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In Deed: A Survey of Programs and Activities Related to Identity and Mission: John Carroll University

Editorial Board

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In Deed

A Survey of Programs and Activities Related to Identity and Mission

John Carroll University

Cleveland, Ohio

1. Context and History

Interest in, and concern about, the Jesuit educational tradition of John Carroll University has been growing since the seventies, and has become increasingly focused during the last ten years. From about 1984 until 1986 the Apostolic Committee of the Jesuit Community at John Carroll was transformed into a “Jesuit/Lay Committee,” involving five Jesuits and five lay faculty and administrators charged with furthering discussion on questions of “collaboration,” “collegueship,” and “sharing the Jesuit vision.” The five meetings arranged by the committee during the 1985-86 academic year demonstrated a real enthusiasm for the Jesuit educational tradition of the University, even when it seemed that it was difficult to specify clearly what that tradition was. Later meetings of the Jesuit/Lay Committee resulted in John Carroll’s participation in the 1989 Assembly of Jesuits in Higher Education at Georgetown University.

Another important stage of the conversation began in 1991, with the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Jesuit Nature of the University, convoked by the then Academic Vice President, Fr. John Schlegel. That committee recommended the appointment of an “Assistant for University Mission” who would “lead, guide, and motivate the entire University community toward the enhancement of Jesuit ideals within the University.” Accordingly an office of the Assistant to the Academic Vice President for University Mission was established at the beginning of the 1992-1993 academic year. It is currently occupied by Fr. Jack Dister, S.J. The Committee also called for the initiation of an advisory committee to aid the Assistant for University Mission and that committee, a representative group consisting currently of sev-
enteen faculty, administrators, and students, has been functioning for the past three years.

National or regional meetings have had a great effect on the growing concern about the Jesuit educational tradition at John Carroll. In addition to the Georgetown Assembly in 1989, John Carroll participated in the Conference on Collaboration at Gonzaga in Spokane in October of 1992, sending the largest single delegation (two academic deans and seven departmental chairs). This meeting sparked a great deal of discussion concerning the tension between the academic and the spiritual elements in the Jesuit educational tradition. Out of this discussion grew the plans for a year-long orientation seminar for new faculty (discussed below). More recently, the Heartlands Conference in Chicago this summer, attended by 35 faculty and administrators, generated enthusiasm and hope among participants for programmatic development related to the Jesuit tradition.

II. Faculty Development Programs

Some of the more effective programs that have grown out of the deliberations of the advisory committee with the Assistant for University Mission are the following.

Faculty Workshop on the Jesuit Character of JCU

Organized for the August, 1992, annual faculty convocation, the workshop included a keynote address by Richard McBurnie of Notre Dame University, "Jesuit Higher Education: an Outsider's View," and small discussion groups reacting to video interviews of alumni discussing the Jesuit tradition at the University.

Focus: Jesuit Identity I

These brief presentations, followed by group clarification and discussion of values and characteristics traditionally attributed to Jesuit education, are accompanied by a wine and cheese reception. They have been quite successful in sparking discussion and have created a demand for follow-up programs. Thus, the following:

Focus: Jesuit Identity II

Each semester, two overnight meeting sessions for faculty and staff are held at Loyola of the Lakes Retreat House in Clinton, Ohio. Modeled on the Cohasset Weekends organized at Boston College, they consist primarily of informal conversations about what the experience, good and bad, has been of working at a university that calls itself Catholic and Jesuit. Expenses of the weekend are paid by the University.

New Faculty Orientation Seminar

In lieu of an earlier very brief orientation, John Carroll is beginning this fall a seminar continuing through a new faculty member's first year. It will consist of four afternoon and evening discussions (including supper) at monthly intervals. The topics to be discussed in these seminars include the history and nature of higher education, the traditions of Catholic and Jesuit higher education in particular, teaching in the liberal arts tradition, and the challenges today of living up to the stated ideals of the university. A fifth and final session will be purely social and will involve the new faculty's spouses as well.

III. Ignatian Spirituality and Service

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius have a long history of explicit emphasis at JCU. Carroll is probably the first college or university to have conducted eight-day retreats for college students on a regular basis. An eight-day retreat

John Carroll faculty, staff and administrators gather for Focus: Jesuit Identity II to discuss the experience, good and bad, of working at a university that calls itself Catholic and Jesuit.

Faculty Brown-Bag Lunches

Organized by the advisory committee, these popular lunchtime discussions are held three or four times each semester. Topics have included "The Balance Between Teaching and Research," "The Jesuit Tradition and Academic Rigor," "Should Jesuit Universities Be Agents of Social Change?" and "Faculty Morale." Two discussions—"Hints on program for students began already in the late 1940's as part of a thriving Sodality (today called "Christian Life Communities"). The change from preached to directed retreat occurred around 1970. About 30-35 students make these individually adapted forms of the Spiritual Exercises after final exams. A good number of lay faculty and administrators also have made such retreats; at least a dozen have made the complete thirty-day

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Exercises, at least in their “daily life” fashion.

- Campus Ministry, precisely because it is an explicit institutionalization of the personal care factor of the Jesuit educational tradition, is an important part of JCU. Besides the organization of campus liturgies and the volunteers that this entails, Campus Ministry involves students in activities such as R.C.I.A. for catechumens, prayer services, week-end retreats, social justice projects, and volunteer work.

- In his inaugural address as president of John Carroll in 1988, Fr. Michael Lavelle proposed that during his watch as many students as possible would become involved in some sort of community service, involved with such projects as “Carroll Cares: Midwest Flood Relief Project,” which involved flying forty students and staff members to the St. Louis area to help in flood relief efforts. Last fall six faculty members included service-learning activities in their regularly scheduled courses, affecting approximately 85 students. In addition, the Center piloted a weekend service immersion project involving 23 students in service activities and critical reflection opportunities. With the help of grant money, the Center sponsored faculty focus groups and continues to develop a proposal for an interdisciplinary concentration in community service. The senior class organized a Special-Olympics-like Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Others through Physical Education) which brought 65 students from the East Cleveland and Green Road Development Centers on campus for games and lunch. Over 200 students participated in Project H.O.P.E.

IV. Academic Programs

Apart from the strong emphasis on the liberal arts and on philosophy and religious studies typical of a Jesuit university, academic programs that are most rooted in the Jesuit tradition include the following: the Master’s programs in Counseling and Human Services and Religious Studies, and the curricular goals of the Department of Education. The latter two deserve more comment. The Department of Religious Studies offers graduate courses in scripture, historical theology, systematic theology, religious ethics, religious education, and spirituality, leading to the degree of Master of Arts and two post-master’s certificate programs in religious studies and in pastoral theology. The department is also honored to sponsor the Walter and Mary Tuohy Chair of Interreligious Studies, which annually brings to the department a distinguished visiting scholar.

The Department of Education is remarkable for the way in which it has linked its departmental goals in the training of primary and secondary teachers explicitly to the goals of the Jesuit educational tradition and makes much use of monographs by Frs. Robert Harvanek, Gerald McCool, and George Ganss in formulating its goals. Each program is founded on an educational model that reflects the Jesuit ideal of an educator. These ideals are articulated as (a) formation of the total person, (b) integration of the discipline, (c) the personal influence of the educator, (d) educational settings as communities of personal influence, and (e) education as a vocation.