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Editors' Comments

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EDITORS' COMMENTS

Through teaching and research, a Catholic University offers an indispensable contribution to the Church. In fact, it prepares men and women who, inspired by Christian principles and helped to live their Christian vocation in a mature and responsible manner, will be able to assume positions of responsibility in the Church. Moreover, by offering the results of its scientific research, a Catholic University will be able to help the Church respond to the problems and needs of this age. (John Paul II, 1990, n. 31)

This statement in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1990, was echoed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2005, when they called for “even more active involvement and cooperation by our Catholic colleges and universities in collaboration with the diocesan educational leadership” (p. 10) to prepare future diocesan and local school administrators and teachers. These statements make it clear that Catholic colleges and universities have a responsibility to Catholic K-12 education. In this issue’s focus section, we present several examples of the ways Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have responded to this call, both in terms of research and teaching. Joan L. Whipp, who coordinated the focus section, along with her colleague Martin Scanlan, outline a call for further scholarship on the increasing number of partnerships between Catholic colleges and universities with K-12 schools. An article by Molly Davies and Karen Kennedy describes creative teacher corps programs that address the staffing needs of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Christian Dallavis and Joyce Johnstone describe the University of Notre Dame Magnificat School collaborations as an example of the ways universities can support data-driven comprehensive school improvement. These are but a few of the innovative responses that Catholic universities are offering “to the problems and needs of this age.” The seeds for these types of partnerships, that in many cases were planted years ago, are beginning to blossom all over the country with the emergence and coordination of many university outreach programs, including an increasing number of centers for Catholic education.

This issue is complemented by three articles that speak to the evolving mission of Catholic schools in light of the social teachings of the Church. Rev. Stephen J. Denig and Rev. Anthony J. Dosen’s article outlining the changing mission of Catholic schools in the pre- and post-Vatican II eras along with the article about preparing teacher candidates to use formative assessment as a tool to improve teaching and learning, thereby promoting social justice,

by Patrick L. McQuillan and his colleagues reflect many principles of Pope Benedict XVI's latest encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, especially the need for justice, charity, and love in the pursuit of the common good. Of course, none of the work of Catholic universities and K-12 education is possible without strong governance structures consistent with both canon and civil law, which Charles Russo's article elucidates.

Joseph M. O'Keefe, S.J., Michael James, & Lorraine Ozar, *Co-Editors*