

Introduction

Centers and institutes are now common entities within higher education at large, and more recently, at Catholic colleges and universities. However, there has been little written on centers at Catholic institutions until now. This issue of the *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* focuses on these centers, offering a first look at ongoing research and a snapshot of several case examples.

In his final speech to Catholic higher education leaders at the 2010 ACCU Annual Meeting, then ACCU President Richard Yanikoski spoke of the growing presence of centers and institutes on Catholic campuses. From this speech grew a research project to create a national database of these entities for researchers and other interested parties. In her article, Lorraine Sloma-Williams presents an introduction to the literature on centers and then provides the first look into the data that has been collected so far in a national study on these entities.

The next five articles present the stories of various types of centers at several Catholic institutions. Each of these articles provides a profile of these centers and the influence they have on the university, society, and the Church.

Rev. Thomas Dailey tells of the founding of the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture, and then summarizes the work that has been accomplished there during the past ten years. Dailey notes that the purpose of this center “is to promote academic study, perpetuate a spiritual tradition, and provide community interaction.”

Then, Sr. Gemma Del Duca describes the foundation of the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education. The article shows how, through this center, a small Catholic university became a leader in Holocaust studies with a close relationship with the International School of Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, Israel.

In their article, Sr. Susan M. Sanders and Sr. Joy Clough show how small to midsize tuition-driven Catholic colleges and universities “serve both the university community and society by providing opportunities for important and civil discourse.”

Erin Brigham, building on the work of Jürgen Habermas, demonstrates how, through a center, a college or university can provide a public

sphere in which religious and secular voices can learn from each other, and in the process, rediscover the public significance of religion.

Finally, Claire Noonan focuses on how the St. Catherine of Siena Center educates its students and the people of the surrounding community by examining the critical issues facing the Church and society today.

Although not specifically focused on centers, the next two articles examine other creative ways in which Catholic higher education reaches beyond its campus borders to fulfill its mission. The article by Rogelio Garcia-Contreras, Jean-Philippe Faletta, and Rick Krustchinsky examines how service-learning opportunities provide a way for Catholic universities to offer students hands-on experience within their field of study and gain awareness of Catholic Social Teaching. Then, the article by Nancy G. Calley, Sheri Pickover, Jocelyn M. Bennett-Garraway, Garbette M. Garraway, and Simon J. Hendry, shows how a university can promote social justice by interweaving Catholic Social Teaching within the counseling curriculum.

To close the issue, Richard Rymarz offers a reflective examination of the cultural issues that are influencing Catholic higher education today. He argues that Catholic universities should adopt a new conceptual model as a way to be transformative cultural agents.

This issue lifts the veil on the remarkable story that is centers and institutes in Catholic higher education. A future issue of the *Journal* will revisit this topic as the research data become more complete.

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