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## FOCUS SECTION—EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES & CATHOLIC K–12 SCHOOLS

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### Catholic Institutions of Higher Education and K-12 Schools Partnering for Social Justice: A Call for Scholarship

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*This article calls for scholarship on emerging partnerships between Catholic institutions of higher education and Catholic K-12 schools that aim at socially just schooling. Justice, ethical care, learning, and social entrepreneurship are explored as possible conceptual frameworks for this research.*

Schooling for social justice involves fostering teaching and learning communities that are inclusive of students across multiple dimensions of diversity. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) directs Catholic educators toward social justice schooling by making schools accessible, affordable, and available. In recent decades, however, Catholic elementary and secondary schools serving significant numbers of traditionally marginalized students have struggled to remain viable (Baker & Riordan, 1998; Brachear & Ramirez, 2005; Dwyer, 2005; Hamilton, 2008; Hunt, 2000; Riordan, 2000), despite compelling evidence that they are academically successful when they do (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Cibulka, O'Brien, & Zewe, 1982; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; Convey, 1992; Fenzel, 2009; Hoffer, Greeley, & Coleman, 1985; Hunt, et al., 2006; Irvine & Foster, 1996; Jepsen, 2003; Jeynes, 2006; Vitullo-Martin, 1979). More recently, a growing number of Catholic institutions of higher education (IHEs) have been partnering with Catholic archdioceses and schools to promote the viability and capacity of such schools (O'Keefe & Scheopner, 2009). Some examples of these Catholic IHE/school partnerships include:

- Boston College is collaborating with St. Columbkille Partnership School, an ethnically and culturally diverse elementary school in the Allston-Brighton area of Boston, on educational leadership, finance, enrollment

management, student development, curriculum, facilities management, and religious formation (Jan, 2006).

- The Catholic University of America and the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. are training special education assistants to work in archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools to improve service delivery options for students with special needs (Crowley & Wall, 2007).
- The University of Dayton's Urban Child Development Center and six urban Dayton Catholic elementary schools are working together to address students' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs and development through psycho-education, behavioral health consultation, individual and family counseling, behavioral health referral/follow-up, medical health education, and medical screening/referral/follow-up (Russell, Mercks, & Eisenhut, 2008).
- The University of Notre Dame and three Magnificat elementary schools in South Bend, Indiana, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. are working toward comprehensive school reform that includes systematic data collection and analysis of student achievement, instructional coaching, curriculum development, instructional training, strategic planning training and support, school board training and support, technology assessment and planning, grant-writing, and parent education (Dallavis & Johnstone, this issue).
- A number of Catholic universities and NativityMiguel Network middle schools are partnering to strengthen the pipeline from these middle schools to high school and to support the transition of NativityMiguel graduates to post-secondary education (Shields, 2008).
- The University Consortium for Catholic Education supports a group of Catholic colleges and universities in the design and implementation of graduate teacher service programs designed to serve Catholic elementary and secondary schools working with large numbers of students living in poverty throughout the United States (Davies & Kennedy, this issue; Smith & Nuzzi, 2007).

While evidence suggests that current partnerships between Catholic IHEs are supporting Catholic schools at all levels (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary) to implement Catholic social teaching, it also suggests that presently these partnerships exist only as pockets of innovation rather than any systemic effort across institutions to improve education and life opportunities for all students within Catholic schools and beyond. Consequently, important lessons that these partnerships might contribute to the broader goals of social justice and school improvement in education across all sectors—private and public, secular and religious—are being missed.

In this article, we call for scholarship that explores the effectiveness of IHE/school partnerships and their impact on schooling for social justice in

Catholic schools. We also call for discussion of implications both within the Catholic education community and in broader educational circles. While Catholic educators and Catholic education scholars clearly draw from scholarship in secular school settings, we think that increased scholarship on Catholic schools has the potential to benefit not only Catholic education, but also education in secular educational settings.

### **How Research on Catholic IHE/School Partnerships Might Fit into an Emerging Field**

The nascent field of Catholic education scholarship is growing more clearly defined both within the United States and internationally (Grace, 2009; Grace & O’Keefe, 2007; Shulman, 2008; Staud, 2008). To “become a robust field of scholarship and practice,” Shulman (2008) suggests, Catholic education scholarship must ask “big questions” that need to be “both tested and deliberated about among the broader communities of scholars and practitioners” (p. 13) in both public and private education. Yet, as Grace (2009) argues in the inaugural issue of *International Studies in Catholic Education*, current scholarship on Catholic education is meager:

On the one hand, the Catholic educational system is the largest faith-based educational mission in the world, having over 200,000 schools and over 1,000 universities and colleges, while, on the other hand, very little systematic scholarship and research attempts to assist, evaluate, and develop this great enterprise as it faces the many challenges of the contemporary world. (p. 7-8)

Clearly, a contemporary challenge for both Catholic and secular schools is to become simultaneously more efficient in their use of resources (e.g., human, fiscal, material, and tools) and more ambitious in their outcome aims that include the elimination of gaps in achievement across race and class (Bryk, 2008, 2009). Are these new partnerships helping Catholic schools that have been attempting to recruit and retain traditionally marginalized students meet this challenge? If so, how?

To assist scholars in efforts to examine these partnerships critically, we suggest employing conceptual frameworks that cross disciplinary boundaries as well as traditional divisions between Catholic and public sector schools. In the following sections we describe four such frameworks: 1) a justice framework that draws from critical theory and Catholic social teaching; 2) an ethical care framework that pulls from feminist theories and Catholic religious order thought; 3) a learning framework based on sociocultural learning theory

along with Ignatian and Lasallian pedagogy, and 4) a social entrepreneurship framework derived from business, management, and economic literature as well as Catholic social teaching.

These four frameworks are not mutually exclusive, nor do they form an exhaustive list. Each, however, provides a valuable perspective from which to examine Catholic school partnerships and reforms that are systemic and oriented toward social justice. In the following sections we briefly explain each framework and suggest questions that might be addressed in future scholarship on Catholic IHE/school partnerships.

### **Conceptual Frameworks for Research on Catholic IHE/School Partnerships**

#### ***Justice Framework***

Catholic social teaching, Jesuit thinking on education, and theories of critical pedagogy suggest that a justice framework might be an appropriate lens to use when studying Catholic university/school partnerships. This framework directs scholars to ask if and how these partnerships are aimed at serving marginalized populations. Catholic social teaching emphasizes the dignity of the human person and prioritizes creating options for the poor; the institutional Catholic Church consistently calls on Catholic schools to enact this teaching (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998, 2007; Grace, 2003), including inclusive practices toward those students who traditionally do not fare well in schools (Tomasi, 2008). Similarly, Jesuit thinking on education and teaching emphasizes education based on “faith that does justice” (Arrupe, 1974/1994; General Congregation 32, 1975; Kolvenbach, 2000). In a speech delivered at the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Education Conference at Santa Clara University in 2000, Kolvenbach described this as education that focuses on the formation of “the whole person of solidarity for the real world” so that students are “touched by direct experience [and] the mind may be challenged to change....and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed” (p. 155). Theories of critical pedagogy draw from the work of critical theorists, who use an analytical model to understand and critique social institutions and structures with race, gender, and class as primary lenses for doing so (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003), and the work of Paulo Freire, a philosopher and adult literacy educator in Brazil. Influenced by Christian liberation theology, Freire (1955/1970) developed a philosophy of teaching that advocated moving students from being passive recipients of knowledge toward the development of a critical consciousness of themselves and their

world that would lead to active work against various forms of oppression and injustice in their communities.

These three perspectives on justice—Catholic social teaching, Jesuit writing on education, and critical pedagogy—tend to overlap. For instance, Oldenski (1997) and Chubbuck (2007) both point out the value of using both critical theory and Catholic social teaching or Jesuit pedagogy to inform education that is focused on social justice. Critical pedagogy offers a framework for the critical analysis needed to advocate for the poor and marginalized effectively, something that some Catholic educators (Hug, 2000) have argued does not always accompany the volunteerism and service often emphasized in Catholic schools and universities. On the other hand, Catholic social teaching (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2005) and Ignatian writing (Arrupe, 1974/1994; Traub, 2008) offer the moral and spiritual vision and rationale needed for moving critical analysis of societal institutions to action, a vision that can be lacking in critical pedagogy perspectives (Chubbuck, 2007; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). This moral vision in Catholic social teaching is grounded in the transcendence of God in all experience, the ethics of the Gospel of Jesus, and the goal of linking justice to faith, all of which compel Christians not only to become aware of social injustices, but also take action against them.

Research suggests, however, that these secular and religious perspectives of justice are inconsistently applied in the organizational structures of Catholic schools. In other words, while social justice values may be taught in the curriculum, they are not deeply engrained in organizational practices, such as recruitment and retention (of both students and educators), service delivery (e.g., services for students with special needs and students with limited English proficiency), financing (e.g., nontuition-based models), and governance (Scanlan, 2008). Scholars have suggested that gaps persist between espoused commitments to justice and models of enacting these commitments for Catholic schools both internationally (Grace, 2003, 2009; Grace & O’Keefe, 2007) and in the United States (Baker & Riordan, 1998; O’Keefe, et al., 2004; O’Keefe & Scheopner, 2009). For this reason, scholars might consider a justice framework, rooted in Catholic social teaching, Jesuit thinking on education, and critical pedagogy, to study questions like these about emerging Catholic IHE/school partnerships:

1. Who is being served by these partnerships? Who is being excluded?
2. To what extent are these partnerships enabling the partnering Catholic institutions to take specific actions that expand/maximize opportunities

for students and families who have been traditionally marginalized in schools by barriers of race, socioeconomic class, language, and/or disability?

3. In what ways do these partnerships directly promote tangible manifestations of social justice in schools, such as improved student learning and reductions in barriers to learning for traditionally marginalized students?
4. How do these partnerships offer opportunities for students, faculty, and other stakeholders to link their actions for social justice with the growth and development of their religious faith (a “faith that does justice”)?

### ***Ethical Care Framework***

A second possible framework for studying Catholic IHE/school partnerships is ethical care as described by both feminist and religious scholars. Getting beyond care as mere sentiment, feminist writers (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 1995, 2007; Noddings, 1984, 2005) focus on one’s moral responsibility to recognize and respond to the needs of others. In a caring school, teachers strive to see that their students grow academically, emotionally, morally, physically, and spiritually; students are oriented toward the growth and well-being of other students; and administrators aim to see not only students but teachers and all others in the school community grow in multiple dimensions. Noddings (1984, 2005) argues that moral education, from the perspective of an ethic of caring, has four major components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. To learn to care, students must see it in the way that adults in their world behave. They need to have the opportunity to talk about care, and they need to practice both receiving care and giving it. Similarly, the adults in a school community need to see caring modeled; they need to be able to dialogue about care in their school, and they need opportunities to give and receive care. Confirmation means that the one caring, whether teacher, administrator, or student, confirms the best possible self in others and attributes the best possible motives to the behaviors of others. In this way the caregivers help the cared-for strive and reach a sense of their best possible selves. Literature on educational leadership (Beck, 1994; Starratt, 1994, 2003) has drawn from this ethical care framework to emphasize how school principals can cultivate school communities that unite families, students, and staff around common values and commitments to success, particularly in schools that are becoming increasingly diverse.

Scholars wishing to study Catholic IHE/school partnerships aimed at improving the education and life chances of those who have often been marginalized in traditional schools may wish to pay particular attention to

critical feminist writers of color who have argued that issues of inclusion and marginalization need to be at the center of any educational inquiry based on care (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). In their studies of Latino students' experiences of schooling, for example, Rolón-Dow (2005) and Valenzuela (1999) bridge care theory with critical race theories to analyze the sociocultural and racialized contexts of schools. Valenzuela's ethnographic study of third- and fourth-generation Mexican Americans and first- and second-generation Mexican immigrants in a Houston high school demonstrates how schools' assimilation policies systematically ignore the culture, race, and language of their students of Mexican descent. In a study of the contrasting conceptions of care by Latina students and their White teachers, Rolón-Dow (2005) found that "deficit-based, racialized caring narratives were often articulated as the teachers used their own experiences as well as historical experiences of White immigrant groups as ideological foundations" (p. 104) to discuss how Latino/a families care for their children, their children's education, and their community. Black and Latino/a theorists call for a conception of care in schools that sees "racism and other systemic injustices as simultaneously social and educational problems" (p. 77). Caring for students affected by racism includes a "responsibility...to contest the societal stereotypes imposed on children" (p. 77) at both individual and institutional levels. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) argues that "caring need not be regarded simply as an interpersonal, dyadic, and apolitical interaction" (p. 83), but rather is a key tool to "communal engagement and political activism" (p. 83). Pérez Carreón, Drake, and Calabrese Barton (2005) maintain that caregiver involvement "must be studied in connection to the spaces in which this involvement takes place, along with the physical, material, and organizational boundaries embedded in these spaces" (p. 468). Studies of partnerships focused on contexts with large numbers of students living on society's margins might look at these partnership sites as "spaces" where social and cultural capital are negotiated and ethics of care are established and practiced.

Similar to the emphasis on care in feminist writing, the traditions and charisms of a number of Catholic religious orders, including Benedictines and Jesuits, add a spiritual dimension to this conceptual framework of ethical caring that might be particularly apt for studies of Catholic IHE/school partnerships. For instance, since the Middle Ages, communities of Benedictines have invited others to share in the stability of their communal life of prayer, conversation, work, and silence. In light of the Rule of St. Benedict (Benedict of Nuesia, 530/1949), Benedictines have focused on the ways that monastic communities need to demonstrate their "hospitality" toward others both



within their communities and beyond. The 53rd Rule of Benedict outlines in detail how members of a monastic community should welcome, embrace, be present with, and guide in ways that serve the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of others. Benedictines strive to respect all community members and guests “as Christ” and without distinctions based on wealth, creed, race, or gender.

Jesuits, following the life and teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, emphasize “cura personalis” or “care for the whole person.” Originally used to describe the responsibility of the Jesuit Superior to care for each man in his community with his unique gifts, insights, challenges, needs, and possibilities, this value is now applied more broadly to include the relationship between educators and students and professional relationships among all those who work in a Jesuit school or university environment. The Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* (Society of Jesus, 1599/2005) explicitly outlines how those working with young people in Jesuit schools need to address not only intellectual and academic development but also the affective, moral, and spiritual development of students. Teachers and administrators do that through personal, caring relationships with their students as well as their modeling of a life and set of values that focus on a life for others rather than oneself.

Drawing from both feminist and religious frameworks of care, then, scholarship on Catholic IHE/school partnerships might consider these questions:

1. How and to what extent do these partnerships encourage modeling of care, dialogue about care, and practice of care among members of the partnership community? How are caring relationships enacted among the stakeholders in these partnerships?
2. What factors in these partnerships are promoting or hindering the promotion of care among individuals and institutions in the partnerships?
3. To what extent are these partnerships empowering both current and prospective teachers and administrators to care intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually for students and families who are traditionally marginalized in school by barriers of race, class, poverty, and language? Do the partnerships catalyze and strengthen engagement between IHE and local communities?
4. To what degree do indications of strong cultures of care in these partnerships correlate with measurable improvements in student learning outcomes that reduce educational inequities?

### ***Learning Framework***

Learning provides another potential framework for supporting thinking and research on Catholic IHE/school partnerships. Theories of sociocultural learning (Lee, 2007; Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991) and professional learning communities (Drago-Severson, 2007; Spillane & Louis, 2002; Stoll & Louis, 2007; Wenger, 1999), as well as Lasallian (Johnston et al., 1997) and Ignatian (International Center for Jesuit Education, 1993) views of learning, offer complementary ways to think about partnership impacts on learning and teaching. Sociocultural learning theories and professional learning community research focus on the learning of multiple stakeholders within these partnerships (students, teachers, administrators, organizations) as well as the complex environmental contexts where the learning and other work of these partnerships take place. Lasallian and Ignatian views of learning from the Catholic tradition offer important frameworks for thinking about the holistic education of learners in Catholic schools that include not only attention to cognitive and sociocultural dimensions, but also the emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning.

According to sociocultural theory, learning is socially and culturally situated in contexts of everyday living and work (Brown, Collins, Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lee, 2007; Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Learning is the result of a dynamic interaction between individuals, other people, and cultural artifacts, all of which contribute to the social formation of the individual mind (Wertsch, 1991) and lead to the realization of socially valued goals (Engestrom, Miettinen, & Punamaki, 1999).

Vygotsky (1978) maintains that learning for individuals always takes place in a social context where learners seek support from more able peers or teachers and/or technical tools or artifacts in their “zones of proximal development.” Through guided participation in shared activities within a specific context, individuals appropriate the knowledge, skills, and information needed to function within their particular sociocultural community (Putnam & Borko, 2000; Rogoff, 1990). The number and type of activities taking place within the partnership environment are opportunities that dictate the type and diversity of development within the partnership. Therefore, to maximize the learning of many individuals within multiple “zones of proximal development,” the partnership learning environment must be constructed as a rich and complex tapestry of activities; and there must be repeated opportunities

for shared activity and access to expertise (Moll & Greenberg, 1990) by all members of the learning community.

Because of the situated nature of learning and its critical link to everyday practices, a number of sociocultural scholars (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) have demonstrated the need for the activities in any IHE/school partnership to address what Lee (2007) calls the unique “cultural displays of knowledge constructed in everyday routine practices” (p. 25) that racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students bring to the classroom. Sociocultural scholars have shown how teachers can use these “cultural displays of knowledge” to help students achieve high levels of literary reasoning (Lee, 2007), writing (Ball, 1995), algebraic thinking (Moses & Cobb, 2001; Silva, Moses, Rivers, & Johnson, 1990), and science learning (Rosebery, Warren, Ballenger, & Ogonowski, 2005; Rosebery, Warren, & Conant, 1992).

Sociocultural learning theory has also been applied to organizational learning (Wenger, 1999) and has grounded much of the recent scholarship on professional learning communities (Drago-Severson, 2007; Spillane & Louis, 2002; Stoll & Louis, 2007). Current scholarship defines professional learning communities as faculty and administrators in schools inquiring and collaborating on a shared vision of student learning to ensure the success of all students. Studies on schools that function as professional learning communities (Goldstein, 2004; Marks & Louis, 1999; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004) suggest that such schools have these characteristics: 1) supportive and shared leadership, 2) active creativity, 3) shared values and vision that is learning focused, 4) a work culture of collaboration, and 5) a focus on continuous improvement and results.

Lasallian and Ignatian views of learning expand on sociocultural frameworks in their emphasis on the holistic education of learners that include not only attention to cognitive and sociocultural dimensions but also emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning in classrooms and schools. In addition, these views stem from a view of human beings whose purpose on earth is rooted in a faith in God that propels them toward service to others and action against injustice. Since the 17th century, the thinking and writings of St. John the Baptist de LaSalle, founder of the Brothers of Christian Schools (Christian Brothers), have emphasized a call for religious brothers to live in community and offer underserved students a quality education that is grounded in faith, Gospel values, and a spirit of community and service to others (Johnston et al., 1997). Similarly, since the 16th century the thinking and writing of St. Ignatius of Loyola has inspired Jesuits to guide learners toward becoming “men and women for others” (Arrupe, 1974/1994). Ignatius saw learners as individuals who need to construct and experience new meanings

and understandings actively from what they already know, feel, value, and imagine. Then the teacher guides learners in reflection on what they have learned. This reflection then must lead to action. While this action “may not immediately transform the world into a global community of justice, peace and love...[it] should at least be an educational step in that direction” (International Center for Jesuit Education, 1993, p. 28).

In light of sociocultural learning theory, professional learning community research, and Lasallian and Ignatian views of learning, then, scholarship examining Catholic IHE/school partnerships might ask:

1. How and to what extent are the activities of these partnerships supporting the academic, professional, emotional, and spiritual learning and formation of participants (students, faculty, and administrators) in manners that are measurable and replicable?
2. How successful are these partnerships at drawing upon the particular “funds of knowledge” (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), “cultural ways of knowing” (Lee, 2007), and “contexts” (International Center for Jesuit Education, 1993) that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and university personnel bring to the school communities in these partnerships?
3. To what extent can these partnerships be seen as Catholic learning communities? What factors are fostering these partnerships as Catholic learning communities? What factors are hindering the partnerships from becoming Catholic learning communities?

### ***Social Entrepreneurship***

A final conceptual framework that scholars might consider when examining Catholic IHE/school partnerships is social entrepreneurship in light of Catholic social teaching. For several decades, entrepreneurship has been held up as an ideal in the worlds of business, management, and finance and has been traditionally oriented primarily toward financial ends (Drucker, 1985). Entrepreneurs are individuals who are highly motivated, oriented toward results and problem-solving, hold themselves responsible for their actions and the outcomes, and are able to tolerate ambiguity (Hassel, 2008; Kao, Kao, & Kao, 2002; Martin & Osberg, 2007). They see opportunities and act on them in innovative, novel, creative manners; and the result is financial success.

Social entrepreneurship is oriented primarily toward social rather than financial aims (Drayton, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2007). The term first appeared in literature in the 1970s (Banks, 1972) and gained popularity a decade later

with the emergence of several foundations promoting social entrepreneurs as change agents (Dees, 2001; Schlee, Curren, & Harich, 2009; Thompson & Doherty, 2006): "Mission-related impact becomes the central criterion, not wealth creation" (Dees, 2001, p. 2). Martin and Osberg (2007) emphasize that social entrepreneurship begins with the identification of a situation of exclusion, marginalization, or suffering, e.g., unfair trade practices, health care disparities, threatened ecosystems, or educational inequities. The social entrepreneur then combines "inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude" (p. 35) to confront these situations.

These orientations of social entrepreneurship are in concert with Catholic social teaching, described in the justice framework above. Specifically, these orientations operationalize the values espoused through Catholic social teaching. Catholic social teaching has long held that economic, social, political, and cultural development should reduce oppression and serve the common good (e.g., Benedict XVI, 2009; Paul VI, 1967). Specifically regarding Catholic schools, the Church emphasizes the importance of providing an education for all, with a preference for those on societies' margins (Tomasi, 2008). Along these same lines, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) has urged reform in the nation's Catholic schools that make them available, accessible, and affordable. Social entrepreneurship describes efforts to create such reform (e.g., through innovative financing structures that replace tuition-based approaches or novel service delivery models that create accessibility for students with special needs).

Social entrepreneurship in schools—namely ambitious, resourceful, strategic, and results-oriented innovations and innovators—have increasingly been recognized as central to many effective school improvement reforms (Fullan, 1997; Hess, 2008; Levine, 2006). Bryk and Gomez (2008) argue that social entrepreneurs can promote research and design that "transform the ways we develop and support school professionals; the tools, materials, ideas, and evidence with which they work; and the instructional opportunities we afford students for learning" (p. 182). For this reason Bryk and Gomez encourage partnerships among universities, K-12 schools, and social entrepreneurs.

Such partnerships can catalyze innovative responses to the many technical and organizational challenges that schools at all levels and in all sectors face—strengthening the teaching and learning environment (e.g., promoting curricular alignment, raising academic demand, improving the school learning climate), building professional capacity (e.g., developing more responsive pedagogical strategies and systems of professional development), and fostering school-community relations (e.g., facilitating institutional social supports and direct services in schools and engaging parents and caregivers

in the schooling efforts). Focusing more narrowly on educating traditionally marginalized students in Catholic schools, Catholic IHE/school partnerships that are socially entrepreneurial can develop effective service delivery models for students with special needs or limited English proficiency and develop financing and governance structures that promote vibrant schools for such students that are not tuition dependent. Such partnerships are frequently described in the context of innovative policies and practices improving Catholic schools (Haney & O'Keefe, 2009; Selected Programs for Improving Catholic Education, 2009).

In light of this scholarship on educational entrepreneurship and in light of Catholic social teaching, then, scholars looking at Catholic IHE/school partnerships might ask:

1. To what extent can these partnerships be seen as socially entrepreneurial? In what ways are they encouraging innovations that are ambitious, resourceful, strategic, results oriented, and aimed toward reducing educational inequities and promoting student achievement?
2. Are the partnerships developing teachers and leaders in the partnering institutions as social entrepreneurs? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. How are the innovations and/or innovators in these partnerships impacting outcomes for students who are traditionally marginalized in schools? How are they meeting the call of the U.S. Bishops to make Catholic schools available, accessible, and affordable?
4. How do successful Catholic IHE/school partnerships reflect attributes of social entrepreneurship seen in similar institutions in other fields (e.g., nonprofit and/or faith-based institutions focused on health care, child care, environmental issues, workforce development)?

### **Conclusion**

In this article, we have conceptualized how scholarship on Catholic IHE/school partnerships could inform and promote social justice education in Catholic educational communities. We believe our call is important and timely for several reasons. First, many Catholic schools that have chosen to serve large numbers of students who face barriers of race, class, disability, or language in traditional schools are struggling to survive. They could benefit from solid information on how to forge effectively stronger partnerships with Catholic institutions of higher education that share their mission of faith development and service to others and could offer them significant human, material, and professional development resources. At the same time, Catholic

institutions of higher education have a lot to learn about how to build stronger partnerships with Catholic schools effectively. Such partnerships can be natural, convenient, and symbiotic settings for student service learning and practicum experiences, faculty research and service, student recruitment, and community outreach.

Second, as outlined in this article, scholarship on these emerging Catholic IHE/school partnerships has the potential to examine a number of “big questions” (Shulman, 2008) that educators in both public and private education have been pondering for decades. For example: How do we reduce the achievement gap in schools, particularly urban schools? How do we ensure that all students in schools have equal access to employment and educational opportunities beyond high school? Counter to the persistent evidence of inequalities in educational opportunities at all levels for many students in the United States (Gamoran & Long, 2006; Harvey & Anderson, 2005; Swanson, 2003) there are indications that some Catholic IHE/school partnerships are offering a positive alternative for those who have been traditionally marginalized in schools (Fenzel, 2009). However, research accounts of these successes, employing strong conceptual frameworks and applying theory to practice, are still very limited.

Finally, scholarship on Catholic IHE/school partnerships aimed at socially just education has the potential to contribute to larger discussions around educational equity. Such partnerships can enrich our understanding of how best to bridge the disparate cultures of universities and schools to promote systemic school reform (Clark, 1999; Goodlad, 1993; Jaeger & Thornton, 2006; Maeroff, 1983; Miller, 2007), especially in schools serving large populations of students who have been traditionally underserved in schools. Even though they may share a common spiritual heritage and mission, Catholic IHE/school partners, like secular ones, often need to reconcile huge differences in organizational, administrative, and faculty cultures, priorities, and educational philosophies as they join efforts to achieve a more socially just education for students.

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