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## For Openers: Help Wanted

Editorial Board

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# Help Wanted

As Richard Passon shows clearly in his overview of hiring policies, “hiring for mission” has in recent years become a hot topic on Jesuit campuses. Nearly all of the twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities report that they have taken steps to insure that questions related to Jesuit mission and identity will be asked in the process of hiring new faculty, administrators, and staff. The reasons for this nationwide movement, and for the sense of urgency that Passon notes, are not hard to discern. Joseph Panuska, S.J., president of the University of Scranton, recounts in succinct form an experience shared by most if not all Jesuit colleges and universities. Throughout the 1980s at Scranton, he says, hiring of new faculty and staff increased at the same time that the number of available Jesuits decreased considerably. “With so many new faces and with fewer Jesuits—formerly and erroneously seen as the embodiment of Ignatian identity—institutions could no longer take for granted that everyone understood and embraced the mission.” By the late 1980s, as Jesuits prepared for celebrations of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Society of Jesus, concern for the future increased. Who would carry on the mission?

This is the context in which were created the many “Jesuit-lay-collaboration,” or “partnership-in-mission” programs currently in place (including the National Seminar). By 1988-89, the year of the Collaboration in Mission conference at Creighton and of Assembly ‘89 at Georgetown, it was clear that Jesuit higher education would remain distinctively Jesuit only insofar as its increasingly lay faculty, administration, and staff “understood and embraced” the mission. Institutions concerned with maintaining their Jesuit identity, then, would need to provide the means through which those already on board could learn about the history and mission of Jesuit education, and, if they wished, participate in the spiritual inheritance of the Society (through directed retreats, for example). Beyond that, the institution would need to formulate and announce its sense of identity with sufficient clarity to prospective new members to assure that those who accepted employment were willing and able to embrace and carry forward the mission. As Passon frames the issue, “hiring for mission” is part of a two-pronged approach of recruitment and continuing education and is intended to assure that the Jesuit university will continue, whatever the course it may take, to be grounded in the values and traditions of the Society of Jesus.

As all of the writers in this issue acknowledge, actual implementation of mission-centered hiring programs can be complex in the extreme. Robert John Araujo, S.J., surveys the legal implications, arguing that laws governing hiring practices give a fair amount of latitude to religiously affiliated institutions.

Kathleen Kane and John J. Pauly register, from very different points of view, the kinds of fears that tend to surface, especially among faculty, when mission concerns are linked with hiring. Kane’s report on what she believes are the needless anxieties of her colleagues at the University of San Francisco over hiring and faculty-development proposals in USF’s new strategic plan is balanced by Pauly’s serious concern that interjecting “mission talk” into the recruitment process is dangerous to the academic health of the institution and ironically inimical to the spirit of Jesuit education. Finally, three members of the Department of English at Saint Joseph’s University provide a glimpse into the actual complexity of the hiring process, in a case study of a recent search in which the ability to contribute to mission was one of the criteria for employment.

As always in the fall, the seminar welcomes new members. This year, we also welcome back an old friend as chairman. John W. Padberg, S.J., was the first chairman of the seminar, and served from 1991-1994 both as chairman and as editor of *Conversations*, before an unusually heavy confluence of obligations (even for him) required that he step down. From 1995-97, the Seminar was chaired by Vincent T. O’Keefe, S.J. We shall miss his wisdom, his wit, his kindness, and (of course) his stories.

Three new members begin three-year terms this year. Hamilton E. Cochrane, Joseph M. McShane, S.J., and Jane Purcell Rues. Dr. Cochrane, who teaches English at Canisius College, has published numerous works of short fiction and has a novel, *Flesh Wounds*, forthcoming from Doubleday. His scholarly interests range from 18<sup>th</sup>-century biography and biographers to the literature of baseball. Fr. McShane is Dean of Fordham College and professor of theology at Fordham University. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1981, he taught for ten years at Le Moyne College (receiving the Professor of the Year award in 1988) before moving to Fordham. His many publications include his 1986 book, “*Sufficiently Radical*”: *Catholicism, Progressivism and the Bishops’ Program of 1919* (Catholic University of America Press). Jane Purcell Rues chairs the occupational therapy education program at Rockhurst College, where she has taught since 1990. A registered occupational therapist and Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association, she specializes in therapy for children with profound disabilities, and has authored or co-authored more than a score of research papers in her field. To *emeriti* members Thomas Buckley, S.J., Kathleen Orange, and Richard Passon, the seminar owes an enormous debt of gratitude.



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