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Fox et al: Letters to the Editor

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"Christ's Laboring," one of four windows designed by architect Steven Holl for the processional entryway of the Chapel of St Ignatius, Seattle University. Photo: Amil Kapahi ©Seattle University.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EDITOR.

I reacted to the Fall 1997 issue on "Hiring for Mission" with mixed feelings. When I applied for a position in the economics department of Saint Joseph's University in 1986, I was woefully ignorant about the significance of the Jesuit identity of Saint Joseph's, did not know what S.J. stood for—and, at the time, I can now confess—it was a matter of indifference to me.

What a difference a decade makes. I find myself teaching a course in Economics and Ethics with a colleague in theology, delivering the invocation at Commencement, and serving on a committee on Ignatian Identity. A metamorphosis such as this could not have occurred at a secular university and is all the more remarkable for the fact that I am Jewish.

I believe that because of, and not despite, my differences, I am an integral part of the Jesuit nature of Saint Joseph's University. My appointment to the Ignatian Identity committee confirms that my colleagues agree. My continual discovery of the common themes in the Jewish and Jesuit traditions both amaze and delight

me. An added personal bonus is my rediscovery and exploration of my own tradition, which I believe further enriches my contribution to the Jesuit identity of the university.

While I endorse the idea of hiring for mission, I am concerned that its implementation may exclude those who have the potential to contribute but whose ability to do so either exists and is not apparent or is yet to be discovered at the time of hiring. Hiring for mission could ignore the potential effect of the mission on such a person—metamorphosis that could make all the difference, both in that person's spiritual growth and in his or her ability to contribute to mission. I wonder whether a person such as myself would be hired under such a policy. I know I would have been the worse off for not having spent the past eleven years here, and I believe that the university would be, perhaps, less well off as well.

*Nancy Ruth Fox
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Allow me to share three thoughts on John Pauly's essay on hiring for mission ("Mission Talk and the Bugaboo of Modernity," Fall 1997).

First, Pauly reports that Catholic identity talk "scares the hell out of liberals which is, of course, its chief purpose." Nonsense. Religiously oriented liberals are among the most vocal proponents of hiring for mission on many of our campuses.

Second, Pauly relies heavily on Weick's organizational theories. In fact, empirical evidence shows that people can easily identify an organization's climate. We start "sense-making," or confabulating social constructions, when faced with an organization that waffles or equivocates about its core identity. In this context "strategic ambiguity" is a synonym for relativism and floundering.

Third, one other issue must have paramount importance in this discussion. In 1995 the Society of Jesus held its 34th General Congregation. The Decrees of that Congregation are normative for Jesuit education, and these specify mission-related hiring as one of the practices for which Jesuit schools must be accountable. A pity if these practices are academically unfashionable, but fashion shouldn't drive us in the wrong direction.

John Hollwitz
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Loyola College in Maryland

I read David Hollenbach's essay ("Is Tolerance Enough? The Catholic University and the Common Good," Spring 1998) with a great deal of interest, and, as I read, with growing suspicion. In his invocation of the "common good," Professor Hollenbach seems to have found a way to dry up the watering down of culture by critically unreflective brands of tolerance. Differences in viewpoint are no longer to be tolerated for tolerance's sake; their inclusion is permitted insofar as it contributes to the formation of a responsible citizenry through the tempered reinforcement of "[t]he links among education, virtue, and the common good." As Roberto S. Goizueta notes in his response, this is "the difference that difference makes": conscientious inclusion lends itself to a creative dialectic process whereby we discover the healing balm for a wounded civilization.

And who could argue, in the face of the genocidal tendencies demonstrated in contemporary cultural ideologies, that the healing is not sorely, sadly needed?

But the sinister factor in Hollenbach's model lies in the very act, the very term, *inclusion*. Participation in this creative dialectic is extended, benevolently, even condescendingly, by those who have usurped the power to permit. If this is "liberation to participate," it is offered only by those who have the authority to liberate: they who first enslave. When legitimacy depends upon permission, in its subordination legitimacy becomes a reflection of the power of the permittors.

If the university, as an institution, determines the site and organization of engagement, it cannot help but determine the outcome. If, as the

premise of a creative dialectic indicates, meaning is generated by juxtaposition of premises within discursive contexts, an attempt to fix the context of the process is an exertion of power at its most invisible and most insidious. It does not create the data, as it were, but forms the operating system. This is a deeper level of tyranny than the one which John W. Padberg, S.J., notes with relief ("Tap-roots") that the Church has grown past; in fact, temporal princedom is more superficial and ultimately more benign than the intellectual control expressed in "authorized inclusion" in the Catholic university.

The real solution to this seeming dilemma is presented by Professor Goizueta who, somehow, does not see it in conflict with Professor Hollenbach's proposals. We must look to the poor, the marginalized, as those who alone possess the authority to "include." If achieving "the common good" implies closing the gap between the poor and those who control the means of production, then real "liberation," real "permission" to participate cannot come from those who already possess the means of control; rather, it must be an absolute subversion of that control by those who are most excluded by it.

Of course, this implies a whole different intellectual environment than that which exists in the university that we now know. Until the structures of power are radically undermined, "inclusion," whether critical or arbitrary, will always be bound by an asymptotic locus of permission.

Keith M. Beyer
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Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

As a workshop leader for National Seminars, a division of Rockhurst College, I look forward to every issue of *Conversations*. Each issue has a wealth of information to assist me in workshops that I facilitate on leadership and team building. The last issue ("Catholic Education and the Common Good," Spring 1998) had several articles that spoke to me both personally and professionally.

I especially want to thank William Byron, S.J., for his article "Living Generously in the Service of Others." This article touched the very heart of what I want to communicate to leaders. To quote from the

article, "Today our prime educational objective must be to form men-for-others, men who will live not for themselves but for God and His Christ." This is the commitment leaders must make to their people if they want their people committed to their organization. Fr. Byron's article brings to mind the words of Ghandi, "we must be the change we want to see in the world."

*Joseph E. Gilliam
National Seminars
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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Saint Joseph's University will sponsor a major national conference entitled "JESUIT EDUCATION 21: CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION," JUNE 25-29, 1999, ON THE CAMPUS IN PHILADELPHIA.

The conference will provide a forum for exploring the implications for Jesuit higher education of the 34th General Congregation (GC 34) of the Society of Jesus, which was held in 1995.

It will also consider broader issues related to the Jesuit and Catholic identity of the twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities, with particular focus on the new challenges that those institutions face as they enter the twenty-first century.

"Jesuit Education 21" is being held in conjunction with the publication of a book containing twenty-seven essays by Jesuits on GC 34 and Jesuit higher education.

The book is being published by Loyola Press, and will appear January 1999.

The conference is open to all personnel, lay and Jesuit, involved in Jesuit higher education.

