PART IV

Lay Leaders: Issues and Perspectives
Trustees and Leadership for Mission

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At a conference on lay leadership we could argue that there is no more important form of that leadership than the exercise of effective lay trusteeship for our Catholic colleges and universities. In actual fact, the success stories of these institutions over the past thirty-five years have been due in no small part to trustee leadership, and specifically to the leadership of lay trustees.

Recently, we have become more aware of the need for trustees to focus on their responsibility for the Catholic identity and sponsoring group’s mission of the institution. Responding to this need is a workshop designed jointly by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, and the Association of Governing Boards to assist trustees in the discharge of that responsibility.

Until the late 1960s, the typical Catholic church or university was essentially an extension of the sponsoring religious community and was owned, operated, and staffed mainly by members of the religious congregation, i.e., the nuns, brothers, and priests. There was normally one civil corporation, and most often board membership was confined to community or congregation members. Lay “boards” were advisory at best.

The Second Vatican Council’s vision for lay leadership, the desire to “mainstream” our schools, increased pressures to develop more professional faculty and administrators, and a benevolent interpretation of canon law led most Catholic colleges and universities to “separately incorporate.” The institution and the sponsoring group no longer shared one civil incorporation, but each sought distinctive incorporation. They structured or restructured statutes and by-laws, transferred ownership, developed
various formal and informal agreements, and established different varieties of reserved powers for the sponsoring group. All the while, a new partnership between the laity and clergy/religious was emerging. This separation was accompanied by an explicit commitment to maintain the Catholic and sponsoring group identity of the institution. It would simply be pursued in a different way.

These developments were accompanied by no little tension, but the end result has been an extraordinary period of quantitative and qualitative growth for Catholic higher education. Some commentators, such as Father James Burtchaell, have claimed that Catholic identity has suffered in the midst of this progress; others, and I include myself among them, claim that Catholic (and sponsoring group) identity has become stronger because we are more intentionally involved in its development. In either case, we come to today when the declining number of the members of sponsoring groups has led to an even greater concern to foster the founding mission and the Catholic identity of Catholic colleges, and sponsoring groups are more concerned about exercising responsible stewardship toward institutions they founded.

The varying degrees of influence sought by founding congregations or dioceses come under the rubric of "sponsorship," a term that has developed over the last thirty years to describe different ways the congregation or diocese relates to the institution in mutual efforts to keep the founding charism or spirit alive. There is no one model for how this is done, but Catholic schools have pursued two broad governance options.

The single-tiered governance model has one board responsible for the institutional mission. In American civil law the board holds in trust the purposes for which the institution was founded, which includes the Catholic/sponsoring group component of that mission. The sponsoring group itself is especially concerned to promote the Catholic/sponsoring group component of the mission, because it serves as the interpreter of the sponsoring charism of the institution. To recognize the legitimate interests and concerns of the sponsoring group, statutes or by-laws sometimes prescribe that the board have a certain number of sponsoring group members, and there are often formal agreements freely entered
into by the board and the sponsoring group. Some by-laws allow for a form of “bloc voting” that requires the prescribed number of sponsoring group members plus one for certain significant votes.

A number of Catholic schools have been moving to a two-tiered governance model to protect the Catholic and sponsoring mission. An “inner board,” or “board members,” or “the corporation” reserves certain powers to itself, and leaves all other responsibilities to a board of directors or trustees serving as the second or “operational board.” This model is meant to protect the interests of the sponsoring group. Examples can be cited where this arrangement has worked well, but many where it has not. It runs the risk of rendering the second board less effective by discouraging board members from fully committing themselves when someone else is “pulling the strings.” This would seem especially likely to happen if the institution were to move from single-tiered to two-tiered governance, because such a move could be interpreted as a vote of no-confidence in the single board in the discharge of its responsibility for mission. If indeed reserved powers are to be used, it would seem best to keep them to a minimum, and to work at keeping the second board as strong as possible. The use (or abuse) of such powers could emasculate the operating board of the college or university.

Whether single or two-tiered governance is in place, the relationship between the board and the sponsoring group (or congregation) cannot be totally defined by juridical rights and obligations. It is more effectively based on mutual trust sustained by ongoing communication and support. Alice Gallin, author, educator, and for twelve years the executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, has suggested that the relationship might better be called “partnership” than “sponsorship.”

Regular contact in good times can help build a level of trust that can weather storms that may occur. Boards need to find ways to welcome members of the sponsoring group or congregation appropriately into important deliberations. Sponsoring groups and congregations need to know that their influence and inspiration can be more important than control. Control can be counter-productive to the fostering of the sponsoring charism. The object
is to keep vibrant, not merely preserve the tradition, and for that to happen, the quality of relationships is very important.

The Trustee Orientation Project we have been developing has two purposes: 1) to emphasize the role of governing boards of Catholic colleges and universities in fostering the Catholic and sponsoring group mission of their schools; and 2) to help make trustees effective and comfortable in that role. A collection of essays has been prepared to orient trustees to their responsibility for institutional mission, and a pre-workshop assessment survey has been developed to determine the distinctive situation of each institution and board as a basis for designing a workshop to fit specific needs. Twenty distinguished present and former presidents and trustees have been trained as workshop facilitators. The workshop is dedicated to developing a plan of action and board priorities to deal with the mission and identity issues raised by the survey results.

Boards range from doing very little to engaging in very significant and effective activity in exercising their responsibility for mission. I have served on both kinds of boards, as well as on some that fall in between. The comfort and interest of individual board members also varies greatly. Some want to be deeply engaged in the church-relatedness of the institutions and others, either because of a lack of interest, or because of an exaggerated deference to church leaders, leave it to them to deal with the "church stuff."

In general, with the board, as with the institution itself, some prefer to have the responsibility focused on a committee and some prefer to have the responsibility diffused throughout the board. Both approaches can work, but there should be some accountability built into the structure, i.e., various ways to ask and test candidly whether or not the particular strategy is working. The committee model runs the risk of allowing other board members to neglect their own responsibility (not unlike the temptation of some "non-academic" or "non-financial" board members to neglect their responsibility to learn something about the academic and financial health of the institution). The full board model runs the risk of so diffusing the responsibility mission that nothing specific happens.
If the committee model is chosen, then the committee (variously called “Mission and Identity,” “Mission Effectiveness,” “Mission Integration,” and so on) needs credibility in terms of membership, charge, and integration with the other tasks of the board. Membership should not be confined to the sponsoring group, although they should certainly be a strong part of the committee. The committee should reflect the composition of the board itself and not include only those board members who are most enthusiastic about the mission. If there is two-tiered governance, mission issues should not be restricted to the “upper” or “inner” board, but should include members of both boards, thus picking up some of the advantages of the Notre Dame model.

Not only is the membership of the board important, but so too is its charge. I have been on boards where such a committee, or its chair, confined its role with the full board to offering short vignettes on the founder and/or mission, but without effectively engaging other board members in substantive conversation. I have also been on boards where the mission committee not only effectively educated the board in digestible portions, but also worked hard to relate its work to the other concerns of the board and was ready to raise mission issues in the midst of the board discussions on other agenda items.

Which brings us to a third aspect of credibility of the board committee on mission: its integration with the other tasks of the board. In the ideal order, there is an easy flow of mission concerns within the other discussions of the board—financial, academic, student life, and so on. This is where administrators can be very helpful, namely, in showing how mission concerns should influence every dimension of the school’s activity. I recall how on one board a member would constantly raise the issue of the ethical dimension of whatever decision or policy was being discussed. The mission committee should be finding ways to do something like this. Is it too much to ask to have a concern for the mission bottom line, to match board concern of the financial bottom line?

Many, if not most, boards will be familiar with church-relatedness issues only in a vague sort of way. Their good will has to be supported by solid orientation, continuing education, and the good example of more senior board members. Presidential
leadership is essential in this regard. Richard Ingram, of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), has emphasized that trustees will rise only to the level of expectation of their leaders, i.e., the president and the chair. Board members need to see the president as a role model in establishing a hard link between mission and all else that boards do, rather than something that is soft and fuzzy to talk about at other times, but not when the board is doing business. Even, or better, especially in time of crisis, when making hard and difficult choices, the mission has to come up to the fore.

In recent years, it has become increasingly obvious that a critical mass of women and men committed to the church-related mission is essential if that mission is to survive with any degree of vitality. In other words, a sufficient number of effective people strategically placed and capable of influencing the institution is needed to keep its mission and identity alive and well. Forty years ago in Catholic colleges and universities that critical mass was assumed to be present in the lived witness of the sponsoring religious and/or clerics, although even then it was also present, if in smaller numbers, in the witness of generous and committed lay colleagues.

Today, such a critical mass can no longer be assumed, but must be recruited and developed. The effort begins with trustees, i.e., in searching for trustees with at least the capability of being committed to the school's church and sponsoring group identity. Trustee profiles cover a number of characteristics as the board seeks to become as strong and effective as possible, but the commitment to mission needs to be discussed early in the recruitment process, with the understanding that effective orientation can lead from an initial openness to a more informed commitment.

In their monograph, Relationship Revisited, Holtschneider and Morey chronicled the decline in Catholic colleges and universities in the numbers of religious and priests, and noted that 28% of respondents to their survey reported that within ten years virtually no founding religious would work on campus or serve on the board.1 Within that scenario, they suggested three options for institutions facing such declining numbers: become secular; find ways to protect the founding charism; become more universally
Catholic. Our workshop for trustees is directed toward the second alternative, suggesting "ways to protect the founding charism," which of course includes the school's Catholic identity.

We know that the future will not be like the past, and many find excitement and challenge in that. Catholics speak of the twenty-first century as "the century of the laity." Members of religious congregations and the clergy are being challenged to support and trust the laity in their emerging role. They are challenged to be generative rather than reactionary in transitioning their legacy into new forms. Such a transition clearly involves risks, but trustees can lead a partnership that can not only survive but prosper in new and exciting forms.

Notes

Sponsorship and the Religious Congregation

KAREN M. KENNELLY

My experience derives mainly from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, a large congregation with general government but a decentralized structure. Provinces and vice-provinces are directly responsible for the sponsorship of institutions through which the mission is carried out. Institutions include five colleges and universities in addition to some fifteen hospitals and long-term health care facilities.

The congregation’s demographic profile affords reason for both optimism and caution regarding the future of sponsorship. Provinces currently average about 460 members each, a reassuring figure when it comes to exercising the responsibilities of sponsorship. On the other hand, our median age is high, ranging from seventy in the Albany and Los Angeles provinces, to seventy-two and seventy-six in St. Louis and St. Paul respectively. We continue to be encouraged by the small but growing number of women now entering the congregation, as well as by the rapid growth of lay associate programs begun in 1974. These now include 451 women and men, many of whom are active in our sponsored institutions.

My approach to sponsorship is also colored by my familiarity with the five institutions of higher education sponsored by our various provinces, each of which has moved toward lay leadership in different ways and with a different pace: The College of St. Catherine in Minneapolis-St. Paul; Fontbonne University in St. Louis; Avila University in Kansas City; The College of St. Rose in Albany, New York; and Mount St. Mary’s College in Los Angeles. A sixth institution, St. Mary’s Junior College in Minneapolis, became the Minneapolis campus of St. Catherine’s in 1986.
The influence of Vatican II on sponsorship would be difficult to exaggerate. All would agree that the understanding and practice of sponsorship has been deeply affected by such Vatican II-endorsed concepts as the basic equality of all Christians by virtue of baptism and the need for subsidiarity and mutuality in decision-making processes and corporate structures.

Equally portentous for sponsorship was the Vatican II call to religious congregations to renew themselves in the light of their founding spirit or charism, the call of the gospel, and the needs of the times. The subsequent membership decline in U.S. congregations (about 50% during the last quarter-century) is partially attributable to the conciliar summons to renewal and has had significant repercussions for the extent, nature, and quality of sponsorship arrangements. A diminished zeal for institutional or corporate ministry among many religious, an indirect result of the response to the Vatican II call to renewal, undermined sponsorship in the smaller and more vulnerable congregations.

Remarkable shifts have occurred over a relatively short period of time. From the perspective of religious congregations, a shift from control to influence with respect to sponsored universities and a concomitant shift from implicit assumptions to explicit measures with respect to mission effectiveness occurred. From the perspective of the laity, shifts took place from closed to open presidential searches; from holding a minority of top administrative positions to holding a large majority of such positions; from constituting approximately half of the faculty to around nine-tenths; and from the expectation that they would grasp the mission of the sponsoring religious congregation by osmosis to the expectation that they would learn from formal programs on mission initiated by the religious congregation.

We are generally too close to these broad trends to interpret them with confidence, much less to identify all their long-term consequences. For this reason, I hope you will appreciate my desire to use the remainder of my essay to address behaviors conducive to healthy sponsorship. My comments are based on the insights I have gained as a member of the Carondelet congregation and a teacher and administrator in its sponsored institutions of higher education. My basic assumption is that new and strengthened
forms of lay-religious collaboration have evolved since 1965 for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, forms that have the potential for sustaining our Catholic mission in higher education long after those of us present here today will have retired from active ministry.

In the interests of time, I propose to focus not so much on the forms sponsorship now takes—there is, after all, an abundant literature on two-tiered boards, reserve powers, sponsorship agreements, and the like—as on the characteristics of successful lay-religious collaboration and how we can reinforce these characteristics. Resources included at the end of this paper are intended to supplement this brief presentation.

**Marks of Successful Lay-Religious Collaboration**

Based on personal experience on both sides of the desk—as a faculty member and academic dean in one of our sponsored institutions, and as a college president of another; as executive director of the Carondelet university association for several years; and as province director and now a member of our congregational-wide Leadership Team—I would suggest a half-dozen guiding ideas and several concrete actions for consideration by religious and laity seeking to promote Catholic identity in the spirit of founding and/or sponsoring congregations. The guiding ideas highlight the need to communicate, report, anticipate, subordinate, trust, and believe. The concrete actions I propose emphasize the need to celebrate, integrate, and formalize. Allow me to offer a few words of explanation about each of these.

**Communicate:** The analogy of “location” as the major factor in enhancing the value of real estate comes to mind. Asked to cite three factors adding to property value, the astute realtor named “location, location, location.” Asked to name three behaviors or guiding ideas essential for good lay-religious collaboration, I would name “communication, communication, communication.” Confidentiality is not usually a problem. Hidden agendas are. Communication goes both ways—there must be an element of mutuality here as in all of the other guiding ideas I discuss.

**Report:** By this I mean behavior that expresses the concept of reasonable accountability of religious congregation to institution
and vice versa. An example that comes readily to mind is the annual report called for by the Los Angeles province while I was president of Mount St. Mary's College. Preparing responses to questions relating to mission; assembling and sharing materials such as audit reports, enrollment, and program data, and the strategic plan; and the ensuing personal dialogue between religious and institutional leadership teams afforded a priceless opportunity for mentoring and building mutual trust. The reporting site was traded from year to year, one year at the provincial headquarters and the next at the college campus, to give each other the "feel" of our respective environments.

Anticipate the inevitability of clashing goals and motivations. I'm sure we could all cite examples of situations when lack of foresight led to a serious breakdown of communication and even the severing of sponsorship relationships. Better to anticipate than to find yourself always reacting to crises. An obvious example is that of anticipating the likely need to modify by-laws when they restrict the presidency to religious and few or no suitable candidates appear to exist within the congregation. Discussing the pros and cons of an open search well in advance of presidential transition helps both the congregation and the board of trustees deal with a very sensitive issue in a constructive manner.

Subordinate the interests of any one individual or special interest group to the common good of the congregation and of the institution. Two examples that come readily to mind are the recent very generous donation of $20,000,000 to The College of St. Catherine by the St. Paul Province, and the amalgamation of St. Mary's Junior College with The College of St. Catherine in 1986. Both actions expressed in ways highly visible to the general public the confidence of a religious congregation in its sponsored institutions and the willingness to sacrifice in order to ensure a bright future for each institution. Both actions have been proven wise by the vigorous growth of St. Catherine's as a women's college proud of its Catholic heritage and its association with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Trust that lay women and men are capable of "owning" or "carrying" the mission. Many examples illustrate and confirm the merits of such trust, beginning with the initiative taken by our
Los Angeles province during my presidency at Mount St. Mary’s to reduce the proportion of sister-trustees from one-third to one-fourth, and to further revise by-laws to allow for a lay president. The result of both actions was to enhance lay trustees’ sense of responsibility for Catholic identity and mission and to attract outstanding presidential candidates.

Perhaps it goes without saying, but we need to set lay leaders up for success rather than for failure at the same time as we express trust through by-laws revisions. Educational programs for trustees, administrators, and faculty, preceded and accompanied by open dialogue within the sponsoring religious congregation, are two fundamental ways to foster broad understanding of mission and personal responsibility for promoting fulfillment of that mission in every facet of university life.

Believe in the distinct missions of both the religious congregation and of the institution of higher education. There is no point in sponsoring an institution of higher education unless that college or university functions at a high degree of excellence with respect to academic as well religious facets of its mission.

With guiding ideas like these in place, lay and religious leadership can work together to:

Celebrate and honor the past, present, and desired future contributions of religious in the annual rituals, programs, and environment of the campus.

Integrate the congregation’s particular charism or spirit into the fabric of the institution. An example I like to cite because of its relative uniqueness is the “Reflective Woman” course at The College of St. Catherine. Readings for the course typically begin with an essay by an alumna member of the province entitled “All Women Can Be: The Spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph,” and the first chapter of a college history, More Than a Dream: Eighty-five Years at The College of St. Catherine.

Formalize understandings and structures that will facilitate successful lay leadership and the continued exercise of positive influence by religious. Important examples in this regard are the “sponsorship agreements” that have been negotiated in the two Carondelet provinces that dropped reserve powers and the two-tiered board structure in the aftermath of Vatican II.
In conclusion, this is an exciting time and I look forward to our continuing dialogue, one that may be enriched by careful consideration of the following texts.

**Recommended Reading**


Sponsorship in the Twenty-First Century

SHEILA MEGLEY

My interest in sponsorship is primarily, though not exclusively, focused on colleges and universities originally founded by women religious communities. Most of us are familiar with the general story. These colleges and universities were established toward the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The original purpose was to provide Catholic higher educational opportunities for Catholic women. By the end of this past century, these colleges followed one of four paths: they closed, became coeducational, merged with other institutions, or were one of a minority of remaining Catholic institutions for women. (Approximately 135 Catholic women colleges existed at the middle of the century, and about eighteen remain at this time.) This attrition is even more dramatic for the Catholic colleges and universities originally founded for male students. All have become coed. And, while I do not have an exact count, I would venture to guess that more women’s colleges closed or merged than the men’s colleges closed or merged.

There are Catholic colleges and universities that were not established by religious communities. Sacred Heart University is a concrete example. It was started when a bishop called together a group of lay people to establish and nurture higher education in the Catholic tradition. Catholic University of America is another unique situation, as it is a university founded by the United States Bishops. These institutions, however, are exceptions to the general pattern of the establishment of a Catholic college or university.

The general pattern of the establishment of Catholic Universities and Colleges in this country included a religious community as the motivating factor. The relationship of the
higher educational institution and the sponsoring religious community is and was complex for several reasons: both institutions have different missions; distinct constituencies; distinct personalities, often reflected in the personalities of the leadership of each institution; and different perspectives on their historical interrelationships. Both institutions’ leadership emerged from different populations and environmental mores, and claim an intellectual and spiritual Catholic heritage. However, religious communities viewed the establishment of a higher educational institution as the vehicle to live out the apostolic mission of their religious communities, while higher education institutions viewed their existence as a means of enabling others to discover and live out their Christian mission in the world. How each of these realities worked or did not work together defines the unique historical relationship for each individual institution, both for the religious community and the higher educational institution. It was about mid-twentieth century when Catholic institutions began to formalize their corporate structure and the relationship with the religious community. And it was only in the late 1960s and early 1970s that the word “sponsorship” came into popular use to describe this relationship.

Sponsorship became a word used to name the transition of religious community ownership and staffing of the institution to a formal relationship of influence sometimes expressed in redefined corporate structures or “sponsorship agreements.” When our Catholic institutions began to form boards of trustees, some required that a specific number of the founding community be on the board as “members of the corporation,” thus achieving influence and/or control on both tiers of a two-tier structure. Often it was also either written or assumed that the president of the institution would, or should be, a member of the founding religious community. It became clear by the 1970s that these institutions could no longer be staffed only by religious of the founding communities. The redefinition of the corporate structures or the sponsorship agreements was the direct result of the challenges facing the religious community, the higher educational institutions, and the world in which they both functioned.
Whatever the circumstances, the formation of the governing body was directly a result of the aspirations of the founding community and the development of the university or college. At this time, the establishment of a formal governance structure resulted from a variety of reasons. Some communities wanted to be protected from the liabilities that would be incurred by the educational institution. Some educational institutions recognized the need to develop a board that could assist in bringing outside financial support and expertise to the institutions. Some wanted to ensure that the influence of the religious community would continue. Others were trying to clarify who “owned” the university or the college. My point is that none of our Catholic colleges or universities and none of the religious communities are the same today as they thought they would be at the beginning of their endeavors, nor is the world in which they function. In fact, neither is the American Catholic Church nor even our understanding of what the Catholic faith means for each of us individually and for America collectively.

Perhaps it can be said that American Catholic higher education came of age in the twentieth century. As the Catholic colleges and universities, as well as the religious communities, came of age, their relationship was defined, either formally or informally, by their governance structure, which was either assumed or encased in corporate structures and by-laws. As we begin this twenty-first century, I believe that those Catholic institutions remaining under the sponsorship of religious communities (male or female) must resolve the ambiguity often associated with two-tiered boards (members of the corporation and board of trustees).

It is my conviction that by the end of the twentieth century, whatever governance structure had evolved, and however the interrelationships between the university and the community encased this governance structure, Catholic higher education and the religious community were reducing all of these concepts to the word “sponsorship.” But “sponsorship” involves more than an organization providing money to an institution to advertise its logo and as a result gain public recognition and goodwill. In addition, the immediate direct influence of faculty and staff predominantly involves lay people. The paradigm has shifted.
Therefore, “sponsorship” by a religious community of a higher educational institution is not fitting terminology for Catholic higher education in the twenty-first century.

I believe each institution should first acknowledge that the relationship between the founding community and the higher educational institutions is now rooted in its governance structure or its sponsorship agreement. That relationship should be examined carefully with a view to understanding the similarities and the differences between a religious community and a higher education institution. Why do we have such an articulated or assumed relationship? Is it to protect the interest of the religious community, or to protect the interest of the higher educational institution? Does the existing relationship enable the institution to move forward? Is the relationship designed for control and influence by the religious community, thus adding another layer to decision making and, by default, disempowering and second-guessing those whose expertise we say we value?

What is important is that all the efforts and all the time, energy, and commitment over the years have formed a historical legacy. This legacy is the gift, a precious treasure, passed on in faith for others to continue. Rather than “sponsorship,” perhaps we should talk in terms of “legacy” in the twenty-first century. The “legacy,” the “gift” of the sponsoring community is its unique charism lived out in higher education, ever changing, ever growing, and passing through time from one generation to another, enriched by those who add to it today just as members of the religious community added to it in the past. When a gift is given, it is not to be taken back. We do not watch how a person uses it. We do not control or influence the gift once it has been entrusted to another. We give it in faith, praying and hoping that those to whom it has been entrusted will cherish it. To a certain extent, it is not as risky as it may first appear. These colleges stand in the Catholic tradition, one that embraces both the religious community and the higher educational institution.

I am currently on a Catholic high school board of trustees. The institution is sponsored by its founding community. Recently, the founding community has been insisting that the board design a plan to ensure the accountability to them of a plan focused on
the spiritual development of the individuals of the board as well as the collective board. However, I am not certain that is the role of the religious community. Since the “members of the corporation” of the secondary institution are the same individuals as “the religious community leadership team,” it is never clear who is speaking for whom. Further confusion arises when the method used to communicate this call for accountability to the board is inconsistent with the mutually agreed upon governance structure of the secondary institution. Rather, the board should design a plan to attract individuals to the board whose values are already compatible with the legacy or gift of the religious community and the educational mission of the institution. A board is responsible for development of the institution, consistent with its mission. But I am not certain that it should be accountable to an outside structure whose primary interests are not the primary interests of the board.

I am reminded of one of the parables of the gospel that I had always found hard to understand. It is the parable of the vineyard. The workers who came in the morning could not finish the job of picking all the fruit from the vines. So they brought in more workers to complete the task in the late afternoon. At the end of the day, all received the same credit or wage. I always thought that was unfair, until I realized one day that what mattered most was that the task was complete—the harvest was saved. And those who began the task could not finish it. Others have to complete the work. All talk of welcoming the involvement of the laity in the work of the gospel becomes clanging cymbals, when we act in a manner that second guesses, controls, or directs that laity to whom we have entrusted our institutions. It behooves us to remember that none of us built these institutions dedicated to our enduring concerns. I am reminded of an old adage that should guide us: “I am responsible for the house that I did not build, but in which I live.” Our work is never finished. Nor is it “our” work. It is God’s work. We need to trust others to carry it on when we are not present or “hovering.”

Catholic higher education in the twenty-first century must have board members who recognize that they are entrusted with a historic philosophical gift—a legacy of the founding community—and that they have a responsibility to ensure that that gift is
enhanced, promoted, and permeates the institution while they are in office. The task is yet to be completed in Catholic higher education, but there is not a shortage of workers. Others will continue. If it is from God, it will succeed. Just as there was a time when only religious envisioned the educational institutions as a means of living out their apostolate, so too must we realize that others also can view the work of education as a means of living out the gospel message.

It is true that the paradigm of the relationship of religious communities to higher educational institutions has changed. However, it is not true that everyone can, or wants to, recognize this change. Old paradigms are held tenaciously as perceived reality, usually by myths—things that were never true, but had an element of truth. For example, in this age of the laity, it is regrettable that some religious and some laity still believe and act upon the assumptions that:

- Religious are more spiritual than lay people.
- Lay people are not educated to the spiritual truth of the gospels.
- Clerics and religious are the only ones with the ability to articulate the gift—the legacy of a religious community.
- Lay people on boards of institutions founded by religious communities should defer to the religious on the board.
- Religious on the boards of trustees speak for all the religious and for the religious community.
- Catholic colleges and universities need clerics or consecrated religious in leadership position to be truly Catholic.

These misconceptions prevent the laity from finding and articulating the contemporary expression of the legacy: the gift of the religious community.

The Catholic college or university should be the place where the Church thinks, where all can find models of individuals living the gospel message, where faith is valued, where human kindness and compassion define the institutions, where all can be completing the work God has given us to do in our time. They should be places where all who are associated with the institution are able to live out their apostolate.
A new challenge faces the 222 American Catholic colleges and universities. All but twelve of these were founded by a religious order or congregation, yet with the declining numbers of these clerical and religious members of the campus community, the institutions must find a way to preserve their individual identities as Catholic, a problem that didn’t arise when many priests, nuns, and brothers walked the campuses. As the previous General of the Jesuits, Father Pedro Arrupe, used to ask, “How to do?”

The Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus is working toward an answer to this challenge. The specifics of the plan are presented here with the hope that a similar project might be instituted at other colleges and universities.

Our five colleges and five high schools are teaming up with one of our retreat centers, the Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth at Wernersville, Pennsylvania, to offer two weekend “Conference Retreats,” one in November and one in February, to members of boards of trustees, faculty and staff, alums, and parents of students on the topic of Ignatian Spirituality. A Conference Retreat offers points for reflection and guided suggestions for prayer. Time is also provided for groups within each institution to share the application of the conference points back home. The topics covered are: the life of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, studied via a movie; Ignatian Spirituality; Ignatian Prayer; Individual and Communal Discernment; and the Consciousness Examen, an Ignatian method of practicing discernment in daily life.

One of my wise teachers once suggested that Catholic spirituality could be summed up in four brief and memorable axioms: love is
possible; evil is reversible; forgiveness is available; and hope is real. Presented this way, Catholic spirituality is understandable and can be embraced by members of a Catholic institution who are not themselves Roman Catholic or even formally religious.

Under this broad umbrella of Catholic spirituality, each college or university’s founding order then interprets its spirituality according to the dynamic vision of its earliest charismatic leaders by focusing on certain aspects of the gospel, and living them out through its members and its institution’s spirit and way of proceeding. Thus, Franciscans are struck by the poverty of Jesus and try to embody his spirit in their lifestyle and behaviors, individual and communal. Benedictines embody the balance between contemplation and action, prayer and work, as their motto, _Ora et Labora_, indicates.

Ignatian Spirituality has been described, again by an insightful teacher of the author, as having the characteristics of a flair for prayer, a yearning for learning, and an attitude of gratitude. How do the sessions of the conference retreat spell out these particular characteristics of Ignatian spirituality? The Catholic tradition has always loved to present its ideals and values through their living exemplars, the saints. Thus we begin with the stirring and heroic life of Ignatius Loyola, his conversion from a soldier seeking fame and glory into a soldier of Christ aiming at his glory, _Ad majorem Dei gloriam_, “For the greater glory of God,” a phrase that occurs countless times in his writings. We deliberately distinguish between “Jesuit spirituality,” to be practiced by members of the order, and “Ignatian spirituality,” its adaptation for our lay colleagues. This application is made easy because most of Ignatius’s insights and principles were experienced and lived while he was still a layman.

The second conference on “Ignatian Spirituality” develops the three notions sketched out above by connecting them to the founding documents and the order’s history. Thus a “flair for prayer” is rooted in Ignatius’s _Spiritual Exercises_, the manual recording his prayer experiences in the cave at Manresa near the monastery of Montserrat, Spain, and guiding the retreats of countless Jesuits, their colleagues, and students. A “yearning for learning” hints at the order’s dedication to education throughout
its history, a suitable rallying point for the educators participating in the conference retreat. An “attitude of gratitude” reflects an optimistic perspective on the world, despite all its sin and mistakes, because followers of Ignatius “find God in all things,” another favorite phrase of Ignatius, and praise God for his presence and providential activity.

Ignatian prayer has definable and teachable methods for beginners and advanced Catholics. Some of these will be shared with the participants, and they will be encouraged to practice them during their reflection period. Discernment is a method for begging God’s guidance in discovering and living out his concrete will in the particular choices, large and small, facing an individual, community, or institution. One of Ignatius’s interesting steps in any discernment process mandates that after gathering all relevant information, the discerner considers first the negative reasons against a proposed choice before listing the positives. This characteristic has the advantage of not letting the good features of a possible course of action sweep one’s judgment away into optimistically embracing an alternative before consideration of all the reasons, positive and negative.

Finally, the examination of consciousness is not an examination of conscience that looks only for sins and faults. It is the practice of discernment in daily life with the intent of reviewing the various movements of spirit in one’s heart during the day since the last “examen.” Again, there are several steps: 1) a prayer for light in which one invokes the Holy Spirit for guidance in the exercise; 2) the outpouring of a grateful heart for God’s gifts this day, large and small. This is especially important for putting into perspective a hard, stressful day; 3) review of the “intense” moments of the day. When did I feel particularly elated, angry, joyous, depressed, fearful, hopeful, enthusiastic, depressed, etc.? This is the heart of the examen and discernment. Since even the just person “falls seven times a day,” there will be moments revealed when one has not been living up to one’s Catholic Spirituality, one’s highest ideals and values; 4) an expression of sorrow for sins, faults, failings discovered; and finally, 5) a resolve for tomorrow is formulated after a preview of the coming day’s challenges and possibilities.
The examen can also be employed by a group, such as a board of trustees during a series of meetings, a faculty department, and so on. The goals of discernment and the examen are a habit of reflectivity, a clarification of and living out of one’s institution’s values and spirituality. Ignatian spirituality thus addresses multi-layered concerns: in our complex times, it promotes personal self-growth, an institution’s unity and development, our communities’ flourishing, and our world’s move back from violence and toward peace and justice.

This concrete program is sketched out here in some detail to provide a paradigm for other schools to tap into the riches of their own founding traditions. The conference retreat format could be used, while the specific content would vary, of course, depending on the spirituality of the founding order. An experience could be crafted with the help of retreat house, parish, or campus ministry resources. Of course, what is learned in only a weekend would have to include extensive, committed, and conscious commitment to follow-up when one returns home.

Our plan at the Jesuit Center is to provide a similar weekend next year for first-timers, with a second “advanced” weekend (for participants from the first conference retreat) in order to address problems encountered after the first year of implementing the insights and graces shared by the participants. It is hoped that an approach like this would be useful for other colleges and universities eager to pass on the specific character of their institution to the next generation of students. These students will, in turn, take their place as lay leaders.
Cultivating Catholic Identity on Campus

KEVIN E. MACKIN

The subject of this short paper challenges us to say something profound about integrating our Catholic identity into the life of our academic communities. Sometimes in our desire to be profound, we miss the obvious. For example, in an early draft of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Arthur Conan Doyle had Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson camping out underneath a tent. In the middle of the night, Holmes woke up, shook Watson, and said: "Watson, look. What do you see?"

Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars."

"And what does that tell you, Watson?"

Dr. Watson paused, and then calculated. "Astronomically, there are millions of galaxies and countless planets. Horologically, it’s three in the morning. Theologically, the universe is charged with the grandeur of God. And meteorologically it’ll be a nice day tomorrow."

Holmes was silent. Eventually Watson asked, "Well Holmes, what does all this tell you?"

Holmes simply snapped, "Watson, you idiot, it tells me someone has stolen our tent."

Yes, sometimes in our desire to be profound, we miss the obvious. I would like to focus on some obvious practices and invite you to share yours with others. I presume that the overarching theme of the conference, "Lay Leaders in Catholic Higher Education," points to a discussion of ways in which Catholic identity can be preserved and strengthened, or, better still, more deeply celebrated.

I am putting aside for now a focus on public policy issues that affect higher education, e.g., a worldwide economic downturn,
students who may be academically under-prepared and heavily dependent on financial aid, rapidly increasing tuition rates, and so forth. The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) has summarized these issues effectively.

A Catholic college has to be a place where, whatever one's religious tradition, faith in a personal and provident God is not peripheral to the educational quest, but is taken seriously as an intelligent, morally responsible, and decisive option. Our colleges and universities must be places where people are educated in the practice of moral virtues that make one not merely an accomplished person, but a good person. As such, our schools must exemplify a Catholic identity that is rooted in gospel values.

We are aware of the changing relationships between U.S. Catholic colleges and universities and their founding religious congregations, which Melanie Morey and Dennis Holtschneider have researched. They found that 85% of Catholic higher education institutions attribute their relationship to ecclesial authority through founding, sponsoring bodies. The decline in membership of founding communities is challenging many of these colleges and universities to re-think their relationships in a way that will at least preserve their particular spirituality and Catholic character. In all likelihood, many of these colleges will become more universally Catholic and less congregational, and lay Catholics may well be arbiters of how congregational and Catholic identity survives.

I think that if Catholic colleges and universities are to preserve and strengthen their religious identity, mission, and culture, lay leaders have to be catalysts in developing strategies to ensure that this does happen. I would like to propose a few key strategies to promote such a goal.

Governance

- Review board by-laws to ensure that they include a statement about the Catholic identity of the college and the inclusion of some qualified members of a founding congregation on the board. The president at a Catholic college or university should be a practicing Catholic.
• Institutionalize an “Academy for Trustee Education.” This would assure a resource of competent congregational and lay trustees who are dedicated to promoting the Catholic identity of the institution. The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, and Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities have published a handbook for Catholic college and university trustees titled *Mission and Identity*. The ACCU and AJCU, in particular, sponsor a workshop on “Mission and Identity.”

**Academics and Mission Efforts**

• Form an endowed center for congregational-Catholic studies to act as a catalyst for strengthening the institution’s identity. A center for Catholic studies could include three major emphases:

An *Academic Program* that sponsors and encourages faculty and students to explore issues of faith and values in the context of congregational-Catholic traditions, e.g., Franciscan-Catholic or Jesuit-Catholic tradition, and so on. Interdisciplinary courses would focus on Catholic themes. These might encompass a range from biology and economics to law and politics. There might be joint appointments (for example, a professor of business ethics and religious studies). Also, faculty forums can explore the institution’s spirituality concerning globalization and other contemporary issues. And I would encourage faculty to participate in Collegium. Grants, course reductions, and other types of support, can encourage research that explores the relationship between academic disciplines and Catholic social teaching regarding for example, medical ethics issues and religious themes in literature.
Spiritual and Liturgical Programs designed to reinforce the congregational-Catholic tradition. Liturgies and chorales, orientations, feasts and special days, retreats, and Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults programs should nourish our students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae, "through and through." A well-staffed Campus Ministry program is important in highlighting and nurturing religious identity.

A Service Component that puts the message of the gospels into action. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni/ae should be encouraged to do informed volunteer service in the community. For example, at Siena College we have a Franciscan Center for Service and Advocacy, sponsored by the founding congregation and others.

- Provide a founding congregation web page, to promote Catholic academic and spiritual growth and articulate the values and tradition of the congregation. This site would be able to promote the history of the founding of the Catholic institution, and its progress.

- Establish a Catholic medal/award offered at the Commencement Awards Ceremony, celebrating prominent men/women who have contributed to the Catholic tradition on campus through their example, academic achievement, and social responsibility.

Student Affairs

- Strengthen the role of the Chaplain's Office for Campus Ministry, to facilitate clear understanding and support of Catholic moral values and the ethos of the founding charism. Professional staff living in the residence halls are key role models for students, so it is very important that staff reflect the mission of the college. Siena's Student
Affairs staff, working with the College Chaplain, are embarking on a Franciscan Values and Living campaign. An essay by the chaplain provides vision and values as a topic for staff meetings and interviews with Resident Director candidates. The staff focus programming and discussions on these values. The Chaplain’s office also brings liturgies into residence hall space. This opportunity for students to become familiar with worship where they live has been very successful at Siena. A 10 P.M. Sunday Mass in one of our Residence Halls is standing room only.

- Craft a written agreement among students that articulates the rights of residents in a Catholic community. Founding congregations have much to offer regarding community life. Siena has Friars-in-Residence living with students, working together with staff. This can be an opportunity for students to learn that they can see God revealed in daily life with their fellow residents. We are called to facilitate this revelation of the deep importance of each person.

- Form a private “academy” led by dedicated Catholic faculty as a study group for capable student residents. This academy would prepare gifted students in practical Catholicism on campus in areas of spirituality, peace, justice, communication, and living together in society.

Sites/Sights of Catholic Education

- When people see our campuses, what Catholic sign value is offered? Is there a visible chapel, a grotto, other obvious indicators that we have entered a college with a Catholic identity? The University of Notre Dame has a grotto and a “touchdown Jesus.” A cross on a dome or a statue of a saint is important because it reminds us and indicates to visitors that we cherish our traditions. Why not have a significant monument related to the founding group in an academic quad or other important space, to emphasize the
nature of the institution? At Siena College, with a Franciscan tradition, we display reproductions of a crucifix that St. Francis of Assisi was inspired by. In our Student Union atrium, there are quotations on the wall by St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Bonaventure. Each image and quote on our campus is a pathway for contemplation and learning. And yes, our physical plants present yet another opportunity to signify our identity and to enter into dialogue about our Catholic intellectual tradition.

Integrated Marketing

• Integrity is an important part of the Middle States Association accreditation process many are familiar with. We should be clear and consistent in expressing who we are as a Catholic college or university. To know who we are as an institution, to say truthfully who we are in marketing and recruiting and communications and other literature, and to follow through on who we are in day to day operations, is simply a matter of integrity.

Pre-enrollment

• Students should know clearly from their first point of contact with the college its congregational and Catholic identity. What distinguishes our institutions from state or secular private institutions? This should be obvious through literature, the college web site, visits to campus, and so on.

Orientation

• Our welcoming programs should include an introduction to the particular tradition of the institution (we can not assume that newcomers know what is obvious to us). For example, St. Francis and St. Clare are essential to understanding the Franciscan heritage. Their lives should be explicitly held up and connected to the learning and living throughout campus life.
Employment

- How do applicants understand our operating principles? How do we look for "a good fit?" We may look for related experience, and ask how he or she will support the mission of the institution. This presupposes a statement that is clear about being Catholic, Franciscan-Catholic, and so on. Hiring for mission is standard at all sorts of companies and institutions, because it is essential. People who work at an institution must advance the mission of that institution. How do our professionals articulate our Catholic principles and values? In what ways do we sponsor and encourage them to explore issues of faith and values in the context of our institution's congregational-Catholic traditions? The obvious answer is: education.

Academic Freedom and Speakers, Programs, Events at a Catholic College or University

- A Catholic college or university is devoted to principles of academic inquiry and the freedom to explore issues and matters essential to education and development of the life of the college. Such freedom cannot be unfettered, nor can it escape the very practical need for those responsible for governance of the college to place limits on events and activities that may, for example, threaten the fundamental principle of balanced and open academic inquiry; pose a threat to safety; may be grossly offensive or uncivil; may be inappropriate by ordinary standards of time, place, or manner; or may seriously undermine the mission of the college and thereby cause misrepresentation. Of course, while the right to place limits exists, such a right is also not unfettered, and should be exercised only in rare instances when no alternative exists other than to disallow a particular event. The overarching example would be common sense civility: an institution would not present something that mocks its own deeply held tradition.
Students and parents, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae, and the general public should rightly expect a Catholic college or university to be a place of solid academic study and celebration of Catholic principles and values. I began with a story about focusing on the obvious. So, I invite lay leaders of Catholic colleges to articulate the obvious and feel free to challenge, clarify, and improve the Catholic identity on their campuses.
The Mission of The College of New Rochelle

JOAN E. BAILEY

The College of New Rochelle (CNR) is most accurately described as mission-driven. The mission of the college from its founding until today has been to create an engaged academic community that provides access to an excellent liberal arts education, especially to those who do not have ready access to higher education regardless of who they may be. This has created an academic community of enormous diversity. Allow me to explain.

The Ursulines founded the college in 1904 as the first Catholic college for women in New York State. A rigorous liberal arts education was at that time available only to Catholic men or to women in secular institutions or institutions founded in other religious traditions, such as Barnard, Radcliffe, Mount Holyoke, or Smith. The population of young Catholic women was not yet being served by existing higher education, and so Mother Irene Gill founded CNR. The historical roots of the Ursulines trace back to sixteenth-century Italy and were grounded in the Ursuline charism of service to those who were not being served well by contemporary society, regardless of who they were or how society viewed them. Thus it was the charism of the Ursulines to address the educational needs of young Catholic women in the early days of the twentieth century, two decades before women could vote in the United States. Mother Gill believed that these young women would be best educated in the Catholic intellectual tradition of the liberal arts, preparing them as women of achievement and leadership in their families, their church, and their society. The first five decades of the college validated her vision, drawing young women from various ethnic groups but
who mostly shared a Catholic school and church upbringing. The college flourished and welcomed young women from different cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions, following its mission and the Ursuline heritage.

In the late 1960s, the college added a graduate school, which by law had to be co-educational, and built on its traditional academic strengths of undergraduate psychology, art, and teacher preparation. As it did so, the inclusion of men and the attractiveness of program strength and reputation brought more students whose backgrounds and experiences differed from that of the traditional age (18-22) young women who attended what was now called the School of Arts and Sciences. At the same time, it became increasingly obvious that young women of color in the communities neighboring the college were not enjoying equal access to higher education. Many of these women were not graduating from high school with the credentials that would readily allow them to go to college. Thus CNR and other local Catholic colleges reached out to the local public high schools to admit a dozen young women who would enjoy the benefits of a CNR education and return to their community to become women of achievement and leaders for the future of the community. Based on recommendations and interviews to provide alternative predictors of college success, these young women were judged to be able to succeed in the demanding curriculum, if they were given both the opportunity and the necessary extra support. From this beginning at CNR and other local Catholic colleges, the New York State Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) was born. This program is now in place statewide and has spawned numerous additional pre-college and college-based support programs across the country.

It is important to note here some of the important elements of this successful effort to promote access to college for students from “difficult” backgrounds. First, there was commitment of the institution from top to bottom to the mission of access and inclusivity, tied to the belief that the college is better for the presence of new populations.

Second, there was an emphasis on respecting individuals within the community by listening to them, responding to the
needs of the newly welcomed groups of students—needs not only academic but also cultural, social and spiritual. This habit of listening and responding was as much located in the areas of the college that faculty and tradition may have seen as adjacent to education, but which the Ursuline tradition had always included in the very notion of education: education of the whole person. Indeed, it was observed that the academic areas moved more slowly to respond to the needs of these young women than did the areas of student support, such as residence life, student activity, and campus ministry.

Third, what helped to make this invitation successful was undoubtedly that these students were part of a group, a critical mass so to speak, albeit only about 10% of the entering class. Additionally, the college was moving simultaneously to reach other “new” populations who would help to provide visible support to this group of students in the School of Arts and Sciences. This project continues today, drawing into the community each year about twenty students whose educational background would not otherwise permit their inclusion.

From that intentional and very structured beginning, an increasing number of young women of color who have enjoyed much stronger educational preparation and who are regularly admissible see the college as welcoming to them and join us in great numbers. Although the School of Arts and Sciences is women only, mainly young women, there is great diversity of background in geography, economy, religion, race, and ethnicity.

But the story of CNR’s diverse community is much more than this. In the late 1960s, another group of students began to appear on the campus in small numbers: older women who were returning to college to complete degrees begun before other obligations took them away. Often these women had left college to marry and raise families, or to go to work supporting parents or siblings, often brothers who were deemed as having a greater need for higher education. Following the mission and model of Ursuline education, which attends to each student and strives for the full development of the talents of each person, a faculty member in Arts and Sciences proposed a model of liberal arts education that would better serve the older adult students who
brought maturity and experience as well as significant demands to the educational environment. This model of liberal arts education was built on the adult student as an equal partner in the educational process and saw the student as a "new resource" for the college community and for society. Thus was born the School of New Resources. This model recognized the abilities as well as the challenges facing an adult who would seek a college education, and this model was built on the mission of the college: commitment to the importance of the liberal arts as essential foundation for a real career. Liberal arts was to be understood, as it had always been at CNR, as preparation for a career, for life.

As this model was discussed and refined, plans were made to reach out to adults in the area around New Rochelle. The mood of the time as well as the law dictated that the program would be co-educational, although the students who inspired it were women. As plans progressed and word spread, the Municipal Employees Union of the City of New York (Local DC37) expressed serious interest. They had been offering a highly successful high school equivalency program for a number of years and sought a way to offer baccalaureate level liberal arts education to their members as preparation for further professional post-graduate preparation and career growth.

In the fall of 1972, both on the main campus and for the first time in the United States at a union headquarters, the full baccalaureate liberal arts program of the School of New Resources began with several hundred students enrolled and many more on waiting lists. Today the college proudly includes 4,500 adult baccalaureate students studying for an interdisciplinary liberal arts degree at branch campuses in Brooklyn and Manhattan, both at Local DC37 headquarters and at the Rosa Parks campus located in the Studio Museum of Harlem on 125th Street, in the Bronx at Co-op City, at the John Cardinal O’Connor campus in the South Bronx, and on the main campus of the college in New Rochelle.

What I have characterized as "adult centered" needs a bit of further explaining if one is to understand the enormous success of reaching out and drawing in new populations to create a highly diverse community. The essential ingredient has been commitment to the mission of the college, to provide a liberal arts education to
those who are not being well served by existing institutions, and to treat each student with respect, i.e. to attend to the student as a whole person and to commit to the full development of that student to achieve her or his potential. In the case of the adult student, the effort has been to be a partner, to offer courses influenced, indeed shaped, by the learning needs and goals of the student by creating processes that assist the student in discovering and articulating those learning needs, and to provide a learning environment designed to support student learning. This has meant taking the learning environment to where the student works or lives: to the community.

For the traditional college-age women, it has often been efficacious for her to live with others near her own age away from the daily demands of family and society. For the older student, it has been efficacious to remove the obstacles of travel and schedule by providing a learning environment easily accessible within the community in time and space which adapts to the adult life rhythm. In both cases, serving very different students has meant creating very different models of education. Who the student is and what the student brings and needs are significant considerations in the educational design. This combination determines how well the student and community will meld. Thus, today the College of New Rochelle offers a traditional undergraduate residential living-learning model of education which also includes some commuter students and also offers an undergraduate inner-city learning model. This model, offered at different locations, offers the same curriculum (interdisciplinary liberal arts), but each location has a distinct climate and atmosphere, shaped to suit the students who study there.

The School of Nursing began on the main campus in 1975 and is co-educational and seeks to expand the male presence in nursing. It serves a traditional age population coming directly from high school or an associate’s degree program, a large population of licensed Registered Nurses, and nurses who seek master’s and post-master’s education in nursing. It does this primarily on the main campus but also offers education in partnership with healthcare agencies and hospitals on their locations.

The Graduate School has continued to add appropriate programs in human service, education, art, and communications, and
offers education courses in partnership with teacher’s centers throughout the New York metropolitan area. In each school the college maintains its identity by following closely its mission while growing and changing. In each school the faculty and curriculum are adapted to the special learning needs of students, but always in the context of the college’s mission. Students, faculty, and staff are diverse in every sense: different ages (only 10% of the students are between the ages of 18-22 and there are also students well into their 80s who attend), and various linguistic and geographic origins. The different cultures include several racial and ethnic groups.

Religious believers and those who practice no religion are welcomed into the community. Our president, Stephen Sweeny, is often heard to say that what holds the community together and gives us our identity is our mutual commitment to our mission, which is grounded in the Ursuline heritage. We are a woman’s college, which we understand to mean that while we are not all women, we nevertheless take women’s education seriously and honor the contributions and perspectives of women. We are committed to the importance of the liberal arts as foundational to education and career and as integrated into career preparation. We are Catholic, which allows us to engage in the dialogue of faith with reason and to examine beliefs and values in a spirit of ecumenism.

Finally, and not in order of importance, since all of these elements of our mission are commingled, we are committed to building a community out of diversity which honors the diversity and values the contribution of these differences to the whole. Institutionally we are committed to respect one another and respect for those qualities that define each as a unique individual. The institution unapologetically celebrates its catholicity while inviting all to the conversation about faith and reason, cultural heritage, the needs of society, and the ways education has as its aim service to others. We are not always successful but we are committed to continue the project. To the extent we have been successful—and our composition suggests we have certainly made progress—it is because our mission and our Ursuline heritage prod us to continue forward in hope.
Expanding Notions of Catholic Identity

SALLY M. FURAY

This conference focuses on lay leadership in Catholic higher education, a title that highlights the ongoing personnel changes in the operation of Catholic colleges and universities. It is my view, however, that Catholic identity is influenced by many other factors than the shift from religious to lay leadership in these institutions.

The last four decades have evidenced an accelerating shift in the moral consensus that characterized the beliefs and values of much of this nation for a good part of its history. The "captive audience," mostly Catholics, which Catholic higher education experienced for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, has been replaced by pluralism and broader choices. Diane Eck's recent publication has demonstrated how this "Christian country" of ours has become the world's most religiously diverse nation. Individual, institutional, and even religious value systems are deeply conflicted, creating new vulnerabilities and requiring revised approaches in virtually all aspects of institutional operations. Catholic colleges and universities are challenged to tread warily and self-consciously across three cultures with differing and often divergent intellectual and moral values: Catholic culture, American culture, and the culture of higher education.

The concept of culture is dominant in Ex Corde Ecclesiae, which underscores the reality that the relationship between faith and culture has become pervasive in Church thought in the last several decades. I will cite one passage wherein the document challenges the research agendas of Catholic universities. I believe this challenge should be applied beyond research and equally to
issues which can and should be raised in our classrooms by competent professors and discussed by thoughtful students. The Catholic university, the document notes, is challenged to be immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the church and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world’s resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level. University research will seek to discover the roots and causes of the serious problems of our time, paying special attention to their ethical and religious dimensions.

As Catholic higher education endeavors to relate to conflicting and sometimes incompatible cultures, I like to remind myself of the broader view, namely, that institutions of Catholic higher education represent only one component of a wide and constantly evolving history of Catholic sponsorship of an extensive variety of humanistic enterprises. These include schools, hospitals, retreat centers, shelters, camps, barrio organizing projects, homes for the elderly, institutes and “think tanks,” social service agencies, radio stations and other endeavors—all of which have been profoundly affected in the United States and other parts of the world by the shift in moral consensus, each enterprise in its own context.

For Catholic educators the result has been constant exploration of the meaning of Catholic identity in particular institutional settings, a virtual hallmark of Catholic higher education in the past three decades. John Langan suggests that:

The concern over Catholic identity shows up in many different areas: the content of theology and philosophy
courses, the behavior tolerated or forbidden in residence halls, the interpretation and fulfillment of the academic and religious commitment to social justice and community service, the choice of candidates for honorary degrees, the sorts of speakers who appear on campus [as well as the] relationships with church authorities . . . and the priorities the faculty brings to the task of choosing and hiring its own members.³

Such issues arise daily in the life of Catholic institutions, creating ambiguities and/or tensions that stem from the uncertainty, disagreement, and confusion among Catholic constituents inside and outside the institutions about the meaning of Catholic culture and about the contemporary role of the Catholic college or university. Sister Ann Ida Gannon, one of my heroines in Catholic high education, noted fifteen years ago that even when we view our constituencies in the light of the Second Vatican Council’s emphasis on the People of God, we find differing and controversial expectations:

A People . . . united . . . by a hope for the same end . . . may differ in culture, outlook, ability to change. They will be radical, liberal, progressive, moderate, conservative, ultra-conservative and each will want to be heard. Often they will use the same words but with different meanings; they long for dialogue but are upset when differing views emerge and are loyally defended; they espouse community but sometimes are really seeking uniformity. A People will never be tidy, neat, submissive but if it is truly a People the differences will not divide but will enrich the whole.⁴

Notes


Creighton University is a coeducational Jesuit university founded in 1878. In the past the university and Jesuits working on the local reservations encouraged students to attend Creighton. Since 1996 the University has made a concerted effort to recruit and graduate significant numbers of Native American students, nurturing them to become leaders at the university and in their communities. Creighton is located in eastern Nebraska at the gateway to the Upper Great Plains, home to many Native American tribes. The Jesuits and Creighton have a long-standing commitment to educating and serving Native American communities. These efforts have been successful and much can be learned from these processes as efforts are made to construct a model to form lay leaders in Catholic higher education.

The Jesuits began their long relationship with Native peoples in the early 1600s and in the 1880s extended their relationship to the Lakota People of South Dakota. They established schools on the Rosebud and then Pine Ridge reservations at the request of the Lakota people in the 1880s. Today Jesuits continue their work of education in collaboration with Native people both on reservations and at Creighton University. The Jesuit values, commitment to service, respect for religious and cultural diversity, and dedication to educating the whole person are consonant with the Native American sense of community, extended family, and respect for the holistic nature of the universe. Thus we have encouraged Native students to find a home at Creighton so that they may return to their reservations or urban areas to be leaders in their communities and among the larger Native American population.
Defining Success

To determine Creighton's achievement with Native students, we drew from Vincent Tinto's persistence predictors, which include academic performance and social integration. Therefore, we looked specifically at academic performance, leadership development, and reported perception of the quality of their overall experiences as reported in the 1999-2000 climate survey.

For the purpose of this article, it is important to profile the typical Native American Creighton student. As of August 26, 2003, the enrolled Native American undergraduates (sophomore and above) at Creighton University are 63% female and 47% male. Sixty-seven percent are from reservations and 96% are enrolled members of federally recognized tribes. The largest tribe represented is the Lakota, with 42% of the undergraduate population. The mean cumulative grade point average for all Native undergraduates is 2.782, and the average number of credit hours completed is 61. The highest cumulative grade point average is 3.724 and the lowest is 2.000. The largest percentage of our students come from three states: South Dakota (46%), New Mexico (13%), and Wyoming (13%). Of our undergraduate students, 63% are Catholic.

For the 2003 graduating Native American undergraduate class, the average cumulative grade point average is 3.328, with the highest cumulative grade point average of 3.802 and the lowest 2.895. Of our May 2003 graduates, 25% are from a reservation and 75% are enrolled as part of a federally recognized tribe.

The 2003 freshman class is half female and half male. A more concerted effort was placed on recruiting from Nebraska, which had a definite impact. The states most represented for our freshmen are Nebraska (50%), South Dakota (25%), and Colorado (17%). The tribes most represented for our enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe come from the Lakota (33%), Winnebago Tribe (25%), and Omaha Tribe (16%). The mean high school cumulative grade point average is 3.628, with the highest cumulative grade point average of 4.00 and the lowest 3.12. The average ACT is 22; 58% of these students are from reservations; and 83% are enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe.
Native American youth frequently live in poverty, and are surrounded by unemployment, alcoholism, despair, and violence. Many Native American youth live in areas with limited educational opportunities. Exposure to long term economic and social distress contributes to an environment wherein Native American youth develop very low expectations for their future. Thus not only do they consider themselves incapable of being leaders but many do not even envision themselves attempting higher education, let alone succeeding.

Approximately 46.2% of Native Americans in Nebraska are living in poverty, which is higher than the rate for every other ethnic group in Nebraska. "Native American youth," as Jodi Rave Lee wrote, "are caught up in a suicidal epidemic that is claiming more lives than any other ethnic group." According to 1985-96 numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Indian Health Services reported that youth in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa commit suicide at a rate six times the national average. Native youth throughout the nation and between the ages of 15-24 have the highest risk of suicide.

Native American youth are also less likely to complete high school than members of other cultures. About 50% do not complete high school. The attrition rate is 90% in some areas of the nation, which is higher than any other population in the United States. According to the 1990 census, 65.6% of all Native Americans 25 years old and above earned a high school diploma or higher, while 9.4% earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

In 1996, Creighton was asked by John Blackhawk, the chairman of the Winnebago Tribe, and Fred LeRoy, the chairman of the Ponca Tribe, to consider how we could encourage college enrollment of their tribal members. In response to the community's request, Creighton University created the Native American Retreat, a program designed to encourage Native American high school students to prepare for higher education and consider college as a viable option.

The Retreat is a collaborative effort among Creighton University's Office of Multicultural Affairs, Undergraduate...
Admissions, the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, the Native American Studies Program, and the student-based Native American Association. All these entities have a history of outreach and community collaboration. This program is distinguished by its collaboration with many higher education institutions in Omaha and support from the Nebraska Tribes, the reservation schools, and a wide variety of Native American organizations. The Native American Retreat was designed with input and inclusion from Tribal Higher Education Programs, targeted reservation high schools, the Lincoln Indian Center, Indian Education Offices and local colleges such as the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Metro Community College. The program is held annually at Creighton University, so the participants are exposed to a university environment and interact with college students. In addition to designing a program that exposes students to college life, participants are exposed to Native American role models. Many of the participants have limited contact with Native American corporate and educational leaders. Furthermore, many of the events are interactive, so that the young Native American participants can see and learn by doing—a more traditional and comfortable method of learning for many Native Americans.

The Native American Retreat was founded on the belief that learning about choices and planning for a better future are powerful tools in fighting poverty. The program is designed to motivate Native American students to seriously consider higher education, prepare for a rigorous curriculum, and demonstrate that college is a viable option. In addition to designing a program that exposes students to college life, the program provides facilitated sessions on life issues, such as alcoholism or lack of spirituality, that could become barriers to their success. The program also explains college costs, scholarships, loans, and other ways of paying for college. As an encouragement to the students, some local businesses offer small scholarships to outstanding senior participants.

We identified reservation schools and Native American organizations to participate in our program. In turn, the schools and organizations selected students utilizing our selection criteria and application forms. We try to limit participation to sixty-five students and twenty adult chaperones.
We do not charge students or participating organizations to attend the Retreat, but the participating organizations are responsible for providing chaperones and travel expenses. Each organization is responsible for selecting serious participants utilizing the following criteria: the students must be Native American high school students who are responsible, cooperative, and who demonstrate good judgment, as verified by a teacher or counselor evaluation. Each student must be considering college, or a school representative must confirm that the student has college potential. The student must complete an application and essay. Thus the program identifies qualified and motivated students and requires that they go through a process similar to applying for college.

Participants and chaperones reside in our residence halls with the college students and experience college life for a three-day period. Participants have the opportunity to experience interactive career opportunity sessions, attend sessions on college preparation, and take part in planned cultural and social activities. Chaperones, the majority of whom are educators from the reservations and urban Indian areas, also receive training during the retreat.

The Native American Retreat is designed as an outreach program, but it also has the added benefit of serving as an excellent recruitment tool for Creighton. The students have an opportunity to come to campus and develop relationships with Creighton students, faculty, staff, and administrators. They can actually visualize themselves as Creighton students, and they become very familiar and comfortable on our campus.

Many of the participants have positive experiences that leave them with the desire to become a part of Creighton. Students who enroll at Creighton who were past retreat participants already have a well established relationship with Creighton students and personnel. They are very comfortable on campus and have a comfortable knowledge of Creighton and Creighton resources. The transition to Creighton is much easier. Since the inception of the retreat, we have had participants enroll every year at Creighton. In Fall 2003, 62% of the freshman Native American students were past retreat participants.

In addition to our formal retreat program, the college often establishes contact with students prior to enrolling. This is done
through our outreach programs, then through scholarship workshops, or through cultural programming or other community outreach activities and speaking engagements. Creighton assists with the college application, financial aid and scholarship search, and applications. Once students have formally accepted a place at Creighton, we ensure that they are enrolled in programs and support services they are eligible for. We review their financial aid packages to make sure forms are completed and they receive the resources for which they are eligible. We then assist them with the registration process and informally attempt to cluster students together in classes.

**Financial Support**

In 1959, Creighton established full scholarships for Native American graduates of Red Cloud Indian High School on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. The Jesuits also run Red Cloud. In addition, Creighton annually provides one full-tuition, room-and-board Native American Diversity scholarship for an academically exceptional Native American student from Nebraska.

Over the years, Creighton has developed other support specifically for Native students. In 1999, former Creighton President Rev. Michael G. Morrison, S.J., through a group of generous benefactors, established the Morrison scholarship, which annually provides three renewable $5,000 scholarships for Native American students with a financial need. The Joseph & Marie Doll Vision Quest Endowment Fund offers a renewable $5,000 scholarship for Native American students based on need and academic achievement. The John T. Butkus Endowed Scholarship provides one-third tuition for a Native American dental student, and there are also several smaller Native-based scholarships available.

In addition to the University providing specific scholarships for Native American students, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Support Services work together to ensure students with high financial need have the resources necessary to enroll at the university. Once we have exhausted internal resources, we assist the students in finding and applying
for external scholarships that will help them pay for the direct and indirect cost of college. Admissions and the Office of Multicultural Affairs conduct scholarship workshops to help the students apply for the larger and more complex scholarships. The Office of Multicultural Affairs constantly researches and locates additional scholarship resources that will help enhance our students' funding for school.

**Student Retention**

The success of our graduates and the support—financial, academic, and social—that we provide for our current students make us the school of choice for many Native American students in our region. In the 1999-2000 Creighton University Climate Survey, our Native American students reported high levels of satisfaction with the institution.

Once Native American students are enrolled, Creighton makes every effort to support and retain them by creating a welcoming environment and a community of Native scholars. The Office of Multicultural Affairs, Student Support Services, the Native American Association (NAA), the Jesuit community, Campus Ministry, and the Office of Minority Health Sciences all provide assistance to Native American students and help affirm the Native American culture within the Creighton environment. Creighton University is able to respond to Native American students on an individual basis, thereby personalizing the education process. In addition, we have a strong staff and faculty support network for Native American students. Creighton has reached out to women and minorities, admitting them in our educational and professional programs decades before legal mandates were in place. Creighton continues to collaborate, create, and sustain a campus environment that welcomes and nurtures talent from diverse perspectives.

Key to Creighton's success is the building of a supportive community of Native Scholars on the campus. Before Creighton's growing number of Native Americans, the rare Native student would feel quite isolated on the campus and generally that person would not complete the four years of study. This has changed over the years, as illustrated in the Table 1. Since 1995, Native
Not only is increasing Native enrollment a sign of Creighton's progress, but retention and graduation rates also indicate that we are developing the elements for a strong program of retention. It is difficult to determine success with these numbers because they are so small; the true test will be over the next several years, as we find out if the larger classes are graduating. The real testimony is yet to be realized.

A key component for retention is the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The Office attempts to ensure that our students have every opportunity to develop their full academic potential by providing direct support and assistance to Native American students so that they may successfully complete their studies at Creighton. To achieve this goal, an important service we provide is academic advising and intervention. Academic advising is an
ongoing process, and the coordinator of Multicultural Student Services provides relevant services through formal programs and ad hoc interactions. In addition to the direct support that the coordinator provides, she works with a network of resource providers in a system of support services. Early intervention consists of identifying at-risk students and providing assistance of various kinds, including enrollment assistance, scheduling assistance, classroom clustering, and financial and scholarship procurement.

This first phase of assistance is proactive in nature and is designed to increase retention by trouble-shooting problems and increasing the chance for a strong first semester by ensuring that students are in appropriate courses. Classroom clustering is a strategy implemented as a direct result of the feedback received from our focus groups conducted with Hispanic, African American, and Native American students. A theme emerged from these focus groups that under-represented minority students felt isolated and alienated in the classroom. They were often the only minority in their classes; therefore the coordinator implemented classroom clustering by placing incoming minority students together in specifically targeted classes. Students who were initially beneficiaries of this strategy reported a positive impact on their overall classroom experiences. The other benefit besides Native American students' confidence in expressing their opinions is the benefit majority students gain from the diverse opinions expressed in the classroom. Additionally, professors benefitted professionally by teaching to diverse students.

In addition to providing early preventative assistance, the coordinator has a formal process for intervening when students are not performing well. There are two systems at work. First the coordinator works with the Retention Director, who receives reports from faculty regarding performance and attendance issues. The next level of assistance is mid-term intervention. An aggressive system of contacting and meeting with students receiving a grade below a C in any class at mid-term is implemented. Upon meeting with a student, the coordinator works with the student to identify the problem(s) and provides support services and academic assistance based on the student's needs. This strategy allows one-
on-one attention and assistance designed to help motivate as well as give the student the tools and direction needed to achieve success.

Another important part of retention is providing students with a concrete link between their course work and career exploration. The office works with students in the area of professional development through internships, employment in our office, and research opportunities. Often these links serve as a motivator and provide a strong connection between what they want to do in their career and their education.

To foster and encourage a strong connection among students and to the institution, we provide a variety of opportunities to form and build relationships. One basic method is a monthly potluck supper hosted by the Native American Studies Director. The Director builds community by hosting potlucks at his residence and having students come together to prepare the main course. The Director also invites faculty, Jesuits, and staff to come and interact with the students. In addition, local Native families are also welcomed to the gatherings, adding young and elderly people to the assembly and more closely replicating the social context of their own homes. Students also frequently bring non-Native friends to the gatherings. This has been a successful method of building relationships and allowing the students to feel connected to one another and the campus community.

The Native American Studies program, formally begun in 1999, is another important retention tool. The program itself is geared to collaborative service among Native peoples rather than simply an academic study of Native cultures, stressing collaboration with contemporary Native communities. There is no expectation that Native students enroll in the program or that the program is exclusively for Natives. What is important about the program in terms of retention is that Native students can see that the college has made room not only for them but also for the study of their cultures and history. This visibility is essential for our students. Several Native students have enrolled in the Native Studies program as a double major, and even if they never take a class the fact that the program exists has been consistently cited as an important factor for Native students coming to and staying at Creighton.
Training Leaders and the Native American Association

The Native American students at Creighton are committed to service and working with their Native American communities. The students are well-known leaders on and off campus, inspiring young Native Americans by serving as positive role models. The typical Native American Creighton student plans to work with Native communities after graduation. His or her plans are an obvious outgrowth of their commitment to Native communities and to each other while in college.

One important student organization on campus is the Native American Association (NAA), which helps build positive Native American leadership. The NAA leaders are usually a mix of new and seasoned leaders. The senior leadership encourages and promotes new leaders from the freshman and sophomore ranks. NAA is a social and cultural organization designed to bring students together for fun, friendship, cultural exchanges, and personal growth. NAA offers members opportunities to develop lifelong friendships, form a support system, plan major campus events, celebrate their various cultural traditions, develop their leadership skills, meet Native American leaders and role models, and get involved in making their college experience the best possible. In fact, the strong support network the students develop serves not only as a recruitment tool but also as a reason many students are retained.

One of NAA’s goals is recruiting more Native Americans. NAA assists with ongoing recruitment through a variety of methods: writing letters, e-mailing, and telephoning prospective students. They even assist prospective students with their scholarship searches and maintain for our office a Native American Scholarship Directory. Other NAA recruitment activities include members going to their high schools to talk about Creighton and a direct marketing strategy of identifying and contacting prospective Creighton recruits. They are instrumental in the planning and implementation of the Native American Retreat. NAA leaders often plan and present entire sessions for the Retreat. They help recruit Creighton hosts and raise funds for the program. They are actively involved all three days and assist with Retreat evaluation.
Individually, Native American students at Creighton are represented in almost every arena. According to Nancy Kelsey, Creighton journalism major, "although their number remains small, Native American students at Creighton University are growing in visibility." In addition to strong leadership in the Native American Association, our students are elected members of student government; involved in the school newspaper as writers, photographers, and photography editors; student athletes; and members of other cultural clubs and organizations and dance teams. Additionally, they are members of university-wide committees like the President's Council on Diversity, HARMONY Committee, and Committee on the Status of Women. They are also members of social fraternities and sororities and service organizations, past Service Trip participants and coordinators, and much more. "It's not like we're involved in just NAA," said Creighton journalism student, Tetona Dunlap, an Eastern Shoshone from Wyoming. "I am satisfied because [Native American students] hit upon a lot of different aspects of college everywhere from sports, to fraternities to school newspapers."

What really demonstrates the quality of experiences and leadership exhibited by Native American students at Creighton is that a Native American student was recipient of the top honor bestowed upon a graduating senior, the Sprit of Creighton Award, for the last two years. The Spirit of Creighton Award is given annually to a male and female student who exemplify the mission and credo of Creighton University. Recipients are honored for their initiative, enterprise; academic achievement, and outstanding character traits. The fact that two Native American students have recently received this award demonstrates the positive experiences our Native students are having at Creighton and further illustrates how they are involved and valued.

Our students are creating positive contributions in transforming our campus, community, and world. A recent graduate received the 2003 Work Study Student of the Year Award. Two Native American Students were recipients of the prestigious Clare Boothe Luce Scholarship, and another received
the top History award for a History major, the Allan M. Schleich Award. The students in the Native American Association also donated Native-related books to the Creighton library to amplify its general collection and to commemorate the start of the Native American Studies program by making a contribution to this scholarly effort.

**Future Challenges**

Although Creighton has made tremendous strides and has long-range goals for future improvement, the university is not where we would like it to be. Any strong recruitment and retention program for Native Americans faces the challenge of limited resources, financial and human, to sustain and enhance initiatives. As numbers increase and resources remain static, the challenge is sustaining the existing level of support. Existing initiatives must be institutionalized and a more formal process established for building leadership skills. The development of mentorship programs and the creation of opportunities for students to link with mentors in the professions they plan to pursue are long-range goals.

Creighton will need to expand its recruitment efforts throughout the United States. We need to develop relationships with targeted schools and create feeder schools in a variety of urban areas, reservations, and rural areas. At the same time, Creighton needs to educate its faculty about the realities of reservation and urban Native life so that they can better work with these students and appreciate their unique cultural and religious heritages. The Native American Studies Program is planning orientation trips for Creighton faculty so they can have first-hand experience of life on the reservation. There are over seven reservations within a day's drive of Creighton.

Ultimately, our best advertising is our integration into and acceptance by local Native communities and the success of our returning students. Because of a long difficult history between Natives and whites, our integration will take time, and trust must be built slowly and carefully. We must also recognize that the success of our students will not be judged by their communities
by high salaries or prestigious titles but by their willingness to be of service to their people and to help their cultures thrive in the modern world while retaining the dignity and beauty of their traditions.

Notes

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