



12-1-2006

Editors' Comments

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Recommended Citation

Hunt, T. C., & Nuzzi, R. J. (2006). Editors' Comments. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 10 (2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.1002012013>

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EDITORS' COMMENTS

Catholic identity has been a major topic in Catholic circles since the days of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. It has been of importance not only in Catholic education but also in other areas such as hospitals and social work. In education, it has had relevance for both P-12 institutions and colleges and universities.

The reduced presence, or even absence, of vowed religious in Catholic educational institutions has been a major force in questions of identity. In higher education, these religious not only provided staff, they almost always had founded and governed the institution as well.

The question of identity was critical in the Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, issued by Pope John Paul II on August 15, 1990. The Constitution dealt with the nature and mission of Catholic higher educational institutions and the relations of Catholic universities to the Church.

Considerable attention in the issue of identity recently has been placed on the governance of Catholic higher educational institutions, often headed by lay persons, and on the teaching of theology or religious studies. The focus section of this issue, however, deals with another aspect of Catholic higher education, that of student affairs. We are indebted to Professor Molly Schaller of The University of Dayton for organizing this effort.

The section is composed of four articles. First, Molly Schaller and Kathleen Boyle present an overview article that presents the philosophy of student affairs professionals and its “match” with the mission and goals of Catholic universities. They point out how most of these professionals are prepared at secular universities and explore the question whether those at Catholic colleges and universities are able to bring their philosophies together with the goals and mission of the Catholic institution at which they work.

Jeremy Stringer and Erin Swezey portray how the philosophy of student affairs professionals and the goals and mission of Jesuit higher education are indeed brought together, using a model program at Seattle University. Sandra Estanek, Michael James, and Daniel Norton continue the discussion with an essay that deals with Catholic identity as it pertains to student outcomes, and propose some preliminary strategies for assessing those outcomes.

Finally, Megan Moore Gardner addresses some of the consequences of the increase of lay leadership of Catholic higher educational institutions. As with the Stringer and Swezey piece, Gardner presents a study of one institution that could be of help to institutional leaders as they seek to maintain institutional identity in a time of substantial change. The article ends with suggestions to both vowed religious and lay leaders who are involved in this situation.

The review of research, presented by Matthew Garrett, is complementary to the focus section. Garrett's title is "The Identity of American Catholic Education: A Historical Overview."

The editors are pleased to present Volume 10, Number 2, to our readers.

Thomas C. Hunt, Ronald J. Nuzzi, Co-Editors