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ENSURING THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH'S SCHOOLS: THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO RESPONDS TO THE CHALLENGE

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The most successful graduate program for the training and formation of Catholic school administrators is without doubt the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership (ICEL) at the University of San Francisco. This article describes the history and current structure of the ICEL program and provides a replicable model for other Catholic colleges and universities with the institutional commitment to offer graduate degree programs for Catholic school leaders.

During the 1970s several social and economic factors converged with ecclesial events following the Second Vatican Council, significantly altering the face of American Catholic higher education. In particular changes were experienced in higher education institutions' schools of education. Together with the formation colleges of the religious orders, Catholic schools of education had long prepared Catholic elementary and secondary school personnel. After the Council, Catholic parents felt less obligated to send their children to Catholic parochial schools, causing enrollment in these schools to plummet. Teaching religious left their consecrated lives in large numbers; and the remaining priests, sisters, and brothers, like the lay teachers who were taking their places, began enrolling in public institutions to receive training as professional educators.

The consequence was a significant drop in collegiate enrollments while costs were increasing at an alarming rate. Catholic institutions, in an effort to survive and in a spirit of reinventing themselves in the aftermath of the Council, redesigned teacher education curricula to appeal to non-Catholic students and serve the more lucrative demands of public education. They

accepted large government loans and grants, with the customary strings attached. Catholic institutions hired non-Catholic professors in large numbers, especially in the area of teacher education, and thus a new post-Vatican II crisis developed for the Catholic schools: the evangelical formation of teachers and administrators.

It was clear to veteran Catholic school educators that something must be done to provide future teaching personnel with a program structured to form them professionally, spiritually, and theologically, or the Church would be unable to maintain its schools. The hundreds of teaching sisters who left their convents in the aftermath of Vatican II or who entered other apostolates considered more meaningful did not return to the schools in large numbers. By 1975 schools were downsized, closed, or merged and became lay staffed.

THE BIRTH OF AN INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATOR PREPARATION

The Catholic press of the 1970s expressed concerns about the identity and viability of Catholic schools. One scholar who brought attention to this issue was Fr. Michael O'Neill, author of *New Schools for a New Church* (1971). Another was Fr. Harold Buetow (1970, 1988), who warned that a shift away from the special preparation of Catholic educators by Catholic universities and colleges would result in a loss of identity. Buetow was right. In the early 1970s some Catholic schools were beginning to suffer identity problems in much the same way as was the University of San Francisco (USF). In its 1975 visitation to USF, the committee from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), wrote:

For a number of years the University has been in a state of transition from one in which "Catholics teach Catholics" to one in which a broader spectrum of backgrounds and attitudes characterizes both faculty and students. For many of the lay faculty, this change has been welcome, and perhaps for some of the Jesuit faculty as well, but there remains a genuine concern by significant elements of the University community about how the Catholic character of the institution is to be manifested. The Committee found little to distinguish this institution from a secular college or university except for the symbolic clerical collars, occasional religious imagery, and the convenience and imposing presence of Saint Ignatius Church. Students and faculty remarked that the University had not found itself since the changes in church and campus life in the 1960's. (1975, p. 1)

During this period, the demise of the Catholic educational system was predicted, but it was not until the mid-1970s that someone did something about the K-12 schools. In 1975, Fr. Michael O'Neill from the Diocese of Spokane, with Fr. Pierre DuMaine (superintendent of schools for the

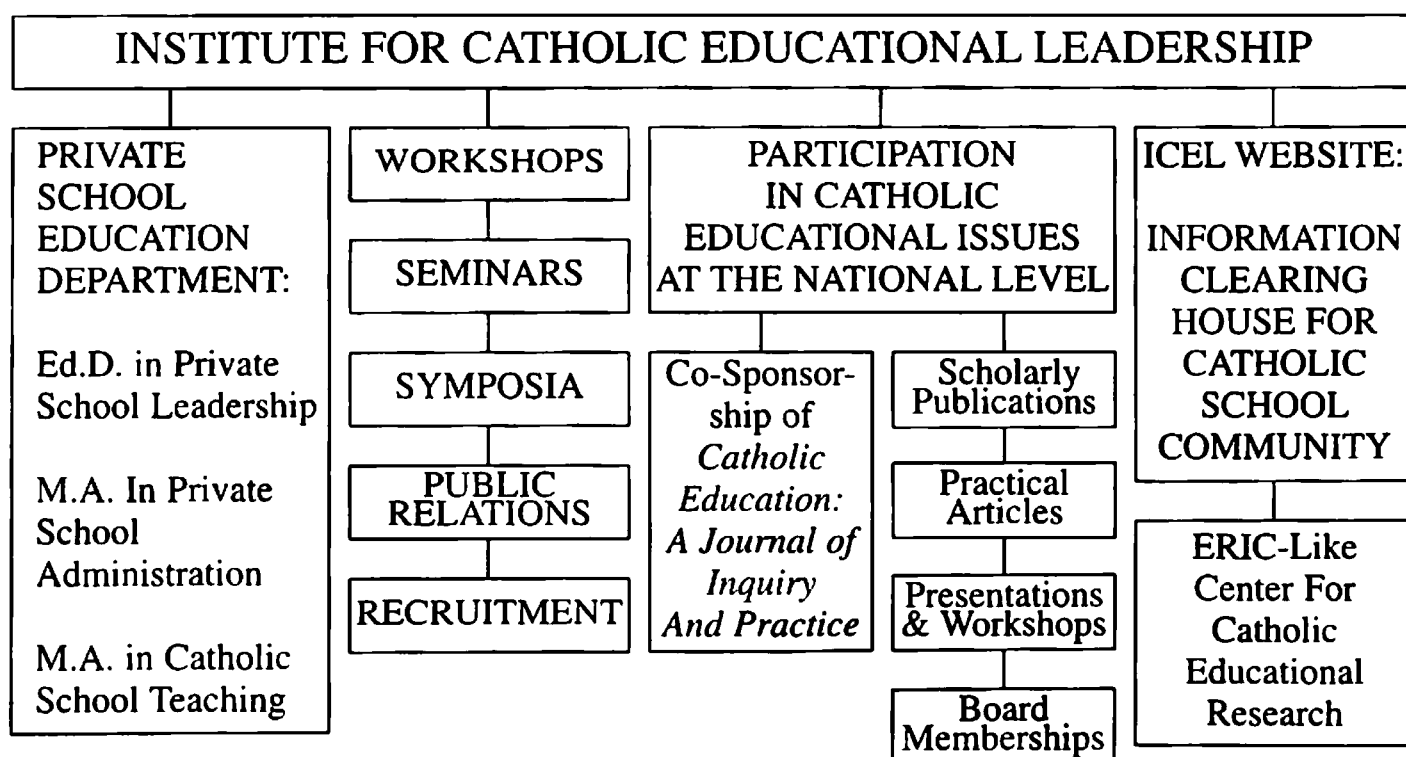
Archdiocese of San Francisco), and Dr. Allen Calvin (then dean of the School of Education for the University of San Francisco) collaborated in designing a program in an effort to offer a solution to the concern about professional preparation. In the summer of 1976, these men inaugurated the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership (ICEL) based on a national needs assessment. The original instrument surveyed 96% of the Catholic school principals in the United States and over 69% of the superintendents of Catholic schools. O'Neill phrased the original goals in the following way:

The Institute for Catholic Education, a national prototype, is established to:

- Provide training for actual and/or potential administrators in Catholic (private) education, and to improve the educational practices in Catholic (private) schools;
- Encourage a support system among those participating in the program;
- Offer consultation and other services to Catholic (private) schools and Catholic (private) school systems;
- Influence leadership in Catholic education on the national level through scholarship and participation in national programs.

The ICEL design was created to preserve those parts of the educational model which had effectively prepared Catholic school personnel of the 1940s and 50s as well as meet the academic, community, and ecclesial needs of the 70s (see Figure 1). In 1979 a doctoral degree for school leaders and an M.A. in Catholic school teaching were added to the program.

Figure 1
Organizational Structure of the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership



A GRADUATE CURRICULUM IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Curriculum and instruction in the Institute seek to model the pedagogical crux of Catholic education, typified in the Bishops' statement of 1972, *To Teach as Jesus Did* (National Conference of Catholic Bishops) as embodying the Gospel message, community, service, and worship, in conjunction with the Institute's assessments ascertaining the needs of Catholic educators. Many of the reported needs continue to be addressed through workshops and other elective offerings, such as Classroom-Based Assessment, Media Literacy, Counseling Techniques for Catholic Educators, Students with Special Needs, and Catholic Identity. Core offerings, which are Moral Development, Foundations in Private School Education, Leadership and Administration in Catholic Schools, Curriculum and Instruction Leadership, and Personnel Leadership (see Table 1), are routinely revised in relation to theory and practice.

Table 1

Core Offerings in the M.A. Program in Private School Administration

The master's degree in Private School Administration requires the following six courses:

- **Foundations of Private Education**

Analysis and discussion of historical, philosophical, theological, and sociological issues in American Catholic education.

- **Moral Development**

Study of the major theories, research, materials, and methods related to moral education, with particular emphasis on the dynamics of the Catholic school classroom.

- **School Law**

Analysis of principal legal and constitutional issues in federal and state law affecting Catholic educators, including liability, contract law, and major church-state rulings.

- **Curriculum and Instruction Leadership in Schools**

Models, research, and practical applications of design and evaluation of curriculum and instruction in the Catholic school.

- **Leadership and Educational Administration**

Examination of significant theories and research in the management of educational organizations, leadership, change, administrative styles, decision making, and informal organizations. Emphasis on the administrator as facilitator of dialogue by collaborating with diocesan boards, staffs, pastors, school boards, and parents.

• **Personnel Leadership in Schools**

Leadership theory, research, and practical skills applied to such personnel issues as communication, problem solving, conflict resolutions, supervision, hiring, and staff development.

The instructional component is intrinsic to the success of the Institute's curriculum. With this principle in mind, ICEL's criteria for its teaching personnel are designed to attract a team of outstanding adjunct professors from across the country. Professors must be Catholic, have a scholarly background and experience in Catholic schools, and be knowledgeable about current Catholic school research. Instructors must meet these stringent criteria because we have high expectations of our graduates, especially in regard to Catholic values (see Table 2).

Table 2
Profile of an ICEL Graduate

A graduate of the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership is:

• **OPEN TO GROWTH** and, therefore, should be:

A visionary leader who articulates clearly the school's philosophy and mission to the various publics;

An educational leader who is cognizant of the lifelong process of learning and communicates this to colleagues and students.

• **ACADEMICALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT** and, therefore, should be:

A scholar who has demonstrated academic competence in all coursework;

A researcher who is knowledgeable of the latest findings in Catholic education and the field of education in general;

An educator who is aware of current methodologies and is able to apply them effectively when assessing the local school site;

A leader who is economically astute and possesses financial skills.

• **A RELIGIOUS LEADER** and, therefore, should be:

A person who has an understanding of Catholic education as an integral part of the Church's teaching mission;

A person of faith who is able to communicate this faith with others;

A person whose lifestyle is founded upon Gospel values and who is a role model for students, parents, and faculty;

A moral educator and leader.

• **A COMMUNITY BUILDER** and, therefore, should be:

An astute and sensitive leader who is able to assess the school climate and to foster a sense of community among all facets of the school;

A leader who builds a school's Catholic identity based upon its history, tradition, and rituals;

A collaborator who works well with other professionals in the Catholic, private, and public sectors;

A leader who stimulates the involvement of students, parents, and faculty in community service as a natural outgrowth of the school's mission;

A person of compassion and justice whose decisions respond to the needs of the individual, as well as to the good of the entire community.

• **COMMITTED TO DOING JUSTICE** and, therefore, should be:

An educator who integrates faith into culture and life in order to promote justice and service to others;

An educator who encourages those within the school community to focus attention on local, national, and global needs;

A leader who works to insure the integrity of each individual within the school community.

ICEL is unique in its curricular offerings, since its curriculum is designed to meet the distinctive needs of Catholic educators. This enriched learning environment promotes an added learning dimension that flows from the professional backgrounds of the students. A shared Catholic school philosophical orientation among graduate students creates a common ground for dialogue, networking, faith-sharing, and the formation of a closely-knit learning community.

Advanced technologies have also assisted in ICEL's ability to build this community through a home page (www.soe.usfca.edu/icel) which provides the latest Catholic school research developments, school job opportunities, quotations and prayers useful to teachers and administrators, and other helpful information. In addition, ICEL is exploring distance learning to enhance and supplement its outreach to the Catholic educational community.

GRADUATES OF THE PROGRAM

During the 23 years of its existence as a program for the preparation of Catholic school personnel, ICEL has attracted students from 44 states and 19 foreign countries. In the past five years, international students have been equally divided between religious and lay educators, although the full-time students tend to be religious. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has the greatest number of ICEL-trained administrators, but both the Diocese of Honolulu and the Diocese of Salt Lake City share the distinction of having the highest percentage of their principals prepared by ICEL. The current enrollment is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Current (1998-1999) Enrollment in ICEL

	M.A.	Ed.D.	Full-Time ¹	Part-Time	U.S.A. ²	Foreign ³
Lay men	32	11	1	42	38	4
Lay women	38	14	0	52	52	0
Religious men	6	4	1	9	7	2
Religious women	21	5	2	24	26	0
Priests	16	10	4	22	22	4
Scholastics	2	1	0	3	3	0
TOTALS	115	45	8	152	150	10

1. Refers to those students whose full-time occupation is study.

2. Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah.

3. Canada, Ethiopia, Japan, Kenya, Micronesia, Nairobi, Philippines, Saipan, Tanzania, The Congo.

Twenty-three graduates are serving in college or university posts; some are directing ICEL-like programs in those institutions. One graduate is president of a university, another is a provost, and a third is an academic vice-president. ICEL has graduated 23 Jesuits, 18 for the high school ministry, and 5 for the university apostolate. Nine additional Jesuits have taken classes in ICEL; three Jesuits are currently in the program.

Over 40 diocesan offices of education throughout the world are staffed by ICEL graduates, including Sydney, Australia; Pago Pago, American Samoa; and Agana, Guam. Two graduates serve in the United States Catholic Conference offices in Washington, DC. The majority of graduates have assumed the heavy responsibilities of elementary and secondary school principals, and a sizable minority teach in these same schools. A number of the men and women religious have been called to serve their communities in leadership positions, and after completing this service, return to the school apostolate. There is considerable networking among those who have attended ICEL. They keep in touch by e-mail, through a newsletter, and by gathering at events such as the NCEA Convention.

Graduates frequently write articles on Catholic education for publications such as *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, *Momentum*, and *Today's Catholic Teacher*. They speak at programs for the National Catholic Educational Association and diocesan inservices; many Ed.D. graduates are adjunct professors at nearby Catholic universities, balancing a ministry of teaching youth with that of instructing adults.

THE FUTURE OF ICEL-LIKE PROGRAMS

Until the period following Vatican II, Catholic institutions of higher education commonly considered it an integral part of their mission to prepare persons for the Church's ministry, particularly in education, medicine, and law. Schools of education associated with Catholic colleges and universities welcomed hundreds of sister-teachers from across the country every summer, extending reduced tuition rates in recognition of the low stipends paid by the parishes. This service was not only considered a contribution to the primary and secondary schools, it was part of their mission.

The critical need for students and a new thrust following the Council changed this focus for one or two decades, but a renewed interest in Catholic identity has prompted Catholic institutions of higher education to look anew at their role in the Church's comprehensive educational mission. Colleges and universities are examining a number of options supportive of pre-service and in-service teachers; administrators; pastors with schools; and a host of auxiliary personnel such as Catholic school secretaries, maintenance people, coaches and athletic departments, advancement officers, computer personnel, and consultants of all types. Because these persons contribute to formation and identity, the colleges seem willing to provide an education for them.

Over 40 Catholic colleges and universities throughout the United States have followed the lead of the University of San Francisco and have established some form of specialized program for Catholic school personnel. They report a variety of approaches, a combination of inclusion formats, and an increasing range of program offerings which emphasize the Catholicity of the schools in order to give academic support to a growing professionalism in the Church's schools. The colleges are preparing to meet a new but inevitable crisis for Catholic schools when they no longer have former religious to staff them.

Catholic institutions of higher education have many challenges. They are working with the reality that hundreds of Catholic educators are not physically near Catholic institutions of higher learning, and the teachers have families they cannot leave while they study on campus for six or eight weeks. Distance learning is an alternative, but the need to build community presents problems to this approach. Bishops and their diocesan departments of education also must seek creative solutions to the problem of high tuition at the Catholic universities and low salaries in the Catholic schools. Because enrollment is often lower in these programs than those operated for public school educators, the Catholic school programs usually run at a deficit and must rely on the goodwill and apostolic zeal of a university administration already besieged by a multitude of financial woes.

Despite these problems, Catholic colleges and universities are currently investing impressive amounts of money in these programs. The University of San Francisco, for example, has offered a scholarship of a 50% reduction in

tuition costs to students both on- and off-campus for the past 23 years. Select scholars are carefully recruited to consider enrolling in ICEL and form a new generation of Catholic school leaders, 98% of whom are lay and many of whom have no Catholic educational background. Four institutions, Fordham University, Saint Louis University, the University of Dayton, and the University of San Francisco, support a journal designed for Catholic educational scholar-practitioners. Thus, Catholic institutions of higher learning have not only responded to the appeal of the American Church through its bishops, but have financially supported this ecclesial need.

USF's Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership is painstakingly building a culture for Catholic schools which places value on common prayer and faith sharing, integrates Christian belief and secular knowledge, and embraces a life of ministry in the service of others. This religious learning experience must be analyzed, updated, and linked to the academic programs that have as their aim the preparation of personnel for Catholic schools. The courses are intellectually rigorous and matched to the professional needs of the schools. There is a Catholic school charism to be transmitted. This charism must be identified, operationalized, and integrated into traditions, practices, and customs, and eventually into a new culture.

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