

February 2018

From the Chair: Jesuit Schools - Good Neighbors

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Recommended Citation

Schmidt, Edward W. S.J. (2018) "From the Chair: Jesuit Schools - Good Neighbors," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*: Vol. 53 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol53/iss1/2>

Jesuit Schools – Good Neighbors

The bulletins posted regularly by the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities contain an amazing range of stories. These stories often tell of new academic programs and degree programs. A posting in early November told of the schools' participation in the Ignatian Heritage Month and the Ignatian Family Teach-in in Washington. Another noted that AJCU presidents had signed a letter to President Trump on climate change. November bulletins told of the Jesuit Basketball Spotlight and noted that this was started by the AJCU in 2008 "to help share the message of Jesuit education through the more than 80 basketball games in which Jesuit institutions play each other every season."

A frequent motif is some new program in which the school is reaching out to its neighborhood, to its city. The schools are very much invested in their locations. While they share a common heritage, language, and spirit, they also reflect where they are – deep in the city or in a smaller town.

These relationships are the topic of this issue of *Conversations*. The lead article by Fr. Thomas Lucas, S.J., tells of how St. Ignatius Loyola deliberately wanted his group to be in the cities and at the crossroads where larger numbers of people gather. "From Rome to Messina and Manila, Goa to Gdansk, Vilnius to Vienna," he writes, "Jesuits built educational complexes of bewildering variety and sometimes startling beauty. Besides classroom teaching, these schools were "centers for scientific research and rich artistic and theatrical production."

Stories follow that tell how the Jesuit schools deliberately reach out to their surroundings. They involve their students with neighborhood schools. They involve their faculty and staff with local associations, even with prisons! They want their

neighborhoods to be better for their being there. And they work to make that happen.

The conflict between town and gown may have been true at one time; perhaps it still is in some locations. But at our 28 AJCU schools, that is not the case. The stories of local involvement given here are anything but exhaustive. They are a simple sampling of much, much more. We want the place where we are to be better for our being there. Involvement is part of teaching and learning. We are involved.

I have noted before that working with the *Conversations* seminar involves some great times. One of the great joys is welcoming new members to the seminar. As of our fall 2017 meeting, we have three new members. Gerard A. Athaide is a professor of marketing at Loyola University Maryland. Michael F. Tunney, S.J., is the rector of the Jesuit community and professor of fine arts and religious studies at Fairfield University. Rachel Wifall is an associate professor of English at Saint Peter's University; Rachel has an article about Saint Peter's in this issue.

And, of course, this joy of welcoming new members comes at the cost of saying good-bye to colleagues who have worked with us for three years. We must bid farewell to Mark G. Bosco, S.J., who just moved from Loyola University Chicago to Georgetown. And to Michael Serazio of Boston College. And to Jessica Wroblewski of Wheeling Jesuit University; Jessica has an article about Wheeling's relationship to its region in this current issue.

Thanks to our new members for committing themselves to this great project and to our retired members for all they have given to us.

Edward W. Schmidt, S.J., editor