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AN ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIFYING AND MAINTAINING CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN AMERICAN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

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All Catholic institutions are increasingly involved in discussions about what constitutes Catholic identity. It is a pressing question for schools, universities, hospitals, and social service agencies. As the debate proceeds on the possible implementation of formal norms for Catholic universities according to Ex Corde Ecclesiae, the question of Catholic identity becomes most crucial for Catholic colleges and universities. Through a content analysis of literature on Catholic higher education, the author suggests a framework for specifying the content of Catholic identity. Within a structure of three major influences which are delineated in 18 categories, Catholic identity is described as a rich and multifaceted phenomenon.

A variety of Catholic college and university presidents, both past and present, have attempted to define the essence of identity for Catholic institutions. Robert Sasseen of the University of Dallas has suggested that Catholic institutions must “teach scholarship informed by faith” (Whelan, 1995, p. 14). John Murray of Duquesne University claims that the identity of Catholic colleges and universities is found in their fundamental commitment to “producing men and women of moral virtue” (Whelan, 1995, p. 15). James Heft, chancellor of the University of Dayton, has offered the metaphor of an “open circle” as a model, suggesting that Catholic institutions should be “sufficiently circumscribed,” demonstrating particular form and purpose and dedicated to the Catholic tradition while “nonetheless open to the widest variety of ideas” (Heft, 1996, p. 11). Meanwhile, David O’Connell of the Catholic University of America contends that “a Catholic university ‘is not a church; [but] it is from the Church, and serves the Church by enabling the Church to serve the world more fully’” (O’Connell, 1999, p. 19).

Catholic and non-Catholic scholars alike have offered their own definitions as well. Among the more concise but comprehensive efforts to summarize “identity” for Catholic higher education is Morris (1994), who identifies four dimensions of institutional identity: (a) intellectual, that aims at truth as its object; (b) aesthetic, that aims at a perspective on beauty not shared by secular institutions; (c) moral, that aims at goodness; and (d) spiritual, that aims at an ultimate connectedness to God. McBrien (1994) maintains that identity is a function of: (a) explicit identification with the Catholic tradition and with the wider Catholic community, (b) intentional effort to embrace and live by Catholic values, and (c) maintenance of a “critical mass” of faculty and administrative leaders who are committed and active Catholics. Marsden (1994) suggests that “Catholic” might mean any combination of the following when applied to higher education: that an institution (a) maintains an active relationship with a religious order, (b) has a relationship with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, (c) is a place where the Church is present through priests and pastoral ministry, (d) is conscious of an obligation to serve the Church as the people of God, (e) maintains a historical association with the Catholic community, and (f) is a place where at least some of the faculty relate principles of the Catholic faith to their subject matter. Daley strikes an evangelical tone, contending that the heart of a Catholic institution must be maintained through: (a) proclaiming Christ through the serious study and teaching of theology; (b) worshiping Christ through liturgical services, religious symbols, private and public prayer; and (c) following Christ by acting as “a community of disciples committed to the pursuit of truth, who are ready to be taught by Jesus” (1993, p. 14). More grandly, Buckley declares that

The university is Catholic in its deliberate determination to render to the church and to the broader world this unique service: to be an intellectual community where in utter academic freedom the variant lines of Catholic tradition and thought can intersect with the most complex challenges, contradictions, and reinforcements of contemporary thought or “secular” culture and move toward unity—whether in the habits of the students or in the direction of research or in the life of the academic community—between the world culture and the self-revelation of God. It is not that these simply intersect, but that one is seen as bringing the other to its own completion.... The Catholic university exists to further the development of both serious faith and all forms of knowledge.... No other institution within human culture can render this unique and critically important contribution to the church and to the contemporary world. (1993, p. 83)

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM RESEARCH

Much of the early research on the institutional identity of Catholic higher education employed trend analysis and focused on such variables as the num-

ber of the founding religious group present on governing boards and among the faculty (Galvin, 1971; Maloney, 1973), the number of Catholics among the student body (Maloney, 1973), the number of required theology courses (Maloney, 1973), or the number of liturgical or cocurricular opportunities available for Catholic formation (Lucey, 1978) as critical components of identity. Through the 1980s and early 1990s, qualitative case studies such as those of Preville (1985) and Markham (1988) explored the institutional narrative as a means through which distinctive identity might be specified. More recently, Murphy (1991) has focused on the degree to which vision and values, especially as expressed through the tradition of the founding order and the leadership of the institution, influence perceived Catholic identity of institutions.

At the same time, the critical role of the curriculum and the faculty as fundamental to maintaining identity has become a topic of considerable discussion (Hehir, 1993; Kennedy, 1992; Schubert, 1990). Also occurring in the recent literature are compilations of the wide variety of views on what Catholic identity means, but very little in the way of synthesis has been attempted (O'Brien, 1996; Fahey & Lewis, 1992; Hesburgh, 1994; Langan, 1993; Mastroeni, 1996; O'Brien, 1996; University of Saint Thomas, 1994).

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM RECENT AND CURRENT LITERATURE

O'Brien offers a helpful bipolar framework through which to evaluate the literature on identity. O'Brien contends that most "Catholic discourse...suggests getting back to Church, one way or another...restoring real Catholic theology,...or reaffirming the Catholic identity of colleges and universities" (Hitchcock & O'Brien, 1995, p. 54). O'Brien identifies Gleason (1995) and Burtchaell (1998) among others as "restorationists" who represent a "rising chorus of protest against the erosion of Catholic identity" in Catholic colleges and universities (O'Brien, 1994, p. 97). The opposing point of view, which O'Brien refers to as "Americanist," "pluralist," or "universalist," originates in the writings of Ellis and Murray, and continues in the contributions of Hesburgh (1994) and Gallin (1996). Authors such as these embrace a major theme of American history, specifically "the steady march of Americanism" and "reaching common citizenship with other Americans," as a positive achievement and see democracy, freedom of inquiry, and communication as critical to achieving respectability and success in Catholic higher education (O'Brien, 1994, p. 111).

A RESTORATIONIST FORMULATION OF IDENTITY

In *Contending With Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*, Gleason traces the “uneven modernization” of Catholic colleges and universities, which most institutions undertook slowly if not begrudgingly, bringing “themselves into line with contemporary norms” (1995, p. 21). He maintains that pursuit of a secular concept of “academic quality,” achieved largely through standardization of the curriculum, resulted in the “splintering” of a distinctive “scholastic synthesis” heretofore fundamental to Catholic higher education. According to Gleason, the outcome was and remains an “ideological” crisis, specifically, “a lack of consensus as to the substantive content of the ensemble of religious beliefs, moral commitments, and academic assumptions that supposedly constitute Catholic identity” (1995, p. 320). In *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches*, Burtchaell (1998) provides a sweeping historical analysis of colleges and universities sponsored by eight Christian denominations in the United States, including three Catholic institutions: Boston College, the College of New Rochelle, and Saint Mary’s College of California. He documents the damaging effects of resistance by presidents to the founding religious group or Vatican control; pursuit of federal and state funding; the dramatic decrease in the presence of religious; professionalization of the curriculum, administration, and faculty; and the pluralization of the student body at these institutions and throughout Catholic higher education. Burtchaell concludes that while “the written record offers almost no evidence of educators on these campuses who openly advocated secession from the Catholic Church;...who saw that their faith and the public culture...were at daggers drawn, and said they were willing to take sides; or who finally realized that the choice had been effectively made, to the forfeit of the faith, and confessed...that it was the only realistic choice,” such was effectively the end result (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 713).

For restorationists, identity is inextricably tied to a meaningful relationship with the institutional Church, its faith tradition, the charism of the founding religious group, and a distinctive educational pedagogy which places faith at the center of the intellectual enterprise.

A PLURALIST VIEW OF IDENTITY

Hesburgh suggests in the first few pages of *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University* that any great Catholic university “must begin by being a great university that is also Catholic” (Hesburgh, 1994, p. 5). The implication is that freedom and autonomy are preconditions to greatness, and represent the very tools through which “Catholic universities, unlike their secular counterparts, can give living witness to the wholeness of truth from all

sources, both the human and divine, while recognizing the inner sacredness of all truth from whatever source, and the validity and autonomy of all paths to truth” (Hesburgh, 1994, p. 8).

Likewise, Gallin (1996) suggests that independent incorporation and the transfer of the leadership of Catholic institutions from religious communities to lay boards of trustees, which took place in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, were essential steps in the process of acculturation of Catholic higher education. Although Gallin concedes that many Catholic institutions “opted for more radical adjustments [in governance structures] than had been proposed by the accrediting agencies, the canon lawyers, or most of their consultants” (1996, p. 25), she concludes that “without the decisions made at the time, it is unlikely that Catholic colleges and universities would be as highly respected by their peers in higher education as many of them are, and would have the resources necessary to continue their mission of education” (1996, p. 137).

For pluralists, changing “the image of [Catholic higher education] in the eyes of local communities, state and federal granting agencies, the national higher education community” and bringing “a more realistic understanding of the secular world to [institutional] decision making” was and remains paramount (Gallin, 1996, p. 134).

THE ROMAN FORMULATION OF IDENTITY

During this dramatic transformation of American Catholic higher education, the Vatican consistently expressed its view that religious founding groups and the local ordinary must continue to be essential elements in perpetuating the Catholic identity of and maintaining the faith in its institutions (Gallin, 1992). John Paul II’s formal declaration, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990), presupposes that “a Catholic university undertakes its task within the communion of the church, which includes a proper acknowledgment of the role of bishops and pope as leaders and teachers of the church” (Komonchak, 1993, p. 44).

The dialogue on exactly how to achieve such acknowledgment in the United States is well documented and has intensified with the publication of the 1998 draft of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States* (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998a). A chief purpose, according to Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, is to clarify “juridical norms” and give “more attention to Canon 812, while maintaining the pastoral and theological principles of the 1996 text, and expressing the juridical norms in a pastoral manner,” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998a, p. 438). Likewise, Cardinal Francis George, in his recent address to presidents assembled at the 1999 meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, clearly sought to underscore this premise when he declared that

“no ecclesiastical institution is completely autonomous, and no one is Catholic simply on his or her own terms,” but that “a Catholic university finds its identity...in a network of ecclesial communion,...in the heart of the church,...which is a threat only to those who understand freedom as complete autonomy and for whom relationships jeopardize control” (George, 1999, p. 621).

TOWARD AN OPERATIVE THEORY OF IDENTITY

Historically, identity has been considered as a loosely coupled set of ideas and concepts, a framework or a point of view (Erickson, 1980). “A primary meaning of the term identity in most formulations is a classification of the self that identifies the individual as recognizably different from others and similar to members of the same class” (Erickson, 1980, p. 109). An additional feature found in the literature on identity is the distinction between public identity, the presentation of self to others, and private identity, the personal perception of self (Albert & Wheeten, 1985). These authors suggest that most organizations define who they are by creating “classification schemes and locating themselves within them” (Albert & Wheeten, 1985, p. 269). The primary objective of such an exercise is a search for a formulation that will distinguish the organization from others (1985). However, these authors contend that most of the resulting classification schemes lack the scientific rigor of taxonomies, that many are not completely elaborated, and that the dimensions of these classifications are frequently constructed without a consistent plan or care for the necessary independence of each dimension.

Even so, the study of organizational identity is important. Albert and Wheeten contend that when organizations face choices of significant consequence, resolution will first be attempted using data and rational decision making models. If these considerations are insufficient to resolve the issue in question, and when the issue cannot be avoided, the focus on data will eventually be abandoned in favor of a discussion of goals, objectives, mission, and values—the “who are we” and “what do we do” as a corporate entity questions—which constitute the fundamental components of organizational identity (Albert & Wheeten, 1985, p. 265).

IDENTITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Identity in higher education is said to include both external and internal dimensions. External distinctiveness derives from comparison to peers (Townsend, Newell, & Wiese, 1992). A university with a singular identity, for instance, can be “one which has distinguished itself from other institutions carrying out similar functions” (Townsend, 1989, p. 25) or one which is

“unique or outstanding when compared” to others (Butler, 1992, p. 14). Organizational identity may also be defined as the internal interplay of a number of institutional characteristics (Chamberlain, 1985). Analysis of these external and internal dimensions suggests that institutions which have a distinctive identity exhibit three overarching characteristics: (a) commitment to a unifying theme which is authentically demonstrated through articulation of institutional vision and organizational values, (b) operative decision making strategies which consistently emphasize and support vision and values, and (c) dedication to achieving excellence in the context of the specified institutional vision (Townsend, Newell, & Wiese, 1992).

Analysis of internal and external dimensions, specification of unifying and motivating themes, and demonstration of the potential interplay among characteristics especially essential to identity in Catholic higher education are not simple tasks. At the very least, they require a degree of elaboration not often attempted.

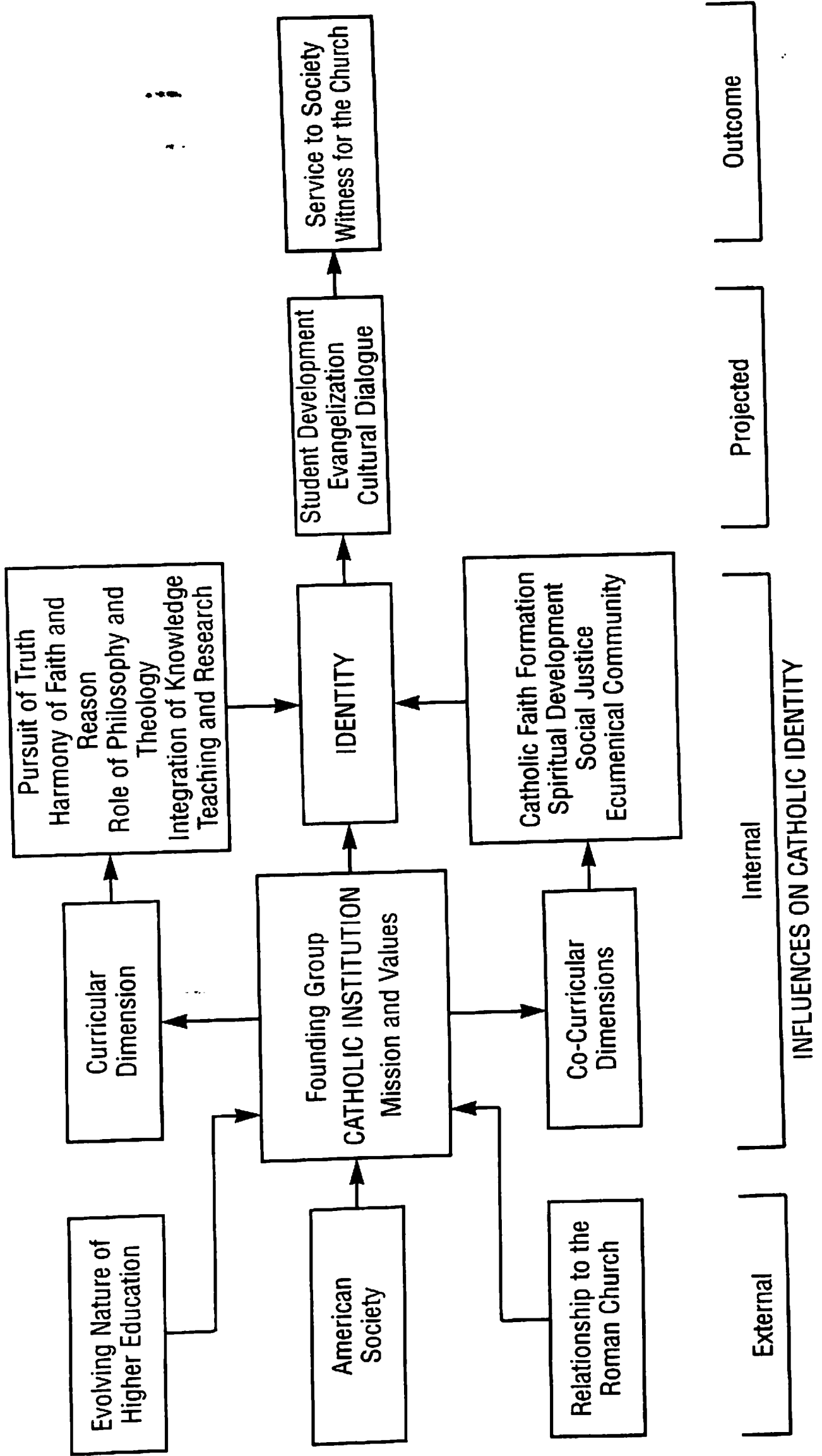
CONTENT ANALYSIS AS THE BASIS FOR ELABORATION

“Content analysis is a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference” (Holsti, 1969, p. 2). It can be used to categorize the presence and frequency of themes occurring in one or more documents. More accurately described as “thematic text analysis,” the technique involves both qualitative methods (inductive, nonstatistical, and exploratory) and quantitative methods (deductive, statistical, and confirmatory) (Roberts, 1997). Through application of this collection of techniques to our current literature, a conceptual model emerged which provides a means through which the individual and collective identity of Catholic institutions, the “who we are” and “what we do,” may be studied and assessed systematically. See Figure 1.

A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIFYING CATHOLIC IDENTITY

From an extensive assessment of the literature on Catholic higher education, one may conclude that the identity of an American Catholic college or university develops from and is largely dependent on three principal, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, influences. Within these three, 18 operative and relatively independent components were identified. While specification of an exhaustive array of elements contributing to institutional identity, given the diversity of Catholic higher education, is not achievable, the framework proposed here represents an attempt to provide an uncommon degree of elaboration and rigor.

Figure 1
An Organizing Framework for Specifying Identity in American Catholic Higher Education



At the outset, external influences shape the institutional identity of Catholic colleges and universities. Chief among these are the evolving nature of higher education in the United States, the local cultural milieu in which each institution is situated, and the relationship established and maintained between each institution and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.

Internally, institutional governance contributes to identity. The activity of governance is influenced in varying degrees by the charism or core values of the founding religious group and is articulated by dedicated faculty and administrators as well as through the institution's mission statement, supporting policies, and practices.

The curriculum and its implementation also shape the identity of the academic community. Fundamental to distinctive identity in the curriculum of most church-related colleges and universities, Catholic included, is pursuit of "whole truth," an acknowledgment that truth is both discovered through human experience and revealed through the supernatural. Further, the curriculum is designed and delivered in ways which promote the perspective that faith and reason are compatible, not mutually exclusive. Integration of knowledge is accomplished primarily through philosophy and theology, interdisciplinary study, and specific teaching and research priorities. Each contributes a measure of distinctiveness to the educational environment.

Likewise, cocurricular programs and activities of the college or university enhance institutional identity. Commitment to Catholic formation, spiritual development, and social justice outreach, as well as a priority commitment to creating an ecumenical community, form the basis of a distinctive cocurricular dimension within the environment.

As a result of these external and internal dynamics, institutional identity emerges, evolves, and is reinforced. Identity, achieved through operationalizing distinctive characteristics, enables and obligates educators in Catholic higher education to pursue a variety of administrative, academic, and developmental outcomes—a projected identity which facilitates evangelization and institutional dialogue with immediate and distant communities, all of which constitutes service to society and the Church and reinforces and enhances the identity of the institution.

The review that follows is intended to place each dimension of the model in a historical and interpretive context.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY

O'Brien (1994) and Shea (1993) suggest that a fundamental problem for contemporary Catholic higher education is the "matter of boundaries"... "their penetration and restoration" (O'Brien, 1994, p. 116). O'Brien offers that "in the usual formation, Catholic higher education assesses culture outside the church for the sake of the church" (1994, p. 117). Shea (1993) suggests, however, that the nature of the dialogue cannot be seen as merely "outside and

inside” but must be “within and among” our collective selves. More specifically, Shea contends that Catholic higher education, in order to be effective and distinctive, must respond to each of three publics: (a) the educational community, (b) the human community in which it is located, and (c) the Church from which it draws its faith tradition. Following this formulation, the evolving nature of American higher education, the nature of contemporary American society as it affects higher education, and the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and its educational institutions are among the most significant external variables which influence institutional identity.

Evolving nature of higher education

The pursuit of excellence in academic programs and the increasing complexity of the world in which we live have contributed to significant changes in higher education. Professionalization and specialization of the faculty, application of technology to academic disciplines, fulfillment of accreditation standards, pursuit of reputational rankings, and advancement of academic freedom and institutional autonomy have become important institutional considerations across higher education. These issues are among those most frequently identified as militating against Catholic identity.

Responsiveness to American society

Individualism, pluralism, and a variety of other democratic ideals influence both curricular and cocurricular dimensions of the college environment. Moreover, the extent to which Catholic institutions attach importance to responding to the need for technical and vocational education, professional education, and other forms of careerism, also becomes a powerful influence on American Catholic higher education. Further, the current trend toward “marketing” our educational “product” in order to attract the largest number of potential “consumers” has clearly had a homogenizing effect on all of higher education.

Relationship to the Roman Catholic Church

Public proclamation of the institution as Catholic in its official documents, application of Church doctrine to teaching and the curriculum, other institutional practices, and openness to institutional collaboration with the local bishop are among the means through which Catholic higher education defines its relationship to the Roman Catholic Church and are critical components of institutional identity. To the extent that meeting federal and state specifications for funding and other resources have become concerns, relationship to the Church has not infrequently been framed as outside interference, a conflict of interest, and increasingly problematic (National Catholic Educational Association, 1992).

INTERNAL GOVERNANCE INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY

Internally, governance structures are influenced by the founding religious group through mission statements, core values, and the administrative policies and practices which flow from these.

Role of the founding religious group

Historically, bishops, congregations, societies, orders, and other Catholic institutes have founded Catholic colleges and universities. The steady decline in the number and presence of the founding group, some would claim, has led to a corresponding decline in the Catholic identity of our campuses (Galvin, 1971; Hassel, 1983). Nonetheless, the degree to which the founder or founders maintain corporate influence through the governing board and the president's cabinet, maintain viable presence in the day-to-day academic and administrative life of the institution, and otherwise contribute directly or indirectly through committed laity to the fundamental religious and spiritual values of the institution is critical to role preservation and corporate influence.

Mission and values

Institutional identity in Catholic higher education is also achieved through articulation of distinctive missions and values. Missions and core values which emphasize the Catholic heritage of the institution, its founding group, and fundamental tenets of the Catholic faith reinforce identity. Making these public and discussing them with and encouraging respect by all employees and students do so as well. Developing policies and procedures which complement the Catholic nature of the institution and Church doctrine and encouraging Catholic members of the university community to create and participate in an active faith community support mission, Catholic values, and institutional identity. Assigning priority to these and related activities is essential.

INTERNAL CURRICULAR INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY

The Catholic perspective on the nature of knowledge and its dedication to the whole truth (Miscamble, 1994; Novak, 1993) and to the integration of faith and reason (Buckley, 1993; Hollenbach, 1993) produce a distinctive dynamic in Catholic education at all levels. Likewise, focus on the liberal arts, especially theology and philosophy, and on a variety of interdisciplinary programs are the means through which a commitment to synthesis and resistance to the fragmentation of knowledge, brought on most recently through specialization and professionalization of the disciplines, are expressed (Burrell, 1994; O'Donnell, 1993; O'Meara, 1994). Further, a teaching agenda which includes reflection on the moral implications of most disciplines and research

priorities which include the dignity of human life and the promotion of justice combine to produce an academic dynamic that is distinctively Catholic (Attridge, 1994; Gray, 1994).

Commitment to truth and harmony of faith and reason

Among church-related institutions of higher education, Catholic included, commitment to truth and to the harmony of faith and reason are defining institutional characteristics. The nature of academic inquiry is characterized as the pursuit of the "whole truth," education of the "whole person," and attempts to highlight connections involving nature, God, and humankind; between discovered truth and revealed truth; and between Gospel values and the culture.

Integrating role of philosophy and theology

The Catholic curriculum has long been characterized by the distinctive role played by philosophy and theology. Philosophy and theology are perceived to provide a synthesizing role in the curriculum, which enables students to acquire an organic vision of reality. Among the indicators of this commitment are the presence of academic requirements in philosophy and theology for all students, interdisciplinary studies which include philosophy and theology components, and an expressed institutional priority for faculty in all disciplines who are well grounded in philosophy and Catholic theology.

Commitment to integration of knowledge

Flowing from its commitment to the whole truth, Catholic higher education is also committed to integration of knowledge. Integration is most often attempted through cooperation and collaboration among faculty across academic disciplines, and specifically through commitment to a liberal arts core, interdisciplinary study, and cross-disciplinary research.

Distinctive agenda for teaching and research

Institutional identity in Catholic higher education is reinforced as faculty bring an active philosophical and theological orientation to the classroom; give priority to the moral dimensions of knowledge or professions; and center the teaching and research agenda around ethics, social justice, the quality of life, the protection of nature, and the search for peace.

The role of the faculty in maintaining curricular identity

National studies by Pettit (1993) and Dwyer and Zech (1996) demonstrate that there is little significant difference between faculty at secular and Catholic institutions. While data from Naughton and Bausch (1995) show a degree of openness on the part of business school faculty to creating distinctive curricular content for their colleges and universities, few excellent

examples exist. What is more important, the presidential leadership of Catholic colleges and universities appears most supportive of hiring the best quality faculty and for the most part is reluctant to pursue aggressive hiring or promotion of faculty on the basis of their ability to contribute to the Catholic identity or mission of the institution (Janosik, 1996). Given these dynamics, it should be clear that revisiting role definition of and expectations for the faculty are issues of paramount importance to the future of institutional identity in American Catholic higher education.

INTERNAL COCURRICULAR INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY

A distinctive cocurricular environment and a developmental agenda for Catholic higher education emerge from a broad set of pastoral expectations which include providing opportunities for faith development (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1992b). More specifically, this includes providing opportunities for members of the Catholic faith to assimilate Catholic teaching and practice into their lives (Kennedy, 1992). It means promoting a sensitive community where the social teachings of the Church, especially with respect to social justice for the disadvantaged, integration of the spiritual and moral dimensions of human life with academic study, preparation for active participation in the Church, and service to others are of particular concern (Johnson, 1981).

Commitment to Catholic formation

Among the distinctive cocurricular characteristics found on Catholic college campuses are a variety of opportunities to learn about and practice the Catholic faith. Sacraments, liturgy, Bible study, and prayer groups are available, but not necessarily exclusively, to the practicing Catholic constituency (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1992a). --

Obligation to spiritual development

A commitment to spiritual development or pastoral ministry is characteristic on most campuses. Significant numbers of personnel and resources are usually dedicated to this purpose. Programs and activities sponsored by campus ministry and other groups interested in religious activities must be acknowledged and valued by the university.

Emphasis on social justice

Social justice education has recently become a particular focus on Catholic college campuses. The social teachings of the Church form the basis for specific curricular offerings, influence the nature of programs and activities, provide the opportunity for discussion concerning the tensions that sometimes arise between Church teaching and contemporary society, and are considered as integral elements of university policy (Association of Catholic Colleges

and Universities, 1998; National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998b; O'Brien, 1993).

Advocacy for ecumenical community

Catholic institutions express a commitment to ecumenical community through the importance attached to creating a welcoming, supportive, and open environment for persons of all origins and religious beliefs. Acknowledging and meeting the spiritual needs of other faith constituencies, including encouraging members of other faiths to assist with the work of pastoral ministry, are frequently hallmarks of this commitment.

PROJECTED INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY

As a result of these activities, through the creation of this environment, Catholic colleges and universities hope to influence in a variety of ways recipients of Catholic higher education as well as the larger culture of which each institution is a part. Students are expected to "continue the search for truth and for meaning," and to "devote themselves to the service of society and to the church" (John Paul II, 1990, p. 23). Dialogue with the local culture and service to society and to the Catholic Church specifically are expected outcomes of the scholarly work taking place on the campuses of Catholic higher education (John Paul II, 1990).

Student development

"Well-rounded" education achieved through exposure to the fine and liberal arts, "open-mindedness," "critical thinking," "willingness to serve," "generosity of spirit," "sensitivity to peace and justice issues" and "preparation to give witness of their faith to the world" (McCormick, 1994) are perceived as significant developmental goals for students at Catholic institutions. The presence and actualization of these contribute to and reinforce institutional identity.

Cultural dialogue and evangelization

Cultural dialogue and evangelization are expressed through memberships in or involvement with community organizations, and by acting on the obligation to contribute to the dialogue concerning community and global issues from a faith perspective. Awareness of and priority for these activities demonstrate evidence of this construct.

Service to society and witness for the Church

Service to society and witness for the Church are achieved as Catholic institutions accept and act upon their responsibility to assist society and the Church and "respond to the problems and needs of this age" (John Paul II, 1990, p. 31).

APPLICATION

With respect to the model suggested in Figure 1, the current critical issues involve locating "Relationship to the Roman Church" as an influence and reaching honest conclusions about the consequences that result. Is this relationship an external influence, which similar to the social milieu in which our institutions operate can be embraced or resisted depending on market forces and other circumstances? Should the relationship resemble that of accrediting and federal agencies, professional associations, or corporate benefactors, which seek to influence the nature of higher education from outside through enacting legislation, providing resources, and other means? Must this relationship more rightly serve as a buffer between external influences and institutions that claim to be Catholic, if the authentic identity of these institutions is to be maintained? What are the consequences of placing the relationship within the Catholic institution itself or allowing it to encompass both the curricular and cocurricular dimensions of the college or university? Restorationists and pluralists have staked out their positions; but meanwhile what of the rest of this multifaceted dynamic?

In fairness, the heterogeneous nature of Catholic higher education coupled with a general underestimation of the complexity of "corporate identity" as a construct have hampered efforts to define and qualify the concept. Still, too much of our focus has been on political rhetoric and too little on the development of theory and practice concerning operative distinctiveness, the impact of institutional behavior on students, and the combined influence of both the Church and Catholic higher education in the service of society.

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