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Forum: Where Do We Stand?: Cautious Optimism in Chicago

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of its women students. And some of the brainy beauties who stride across campus suffer from the pressure to be perfect. As for the cooks, cleaners, and cashiers, I can't tell if anything has changed for them in the last ten years, or for the men on staff.

Are women's concerns receiving less attention today than ten years ago? People at B.C. are talking about justice for the poor, better race relations, respect for gays and lesbians, and what it will take to keep B.C. Catholic. Discussion of women's issues seems muted by comparison. But perhaps that's because we are talking more respectfully than we were ten years ago. People on different sides of the abortion debate, for instance, show more respect for each others' beliefs and motives.

Decree 14 is an impressive resource, but implementing it means facing practical questions: how do we link the promotion of B.C.'s Catholic identity with the advancement of women? and when will U.S. Jesuit schools organize a world-wide network of Jesuit institutions to promote justice, respect, and advancement for women throughout the world? ■

Arthur Madigan, S.J., is a philosophy professor at Boston College.

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM IN CHICAGO

Susan A. Ross

In the last ten years, Loyola University Chicago has survived a serious budget crisis, an enrollment crisis, two presidents, three chief academic officers, and countless other changes. But in 2005, we are (we hope) on the other side. The campus is transformed, new buildings are going up, enrollments are at record levels, new faculty are being hired again. And in the spring of 2005, President Michael J. Garanzini, S.J. established a Commission on the Status of Women, on which I serve. In many ways, I think, we are just beginning to respond to GC 34, ten years after it was issued.

Obviously, the difficulties that Loyola has experienced have meant that other issues (mostly financial) have taken priority. President Garanzini's predecessor had delegated two women from university ministry to explore possibilities for GC 34's implementation in 1995, but I had declined to be involved because I felt that the burden of responsibility fell on the Jesuits, not on women.



Last spring, the present and former women's studies program directors (of which I am one) met with President Garanzini to express our concerns over the situation of women at Loyola. Two women faculty who had worked in an administrative office had resigned in frustration. Women deans who resigned or retired were replaced by men. Women staff members were concerned that men were often promoted over equally or more qualified women. We directors were concerned not only about career possibilities for women, but also about the general climate for women. In response, President Garanzini established this commission and our work, begun in the summer, is now moving forward.

Yet the overall picture at Loyola offers some very bright spots for women. Our women's studies program, in its 26th year, has had solid administrative support. Men and women students enroll in impressive numbers in classes in the program, and we now offer a master's degree as well; our MA/MSW program is particularly popular. The Ann Ida Gannon, BVM Center for Women and Leadership is a beacon of light for faculty, staff, and students and has a healthy endowment of its own.

The *Vagina Monologues* is produced every year as part of an effort to reduce violence against women, and President Garanzini has fully supported the productions. And in my own department of theology, the women full professors now outnumber the men.

I am cautiously optimistic about Loyola's Commission on Women and the future for women at Loyola. But we still have a long way to go. My hopes are that we will see more women appointed to senior positions in the university, that there will be a more hospitable atmosphere for them, and that all of Loyola's women—faculty, staff, and students—will consider their Jesuit teachers, colleagues, and co-workers to be allies and friends. ■

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GEORGETOWN'S CLINICAL PROGRAMS

Carol Q. O'Neil

Decree 14 of the 34th General Congregation, on "Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Society," suggested eight concrete ways that Jesuits might align themselves, "as individuals and through their institutions... in solidarity with women (GC 34, 374-381)." Over the past ten years, Georgetown Law Center has made significant progress on several of these suggestions, in particular—"explicit teaching of the essential equality of women and men," "support for liberation movements which oppose the

exploitation of women and encourage their entry into political and social life," and "specific attention to the phenomenon of violence against women."

During this period, under the auspices of an extraordinarily talented woman dean, Judith Areen, the Law Center has increased the depth and breadth of clinical programs that strive to improve the lives of poor women in the District of Columbia: the Domestic Violence Clinic, in which students represent clients, primarily women, who are victims of domestic violence; and the Family Advocacy Clinic, whose faculty and students represent poor families, often headed by women, in areas of special education, child adoption, and government benefits. In the global arena, an International Women's Human Rights Clinic enables students to work with international and non-governmental organizations around the world to promote women's rights. A Women's Law and Public Policy Fellowship Program supports postgraduate work on legal and policy issues affecting women. A program in Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa educates African women lawyers who return to their home countries to "support... liberation movements which oppose the exploitation of women and encourage their entry in political and social life." Graduates now hold major leadership positions in their home countries and international organizations.

How and why did this happen? The underlying reason for this progress has been an institutional commitment to two additional suggestions in Decree 14: the "appropriate presence of women in Jesuit...institutions," and "genuine involvement of women in consultation and decision-making." In universities, no lasting progress is made on important issues unless talented faculty members direct their teaching, scholarship and collaborative efforts on them. Thus, at the Law Center, an institutional commitment to hiring outstanding women scholars of diverse interests and backgrounds has led quite naturally to considerable intelligence and energy being devoted to the legal and social justice issues affecting women. A concomitant commitment to the presence of women in leadership positions has guaranteed that women faculty have appropriate access to decision-making processes and institutional resources.

Jesuit law schools are particularly well suited to work against systematic discrimination against women in society. Careful attention to hiring and support of women faculty and concerted efforts to promote women's leadership in law schools can create an "organic" and long-term institutional response to the "unjust treatment and exploitation of women" that Decree 14 addresses so forcefully. ■

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