

EDITORS' COMMENTS

Agents of change for Catholic education present themselves in a variety of shapes and sizes. Prophetic voices with the experience and vision to help sustain the rich tradition and historically proven success of Catholic schools, colleges, and universities are a critical component to the future of this mission-driven enterprise. Prophets and leaders of educational change are most compelling and ultimately effective when their message is well informed and rooted in the knowledge of good practices and scholarship and enlivened within a community of people committed to a common mission and vision. This issue of the journal continues a tradition of presenting scholarship that aims to inform leaders, practitioners, and visionaries about current education theory, good practices, and practical strategies to address the ever-present challenges that we face in Catholic education.

This issue begins with a set of articles that address critical matters in equity, quality, professional capacity, and governance to sustain the mission of Catholic primary and secondary education. Hallinan and Kubitschek argue that the equality of educational opportunity continues to be threatened by long-standing gaps in student achievement by race, gender, and economic status as well as by school sector and school poverty measures. They investigate the magnitude of these gaps by addressing these factors simultaneously while measuring for effects of school sector and school poverty on gains in academic achievement. Murray and Kane suggest that the responsibilities of staff at Catholic schools are set apart from public schools. It is the authors' assertion that those who serve in Catholic schools need to understand their role as faith driven. This research explores this notion by a study of Catholic school counselors in terms of their academic preparation and training as well as the degree to which they incorporate Catholic mission into their ministry with students. Haney describes new governance models that exhibit particular promise to addressing necessary shifts in structure and board authority that are required in the current competitive climate for school resources and management.

This issue's focus section, *Building Capacity for Mission in Catholic Higher Education*, considers research about the ongoing efforts to build a robust mission-animated culture at Catholic colleges and universities. Expectations for change among undergraduates who attend Catholic colleges and universities are at the heart of the article by Gray and Cidade. This research team from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) seeks to provide reliable scholarship that addresses the question of whether or not Catholic colleges help students *move closer* to Christ, and do a better job

of moving students toward the Catholic faith than secular colleges. Gray and Cidade conduct their study by isolating changes that occur to students' attitudes and behaviors on campus. The second piece in the focus section moves our thinking about building capacity for mission from the point of view of institutional effects on student attitudes to students' understanding about their spiritual and religious experiences and development. Overstreet offers a consideration of a particular set of interpretations and perceptions from a group of students who are navigating through the college experience. These reflections provide Catholic higher education leaders with new insights about mission-based strategies for student development informed by the spiritual and religious lives of students.

Finally, the issue concludes with Gallagher's review of *Where is Knowing Going? The Horizons of the Knowing Subject* by Rev. John C. Haughey and Zelenka's review of *The Gospel According to Star Wars: Faith, Hope, and the Force* by John C. McDowell.

Given that this is the last print issue of the journal, the editors would like to thank the staff of Ave Maria Press for their support and commitment to excellence in publishing the journal for the past 5 years. The journal will continue in an open-access, electronic format and can be accessed at www.bc.edu/catholicjournal

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