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Editors' Comments

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Editors' Comments

It is a pleasure to offer our readers another substantive issue of research articles, reflections, and summaries of important scholarly meetings all in support of understanding with greater clarity the state of Catholic education and its distinct contribution to our communities, the Church and broader society.

The issue begins with Rachel Collopy, Connie Bowman, and David Taylor who offer us insights into the educational achievement gap as a social justice issue. The authors present Catholic and Marianist conceptions of social justice that call people to work with others to transform institutions in order to further human rights and promote the common good. Drawing on key elements of Catholic teaching, the authors argue that the achievement gap constitutes a social injustice. They then offer a case illustrating collaboration between university-based teacher educators and school faculty to transform the institutions of school and of teacher preparation.

Kathleen Glenister Roberts asserts that while social justice education has a rich and ancient history within the Catholic Church, academic disciplines have only recently begun to make the idea of social justice relevant within courses for undergraduates. This paper considers the field of interpersonal communication from the vantage point of social justice in the Catholic intellectual tradition. The essay discusses philosophies surrounding social justice, interpersonal communication, and friendship—ultimately asking what a university course centered on "soul friendship" might look like.

Kathleen Engebretson writes a conceptual paper considering some of the foundational issues which a teacher needs to have at least considered (if not resolved) when he or she sets out to encourage students to understand and appreciate the variety of religions in his or her communities. These issues include terminology, assumed hierarchies of religions, fundamentalism, religious history, student beliefs, and critical analysis about religions. All of these foundational issues provide rich content for educators' reflections, reading, and discussions with colleagues and dialogue with students.

Carlos McCray, Floyd Beachum and Christopher Yawn offer an exploration into the idea of integrating critical spirituality in urban education leadership. Drawing upon the strengths of the African American community and their collective historical experiences, this essay explores creative ways to integrate spirituality in the education of students in urban schools.

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Richard Sinatra and James J. Maher, C.M., reveal in their manuscript how St. John's University implemented mission-focused programs to advance its unique Catholic perspective, that of the Vincentian tradition to serve the poor and remedy social inequities. Major program initiatives have included an expanded and enriched focus on academic service learning and a dedicated effort to measure program impact through outcomes-based quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Religiously affiliated institutions may find program components and organizational strategies explored in this piece to be beneficial in their own work in serving the poor, needy, and disenfranchised.

Jeffery Thielman, president of the Cristo Rey Boston High School offers lessons learned and the theories applied to facilitate a school turnaround. Because turnaround is a relatively new area of focus in education, there is limited research on what does and does not work, and even the definition of turnaround is a work in progress. This article gives some history and context for school turnarounds currently taking place in the United States and describes the turnaround of a Catholic, inner city high school in the Archdiocese of Boston. The author has been involved with the Cristo Rey movement since 1998.

Our Focus Section for this issue is introduced by Mimi Schuttloffel - professor of education at the Catholic University of America and Journal Board member. The focus section summarizes content from the 2011 CHEC conference on Catholic identity sponsored by The Catholic University of America.

Various Authors reflect on Catholic identity from the 2011 Catholic Higher Education Collaborative Conference. These proceedings include selected presentations on Catholic identity by six participants of the 2011 Catholic Higher Education Collaborative (CHEC) Conference on Catholic Identity at The Catholic University of America. The conference, jointly sponsored by CUA and St. John's University, is the forth in a series of five national conferences sponsored by the collaborative. Each of these presentations looks at Catholic identity from a different perspective, including collaborative partnerships between K-12 schools and higher education, school policies that promote Catholic identity, curriculum, research into Catholic social teaching, and leadership.

Finally, John J. Convey presents the results of a survey conducted in 2010 of over 3,300 administrators and teachers in Catholic elementary and

secondary schools nationally about their understanding of the meaning of the term "Catholic identity." The vast majority of respondents viewed the school's culture or faith community as the most important component of its Catholic identity. Several aspects of Catholic identity that received high ratings were prayer, the content of the religion course, who taught religion, liturgical celebrations and participation in service. The respondents viewed the percentage of Catholic students as the least important aspect of Catholic identity.

Books reviewed for this issue include:

James L. Heft, S.M. (2011). *Catholic High Schools: Facing the New Realities*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
Reviewed by Andrew F. Miller, Boston College

Thomas G. Welsh (2012). *Closing Chapers: Urban Change, Religious Reform, and the Decline of Youngstown's Catholic Elementary Schools, 1960–2006*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
Reviewed by Carmen L. McCrink, Barry University

John C. Haughey, S.J., Ed. (2011). *In Search of the Whole: Twelve Essays on Faith and Academic Life*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
Reviewed by Carl N. Still, St. Thomas More College

Jacques Duquesne and Francois Lebrette. (2005). *History of the Church in 100 Masterpieces* and *Lives of the Saints through 100 Masterpieces*. (2 volume set). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
Reviewed by Ian Werrett, Saint Martin's University

Francis S. Collins. (2007). *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York, NY: Free Press, A Division of Simon & Schuster.
Reviewed by Gregory S.C. Hine, University of Notre Dame, Australia

Michael James, Joseph O'Keefe, S.J., and Lorraine Ozar