what we’re told about love in the bible:

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Cor 13: 4-8)

These are pretty practical everyday manifestations, pretty simple things, which nonetheless would indeed transform any person, team, or organization that faithfully put love into action in these ways—simple, not easy. The goal is transformational love: we don’t simply preach about it, we become it. As Gandhi said, “you must be the change you wish to see in the world.” As a department we can’t simply talk about Ignatian virtues, we must be transformed into a virtuous department. As individuals we don’t simply preach the gospel of love by our words, but in our actions. As Saint Francis of Assisi said, “preach the gospel and if necessary, use words.” So we will be transformed when every interaction in the life of every individual in this department is seen as an opportunity to preach the gospel of love through our actions and interactions.

The idea that we are transformed by and through love can seem a bit of head-scratcher in the competitive context of athletics and within our competitive and individualistic and materialistic world. However, again and again we

see examples in sport and life where love is stronger than fear, where what looks like weakness is actually strength, and what looks like strength is often weakness. The second “great commandment” presented in the bible is “to love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). This love of neighbor is at the heart of Jesuit ideas of leadership. In fact some, including Jesuit leadership expert, Chris Lowney, point out that Saint Ignatius’s notion of people thrive in environments characterized by “greater love than fear.” So whereas long-held (and still prevalent) leadership notions emphasize that “it is better to be feared than loved,” Saint Ignatius knew that 1) love of neighbor was one of the two great commandments, and more importantly that 2) the catalyst for the realization of human potential was found in the power of love. Chris Lowney actually describes what he refers to as “love-driven leadership,” stating:

That’s love-driven leadership: the vision to see each person’s talent, potential and dignity; the courage, passion, and commitment to unlock that potential and the resulting loyalty and mutual support that energize and unite teams (Lowney, 2003, page 176).

Transformational love is the love that changes me personally; but also the love that particularly changes how I view you—as colleague, teammate, and even as fellow competitor. I love you for your gifts, talents and abilities, which may be different than mine and even better than mine. I don’t hate, or resent, or attempt to repress or destroy you just because I do not like you or you’re simply not like me. This foundational mission approach is what made the Jesuits able to integrate into cultures all over the world; they tended not to hate or fear, but rather to love.

Transformed by love, then what? Transformed by love for justice. That is to say, once I am transformed by love and I see your potential and capacity, now I must DO something about it. As the saying goes, “there’s no such thing as justice, there’s just-us.” Each one of us must be willing to stand up for the humanity and the divinity of our brothers and sisters—most especially the poorest and most vulnerable. I don’t just love my kids in some nice warm fuzzy way, I love them and I would defend them, I would fight

for their safety and well-being, and even give my own life for theirs. By my example of love and leadership I am transformed, and hopefully they are transformed too, as I show them what they must do for others (“as I have done for you, so you must do for others”).

So does this crazy talk of transformation in love and leadership mean we are all going to get rid of the scoreboard and remove all aspirations for excellence in education, sport and life? Does this transformation require a “transformation to intramurals”? Absolutely not. In fact, I believe that in and through competition we are able to deeply experience the beauty of love: we even love those we want to beat! Competition isn’t the problem (which many mistakenly argue); misunderstanding competition is the problem. My colleague David Shields always pointed out that in Latin “competere” means “to strive with.” Competition is thus an evolved form of collaboration and cooperation rooted in love and respect and genuine need for the other competitors and teams (remember what it was like when the kids in your neighborhood quit the game and how badly you wanted and needed them to come back?). True competitors see, appreciate and bring out the best in one another. Thus, we begin to compete in love, not in fear and hatred. Love-driven leadership encourages us to see the good in others, to do the good for others, and ultimately to be the good.

So the end-game is individual and collective *transformation*; a metamorphosis (that is, a change in form and substance); or, what we might call a *transfiguration* (which is defined in dictionaries as a “glorifying spiritual change”). The idea of transfiguration has deep roots and substantive connection to Catholic Jesuit foundations. The Transfiguration of Jesus, described in the New Testament (c.f., Matthew 17:1-9), is one of the five major milestones in the life of Jesus (along with Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension). It has such significance because it represents the place where the divine (God) and the human son (Jesus) are shown to be one. And that’s what the eventual end-game can be for us: that our humanity and divinity might be truly and fully united and manifested to others. These Jesuit virtues and values aren’t something I do to avoid hell and make the department a nice place to be; I live these to become truly what I am, and what

we are capable of being. We are called to transfiguration, metamorphosis, transformation, to become who we are: a divine, spiritual being made from and for love.

If we are transformed by notions of love and leadership, then what are the practical requirements:

1. **Personal responsibility:** transformation begins by self-awareness and reflection. At a very personal level we personally “must be the change we wish to see.” We can’t be a transformed coach or captain trying to lead others if we are not daily pursuing our own transformation. We live the restless discontent with mediocrity and we take seriously our responsibility to love, overlooking no opportunity to show our love in word AND deed, to speak up and stand up for what and who we love.
2. **Collective responsibility:** transformation calls us to a collective responsibility for the transformation of others, to be about others and their growth and well-being. We must feel an obligation for others—born of love, not of fear. It’s not just our job to care for those we work with and lead, it’s our vocation. We can’t see injustice in our community and in our world and not feel called to respond in love and with leadership to make it right and good. Collective responsibility means a commitment to social justice in THE world, but also a commitment to social justice in OUR world, here together. Justice means giving others what they are due—like basic respect, the benefit of the doubt, and love.

Transformation in love clearly requires BOTH personal and collective responsibility. These requirements clearly have day-to-day implications for how we conduct our lives as members of the Le Moyne College Athletics Department and as we try to serve our colleagues and our community, most especially our student-athletes and their families. These implications are significant and profound if we take them seriously. We are called to “put on love” (as Saint Paul describes it) every single day with our colleagues and with our student-athletes, to love them in their poverty and weakness and humanity, to put their needs above ours, to “love our neighbor as ourselves”—simple, not easy. As Chris Lowney puts it, “love leads to confronta-

tion when human potential is disrespected, wasted, or frustrated.” I would say, this is what it means to say “transformed by love *for* justice.” Love leads to something, it’s not just a feeling but a transformative force for good. Love and conflict go hand in hand; it’s not bad or good, just a normal part of working personally and collectively to pursue excellence with integrity (*magis*) and doing so with a commitment to the care of the person (*cura personalis*). More than confrontation, it can be seen as “care-frontation”—I love you, therefore I must challenge you when you’re not your best self. It’s when I don’t truly care or love you that I ignore you or let you continue unchallenged in your lesser ways of being.

Beyond the implications for our day-to-day living, if we are truly transformed by the deepest implications of this vision of love, then we must truly begin to embody the Jesuit commitment to the promotion of justice. Social justice would have to be a core priority of the athletics department since the call to love is accompanied necessarily by a call to stand up for and protect the beloved, to feel a personal sense of responsibility to transform situations where there is injustice, poverty, violence, and all that is NOT love. These are obviously broad, far-reaching, lofty and daunting goals. But without this big-picture, end-game perspective, our efforts can be trivialized and we risk never tapping into the truest and deepest reason for existing in the Jesuit tradition. And heck, if it was easy, everybody would do it!

How then would we know if we’re successful in the realization of our mission? For starters, we are developing metrics to measure the indicators of a Premier Division II Athletic Program, indicators of academic excellence, athletic excellence, as well as excellence indicators in the character and culture at Le Moyne. Some of this gets at indicators showing the presence of Jesuit values and practices. But the true indicator of the Premier JESUIT Athletic Program will be when the experience of *What’s Inside The L* is so powerful and impactful that most, if not all, of the student-athletes go out from Le Moyne transformed in love, capable and committed to being the change needed anywhere they are called to be, and thereby transforming the world. *Men and women for others transformed in love for justice.*

The following prayer by Saint Teresa of Avila speaks deeply of our need to be transformed in love for justice, and the call “to be the change”:

Christ has no body but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes
with which He looks compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet
with which He walks to do good.
Yours are the hands
with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands.
Yours are the feet.
Yours are the eyes.
You are His body.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

“Be the change!”—it almost seems to me that this should be the last line of this prayer. Yours are the hands, feet, eyes and body of Christ, so BE THE CHANGE whenever and wherever you find yourself. How do student-athletes learn to “be the change”? By our helping them learn to see the need and to feel a sense of responsibility for and the capability to respond. If somebody on this team or in this department is hurting, help them. If somebody is poor—poor in money, poor in talent, poor in character, poor in spirit—help them. Simply be the change—on your team, in this department, in this community, and in the world.

This mission is daunting and humbling, but “do not be afraid” (Matthew 10:31) for “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). We must simply remember: “the greatest of these is love and love never fails” (1 Cor 13: 13).

TRANSFORMED IN LOVE FOR JUSTICE Optimal Performance Self-Study

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

INADEQUATE = not meeting what is expected of you, detracting from the goals or objectives of your team/organization.

IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... finding ways to help others in need.		
2) ... respectfully confronting those who engage in wrong, unethical, or unfair behavior.		
3) ... recognizing and responding to the feelings or needs of others.		
4) ... showing respect and open-mindedness for differences, including different backgrounds, views, personalities, abilities, etc.		
5) ... resolving disagreements or conflicts in a way that is fair to all involved.		
6) ... assisting the poor—in spirit, in character, in talent, in financial resources.		
7) ... showing a willingness to intervene and “be the change”.		
8) ... speaking up, standing up, and stepping out for what is right, good, and/or fair.		
9) ... using talents and abilities to help others.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when the way you put *Transformed In Love For Justice* into action was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to put *Transformed In Love For Justice* into action in a way that would be more ideal:

TRANSFORMED IN LOVE FOR JUSTICE Optimal Performance Coaching Practices

Write down a PERIOD OF TIME that you will focus your reflections on, such as ‘last month’, ‘last quarter’, or the time suggested by the facilitator:

Rate your performance on the Inadequate-to-Ideal scale:

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IDEAL = just right for the circumstances/situation in meeting what is expected of you, in driving and promoting the goals and objectives of your team/organization.

Mark the score on the ‘thumbs-down/thumbs-up’ line with an X.

Part 1: Rate your performance ...	INADEQUATE	IDEAL
1) ... promoting personal and collective responsibility.		
2) ... teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling love.		
3) ... creating structures that promote love.		
4) ... not tolerating unjust rituals that demean or denigrate individuals (e.g., hazing).		
5) ... promoting rituals that encourage love and service to team members.		
6) ... providing opportunities for service to the department, college, community, and world.		
7) ... celebrating examples of alumni who are being the change in their community and in the world.		
8) ... providing significant service learning and social justice experiences.		

Part 2: Reflect on the questions below.

1) For this period of time, list examples when you were able to teach/model *Transformed In Love For Justice* in a way that was **IDEAL** (or close to ideal) for the circumstances/situation:

2) List examples of something you could do **DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER** in the future to teach/model *Transformed In Love For Justice* in a way that would be more ideal:

Reflections

1. How do we *market and communicate* the Jesuit brand of athletics?

2. How do we *recruit* for parents and student-athletes who desire experience of a Jesuit brand of athletics?

3. What in our current practices *support and enhance* the Jesuit brand of athletics?

4. What in our current practices *contradicts, interferes, or undermines* the Jesuit brand of athletics?

INSIDE THE L TOUCHSTONE

Want to know what makes the **Le Moyne College Athletics** experience unique, powerful, and transformative?

Here's what inspires and defines the student-athletes and coaches, administrators and staff, parents and alums in the Le Moyne College Athletics Family.

HERE'S WHAT IS

INSIDE THE L:

EXCELLENCE with **INTEGRITY.**

TOUGH LOVE and **TOTAL CARE** of each person in **MIND, BODY,** and **SPIRIT.**

LEADERSHIP, SERVICE, and **LOVE OF NEIGHBOR**—everywhere, all the time.

SPIRITUAL BEINGS who **SEEK** and **EMBRACE THE SACRED.**

TRANSFORMATIONAL LOVE and a commitment to **BE THE CHANGE.**

**ALL IN
ALL ONE
ALL DOLPHINS™**



INSIDE THE L—CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE
& ETHICS ASSESSMENT® SURVEY:
SAMPLE REPORT EXTRACT

INSIDE THE L
CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE & ETHICS ASSESSMENT®



Summary Report
Sample

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Report Content

1. Summary Data Profile

- 1.1 Culture and Competencies Among Athletes

2. Culture & Competencies by Area

2.1 Magis

- 2.1.1 Magis Items
- 2.1.2 Magis: All Athletes
- 2.1.3 Magis: Underclassmen
- 2.1.4 Magis: Upperclassmen

2.2 Cura Personalis

- 2.2.1 Cura Personalis Items
- 2.2.2 Cura Personalis: All Athletes
- 2.2.3 Cura Personalis: Underclassmen
- 2.2.4 Cura Personalis: Upperclassmen

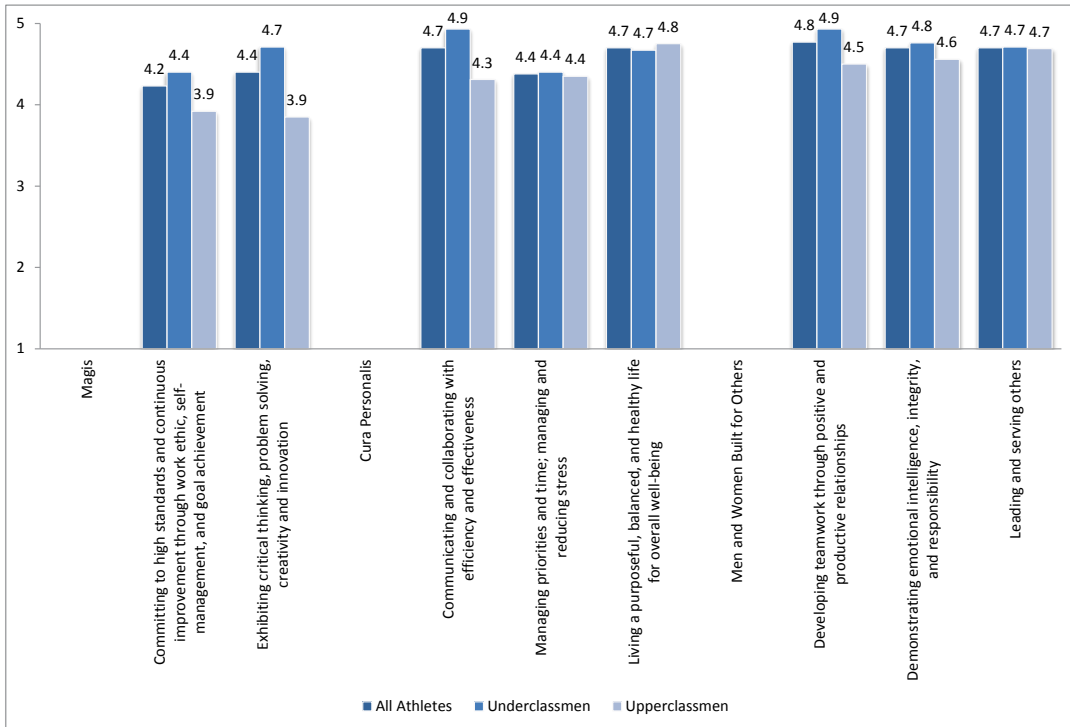
2.3 Men and Women Built for Others

- 2.3.1 Men and Women Built for Others Items
- 2.3.2 Men and Women Built for Others: All Athletes
- 2.3.3 Men and Women Built for Others: Underclassmen
- 2.3.4 Men and Women Built for Others: Upperclassmen

3. Coaches'/Staff Actions Developing Student-Athletes' Competencies

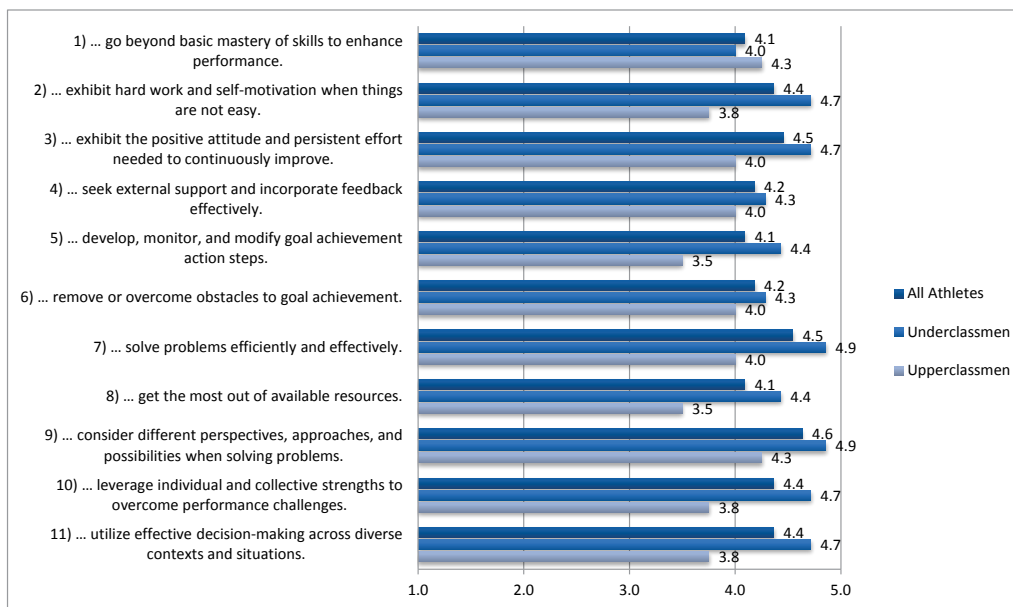
- 3.1 Coaches'/Staff Actions Developing Student-Athletes' Competencies Items
- 3.2 Coaches'/Staff Actions Developing Student-Athletes' Competencies: All Athletes
- 3.3 Coaches'/Staff Actions Developing Student-Athletes' Competencies: Underclassmen
- 3.4 Coaches'/Staff Actions Developing Student-Athletes' Competencies: Upperclassmen

1.1 Culture and Competencies Among Athletes



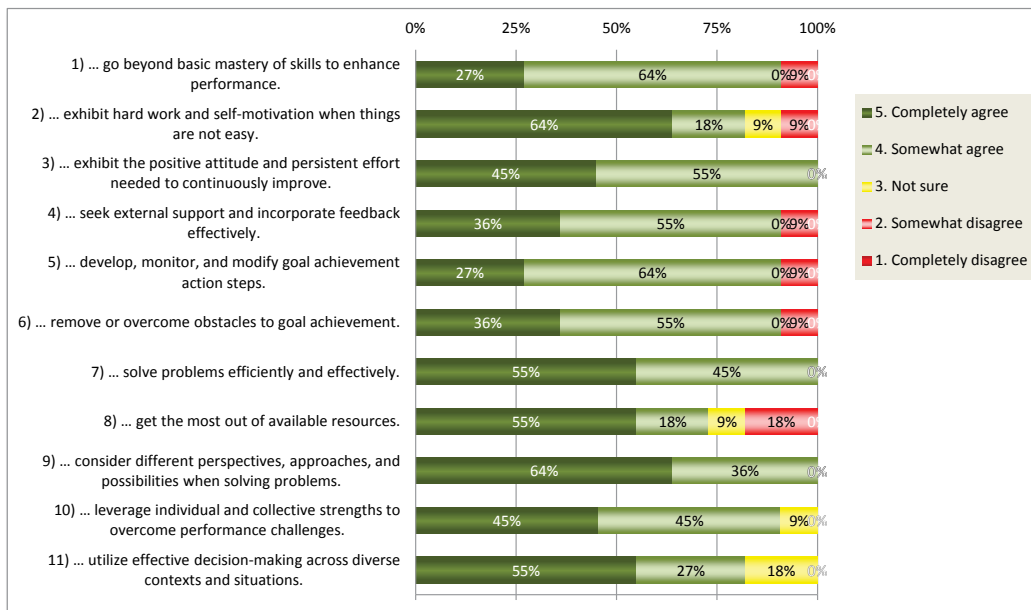
2.1.1 Magis Items

Do you agree with these statements? Athletes on this team:



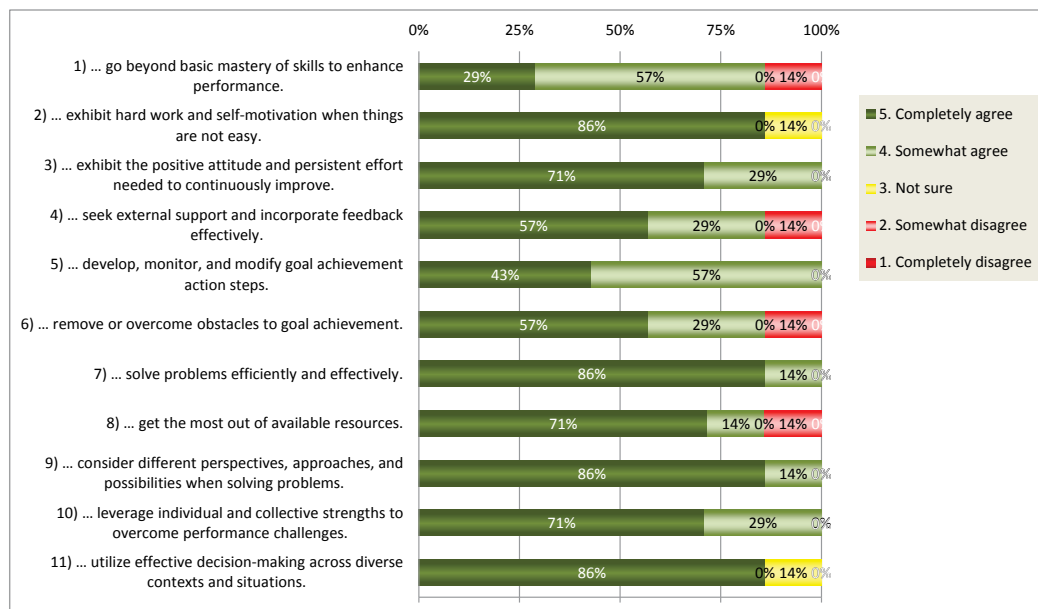
2.1.2 Magis: All Athletes

Do you agree with these statements? Athletes on this team:



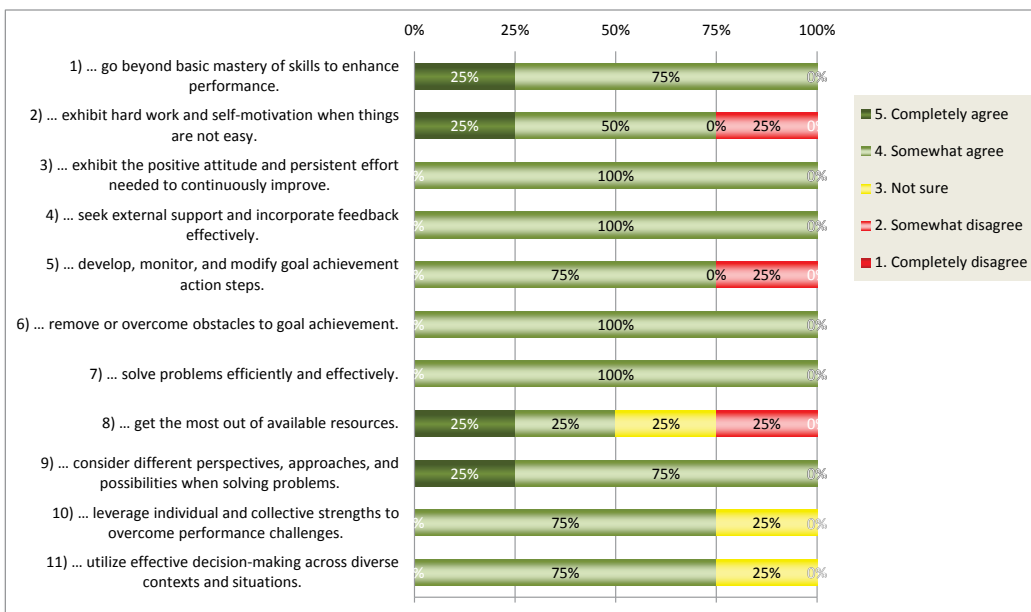
2.1.3 Magis: Underclassmen

Do you agree with these statements? Athletes on this team:



2.1.4 Magis: Upperclassmen

Do you agree with these statements? Athletes on this team:



LE MOYNE **DOLPHINS**

**ALL IN
ALL ONE
ALL DOLPHINS™**



INSIDE **THE L**