

## CLOUDED HORIZONS: CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE COMING DECADE

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*Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States are increasingly finding themselves at risk concerning their survival because of potential threats in five principal areas: 1) changing delivery systems, 2) a failure of management, 3) Catholic identity and religious affiliation, 4) competitive price structures, and 5) the volatility of enrollment. Yet there is no remorseless law of entropy to which Catholic colleges and universities are inexorably bound. There are many choices facing us, some better than others, and only a few really bad. Two of the latter are: to do nothing or, worse, to continue to do things the way we have been doing them. This essay suggests lines of approach that, taken together, offer hope for escape from the present situation and point to long term success.*

Sitting behind an academic vice president's desk for 25 years at five different Catholic institutions fills a person's memory with many experiences: some good, some god-awful, and many, mercifully, forgotten. Above all, the administrative experience gives one a "feel" for the art and management of the Catholic educational enterprise. While it would be woefully unimaginative to say that from that vantage point one can see much change, it would be morally negligent to say one could not discern some general patterns from that change, assess some probable directions on future movements, or espy some likely environmental, cultural, religious, or political realities of which one should be especially mindful. If nothing else, one who has slogged through a thousand meeting agendas may avail himself of the rationale offered by La Rochefaucauld in his sardonic maxim on old men:

namely, that they are able to give good advice because they are no longer capable of setting bad example.

Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States are increasingly finding themselves at risk concerning their survival because of potential threats in five principal areas, any one of which affects their institutional viability: 1) changing delivery systems, 2) a failure of management, 3) Catholic identity and religious affiliation, 4) competitive price structures, and 5) the volatility of enrollment. There may be others, but clearly, failure to adequately address any of these will raise serious questions about the continuation of a school.

**1. Changing delivery systems.** One of the glories of Catholic education which, ironically, now threatens its existence is the manner in which such schools made professional education available and accessible to a vast community of men and women of immigrant backgrounds for whom such professional education was the escape-ladder out of the semi-skilled world of mine and factory and into the somewhat restricted Anglo-Saxon world of law, accountancy, medicine, engineering, and business. What the Catholic college did was to design the means by which education could be formatted into a "commodity." We became adept at packaging and repackaging courses, programs, worksites, internships, and the entire rhetoric of "enhanced professional preparation" for increasingly broader audiences which included in time many people outside of our traditions or culture. We offered a *via media* between what was perceived as the academically suspect proprietary school, which spanned the scope of learning from cosmetology to typing, and the select liberal arts college to which the mandarin class sent its sons (and less enthusiastically, its daughters) to study history, economics, literature, and the fine arts. Without directly saying so, we demythologized the educational experience, shearing it away from the highly stylized world of ivied-walls, fraternity houses, elephantine athletic programs, formal balls, treacly nostalgia, and the rest. We zeroed in on the nub of the matter and put it together in an efficient manner within a realistic time frame with demonstrable payoffs. This the traditional, selective liberal arts college did not want to do and the large, public state institutions were unable to do. Thus, it was left to us to respond quickly with agility and an alert reading of our environment, to make programming available to all who wished to increase their skills for the workplace or aspired to more remunerating and satisfying jobs if they only had this or that degree, certification, body of courses, or what-not. Hundreds of thousands of successful professionals today in business and health care, technology and special education, and art and music therapies, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, owe much of their success to their educational experience in a Catholic college or university which but a few years before was teaching the fine and liberal arts to young women and men from pious Catholic families who were sanctuaring them until a suitable marriage took place.

Etienne Gilson remarked once that the reason disciples and their masters in philosophical systems fall out among themselves is because the conclusions of the master become the assumptions of the disciples and the latter move on to places which the former may find strange and even wrong. So also, what we have successfully created in commodity education is now being taken as a given and is being moved to an entirely new state of existence: electronic education. There is occurring within our midst, leaving whether it be for good or ill to the side for the moment, a tidal wave of growth in "transmissioned learning" or electronic education. Therefore, just as Dell and Gateway 2000 have demonstrated that they could make a computer just as good as the IBM without the IBM culture, so the University of Phoenix and several large public institutions across the country are showing thousands of people every day that they can enhance their professional situations and increase their range of job options without ever having to leave their home, business, or work station. Moreover, American businesses in great numbers are devoting considerable time and billions of dollars to see how distance learning and on-site delivery systems can enhance the productivity of their workers. Electronic education offers the effective tool for the annihilation of the last barriers between education and its audiences: space and time. If the Catholic college showed the world how to convert education from a way of life to a commodity, it itself is now being threatened by a further development which shows how education as a commodity can be converted from a process of conveying information in a certain place at a certain time to a continuously available service where place and time are irrelevant.

This new alternative is still in its rude form, and up against a Cambridge seminar it must seem as crass and as gangly as did the first model T's compared to the cabriolet with inlaid wood, velvet cushions, isinglass windows, gas lamps, and four high-stepping white geldings pulling it smartly along cobblestone streets. But all that has been inurned in the museums, and the automobile not only moved from success to success, it irresistibly redefined the infrastructure of the American cultural experience forever.

Since commodity education constitutes for many Catholic colleges the bedrock of their stability and indeed of their survival, the emergence of electronic education poses a fatal threat to their existence. The threat is made more ominous by the scale of investment needed to compete effectively in this new environment. In the old commodity world, a school would put together a few specialty courses, add a few from the main curriculum, hire a couple of adjunct faculty with specific professional expertise, perhaps include a modest lab-like room for specialty work, and credibility was achieved. Now, hundreds of thousands of dollars in up-front investment to assure quality delivery systems are *de rigueur*. Very few schools have the resources of this magnitude or the range of choices to risk all on such an expensive gamble, and it is a gamble of incalculable proportions for two rea-

sons. First, electronic education is still in its infancy and even the most prescient cannot begin to discern what the eventual patterns of a mature electronic education system will look like. Secondly, electronic education partakes of the overall philosophical character of the computer revolution: an aggressive entrepreneurial spirit akin to the explosion of the mining frontier in the old west or the golden age of wildcatting in the oil fields of Pennsylvania and Texas. Many 30-day wonders, irresistible fads, mountains of skullduggery, sharp practices and plain old looting, raiding, and plundering lay ahead before a rational, productive, and reliable system emerges. A relatively small institution with a fragile financial structure, an excessively conservative board of trustees, and a timid administration are feeble weapons indeed to enter into such an arena of combat with its winner-take-all and take-no-prisoners atmosphere.

**2. A failure of management.** I suppose no organization is managed as well as it could be or as well as its clients, stockholders, and executives wished it were. Yet even by a flexible standard, Catholic institutions are conspicuously ill-managed for a series of commendable and/or realistic reasons. First, as in so many other categories, they seldom pay at competitive levels with other institutions, be it for comptrollers, plant managers, fund raisers, or historians. Therefore, for those who measure their professional value in terms of comparative salaries and who mark their professional journey through institutions of higher learning by higher and higher salaries, the Catholic college or university is often not a final destination (or even a stepping stone), save in the cases of those who are the most prestigious or financially competitive. By and large, therefore, the Catholic institution seldom benefits from the bracing and energetic leadership of crisp, comprehensive, effective management.

Second, the Catholic institution adds to its disadvantage by an entangling confusion of the charitable and the professional. Throughout its history, the Catholic college has from time to time sheltered those who have been unfairly beached on the islands of time and space by cataclysmic events beyond their control. I knew barely intelligible librarians who fled from the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, displaced physicians from Cuba who doubled as faltering Spanish teachers, and Vietnamese families who conspicuously mismanaged a university mail service because the alternative was homelessness and poverty. The Catholic inspiration to provide a refuge for the needy, a temporary shelter for the unfortunate, is edifying but offers no mitigation when competence alone is the shield against failure. On practically every Catholic campus in America, unfortunately, there are persons whose claims to their positions bear scant resemblance to the qualities needed for the successful achievement of the tasks at hand. And if, as I have said, the inherent high-risk status of the Catholic school requires that all work together at their very best with the maximum levels of competence and agility, these touching

examples of personal and institutional consideration will be costly indeed.

Third, Catholic colleges also reflect the organizational style of their founding fathers and mothers. The clannish tendency of the Irish (who were in the vast majority of cases, the founders and foundresses) contrasted almost asymmetrically with the rational management structure of the larger Anglo-Saxon public world of business. The world was too risky and too complicated, it was deemed, to trust to "systems"; better to rely on those whom you trust to stand by you in thick or thin, regardless of how well they did their job. In a word, Catholic colleges and universities have operated on the level of personal loyalties, ganglia of affections, and accumulated favors and vendettas. (That is why the gossip and vindictiveness on a Catholic college campus is so much richer and macabre than on the campus of a public institution.) That is why in a world in which institutions will survive only by the most rigorous applications of rational management systems the Catholic college is at a sore disadvantage. Its channel for the flow of power and execution of command are accluted with petite baronies and Offenbachian fiefdoms which, like the medieval robber barons at the bend of every large, trading river, exact their tribute and/or stifle institutional will. We can all cite experiences in which patently-needed change, even if it touches upon institutional survival, has been thwarted or permanently delayed "until so-an-so retires or dies." The price of institutional consideration has been an institutional arteriosclerosis, permissible in other, palmier days, but fatefully costly in the present environment.

**3. Catholic identity and religious affiliation.** We come now to the crux of the matter, the very nature of the Catholic college or university. Until the late 1960s virtually every Catholic college and university had a palpable identity with its specific theological origins; namely, to be a center in which the religious beliefs of the Catholic community were adumbrated in a setting of higher education. While the style and patina of each college bore the marks of the specific character of its sponsoring religious body, be it Jesuit, Holy Cross, Ursuline, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Dominican, Franciscan, Diocesan, or that of a dozen other religious congregations, all shared an explicit commitment to impart an educational experience deeply imbued with the theological and religious beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic institution of higher learning was a far-flung establishment consciously and explicitly reared in parallel and tacit opposition to the prevailing venues of secular (state) or private (Protestant) institutions.

The Catholic college or university world was comprehensive and it was institutionally shaped by its profession of faith. Daily liturgy was an institutional event; Holy days were institutional holidays; and spiritual formation through sodalities, annual retreats, triduums, and novenas was built into the fabric of the life of the institution. Residence life mirrored, as faithfully as

was practical, the rhythms of home and family. The pieties of the community were affirmed not simply as individual or personal growth opportunities but as community professions and practices of the underlying "stuff" of the school to which all were called either by pervasive moral suasion or explicit legislation and rules. In this atmosphere the college pledged to do two things: arm its students with higher levels of sophistication about their faith and morals, and prepare them for a career in the professions. By and large, year after year, it did these things with astounding success.

In the 1970s there was deliberate and dramatic change in the redefinition of the nature of the Catholic college. It foreswore its explicit theological and institutional faith commitment. It strove mightily to mimic the mode and manner of those institutions in opposition to which it had been created. It disestablished its institutional pious practices, repositioned itself with a more latitudinarian rhetoric as an institution in the "Catholic tradition," protested its commonality with the larger American educational establishment, and, all in all, claimed to have attained a new level of "maturity" for which the older definitions and practices were adequate.

As a means of retaining its continuity with its past, it diminished the affirmation of its Catholicity while exalting its affirmation of the distinctive charism of its sponsoring religious body. It became a "Jesuit college in the Catholic tradition" or a "Franciscan college in the Catholic tradition." But it did this precisely at the time when the great congregations which had in such numbers founded and staffed these colleges were themselves undergoing a terminal crisis of oceanic proportions. The wellsprings from which came the thousands of men and women who streamed into the religious orders and congregations in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s shrunk to a trickle. The problem was exacerbated by the simultaneous mass defections which afflicted them during the 1970s and 1980s. Paradoxically, at the same time that colleges and universities were touting their distinctive religious charism as the badge of their Catholic authenticity, the organizations which engined that charism were experiencing a profound crisis of institutional faith, losing members by the score and eschewing the will to recruit new ones.

From the great congregations of Jesuits to the smallest community of nuns, all who had withstood the assaults of war, revolution, persecution, exile, suppression, and martyrdom now embarked on a course of voluntary institutional self-destruction. Those who remained became increasingly aged, some increasingly addled, and a few even increasingly loony; some of these rose to positions of executive leadership. For 20 years it was considered bad form to raise the question of "Catholic identity." For 20 years Catholic colleges and universities increasingly recruited non-Catholics to their faculties; some college presidents resorted to conspicuous antics to distance themselves from their local ordinary; and many schools embraced for their residence life the looser social practices of the larger society precisely at a time

when, in magazines and newspapers, the first secular voices of concern were asking whether there might not be something wrong with the culture at large.

Through a lot of wheezing and chiding, the Catholic college and university transmogrified itself into something like most American private colleges and universities, pointing to its religious foundations yet now decked out in a new found maturity emblazoned with academic freedom, a stress on religious diversity, a cook's stew of religious practices, and a chipper swagger about being modern. And it was often goofy presidents from religious orders and congregations who were the most assertive in advancing this new fangled institution in spastic acts of self-immolation.

What should have been foreseen was the fact that once you begin to demythologize something, there are going to be people who stop believing! Imagine that! Increasingly larger and larger numbers of parents became skeptical about spending thousands of dollars a year to provide their son or daughter with an environment that more likely eroded faith and religious practices than strengthened them. Having been told, repeatedly, that Old St. Mary's had shed its theological straight jacket and was now a "kissing cousin" to the public institutions in the neighborhood, parents wondered aloud, "Why spend all that money when you can get practically the same thing down the street?" Besides, it was getting harder and harder to get a clear focus on what a Jesuit university in the Catholic tradition meant, for example, when there were hardly any Jesuits around anymore and everyone you asked on campus had a different idea of what the "Catholic tradition" was. As I commented in a talk once, the term "Catholic tradition" bears a striking similarity to a UFO: sufficient numbers of seemingly sane people attest to an experience of one but nobody can adduce the least shred of evidence of its existence.

In the last couple of years a "boomlet" of interest in Catholic identity has emerged. It verges dangerously on becoming chic. I have even been invited to present workshops on how to restore Catholic identity at places where 15 years ago anyone would have been hooted down who proposed such a discussion. Conferences have been held to affirm its importance. It's like finding a community of confirmed alcoholics who, after a 20-year bender, are running around madly trying to embrace temperance. Sensing this shift of current, college presidents are making increasingly explicit statements of touching piety concerning the religious character of their institutions. But where is the substance? It is going to be increasingly difficult to renovate a new Catholic identity. Having made their first mistake by disestablishing the entire theological edifice and institutional faith commitment when they should have been content to throw out one particular cultural expression of it, the Catholic leadership committed a second grave mistake when they freighted the Catholic identity of their institutions on the backs of religious congregations, who were about to emulate a pack of lemmings, and have

done so quite successfully.

Are we about to perpetrate a third institutional blunder by resorting to smoke and mirrors to make our institutions Catholic again? How? By gussy-ing up Holy Spirit Masses? Luring certified "Catholic" speakers onto campus? Writing our catalogues in more explicit language? Force-feeding "Catholic Studies" programs into existence? Assuring one and all that we take our Catholicity seriously? Even if we do any or all of these things, we will not succeed. The revival of the Catholic university, like overcoming an addiction, will occur in small increments and over a lengthy period of time, internalized as a habit, steeled by resolution, and accompanied by pain. There is no short cut to regaining theological integrity and to rekindling confidence on the part of the Catholic community that we are the genuine article. Nothing is more important than this for it goes to the very heart of our identity. The Catholic college cannot emulate the Harvards and Stanfords of the world, metamorphosing from explicitly religious institutions into prestigious private universities. For a wealth of theological and ecclesiastical reasons, the Catholic college is umbilically tied to the Church and to the Catholic community. It can only be faithful or variously unfaithful to its origins and its beliefs. And after the mischief of the last 25 years, evidence of sustained fidelity will not come easily.

Lastly, we need to disenthral ourselves of the identity-fusion of Catholicity with religious congregations. This perdurable fallacy has brought us a host of problems; in time, it will imprison us in an illusion for the great congregations of education, which were born either in the strife of the Reformation (like the Jesuits and the Ursulines) or the catastrophe of the French Revolution (like Holy Cross and the Notre Dames), are all passing away. Within a generation, little trace will remain of any of them save for clutches of octogenarians in various shuttered nursing homes. They lived a long historical moment in the life of the Church, but their time is gone, and if we continue to lash the Catholicity of our colleges and universities to them, we will lose that as well.

**4. Competitive Price Structures.** Regardless who or what one wants to read and believe, there is a growing sensitivity by the general public to the cost of college and university education. This sensitivity is a response not only to the dramatic and relatively hefty increases in tuition costs over the last 10 to 15 years, which far outstrip the inflationary pressures of other commodities, but also reflects an increased concern about the inherent value of such an education. Confidence about a college degree as a passport to security and remunerative employment continues to decline. So an item which increasingly costs more is being valued less. This invites hard scrutiny and harder and more pointed questions from parents and students who see a formidable investment ahead of themselves while having more lingering doubts about its efficacy. This in itself would constitute a flashing yellow light of



warning, but it is made more grave by other simultaneous events: the consistent eroding of federal support for education and the increased activism on the part of public institutions to garner private funds and build private endowments and thus compete in an arena which historically was a virtual preserve of the private college and university. While all of this is threatening to the Kenyons and Sweet Briars of this world, it is life-threatening to the St. Mary's of the Canyons and the St. Hyacinths of the country.

There exists a widespread and tacit assumption that there is little "sky room" left to boost the tuition rate and a growing awareness that calls for accountability and demonstrable value. The present is also a time of fierce competition for scarce dollars to supplement the tuition rolls and the attenuation of the "living endowment" by the irreversible decline of religious men and women on the staff. It is a time of consistent erosion of federal support for higher education, a form of support which had, in an earlier time, been systematically folded into the financial structure of colleges and universities. In essence, at this time, the Catholic college is facing a long-term financial crisis. Already on many campuses signs of the crisis are becoming evident: a deferral of routine maintenance; a relative impoverishment of faculty salaries; the thinning of administrative cohorts in the middle management and direct service areas, further diminishing the level of quality which is clearly one of the few areas in which the Catholic college can distinguish itself from its public competitor; fewer dollars with which to play the "discounting" game used by colleges and universities to attract students; and the intractable problem of maintaining and sustaining competent and aggressive development offices and development officers.

What is particularly dangerous about this threat is that it can create a vortex of crisis and decline from which it may be impossible to escape. The shortfall of financial aid dollars and the failure to continue to modernize over-used facilities lead to enrollment contractions, further destabilizing the finances of the college and accelerating "donor flight"; to smaller salary increases, dampening the recruitment of quality faculty and senior staff; and to the inability to continue investing in vital infrastructure needs such as technology, cost-efficient heating and cooling systems, and student services to match the increasing level of expectations of students and their parents. And each of these doleful states contributes to the need of further excisions, contractions, and a decline of general quality, thus accelerating the spiral of crisis and decline.

**5. The volatility of enrollment.** Another paradoxical accomplishment which now emerges as a threat is the nature of the enrollment patterns of many Catholic colleges and universities, especially those which are relatively small and entertain a diverse student population. In the last two decades many such schools sought and found their salvation in redesigning their educational delivery systems to accommodate the needs and circumstances of

part-time and adult learners. This proved a boon to thousands of people who had interrupted their earlier collegiate experience. Evening and weekend classes and the affirmation of part-time status as a legitimate badge of membership in the college community permitted them to complete their studies or to embark on new careers, thus advancing their professional lives. For many understandable reasons, schools with such populations simply folded these numbers and these revenues into the organization of the institution. But in doing so, they became unwittingly hostaged to a set of circumstances peculiar to the part-time and adult learner. Such populations, unlike the traditional college-bound, high school senior, do not see collegiate experience as a full-time, stable course of studies with a clear beginning and a definite end. They see it rather as one among many demands on their time and resources with some goal in the indefinite future determined by a thousand unanticipated circumstances. They often are paying their own way while working full-time and/or raising a family. Thus, the course of their college experience is subject to real and relentless pressures over which the college has no control, such as transference to another site by one's employer; discontinuance of reimbursements; family crises precipitated by divorce, sickness, or the need to care for an elderly parent; reduction of salary; or, more starkly, the loss of a job.

Suddenly institutions which need to monitor their bottom lines, be it in term of enrollments or of revenues, and whose margins of stability are dangerously thin find themselves whipsawed by dramatic swings in enrollment and finances. And the rises and falls in these categories are not proportional. The increases do not represent the creation of discretionary funds for enrichment purposes that may be delayed in down times but in fact are used to sustain ongoing operational costs while the decreases create distressing budget contractions which directly affect essential services. Having long folded in the revenues of large part-time populations, such institutions find themselves riding on the back of the proverbial tiger, desperately holding on for dear life. The interventions are one-sided since the causes of volatility lay beyond the scope of the college to manage. Since nothing can be done to mitigate the external factors which generate the volatility, colleges and universities increasingly bring internal pressure to bear to generate new programs in search of new audiences, to reduce operating costs even further, and to flog what still remains as mediocre advancement staffs and offices into what can only be described charitably as "panic fund raising."

Before looking at some means by which the Catholic college or university can extricate itself from these threats of annihilation, we need to acknowledge, with sadness, that some institutions are probably not salvageable. Because of weak financial structures, continuing mismanagement, widespread confusion as to mission and purpose and even identity, relentless competition, accelerating changing patterns of educational needs, micro-

scopic enrollments, or a combination of some or all of these, some of our institutions will close. The societal needs of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries have changed and so, as with institutional life in general, old, weak forms will pass away and only those perspicacious enough to respond will make the transition to a new mode of Catholic education. Some of our sister institutions are no longer capable of doing that. Mergers, absorptions, and combinations may offer a transformed means of shadowy survival, but sheer dissolution will also take its toll.

Yet there is no remorseless law of entropy to which Catholic colleges and universities are inexorably bound. There are many choices facing us, some better than others, and only a few really bad. Two of the latter are: to do nothing or, worse, to continue to do things the way we have been doing them. The following are some suggested lines of approach that, taken together, offer hope for escape from the present situation and point to long term success.

**1. Be absolutely ruthless and focused in writing mission/vision statements.** If the most recently hired shuttle driver or custodian cannot tell you, clearly, in two minutes what the college is for, throw away what you have and start over. Mission statements that mimic college catalogues' rhetoric in being prolix, spongy, and diffused are worse than useless; they are harmful for they permit anyone to make them mean whatever anyone wants them to mean. That state of affairs signals that the entire college community's support, essential for survival, will be missing. The statement needs to be focused, specific, and laden with goodness.

**2. Be Catholic about your Catholicity.** Catholicity does not mean dogma, it does not mean social justice, it does not mean transcendence, it does not mean a particular tradition elucidated by a particular religious group. It means ALL of these things in an integral proportion. Achieving this proportion will be most difficult for it requires two absolutely non-negotiable conditions: it must encapsulate a holistic vision of the life of Christ (Scripture) as mediated by the life of the Church (tradition), and all who are responsible for the institution's life and action must share this vision. This core value is the vital unity of the institution. In an era of vast disaggregation of Catholic institutions, there must be an absolute unanimity of the sense and meaning of the Catholicity of your college or university. We must put ourselves in the place of the great founders who created something new, radically new, as a vehicle for living the Christian life in an educational milieu. The old models are all being discarded; they cannot be reinvigorated.

**3. Reconceptualize the learning and living experiences of college students into an integral whole.** The synergy of living and learning the Catholic intellectual life is essential to growth and survival. The "residential ground of learning" may be the most apt definition of the Catholic college of the future. We must recall that the three centers of the medieval school were the chapel, the library, and the common room. Interestingly, the classroom

was not included. We need to disenthral ourselves from the present configuration so as to recreate a new model in which students can live/learn as a rich continuum and not as discrete actions. This will probably be the most difficult task of all because it will require new modes of architecture and of organization, of team management, and of integrating faculty and student services in ways that all may find awkward and complicated, at least initially. But it must be done.

**4. Program from mission, not from need.** For too long we have shaped our programming philosophy as an analog of business. We speak of markets and niches and needs to the detriment of the genius which is our college or university. We must reassert the discipline to do some things and to do them well. In 30 years of academic administration I have seen everything from art therapy to mortuary science rationalized as “flowing from the mission of the college,” and I have seen only two programs (out of hundreds) dropped from a college catalog. We must jettison this piece of hypocrisy and re-establish a sense of integrity. We must be unflinching in asserting that these are the things we do well and those are the things one needs to go elsewhere to pursue. We must place greater confidence in the general public to be prepared to sacrifice for and be attracted to what we do well. Students will come, at least those who want to live/learn with us.

**5. Design exceptionally professional management systems.** The internal systems of the institution must be honed to a virtual perfect pitch. We all know an institution as a complex system of systems. To the extent possible, the sub-sets must function crisply, efficiently, cost effectively, and collegially, and the relations among them must be crisp, efficient, cost effective, and collegial. The industrial model of the segmentation of function within a hierarchical management is doomed. The technological model of collaborative and synergistic activity is necessary for the Catholic college of the future. This means that the rational convergence of enrollment goals, budget allocations, authorized positions, external fund raising, infrastructure investment, mission effectiveness, spiritual vitality, plant maintenance, and program development have to be designed into a seamless unity in which they draw strength from each other and are not pitted against each other in a ceaseless war over resources. To be a manager in this type of system is to speak knowledgeably about all of these areas. We need to find people who know not just how to run a residence hall but also how to connect that skill to the admissions plan, the case for institutional advancement, and the landscape philosophy of the college.

**6. Design condominiumia for transmissioned learning.** Here we must live with risk at a dramatic level. As I said, we cannot tease out the future of “electronic education” in higher education. Yet it is so pervasive, and we have committed many of our schools to serving those constituencies targeted by transmissioned learning, that we cannot shrink from venturing into

these waters, however turbulent they may be. As a practical way of moving in this direction while minimizing the risk, we should pool investment from a variety of schools and erect a distance learning center which provides the best we have to offer to the general public. We need to resist the temptation to try to put everything out in the ether and limit ourselves to what is the best we can do. Regional centers composed of a dozen or so schools might be created and sustained by distributing the cost and management in the manner that consortia use.

### **7. Cultivate a sturdy detachment from the society and the world.**

This is not to say that we turn our back on the world but the old mode of reform is ever true: to change the world you must be detached from it. We must reimmerge ourselves in the sacred and bathe ourselves with the mystery of faith and its sustaining grace so that we might see all things in a new way. It is, after all, God's work that we are about and we cannot attempt to aspire to any success in that endeavor unless we dispose ourselves to hear from Him what that is. And as the Scriptures untiringly remind us, we cannot be so disposed only in our heads but we must also dispose our hearts and our wills. And this requires a metanoia wrought by prayer, sacrifice, listening, and the scalding of our desires, for it is not about making yo-yos or space rockets that we labor, but about transforming human beings into what they themselves have been uniquely called to be. And for them to risk the courage to embrace that end through a collegiate experience requires that they have confidence that we know what we are asking them to do because we have done it ourselves. Jesus himself repaired to the mountain to pray and to refresh himself in the company of the Father so that he might continue his ministry, and in so doing he changed the world and continues to change it. We cannot minister to the poor, bring social justice to a battered and violent world, help tame the cupidity of men and women, or assist people along their path to beatitude unless we all have first made the journey to God ourselves.

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