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For Openers

Editorial Board

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In the last issue of *Conversations*, William C. Spohn of Santa Clara University, reflecting on the lack of campuses doing "structural analysis" of their justice programs, stated -- almost as an assumption -- that "the AJCU (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities) institutions have distinctive campus cultures." The current issue of *Conversations* takes up that assumption -- one which is probably shared by many readers -- and submits it to scrutiny.

At almost any gathering of faculty, staff, and administrators (and not a few student gatherings), on the campuses of any of the thirty Jesuit colleges, universities, and theologates, talk might turn to the issue of "campus culture." The questions are familiar: What is campus culture, and how can we change or at least affect that culture in a positive way? Over a year ago, at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus, the National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education spoke with a number of presidents and provincials. In that conversation the presidents raised the issue of "campus culture," and particularly the "dark side" of that culture, as all have likely seen or experienced it.

In the seminar's subsequent discussions it became apparent that even at a single Jesuit college or university there is never a single culture -- using that term in its most popular sense -- but rather a multitude of cultures or sub-cultures. The current issue of *Conversations* presents perspectives on a number of the cultures -- and issues within those cultures -- that help to characterize the various Jesuit colleges and university campuses. Professor Mary Ann Donnelly provides an overview on those many perspectives. We hope that her article -- and those which follow it -- encourage readers of *Conversations* to think, reflect, and talk about the

different campus cultures at their institutions, and the way that they interact and influence one another, making for the specific individuality of those campuses. Because, as contributing authors Pat Rombalski and Stephanie Quade note, it is often perceived that students define the culture, the remaining articles in the issue -- after Professor Donnelly's -- begin with students and proceed through subsequent essays on other cultures and issues within those cultures.

New in this issue is a feature the seminar hopes to make a regular part of *Conversations*; namely, a spotlight on outstanding students chosen by and from the different Jesuit campuses. The students, after all, are the reason for the institutions' existence.

Beginning this issue with Boston College, Canisius College, Creighton University, and Gonzaga University, each future issue will spotlight four students from four additional campuses. In time the magazine will have featured outstanding students from all thirty colleges, universities, and theologates.

Besides photos of the spotlighted students, graphics for this issue include a variety of photos on campus cultures solicited from the campuses of the spotlighted students. Insofar as possible, this practice too will continue in future issues.

The seminar continues to solicit responses to particular articles and entire issues. Such responses will appear in a special department at the end of subsequent issues.