

From the Editor

Volume 2, Issue 1 of *Integritas* addresses the question of the value of liberal arts education in the contemporary world, amidst pressures on colleges to ensure that education increase earning potential. Psychologist Thomas G. Plante argues that it has perennial value, even in an age of economic insecurity and professional specialization. Drawing from contemporary research, he suggests that the habits of mind cultivated by the study of the liberal arts are still of value in the contemporary workforce. Further, he points to alumni of Catholic universities as representing the transformative impact of a Catholic liberal arts education. Plante and his colleagues seek to demonstrate empirically that liberal arts programs, and in particular those with a focus on “faith that does justice,” enhance students’ ability to show compassion and deal with stress.

In response, theologian Kevin Hughes challenges the idea that the study of the liberal arts is the most apt preparation for skills to be used in the professional world. Rather, he emphasizes that they help a student develop habits of living appropriate to the wise person. The liberal arts are foremost about living well, not only working well. Understanding this point, he suggests, means thinking carefully about the structure of university education as a whole. The liberal arts are important, he says, but they cannot compete with professional disciplines in the development of skills for the workforce. It will be necessary, he suggests, to consider what an integration of liberal arts disciplines with professional training might look like in order that graduates of our universities are both competent professionals and lovers of wisdom whose lives are ordered toward great goods.

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