

9-1-2013

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Recommended Citation

Josh, Daly (2013) "Just Employment and Investment Policies: An Idea Whose Time Has Come," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*: Vol. 44, Article 7.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol44/iss1/7>

Just Employment and Investment Policies

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

By Josh Daly

Have our Jesuit campuses fully lived out their ideals when it comes to the rights of campus workers and the investment of university endowments?

A three-year campaign for a living wage for contract workers at Georgetown peaked in 2005, when students went on a nine-day hunger strike. At Loyola New Orleans, a campaign by students and dining services workers crescendoed after a well-loved employee was fired for her union-organizing activity.

For administrators, responding to situations like these has been fraught with challenges around neutrality in labor disputes and financial constraints. Given this, it would be easy to dismiss protesting students as radical or naïve. But then, too, we would have to dismiss the challenging call of the late Jesuit superior general Fr. Pedro Arrupe to practice the works of justice:

- *First*, a basic attitude of respect for all people that forbids us ever to use them as instruments for our own profit.
- *Second*, a firm resolve never to profit from or allow ourselves to be suborned by positions of power deriving from privilege, for to do so even passively is equivalent to active oppression. To be drugged by the comforts of privilege is to contribute to injustice as silent beneficiaries of its fruits.
- *Third*, an attitude not simply of refusal but of counterattack against injustice; a decision to work

with others toward the dismantling of unjust social structures so that the weak, the oppressed, the marginalized of this world may be set free.

Jesuit values and business operations need not be at odds. What makes the above cases remarkable is the response of the respective administrations. At Georgetown, the administration worked quickly with various stakeholders to develop and implement a just employment policy, which sets guidelines on issues like wages, benefits, and organizing rights for contract employers. At Loyola, a task force created by the president spent a year to research and create a similar policy. Both schools have advisory committees that now ensure that the policies are followed.

Similar issues exist around our endowments. Currently, students at hundreds of colleges and universities—several of our Jesuit schools among them—are calling for divestment of endowments from fossil fuels. Others, following the Move Our Money campaign, are calling on our schools to invest in their local communities.

Again, several of our schools have developed constructive ways forward. Loyola Chicago has an active shareholder advocacy committee, which engages the companies LUC is invested in on human rights and environmental issues. And Fordham recently made a

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\$250,000 investment in a local credit union—money that will support small businesses and local homeowners, among others—in response to a student campaign called “Fordham for the Bronx.”

As anchor institutions in our communities, Jesuit schools have considerable power to respond to Arrupe’s call to build more just social structures. In Cleveland, Case Western Reserve has joined the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals in leveraging their purchasing power to incubate the Evergreen Cooperatives: employee-owned businesses providing commercial solar, laundry, and greenhouse food production services and building good jobs and real wealth for residents of nearby neighborhoods whose median income is \$18,000 per year. What if Jesuit schools helped incubate similar initiatives in our communities?

We have an opportunity—at the invitation of our current Jesuit superior Fr. Adolfo Nicolás—to creatively reimagine the founding of our Jesuit universities and how we can embody our values in present realities. On business practices, two emerging networks of faculty, staff, and students are engaging in this creative process: the Jesuit Just Employment Project (<http://lwp.georgetown.edu/campus-project/jesuit-just-employment-policy-initiative/>) and the Jesuit Endowment Ethics Network (full disclosure: I belong to both). Both groups have been gathering stories of promising practices like those mentioned above and have been developing model policies and tools. I urge my colleagues across the family of Jesuit institutions to find out more and to join in this important work to raise our practices to the level of our ideals. ■

Financial Aid: Need Based or Merit Based?

Towards a Just Policy

By Jeff von Arx, S.J.

We are all aware that St. Ignatius wished Jesuits not to charge for their ministries, including the ministry of education, so that students would be admitted to our colleges regardless of their ability to pay. He expected us to beg for the support of our works! This proved to be impractical in the long run, but the contributed services of Jesuits, who constituted the majority of faculty in our schools for most of Jesuit history, meant that fees were low, even when they were charged. Here in the United States, our colleges were founded in the interest of a mostly urban, immigrant population who could not afford the fees that most private institutions charged, and even these modest fees were often waived for students who could not pay them in an informal economy of financial aid administered by the Jesuits.

As our institutions changed, and especially as we hired more lay faculty and staff who had to be paid a living wage, tuitions rose and financial aid became more

formalized. Today, a few of our institutions are in the fortunate position to honor a commitment not only to need-blind admission but also to meeting fully the demonstrated financial need of all the students they admit. They do this typically with the help of large endowments. But I do not mean to minimize the struggle it is even for these institutions to meet this commitment, especially in the current economic climate.

For the rest of us, who cannot meet full financial need, we have traditionally tried to make as much need-based financial aid available as we could. There have been some exceptions to this practice, most notably athletic grants-in-aid, which are awarded irrespective of need (although, of course, many athletes have need), and merit scholarship programs to attract the very best students (presidential scholars, etc.). But a commitment to awarding most financial aid on the basis of need has

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