

# Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education

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## A Letter from Patrick Howell, S.J.

Patrick Howell S.J.

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challenge union elections mandated by the National Labor Relations Board on the grounds of religious freedom appears cynical. If excessive government intrusion were really their fear, Catholic universities could simply allow a free and fair union election without NLRB involvement, which Section 9 (a) of the NLRA permits. Moreover, as the USCCB has articulated in *Respecting the Just Rights of Workers*, management at Catholic institutions may never usurp the right to unionization.

As students begin to increasingly realize that the situation of adjuncts glaringly contrasts with the Ignatian and Catholic vision for communities of higher learning, they will inevitably sour on the mission of our colleges and universities. As Rick Malloy, S.J., of Scranton University has contended, if we fail to model the values

of the Gospel, “We will be subtly communicating to our students that it makes more sense to ‘Look out for Number One,’ ‘Grab All the Gusto You Can’ and forget the poor and oppressed of our world.”

Resolving the issues will not be easy, especially as Catholic institutions seek to remain buoyant in a highly competitive market. Nonetheless, ignoring the unjust situation of adjuncts cannot be justified. Moreover, the mounting pressure for Catholic institutions to live up to Catholic principles and values in the treatment of their employees – including but not limited to adjunct faculty – will not likely dissipate. It is time for all Jesuit universities to follow Georgetown’s lead and adopt a just employment policy (see <http://www.justemployment-policy.org/jesuit/>). ■

## A Letter from Patrick Howell, S.J.

Dear Colleagues in Jesuit Education,

Six months ago we launched our first, interactive website for *Conversations* magazine. It enables much more flexibility for us to publish your contributions and, we hope, stimulates greater intercollegiate conversations about key issues and opportunities in Jesuit higher education. See <http://conversationsmagazine.org/>

Let me assure you we will still publish our regular print editions of approximately 48 pages at the beginning of each semester – January and August. But we will have additional articles on the website, which we previously could not accommodate because of space and cost limitations. A *Conversations* Newsletter will be sent to subscribers to alert you to new editions on our website. If you wish to be included please send a quick note by email to [conversamagsubscription@gmail.com](mailto:conversamagsubscription@gmail.com)

Another fruitful initiative is that we now collaborate with all the Jesuit

mission and identity officers to determine the most pertinent themes for the magazine and to share strategies for its use on each of your campuses.

The National Seminar board rotates membership on a three-year basis so it’s always a combination of gratitude and sorrow when we say goodbye to our “veterans.” This year Diana Owen (Georgetown); Laurie Ann Britt-Smith (University of Detroit Mercy), and Sherilyn Smith (Le Moyne) with our gratitude earned the distinction of “Conversations-emeriti.” And Kristen Heyer of Santa Clara leaves the board after two years as she moves to a new position “in the Jesuit family” at Boston College.

Thank you for your interest and support,

Patrick Howell, S.J., chair  
National Seminar on Jesuit  
Higher Education

