

# Conversations

*On Jesuit Higher Education*

Spring 2018

Number 53



## University Engaging its Location

Who We Are | Where We Are



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# Conversations

On Jesuit Higher Education

## University Engaging its Location



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Cover Photo: University of Detroit Mercy, McNichols campus, early in the morning.  
Photo by Anthony Laszlo, a dental student at Detroit Mercy.

# 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



# Finding our Place

## *A Reflection*

By Thomas Lucas, S.J.

For three years during the early 1980s, I walked past the Collegio Romano every day on my way to classes at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Founded by St. Ignatius in 1551 and originally housed in rented rooms, the Collegio grew quickly. An early alumnus, Pope Gregory XIII, expropriated an entire neighborhood in the heart of Rome and

built an immense college complex in the 1580s, spending 4,100 kilos of silver on the project. The Collegio, whose Jesuit-designed façade is second only in scale to St. Peter's, housed aulas, courtyards, music rooms, a botanical garden, an observatory, a pharmacy, a museum, residences for faculty and Jesuit students, and an immense library. The six-square-block com-



plex was eventually completed with the construction of the grandiose college chapel of Sant' Ignazio. With the downtown Collegio and their headquarters at the Jesuit mother church, the Chiesa del Gesù, just a block away, the early Jesuits and their papal sponsors succeeded in creating a prototype, a pole, a landmark. In a word, in midst of the confusing jumble of the city, they created a place. They wanted to be at the center of the action, in dialogue with the urban scene. Jesuit educational institutions have attempted to do so ever since.

For two-thirds of my life, I've inhabited Jesuit places. Sacramento's Jesuit High in the 60s, emerging out of hop-fields, then the ancient gardens of Santa Clara University, next to the Mission Church where 15 years later I would celebrate my first Mass. Fordham's Rose Hill in the late 70s, as the Bronx burned around us. San José's Bellarmine, then Rome and then Berkeley. A stint in the nation's capital was followed by 18 years at USF and work in Shanghai. Now I find myself in Seattle University's urban oasis in the midst of hipster-riddled Seattle. Join the Jesuits, and you'll live in interesting places and be in the middle of the mix.

What is the formula that makes a place out of space? Walter Brueggemann elegantly frames the distinction in *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (2002): "Place is a space which has historical meanings, where some things have happened which are now remembered and which provide continuity and identity across generations. Place is space in which important words have been spoken which have established identity, defined vocation, and envisioned destiny. Place is space in which vows have been exchanged, promises have been made, and demands have been issued. Place is indeed a protest against the unpromising pursuit of space. It is a declaration that our humanness cannot be found in escape, detachment, absence of commitment, and undefined freedom."

Meaning. Memory. Continuity across generations. Echoing halls and yards where important words establish identity, define vocation, envision destiny. Vows, promises, commitment, demands made and responded to. Rarely does an airline terminal or a fast food joint serve as a vessel to contain

these complex attributes and activities. Yet a book falling open to the right page in the back of the philosophy stacks of the library, or a chance encounter in the quad that leads to coffee and an all-night conversation, or the sweet smell of a century of beeswax in the chapel, or flying a kite off a forbidden classroom rooftop in the moonlight, all create a place that remains within us long after our college days are ended. We have inhabited a place, a place that mysteriously travels with us even as we leave it.

If we listen to the poetry of Genesis, humanity's first schoolroom was a garden, a laboratory in which our ancestors developed both taxonomy and their all-too-free wills, where they conversed with the Lord in the cool of the evening. Plato withdrew from the Academy into a garden secluded yet in sight of the city, there to ponder and to converse with his students. For many, perhaps most of us, our first campus for exploring the world was our mother's or grandmother's garden, and for me, at least, my first remembered transgression was climbing over its low fence to explore the greater green world beyond and climbing back over before I got caught. It's no accident that medieval monasteries were arranged around ambulatory gardens, and that both St. Ignatius and St. Peter Canisius, his most skillful college founder and real estate developer, insisted that every college should have its own urban garden and its own house in the country where its students could escape the *mal-aria* of town.

This image of garden as a metaphor of place has ramifications when we apply it to an institution of higher education. In each, roots are set down, nourishment taken in, growth encouraged. A garden and a college are cultivated, ordered entities: a literal *campus*, a field with their own memory and history. They are places that invite reflection, astonish us in their diversity, open us up to beautiful forms of life, provide quiet corners for conversation and bowers for young lovers. Both require immense hard work and constant attention, pruning, weeding, and watering, all in due season.

Yet the image of the medieval cloister or the *Hortus Conclusus*, the walled enclosure entered into through a locked postern gate and accessible only to a few, is far removed from Ignatius' notion of the



The Garden of Eden, by Jan Brueghel the Elder. Circa 1655 and circa 1661.  
Izaak van Oosten [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

place of the college in early modern culture. Having studied at Alcalà, Salamanca, and Paris, he evolved from his hinterlands origins into a thoroughly urban being. His Society and its institutions were to occupy the town square, not remote monastic mountaintops. Breaking with a religious tradition that went back to the fall of Rome, rather than fleeing from the city, he moved into its heart. In the Society's Constitutions [622e] he lays out his mission strategy of place with a calculating eye. The Jesuit targets were clearly defined: "Preference ought to be shown to the aid which is given to great nations such as the Indies, to important cities, or to universities, which are generally attended by numerous persons who by being aided themselves can become laborers for the help of others." In a frequently copied letter that went out in the saddlebags of those sent to found new colleges, Jesuits were reminded to look to "the edification and spiritual development of the city" and

counseled to "take special care that you obtain a good and sufficiently large site, or one that can be enlarged with time, large enough for house and church and if possible not too far removed from the conversation of the city, and having bought that, it will be a good beginning for all that follows." In that strategic decision, Ignatius definitively rejected the false dichotomy between "town" and "gown."

With those marching orders in hand, Jesuits became place-makers, conversation partners in the great cities of the Catholic world and in the new frontiers of the Spanish and Portuguese missions. From Rome to Messina and Manila, Goa to Gdansk, Vilnius to Vienna, Jesuits built educational complexes of bewildering variety and sometimes startling beauty. College buildings served not only the educational needs of their (male) students, but served as centers for scientific research and rich artistic and theatrical production. The non-parochial col-

lege churches opened their doors to all in the urban scene, to rich and poor alike, and their sodalities brought spiritual support and opportunities for participation to men and women across many spectra of class and culture. To recall Brueggemann's definition, the Jesuit college-church complex became a place where important truths were spoken, where significant, life-changing engagement could develop and vocation be confirmed.

So how does this historical backdrop inform us as educators and place-makers in the Jesuit institutions of the 21st century? Our North American culture is no longer a Judeo-Christian monolith, and the diversity of our student, faculty, and staff backgrounds makes some long for the "good old days" of an unambiguously Catholic milieu. When my uncle first took me as a youngster to visit his alma mater Santa Clara, the first place we visited was the Mission Church. In our contemporary post-Christian culture, the chapel is now often interpreted as an architectural curiosity, a relic of a world of yore. When I was teaching at USF, I heard a student tour guide blithely dismiss the campus's grand St. Ignatius Church saying, "Oh, yeah, it's pretty cool, but you don't have to go in there until graduation."

When I am discouraged by such indifference, I take heart from a passage Karl Rahner, S.J., wrote in his *Theological Investigations* (vol. 14):

One does not enter a temple, a shrine that encloses the holy and cuts it off from a godless and secular world that remains outside. In the free breadth of a divine world one erects a landmark, a sign of the fact that this entire world belongs to God, a sign precisely of the fact that God is adored, experienced, and accepted everywhere as one who, through grace, has set all things free to attain to him, and a sign that this adoration takes place not in Jerusalem alone, but everywhere, in spirit and in truth.

I take hope in the fact that the red thread that unites the 16th century Collegio Romano to the hop fields of Sacramento to the glades of post-modern Seattle University is a lived conviction that it remains possible to discover meaning in this world and to share

that meaning with the generations that follow us.

Our campuses, at their best, are landmarks: not just architecturally, but transformatively. In computer and genetics labs and art and music studios, in seminar rooms and coffee shops, in campus ministry offices and chapel, under spreading trees and in sheltering inglenooks, I have experienced that powerful words can still challenge and define, beautiful and true thoughts can be explored and then ripen into action and even vocation. Those words, thoughts, and actions reach beyond the bounds of our campuses. In every one of our institutions, we interact with our neighbors, inviting them in for shared reflection even as we reach out in service through programming, tutoring, and dialogue. This has been our strategy from the beginning: to be in "conversation with the city."

Our core values and teachings that are grounded in memory and hope still need places where they can be given root room. Our humanistic tradition that grows out of the compassion of Christ and the Sages and from the passion of Ignatius and his colleagues still makes its valid demands and calls for protest against unpromising escapism.

We are not angels; we live in a physical world of here and now, embodied not in random space but in human and divine place. A virtual world is No-place, no place for humans to inhabit. As educators in the Ignatian tradition, we inhabit a university, a little physical universe rich in possibilities that grow out of the soil of memory and tradition. Weeding, pruning, and watering, we commit ourselves to these places, to create and recreate them anew, well aware of the hard challenges that await our students and ourselves within, even as we reach outside our gates. Here we place ourselves in solidarity, in an age-old community of scholars, guides, and seekers in dialogue with each other and with our neighbors. Here takes place the union of past, present, and to come, and from this place, perhaps, together we can find our way home.

*Fr. Thomas Lucas S.J., is rector of the Arrupe House Jesuit Community and University Professor and Curator at Seattle University. His book Landmarking: City, Church, and Jesuit Urban Strategy (1997) won an AJCU national book award in 1999.*





# Thinking Like an Urban Planner at a Jesuit University

By Jamie Kralovec

As an urban planner and a committed practitioner of Jesuit spirituality, I have found working for Georgetown University's master's program in Urban and Regional Planning to be an enriching opportunity to join my passions. I am a newcomer to higher education, having worked previously in government and non-profit roles, and my time at Georgetown has invited me to reflect on how Jesuit colleges and universities incorporate urban planning into their work. Jesuit embrace of the city is nothing new, trickling down from the founding vision of St. Ignatius, whose commitment to the city remains at the heart of Jesuit higher education. Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., affirmed the contrasting appeals of the university-city relationship when he wrote in this magazine in 2000: "The contemporary Jesuit university finds in the classroom of its urban community both resources that feed the mind and stretch the imagination, and human needs that summon us to service."



In this article I will outline some of the ways that Jesuit universities can deepen their special relationship with local place by thinking like urban planners, a discipline devoted to the study and practice of the built environment. How do we put the discipline of urban planning into practice in our academic programs, community-based learning and research, and external engagement? What resources does urban planning offer Jesuit universities that are striving to take advantage of the incredible opportunities of city life while addressing the challenges of justice ever present in the contemporary city?

## Background on Urban Planning

What is urban planning and what does it seek

to influence? Broadly speaking, urban planning provides communities of varying sizes with the tools to guide and manage the orderly development of the built environment while ensuring human health and well-being. It is an interdisciplinary set of practices that rely on planning processes to address various elements affecting communities, including environmental sustainability, affordable housing, public health and safety, and transportation. Planners serve society in many roles, ranging from more traditional responsibilities in local government to innovative positions in research institutions, universities, private sector firms, and community organizations. A discipline with an ancient legacy, urban planning in the United States did not become an academic institution until the late 1920s and 1930s following the professionalization of planning at the national level.



Two schools in the heart of a city. Left, Fordham University at Lincoln Center, NYC, and above, Saint Peter's University in Jersey City.

At its core, urban planning is a structured way of assisting communities as they solve their challenges and shape their futures. To do this at various scales of community, planners use different methods and tools. The “rational model” is one of the most common approaches followed in a traditional planning process: 1) undertake a detailed survey of existing conditions; 2) articulate goals; 3) identify problems; 4) evaluate and select alternatives to address the problems; and 5) implement the resulting plan.

Skilled planners, regardless of where they work, tend to rely upon technologically-enabled data collection, stakeholder input, spatial visualization of data and findings, and recommendations for policy and development. Planning is an indispensable tool for collaborative decision-making and visioning of a community's aspirations. Motivated by social justice, contemporary planning practice in the United States strives to be attentive to issues of social and economic equity.

## What Is the Value of Urban Planning in Our Jesuit Universities?

The toolkit of urban planning methods can be deployed in many ways at the university. I will briefly share some of the ways that Jesuit universities are already using urban planning to advance mission, providing a broad framework for how university administrators might leverage planning's value in their internal and external engagement.

### *Research, Data Support Communities*

While few Jesuit universities offer dedicated degrees in urban planning, many employ trained urban planners on faculty and in research capacities to improve understanding of the social and economic changes occurring in local places surrounding the university. The university can be a critical local partner by leveraging the intellectual capital of its faculty to illuminate changing economic, social, and cultural dynamics. Informing community leaders and policy makers about deeper trends and social realities not immediately evident on the surface, the “gritty reality of this world” described by former Superior General Kolvenbach is a powerful use of research capacity for the common good. Several Jesuit universities host research centers dedicated to the study of their cities. These include the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, the

Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University Chicago, the Center for Urban and Applied Research at Le Moyne College, and the Center for Sustainability at St. Louis University. Accessible and usable practical research provided by these centers supports Jesuit mission priorities around local efforts to advance economic, social, and environmental justice.

### *Planners in Service of Local Aspirations*

As an inherently applied practice, urban planning lends itself easily to community-engaged forms of collaborative service and capacity building. Urban planners at the university can add needed capacity for community-based organizations and other local groups that cannot afford high-cost consultants and expensive technology. The university can serve as a partner in the development of community-driven



Photo courtesy of Chris Davis / Hive13.

The Community Building Institute at Xavier University helps communities organize their own redevelopment by tapping into the passion of their residents and identifying the physical assets of their neighborhoods. The goal is to develop a coordinated plan of improvement that incorporates all the major elements a community needs to really thrive - housing, schools, health care, transportation, jobs and busi-

ness. The Community Building Institute presents itself as a partner for communities that are ready to grow into desirable and healthy places to live and work.

CBI recently visited Hive13 on Spring Grove Avenue, a community of makers, engineers, and artists. They have equipment to burn and cut and attach, disconnect, and spin and electrify to make anything the members of their community can imagine.



plans as well as a platform of ongoing technical assistance as plans are implemented and adapted to changing conditions.

At Xavier University, the Community Building Institute (CBI), which houses a staff of planners and researchers, assists area nonprofit development organizations with technical resources, capacity-building, and data-based planning to realize comprehensive place-based redevelopment. CBI has provided technical assistance to organizations in several historically disinvested Cincinnati neighborhoods that have realized their aspirations, leading to the creation of work-training programs and community theater projects among other accomplishments.

At Georgetown University, a cross-listed graduate urban planning studio between the planning program and the law center is dedicated to studying the impacts of remapping a flood-plain zone along the Anacostia River in the heart of a historic African-American neighborhood on the east side of the city. Students produce technical reports, analysis, and recommendations for future public investment and new land use development controls that are informing the work of local residents, community organizations, public officials, and other stakeholders.

### *Physical Development and Sustainability*

One of the most evident uses of urban planning is the facilitation of the university's physical presence that shapes and forms surrounding neighborhoods, including construction of campus facilities and the location of community-serving amenities owned by the university. Fordham University's development of its Lincoln Center campus in the 1960s as an urban renewal project at the invitation of master city-builder Robert Moses is one prominent example of a large-scale campus expansion in the modern era with significant impact on its receiving neighborhood. In other cases, Jesuit universities intentionally locate community engagement offices, service-learning centers, and other university amenities in higher-need urban neighborhoods to serve community-identified needs more directly. Seattle University, for example, through its Youth Initiative has chosen to direct resources from the university's educational programs in one particular neighborhood to improve the academic outcomes for low-in-

come youth living in the attendance zone around Bailey Gatzert Elementary School (see p. 10).

In the wake of *Laudato Si'* and a growing awareness of the role played by cities in environmental stewardship, universities are using their community engagement and development activities to address climate change. Campus master plans dedicated to sustainability goals and the creation of sustainability offices celebrate the commitment of Jesuit universities to the energy efficiency of the campus's physical infrastructure. Green efforts abound at Jesuit universities. In a particularly innovative example, the University of San Francisco created a community garden, with a greenhouse built by architecture students, which serves as a "living laboratory" for its urban agriculture students as well as source of sustainable urban food production for community dinners.

## **An Invitation**

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius invites the retreatant to a composition of place, utilizing one's senses to imagine material settings in time and space as the basis for interior contemplation. I see a thread between Ignatius' invitation to think deeply and concretely about place as the background for spiritual growth and the Jesuit mission to fully and justly engage both the opportunities and challenges of the city by using the resources of urban planning. How do we imagine the Jesuit mission commitment of our universities to the cities that surround the university? While urban planning and its many applications are already operating in many Jesuit colleges and universities, I think there is more room for us to individually and collectively marshal planning methods in our work as faculty, administrators, and community partners.

*Jamie Kralovec is an administrator and lecturer at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies, where he teaches "Jesuit Values in Professional Practice," a community-based learning elective introducing professional and liberal studies students to the applicability of Jesuit values to personal and professional life. Prior to Georgetown, Jamie served on President Obama's White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities.*



# Images of Engagement

## *Seattle University Youth Initiative*

By Rachael Steward

The **Seattle University Youth Initiative (SUYI)**, launched in 2011, strives to strengthen education and support systems for 1,000 neighborhood youth and their families while enhancing the university by providing service learning and research experience to students, faculty, and staff.

The Youth Initiative works with schools, community-based programs, university students, faculty, and staff to offer academic and enrichment opportunities for youth living in a large geographic zone just south of the campus. Throughout the year, including summers, youth participate in events and programs, which include support for children to ensure proficiency in core academic subjects in order to successfully transition to the next grade levels and to develop a college-going identity.

Using a collective impact model, the university engages partners who provide education, housing, health and employment opportunities to support youth and their families. This approach arose from





## 2016-2017 Youth Initiative Statistics

University student volunteers  
and service-learners

294

Hours of academic assistance  
and mentoring in K12  
partner schools

4,285 hours

SU undergrads employed  
in K12 program

73

Hours provided by K12  
student employees

7,946 hours

Number of SU students registered  
for community engagement  
positions in target area

756

Number of faculty instructors  
engaged in initiative

191

Number of courses with  
service-learning component

429

Students who took a service  
learning course in 2016-2017

59%

SU students who graduate with  
a service-learning course

75%



listening sessions with community and campus stakeholders to develop a genuine, mutual partnership between the community and the university.

The success of the Youth Initiative is captured in the increased engagement of both campus and community (see statistics box). Academic, social, and community-building programs are hosted in partner public school buildings, as well as on the university campus. Washington Middle School students, for instance, spend a day on campus learning about college life. They visit dorms and participate in group discussions led by campus staff.

Each year the Jumpstart Program supports about 150 preschool students with early literacy support, thereby increasing kindergarten readiness. Approximately 125 elementary school students participated in the Extended Learning Program at Bailey Gatzert Elementary. In fall 2015, 74 Washington Middle School students were matched with academic mentors who provided a total of 421 hours of academic support.

Campus engagement billows out to include faculty immersions as a method to increase faculty knowl-

edge in areas such as homelessness, creative place-making, digital literacy, and several others.

*Rachael Steward is the deputy director of Community Engagement. For more information, see <https://www.seattleu.edu/suyi/vision-and-goals/>*



Photos: Seattle University students work with Bailey Gatzert Elementary School students during the After School program as part of the SUYI. Photos courtesy of Seattle University. Photographer: Yosef Kalinko

# A Center Outside Itself Where the University Finds Itself

By Jason Taylor

Big universities in cities, so far as I can see, have given no thought or imagination to the unique establishments they are. Typically they either pretend to be cloistered or countrified places, nostalgically denying their transplantation, or else they pretend to be office buildings. Of course they are neither.

Sometimes a neighborhood, too small to function as a district, gets the benefit of power through possessing an exceptionally influential citizen or an important institution. But the citizens pay for their free gift of power when the day comes that their interests run counter to those of Papa Big-wheel or Papa Institution. They are helpless to defeat Papa in the government offices, up where the decisions are made, *and therefore they are helpless also to teach or influence him*. Citizens of neighborhoods that include a university, for example, are often in this helpless fix.

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (350, 166-67)

If we are to think about our institutions in relation to our location, then Jane Jacobs calls our attention to two common forms of thoughtlessness: 1) the failure to consider well the kind of place we are; and 2) the failure to consider well the places of which we are a part (indicative of a broader lack of social knowledge, awareness of social ecology). Together, these form a single challenge: to center our thinking on how the places we are and the places we are in are co-constitutive, how they shape and are shaped by one another.

Many of our institutions – including my own, Regis University – have made engaging in place-based initiatives or becoming anchor institutions a part of our work and our identity. We often put forward such work as a significant improvement upon approaches to community engagement which are geographically or functionally more disparate. What might it mean, then, for our institutions to undertake initiatives in the places *where* we are?

The kind of place envisioned and actualized in El Salvador by Fr. Ignacio Ellacuría and others – the Central American University (UCA) – offers us important resources for responding to that question. Ellacuría contended that the university is a social projection. This contention can be understood as both descriptive and normative. Factually speaking, the university, as a social force within a social reality, will shape that reality. Normatively speaking, the university, as a social force within a social reality, ought to strive to shape that reality for the better, for something always greater.

This claim is consistent with another claim frequently attributed to Ellacuría, that a university has its center outside itself, that the university is an ec-centric institution. As an ec-centric institution, the university discovers itself in a place beyond itself; the university must project itself beyond its boundaries – physical or otherwise – to find its true center.



**The university discovers itself in a place beyond itself;  
the university must project itself beyond its bound-  
aries – physical or otherwise – to find its true center.**

In an interview in *America* (Sept. 30, 2013), Pope Francis offers indirect confirmation of this line of interpreting Ellacuría. Speaking of the Jesuit order, Francis says, “The Society of Jesus is an institution in tension, always fundamentally in tension. A Jesuit is a person who is not centered in himself. The Society itself also looks to a center outside itself; its center is Christ and his church.” The temptation, continues Francis, is to settle for a false center that disposes of this tension: “If it [the Jesuit order] looks too much in upon itself, it puts itself at the center as a very solid, very well ‘armed’ structure, but then it runs the risk of feeling safe and self-sufficient. The Society must always have before itself the *Deus semper maior* [God always Greater].” Strikingly, Francis goes on to assert that the inward-turning examination of consciousness helps the Jesuit order to avoid turning in on itself: “This tension takes us out of ourselves continuously. The tool that makes the Society of Jesus not centered in itself, really strong, is, then, the account of conscience, which is at the same time paternal and fraternal, because it helps the Society to fulfill its mission better.” From this perspective, place-based initiatives, in our context, can be instruments of institutional examination, affording thought and imagination about the uniqueness of our establishments less vulnerable to the social pretense criticized by Jacobs.

Ellacuría himself gives us language to name the poles of the tension that Francis describes. In Barcelona in 1989, 11 months before his execution, Ellacuría weighs the significance of the quincentenary of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. There, Ellacuría criticizes in the church the “subtle tendency to prefer and prioritize its ‘institutionality’ over its ‘mission’,” and subsequently locates and criticizes this same tendency in the Jesuit order and the UCA as a Jesuit university. They too are equally liable to prioritize institute over mission:

In large part, the church was carried along by this reasoning: “right now I cannot carry out my mission, which is to proclaim the kingdom of God in accordance with the message of Jesus, because to do so would put the ecclesial institution at risk, and that must be avoided above all. When the time is right, I shall carry out my mission”

(*Essays on History, Liberation and Salvation*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 32).

From this perspective, place-based initiatives, in our context, can be instruments for managing the ever-present risk of reducing desire to the terms of safety and self-sufficiency. Besides helping us to avoid self-enclosure, they might very well help us to build capacity, before times of conflict, to avoid the unhappy discovery that we are situated under a standard marked not only by avarice and arrogance but also by the pusillanimity of a Papa Bigwheel.

To conclude, what might it mean for the places that we are to undertake such initiatives in the places where we are? I think it means two things if we assume that our institutions live lives of ethical drama comparable to that described by Fr. Ellacuría and Pope Francis above. First, it means that a university must flee a false center where identity is constituted primarily in terms of self-preservation. The key question is not, “How will we survive?” which expresses the social projection negatively. Rather the key question arises when the university seeks its true center in a place where identity is constituted by the question, “Who and how are we in relation with others?”

*Jason Taylor is an associate professor of philosophy and director of the Office of the First Year Experience at Regis University.*







# Teaching and Learning in San Francisco's Gentrification Tide

By Rachel Brahinsky

**Gentrification has taken** the San Francisco region in a big way. It came through the influx of tech wealth that has stacked the housing market against the middle class. It came, too, through the rising use of home-sharing services like Airbnb, which convert houses into hotels and put pressure on the cost of residential life. It came through a nationwide shift, where more and more of us are seeking out urbanism, whether cities are ready or not.

My students at the University of San Francisco would call the situation quite *real*, and it is pervasive in our conversations. When prospective students come to visit and get a sense of the campus, faculty gather with them and share stories about the classes we teach and the experiences they may have, should they enroll. We can't help but talk about the challenge of housing and the role that our students will play in the region as they move from dorm to apartment and beyond.

I can imagine a recruitment officer urging me to turn the dialogue elsewhere, but we all know that this conversation cannot be avoided. Newspapers and blogs discuss the high cost of living in San Francisco on a regular basis, and the local and national conversations about changing cities are often focused on the role of the Bay Area in exemplifying the good and the bad of urbanism.

On the one hand, the region is stunningly beautiful and has been a cultural hearth for so many communities, attracting waves of immigrants, artists, and people interested in making a better world in various ways. This diversity is one of the region's greatest strengths, generating both beauty and jobs. On the other hand, this same diversity has been under threat by the rapid rise in the cost of

housing. Many affordable pockets of the region have flipped in the last five years, with median home values rising over a million dollars and median rents soaring in new and shocking ways each month.

So how do we handle this? It's a challenge for faculty and staff, as much as for students. Housing costs were central to recent union negotiations and always present in hiring conversations. We collectively engage with the same challenge all San Franciscans face: how to contribute to the region; how to find a sense of home in a context of a rising cost of living; and how to participate in the growth and expansion of the creativity of the region without threatening its history. It is indeed an urgent task.

Yet, as my students show me in each urban history seminar: history teaches us that there is a way to walk lightly in a city, to share in its development, and to contribute rather than only take and consume. Each semester I am inspired by their optimism, and



Above, Loyola Village residence halls at University of San Francisco. Left, Lone Mountain North residence hall delivers spectacular views of the Marin headlands, San Francisco Bay, and Richmond neighborhood.

I am hopeful about the role that they can play as long-term residents of the region after college.

My own research has also been a guide for me. I'm currently working on a book that looks at how racism and property have shaped our urban past and how the activism of communities on these issues has offered us stories that can help us re-imagine how we work through the challenges of contemporary urbanism like gentrification.

One of the histories that I have focused on is a social movement led by a group of African American women in San Francisco's southeast sector. The story begins right next door to USF in the Fillmore District, where residents faced dramatic urban change in the 1950s and '60s. City leaders, as part of a national effort to remake cities, identified that neighborhood as a key site for urban redevelopment. The notion of urban renewal, as the program was called at the time, sounded upbeat. But it quickly became clear that one of the primary effects of the program was the displacement of a majority African-American and Japanese-American community.

The redevelopment program pushed residents from their homes and bulldozed 20 square blocks, including many Victorian structures that were not yet viewed as special. Community pressure was ultimately successful in forcing the city to replace the old neighborhood with subsidized housing, but this was a devastating time and the area still struggles to remake home and a sense of place. The writer James Baldwin, in assessing the impact of the program in the Fillmore and places like it across the country, noted that what had been called urban renewal was in fact a strategy for "negro removal."

Meanwhile, the redevelopment program moved on to other parts of the city. Across town, Bayview-Hunter's Point has been home to an important and instructive social movement. It's a neighborhood that has long been cut off geographically from the rest of San Francisco in spite of the city's tiny size (it's only about 7 miles by 7 miles, after all).

In the 1960s, while the Fillmore was facing those bulldozers, a group of African American women in Bayview organized. The group, which was called the "Big Five," pushed for community participation in the redevelopment process in their neighborhood. Some of them had lost their homes in the Fillmore; they all had friends and family impacted by the upheaval there.

Over time, with coordinated efforts across the city, the Big Five inserted themselves into the urban planning process that sought to reshape their neighborhood. Through persistence, collective education around the rules of urban planning, and direct action – in which they staged a successful sit-in in government offices to demand funding for affordable housing – the Big Five slowly pushed the wheels of urban justice in their favor.

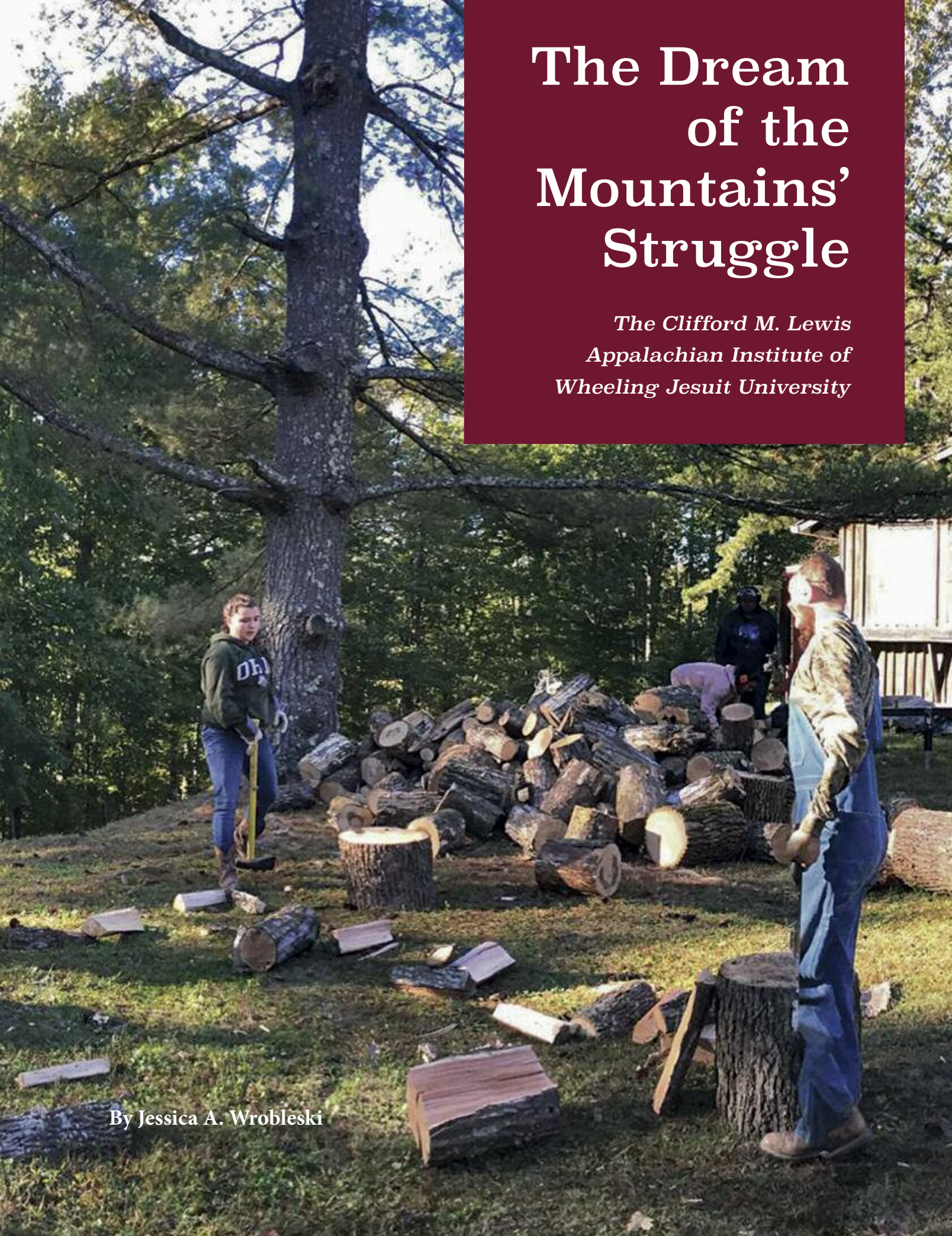
When I had the privilege to interview one of the leaders of the Big Five in her Fillmore District apartment years ago, she recounted stories of tenacity and bravery, where poor women with little social capital forced open a political space in the city and created a place for themselves. These days, the hills of Hunter's Point once again face economic challenges, but the streets are seeded with the names of the Big Five women and their collaborators. The legend of the Big Five is not well known outside of Bayview, but the story sustains people there today who are still working to redirect urban planning towards community needs.

The lessons of the Big Five are relevant across the city, and indeed in any urban neighborhood. As the USF community engages with gentrification and its impacts, we can learn from these histories. It is not an easy process. These kinds of stories, however, offer a roadmap for challenging the urban status quo and a way through which the USF community can imagine and work for an urban future that includes us all.

It's a matter of everyday practice. Most of our students spend time doing community work as part of their degree expectations. As our students blend ideas and theories about challenges like urban displacement with hands-on action that can reshape cities in more equitable ways, they further embed themselves—and the university itself—as good neighbors and long-term caretakers of San Francisco. The more they can learn to truly listen and engage with longtime residents like the women of the Big Five, the better our students can design equitable policy and programming for the broader community.

*Rachel Brahinsky is an assistant professor of urban affairs and urban studies and the faculty director of the Urban & Public Affairs MA program at the University of San Francisco.*





# The Dream of the Mountains' Struggle

*The Clifford M. Lewis  
Appalachian Institute of  
Wheeling Jesuit University*

By Jessica A. Wrobleski



**Founded as Wheeling** College in 1954, Wheeling Jesuit University has always seen its mission as deeply connected to its place in the hills of Appalachia and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia. It was at the invitation of the local bishop, John J. Swint, in 1951 that the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus initiated the establishment of a college in West Virginia for the purpose of offering a Catholic liberal arts education to the people of the region. At the time – and in many ways, to this day – Appalachia was a “frontier” for Jesuit education: not only does the region have a relatively small Catholic population and few parochial schools, but rates of post-secondary education are significantly lower than in the nation as a whole. The region has long been shaped by an experience of struggle, and the mission of Wheeling Jesuit University has been, and continues to be, shaped by the region, often sharing in its struggles.

Nearly 50 years after its founding, in 2002 the university established the Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., Appalachian Institute, named for the first Jesuit priest to come to the area for the purpose of starting a college there. Inspired in large part by the vision articulated in the 1975 Appalachian Bishops’ Pastoral, *This Land is Home to Me*, which called for social and church institutions to share in “the dream of the mountains’ struggle,” the institute has a mission of promoting research, service, and advocacy for and with the people of Appalachia to build healthier, stronger, and more sustainable communities. At the time the Appalachian Institute was founded, Bishop Bernard Schmitt of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston stated that “The Appalachian

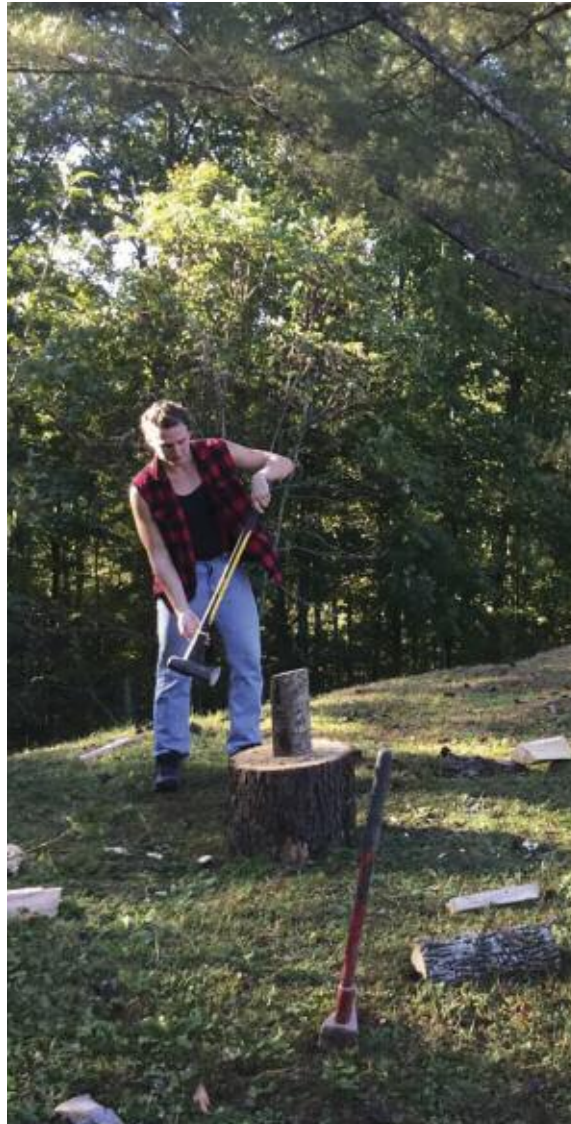
Institute is a concrete expression of Wheeling Jesuit University’s half-century commitment toward the people of the diocese and the region.”

In its 15-year history, the Appalachian Institute has offered a wide array of programs and opportunities which promote its mission of research, advocacy, and education around the region. In partnership with over 70 community organizations and other university programs, the institute has

sponsored events such as a conference on the declining steel industry or, more recently, the opioid crisis; photographic exhibits featuring images from coal mining communities and those affected by the natural gas industry; and films or discussions of issues ranging from food insecurity to health care and energy policy. The Appalachian Institute has also sponsored research on a variety of issues affecting the natural environment and human health, such as investigating the impact of slurry pond impoundments or the relationship between fracking and water quality, and routinely trains students to advocate to legislators (both in Charleston, W.Va., and Washington, D.C.) for issues contributing to justice and health in the region.

Since 2004, a significant part of the educational work of the

Appalachian Institute has been through running immersion trips around the region, not only for WJU students but also for students from high schools and colleges – including many Jesuit schools – across the country. The institute offers educational immersion trips that focus on energy policy and its consequences in Appalachia, on issues related to health





care and food justice, as well as direct-service focused trips. Elizabeth Collins, who served as director for the institute from 2012 to 2017, explained that the institute strives to cultivate not only concern but connections, and ultimately a sense of commitment to the region through these trips, both for WJU students and for those who come from outside the area. “We are trying to fight the ‘globalization of superficiality,’” in such trips, she explained, “so that students leave feeling a burden [of love] for the region, rather than [feeling] warm and fuzzy because they helped some poor people in Appalachia.” Collins emphasized the importance of education through encounter with the people and places of Appalachia in these trips and explained that fighting stereotypes about the region is an important part of the institute’s work.

While much of the institute’s programming focuses on the complex challenges that the region faces, another important part of its mission is fulfilled through celebration of the region’s culture, history, and natural beauty through events such as poetry readings, community meals, films, and other events. Collins, a native West Virginian, explained that both a critical and a celebratory framework are necessary for an adequate view of the region. For students who come from the region as well as for those from outside, offering opportunities to understand and fall in love with this place and its people – finding reasons for resilience in brokenness and hope in struggle – is a vital part of the institute’s mission.

For several years, Wheeling Jesuit students have helped to lead immersion trips for outside groups – an experience that many have found deeply transformative. Nic Cochran (’15) was both a participant and a student leader in numerous immersion trips during his time as a WJU student. While Cochran had felt a call to religious life for some time, in large measure it was his experiences with the Appalachian Institute that played a decisive role in his decision to become a priest of the Wheeling-Charleston Diocese. “The Appalachian Institute provided the opportunity for encounters with people and places I would not have otherwise known,” Cochran said, citing his experience with the people of West Virginia – their creativity and sense of community despite many challenges and negative stereotypes – and the beauty of the land itself as reasons he is committing his life to this place and its people.

No less than in the nation and region as a whole,



All photos show Wheeling Jesuit University students helping community members prepare for winter with wood chopping services.

the past year at Wheeling Jesuit University has been marked by challenge and transition. In May 2017, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston reaffirmed its original commitment to WJU by purchasing the school’s long-term debt. Bishop Michael Bransfield stated, “The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has acted to help stabilize the financial operations of the University to ensure they continue their mission here in the Mountain State. As West Virginia’s only Catholic institution of higher learning, Wheeling Jesuit University has a special responsibility to offer a Jesuit education in the state and the region, which is enhanced through the beautiful work of the Appalachian Institute.” Through this partnership and relationships with those in and beyond the region, the Appalachian Institute will continue in its mission both to celebrate and to share in the struggles of the mountains and the people of Appalachia.

*Jessica Wroblewski is associate professor of theology at Wheeling Jesuit University and a native of West Virginia. She served as a member of the editorial board of Conversations from 2014 to 2017.*

Appalachian Institute website:  
<http://www.wju.edu/ai/default.asp>



# Sports in Schools

## *Beyond Winning and Losing*

By Patrick Kelly, S.J.

Sports have had a “place” in Jesuit schools from the very beginning. The first school buildings the Jesuits built in France and elsewhere typically had an open courtyard in the middle so that students could play sports. And time was scheduled into the school day and school year for sporting activities. In addition to feast days, every Thursday was a recreation day. It was common for students to walk on these days with the fathers to the Jesuit villa to engage in recreation and sport. When Jesuits started schools in the 19th century in the United States they continued to provide time and space for play and sport.

In this matter, Ignatius and the Jesuits were influenced by the Christian understanding of the human person as a unity of body, mind, and spirit. They were also influenced by Thomas Aquinas’s conception of virtue as having to do with moderation. According to Thomas, a virtuous person should not be working or studying all the time, but also needed to take time for play and recreation. Indeed, Thomas had a high estimation of play, even saying it was like contemplation because both activities were enjoyable and done for their own sake.

Of course, sports also have a “place” in Jesuit universities in



the United States today. Students, faculty, and staff routinely participate in pickup games of various kinds. Students compete in many intramural sports. These sports provide the clearest and most uncomplicated link to our Jesuit heritage and its emphasis on moderation in studies and the need for play and recreation for a fully human life.

Students at Jesuit schools also compete in intercollegiate athletics at Division I, II, and III levels. Our location in the United States has led to the proliferation of such intercollegiate athletic programs. Only in this country is there such a highly developed intercollegiate athletic system connected to higher education.

Sports in all U.S. universities also take place in the “location” shaped by modernity and its aftermath. In some ways this location negatively influences intercollegiate athletics.

## The Place of Sport in U.S. Universities Today

For example, although Cartesian mind-body dualism has been widely criticized and surpassed by philosophers, its effective history as well as new postmodern expressions of dualism are very much present in American universities. Consider that in many American universities the academic (mind) and athletic (body) sections have little, if anything, to do with one another. We rarely, if ever, ask students to reflect on the embodied experiences they are having in sports in the academic context.

Of course, we do pay a lot of attention to sports. But the attention tends to be directed primarily to who is winning and losing, how to win, and how much money a person or institution gets for winning. The emphasis on money is related to what Michael Sandel has called the move from having a market economy to being a market society. In a market society, the activities we engage in are increasingly valued only in monetary terms, and we lose the ability to recognize their intrinsic meaning or value. In such a context, leaders of universities easily begin to view sports only as a means to external goods, such as money and prestige.

Rather than paying so much attention to sports as a means to external goods, the focus needs to shift

to the internal goods or intrinsic rewards of sports. Retrieving insights about play from earlier periods can help our reflections. After all, as Thomas pointed out, play is engaged in for its own sake. As he put it, “Nothing further is sought in play than the soul’s delight.” In response to the objection that play cannot be virtuous because it is not directed to something else, Thomas says that it is true that play activities themselves are not directed to external goods. He points out, however, that the enjoyment experienced at play is directed to an end: the refreshment or restoration of the soul. In our language today we might say that enjoyment in play leads to the well-being or flourishing of the person. Our students and coaches, that is, practitioners, understand these intrinsic rewards of sport very well. Jim Hayford, our new basketball coach at Seattle University, pointed in their direction, for example, when he said he coaches a style of basketball that is “fun to play, fun to coach, and fun to watch.”

As mentioned earlier, from a Jesuit perspective, the human person is a unity of body, mind, and spirit. Thus the bodily activities that young people engage in, such as sport, impact their minds and spirits. From this perspective, it is important to invite students to reflect on their experiences in sport, not just who won, how to win, and so forth, and to consider how such experiences impact them in their interior lives and their making of meaning. The

**...the attention tends to be directed primarily to who is winning and losing, how to win, and how much money a person or institution gets for winning.**

element of joy, which is so basic to play, is particularly important. While playing a team sport, students experience joy as they put their talents at the service of something greater than themselves. They learn that they become persons as they give of themselves

to others. At the heart of what Jesuit universities do is to help students discover what gives them joy—in their studies, and as they engage in service or consider work of various kinds. They also help students to identify their talents and to come to understand how they are going to use them to be of service to others. In this sense, joy can become the “pivot” point for our students, from their play and games to the rest of their lives.

This approach is grounded in Jesuit spirituality. In a meditation called the Two Standards in the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius has the retreatant con-

For St. Ignatius, everything in our lives should be directed *ad maiorem dei gloriam* – toward the greater glory of God. But how can this be true of play, which is done for its own sake? With Thomas Aquinas’s insight that the enjoyment in play is directed to the recreation and restoration of the soul we have the beginnings of a response to this question. Jesus says, after all, that he came that “we might have life and have it to the full.” And St. Irenaeus famously taught that “the glory of God is a human being fully alive.” Thomas helps us to understand that play gives glory to God indirectly, then, to the extent that it helps us to be fully human and fully alive. Of course, whether play is doing this or not in concrete situations is something that needs to be studied and discerned. But to the extent we are paying attention to young people’s experiences and asking how these are related to their growth and flourishing, we are on the right track.

While we engage in play for its own sake, the joy associated with it points beyond itself. As Pope Francis has said, “Play reminds us of joy, the joy of the Lord.” For St. Ignatius, joy is one of the important characteristics of spiritual consolation. Ignatius himself learned this only after he was injured in battle and had time to step back

from the pursuit of his own glory and began to pay attention to his interior life. There he discovered God speaking to him in the depths of his joy. In his rules for discernment Ignatius counsels that our major decisions in life should be related to and building on such experiences of joy, which he said “point out and open up the way we are to go.”

*Fr. Pat Kelly, S.J., associate professor at Seattle University, has authored Catholic Perspectives on Sports: From Medieval to Modern Times (2012) and edited Youth Sport and Spirituality: Catholic Perspectives (2015).*



sider how persons and societies are led off track when they are “ensnared” by riches, which leads to the honor of this world and then to surging pride. He says this is a temptation of “the enemy of our human nature,” a traditional way of referring to the devil or Satan. Whatever one’s views are on the ontological status of the devil, the phrase Ignatius uses highlights that when persons or societies are driven only by money, their humanity is undermined. When we focus only on money we take our eyes off of our students’ experiences in sports and so are unable to know whether they are related to their growth and flourishing.





# Being a Neighbor in the Hood

*Difficult conversations to envision a new neighborhood*

By Gilbert Sunghera, S.J.

**The University of Detroit Mercy** lies at the intersection of two great corridors, Livernois Avenue and 6-Mile Road, also known as McNichols Road in honor of the Jesuit university president who moved the main campus to this location. To the north, across McNichols Road, is one of Detroit's most stable neighborhoods, featuring well-built brick structures along streets with manicured lawns. It is a diverse middle to upper-middle class neighborhood with relatively low levels of unemployment.

To the west (across Livernois Ave.) is a very different set of neighborhoods. Livernois was the main conduit of destruction during the '67 riots, which left in their wake abandoned and burned storefronts and businesses. In the intervening 50 years, most of these businesses never returned, and like most of the city, the shells of burned-out establishments dot this once proud thoroughfare.

The Fitzgerald neighborhood, which lies behind the commercial activity of Livernois, has modest homes, many made of wood; and again, like most of Detroit, these homes did not fair well in the white flight that occurred in full speed after the riots / rebellion. Over 100 lots in the immediate neighborhood are either vacant or have burned shells of homes. The residential neighborhoods to the south and east of the campus are similar to this Fitzgerald neighborhood. As the student population dropped at the university, mirroring the city's population drop, the university slowly began to close off streets and eventually fenced itself off from surrounding danger.

The university has done more than its fair share of providing services to the city. It operates 21 academic-based clinics, serving over 30,000 people annually with free or reduced cost for medical, dental, law, and counseling services; it even has a nonprofit

architectural firm. In addition, students provide direct service to those in need through a variety of service-learning courses, and many clubs and organizations provide direct service to the city in creative ways. However, many of those services leap-frogged the immediate neighborhood to reach more desperate parts of the city.

A notable exception is our Campus Kitchen program, which repackages food not used in our cafeteria for folks in our immediate neighborhood. This past year over 10,000 pounds of food was given to three community partners in the immediate neighborhood. Roughly 54 percent of the children in the surrounding neighborhood live below the poverty level, and 40 percent of the working age population

is unemployed. The university attracts an underserved population of students in the region, and roughly one third of the students are first-generation immigrants.

In the fall of 2015, the university and The Kresge Foundation established the Live6 Alliance (Livernois Avenue and 6 Mile Road), as a non-profit economic development organization chaired by university president, Dr. Antoine Garibaldi. There had been earlier attempts at stabilizing the area; however, this current effort is proving to be the most interesting.

Lauren Hood, the first interim director of Live6, is an alumna of a newly established Master of Community Development program, housed in the school of architecture. Unlike traditional planning programs, MCD roots community development in service, social justice, and sustainability. It is an interdisciplinary approach integrating human, organizational, physical, and economic aspects to guide residents in reimagining their neighborhood.

The Live6 revitalization efforts hosted listening sessions with community stakeholders. These sessions, labeled “speakeasy,” have focused on everything from security, arts and culture, business, youth, and so forth. The lively discussions pit diverse constituents with different visions against each other to help find common cause.

A major sticking point has been the fence that surrounds the campus. The symbolic nature and burden of the fence remind neighbors how difficult it is to attract parents to a campus that is not quickly perceived as safe. In one discussion, I found myself burdened by defending the fence, especially now that I oversee an aging Jesuit community, and as I mentioned at one of these speakeasies, aging Jesuits don’t move fast. Many of the local neighbors nodded their heads in agreement, citing similar concerns about their own aging parents.

At another speakeasy, a neighbor asked, “Why is the university even here? It doesn’t make any business sense.” I explained that as a Catholic institution, we are more than just about training future doctors, lawyers, philosophers, poets; we are concerned with



The University of Detroit Mercy is deeply engaged with its neighbors.





bringing about the Kingdom. That Kingdom has not yet arrived. I also mentioned that what we can do best for the neighborhood is to get suburban students into the city so they can learn from those who have survived, so they can learn to love the city.

These are difficult conversations, and solutions have yet to find solid footing, but small interventions are occurring. A farmers market featuring locally grown vegetables from a group of residents and the Detroit Public School children is providing fresh produce in this food desert. Light up Livernois, a program that started prior to Live6, is helping small businesses repopulate the Avenue of Fashion, a once thriving boutique shopping destination in the city.

The conversations also point out some of the struggles concerning what people want in their neighborhood. Those at the university and the upper middle class neighborhood to our north would love a resurgence of small businesses, while some of the other neighbors want an Applebee's restaurant to prove to the rest of the city that "we have made it." Expectations are difficult to manage in diverse neighborhoods, so this approach of neighborhood conversations is proving useful.

Detroit has made national news for its innovative rehabilitation programs, focused primarily in midtown and downtown neighborhoods. The city's planning department is currently employing other

strategies to minimize the displacement of long-time residents and to amplify the charism of local communities that have survived. But it is highly unlikely that Detroit will ever repopulate its 1950 peak of 1.85 million residents.

One initiative that reflects this new thinking is being launched in the Fitzgerald neighborhood west of the campus, which has over 100 vacant lots. Productive landscape techniques are being employed (small truck farms, tree lots, wildflower fields) to knit the community together and to provide employment opportunities for the local residents. This program is one of five national demonstration projects funded by the Knight Foundation for innovative approaches in shrinking cities. Our students during their freshman orientation will spend half a day preparing the Fitzgerald neighborhood for the first phase of implementation of this aggressive scheme.

A university can be a catalyst for successful neighborhood stabilization and growth if it can empower the community to articulate goals and values and can align the university community's values (students, faculty, staff, alumni, and future parents) with those of the local community.

*Gilbert Sunghera, S.J., is associate professor of architecture and rector of the Jesuit community at the University of Detroit Mercy.*





# Walking the Crossroads of Campus and Community at Rockhurst

By Alicia Douglas



During the development of Rockhurst University's campus master plan a few years ago, we learned we were considered an "introverted campus." It seems like a strange thought – introversion is a concept we usually apply to people, not to university campuses. But reflecting on that designation, it becomes abundantly clear how being introverted has guided relationships with our community members, partners, and stakeholders.

Rockhurst University sits in a social and geographic crossroads, an intersection of lifestyles, economic realities, lived experiences, types of housing stock, and business and institutional endeavors. Our university is one of the major institutions that serves as a community anchor to a neighbor-

hood that has been in transition for the past few decades. The neighborhood has struggled with aging housing stock. It has survived racist blockbusting tactics and white flight by creating the 49/63 Neighborhood Coalition made up of resident volunteers. That coalition stood up and cleaned house – literally – when the neighborhood became infested with drug houses. As those changes were happening, Rockhurst remained anchored and attentive. Rockhurst is blessed to be in Kansas City, a place that nurtures volunteerism and grassroots community activism so residents can tackle social justice issues on the home front. This culture of service also runs through the veins of Rockhurst itself.





Rockhurst University  
Community Center.

Let us walk down a different direction of our crossroads.

We have a beautiful 55-acre campus in the urban center of Kansas City. We have a very active neighborhood coalition and a good relationship with the Kansas City Police Department. Minutes from us there are neighborhoods suffering from random acts of gun violence. Rockhurst, the neighborhood coalition, and the Southtown Council, our business association, are working together to regularly communicate with our patrol division about how our residents and institutions can better work together to make our neighborhoods safer. In addition, we continue conversations about what community policing means and how that translates onto the university campus with university security and police. What can we do to help bridge the gap and convene opportunities for positive interactions with police?

Being that introverted campus, it is natural for us to look inward; let us stop at the center of the intersection for a moment. Our university has intentionally convened discussions about diversity and inclusion for all members of our university community for the past few years. Meanwhile, the NAACP has issued a travel advisory for people of color passing through our state, Missouri, to be mindful of their safety and surroundings. Just across the state line in Kansas, a man was recently killed in a hate crime that attracted national attention. How do we help anyone visiting our city and our university understand that we at

The neighborhood coalition sometimes finds it necessary to challenge the university as a way of protecting the community. Plans for building construction or issues of student behavior can interfere with what long-term residents consider the natural order of things. Reflecting on our relationship-building experiences, we have learned that neighbors like to know what's going on. New construction without announcement, discussion, or community input causes anxiety and uncertainty. What will happen to their homes, property values, to the neighborhood in general?

Tensions can rise and communication gets tougher when dealing with student behavior issues. This is tough when there are repeat offenses of litter or loud parties that

go into the wee hours of the night next door to folks who have to go to work in the morning or have young children to put to sleep. The current group of students may learn the appropriate norms and behaviors for the neighborhood, but then there is a repeat cycle with each new class. How can we work together to help the students and neighbors find peaceful reconciliation? The university has chosen to step outside its cultural communication habitat and adapt new styles of communicating with neighbors. By creating the Rockhurst University Neighborhood Committee, which includes neighborhood leaders and university representatives, we can address concerns of our neighbors face-to-face and work alongside them to make our community better for everyone.



The campus bell tower. Photos courtesy of Rockhurst University.

Rockhurst have intentionally created an inclusive place for them? How do we work united with our community to demonstrate that our campus culture is one of peace, love, dignity, and inclusion? What can we do to share within our community and our surrounding community that we hold dear the Jesuit values and tradition that make Rockhurst special – that have held us accountable for being that community anchor for more than a century?

Building and maintaining trusting relationships between Rockhurst and the Coalition is imperative. Convening the RU Neighborhood Committee has provided opportunities to sit down and talk about our shared goals and concerns in an environment of trust and honesty. The committee worked to create a strategic plan to address shared community goals. Coming together in this way transitioned our relationship from contentious to trusting, even when faced with tragedy. When a local high school student was murdered while walking home near our campus, our community pulled together to grieve and to inspire hope; we held a vigil, developed back-to-school events, and continue to host an annual student-led neighborhood 5K run/walk to support a

scholarship fund in his memory. Humanizing each other and keeping open lines of communication is our best way of keeping our neighborhood relationships moving in a positive direction.

Being an introverted campus does not mean we accept whatever fate comes our way. It means we contemplate and act accordingly after giving the conversation the time it needs. We account for the lives that intersect in the crossroads: the ebullient hope of new students and professionals, reserved wisdom of long-term residents, cultivation of young families, struggles and triumphs of new businesses, and folks getting back on their feet. Reflecting on the words of our university president, our place is “to make God’s good world better.”

*Alicia Douglas is director of community relations and outreach at Rockhurst University and has been with the university since 1999. She directs the Rockhurst University Community Center, facilitates the university’s Neighborhood Committee, and co-facilitates campuswide community service projects. She enjoys engaging in civic leadership activities in Kansas City.*



# Empowering Communities in Worlds Apart

## *Regis University Studying 'Abroad' in the Neighborhood*

By Elizabeth Grassi, Obdulia Castro, Paul Burson, Rosa Burson

**Regis University** is located on a beautifully kept campus, an island in the middle of the urban sprawl of northwest Denver, Colorado. It is surrounded by a growing immigrant Hispanic community that has at times been invisible. True to its Jesuit mission, Regis fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and provides numerous opportunities for community-based and service learning. Taking advantage of these resources, two faculty members from the education and languages departments joined the Center for Service Learning to develop a program that would close the gap between our students and the immigrant Hispanic community, with the overarching goal of making our students and our Hispanic neighbors “real” to each other.

Both departments wanted to change the existing power paradigm to create a community-based program where the families provided service to our students and our students became the receivers and the learners. Inspired by a program developed by Ethel Jorge at Pitzer College in California, we developed the Spanish-English Exchange Program (SEEP). This program, informally known as the “study abroad in the neighborhood,” brings Regis students into the homes of local immigrant Hispanic families for a semester. The families decide the agenda; students participate in daily family activities, explore the neighborhood, shops, and churches with the families, learn how to cook, dance, and speak the language. Regis students practice Spanish in a natural environment, learn about the family’s culture and how the particular family navigates the challenges of U.S. society and school systems.

“Coming from a foreign country experience where you are the foreigner, you realize how big that is. And now being back in the States you realize that no matter where you are in the US there are thousands of people going through the same experience. They live down the street from my university. They are everywhere. It’s awesome how diverse Denver is.”

– *Student participant, interview*

Participation in this program has allowed our students to establish unique relationships with neighbors they would not have met were it not for this project. “Finding the unfamiliar in familiar places” is what students encounter every week. The families “adopt” our students as their own and readily share the struggles they experience as immigrants living in the U.S.

“My relationship with my family has developed from initial awkward greeting of trying to use the proper cultural norms, to letting myself help A. set the table for dinner. After only two months of weekly visits I have connected with this family because we both have openly welcomed each other. I have learned more about their



history, values, and personalities in our relaxed setting than I ever would have through a formal and instructional method.”

– *Student reflective essay*

As a result of this honest and candid relationship, our students experience the reality of immigrant life: the trauma of deportation and discrimination, economic difficulties, lack of health insurance or basic needs, and school issues the families experience regularly.

“For a school project, one of the kids in the family needed to gather information and images to present with. He needed to have access to a local library and be able to use the Internet. His family didn’t know where the nearest library was, and didn’t know how to use the Internet, print pictures, or have pictures

printed at Kinkos. They did not have access to these because of their language and their economic status, and his grade could have suffered in the class.”

– *Student reflective essay*

The families also rely on our students to bring cultural capital to the homes. And when students bring the families on campus to eat or watch sporting events, the families gain access to a space that was next door but where they did not feel invited before. Much to our delight, in the last two years this program has come full circle and the original children from the host families now attend Regis University and visit other families in the program through their classes. We greatly value the knowledge our neighbors have imparted to our students, and, in exchange, our neighbors readily invite our students into their homes year after year.

“I derive great self-satisfaction from this process because I genuinely love the experience, not particularly because it is a “service”, but more on the basis of the great relationships you establish. ... This summer I am going to help my Spanish brother apply to college. What a privilege! To pass on knowledge I have acquired through my time here, and in turn, to learn from an amazing group of people.”

– *Student participant, program evaluation*

Elizabeth Grassi is director of assessment for Regis University and professor and chairperson in the Department of Education. Obdulia Castro is a professor of modern and classical languages. Melissa Nix is the director of Curriculum & Intercultural Programming, and Paul Burson is the director of Student Development & Community Partnerships, both in the Center for Service Learning at Regis University.



# A Beautiful Thing

## *Traversing a Deep Divide through Partnership and Hope*

By Melissa Quan and Bob Hannafin

**Connecticut's Fairfield County** is a tale of two cities. It has the wealthiest residents in the country, on a per-capita basis, and also the poorest. A recent *Business Insider* ranking rated Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk the single most unequal metro area in America, with the top 5 percent of earners making almost 30 percent of total income and the bottom 20 percent accumulating a mere 2 percent share. "The Nation's Report Card" – a U.S. Department of Education test given to students in every state – recently showed that Connecticut had the largest achievement gap between its minority students and their peers across five of the 12 indicators. Connecticut also has the dubious distinction of one of the highest incarceration rates for Hispanic and African-American males.

That aforementioned income-based achievement – or opportunity – gap takes an obvious toll on students, their families, and communities, but it also creates an unsustainable economic drag on the state and country, as evidenced by the fact that long-term job growth prospects in Connecticut lag behind the national average. Addressing inequality is not just a moral and social-justice imperative. It is an economic necessity as well.

Bridgeport, the state's largest city, faces several political and economic challenges. The city has a chronic revenue problem. Nearly a quarter of the city's residents live in poverty – paying little or no income tax and requiring a host of support services that the city struggles to provide. In addition, over a third of the city's land is owned by nonprofit organ-

izations and other entities that don't pay taxes, and much of the remaining two-thirds is blighted with shuttered mills, factories, and warehouses, once the pride of a thriving pre-war economy. Finally, county governments in Connecticut lack taxing authority; this further exacerbates the city's plight. Although the city is located in the state's wealthiest county, there is no mechanism for the county to contribute to city needs.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Bridgeport Public Schools (BPS) experience deficits and shortages that are uniquely acute. Furthermore, BPS serve one of the most diverse student populations in the state with Hispanic (49 percent) and black (36 percent) children comprising the largest subgroups. They rightfully celebrate that diversity, but it presents challenges as well.

Students of color lag behind their white counterparts on almost every achievement measure. The Bridgeport Public Schools also have an unacceptably high dropout rate and a low percentage of students who pursue higher education.

As a Jesuit institution situated at the nexus of these national crises of inequity, we have felt called to respond. Fairfield University's partnership with Cesar Batalla Elementary School (CBES), one of BPS's largest and most diverse schools, has been emblematic of that effort.

CBES is an elementary school where all of its students qualify for free or reduced-price meals and 40 percent are English-language learners. As at many



The campus of Fairfield University (photos courtesy of the university).

large schools in high-poverty urban districts, CBES students struggle to meet grade-level goals as measured by standardized tests (just 11 percent in language arts and only 4 percent in math). Amidst these struggles, CBES nonetheless remains a vibrant community of dedicated teachers, learners, and families.

By contrast, Fairfield University's 5,000 students are predominantly white and from mid-to-upper class backgrounds. A mere four miles apart, CBES and Fairfield represent, in many ways, the stark inequity that plagues the county and nation as a whole.

In an effort to bridge this gap, some six years ago CBES and Fairfield entered into a partnership focused on raising literacy levels of CBES students. The partnership began with a few service-learning courses and the commitment of Fairfield's Center for Faith and Public Life and Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions. In 2015, we began to explore an even more holistic approach that would include support for the students, teachers, and parents and address academic achievement, social-emotional wellness, and

family engagement, particularly through a place-based community engagement model.

Place-based community engagement focuses resources and partnership activities in a specific neighborhood or other geographically defined place – in our case, a school – to impact defined, measurable outcomes. Together, we identified goals focused on literacy development in grades K-5 and worked with middle school students to foster long-term aspirations for higher education.

Over the past six years, nearly 700 Fairfield students enrolled in 35 service-learning sections have engaged with that partnership through courses across a variety of disciplines; hundreds more CBES students have visited Fairfield's campus through the support of athletics, modern languages, and other departments; and CBES teachers have benefited from intensive professional development trainings led by our education school faculty. The Fairfield and CBES communities have become increasingly interconnected with CBES teachers taking graduate



classes and Fairfield alumni being hired by CBES as the partnership became integrated in hiring decisions at both schools.

Evidence points to modest gains in academic performance, particularly among participating second graders and middle schoolers. CBES teachers also report that partnership activities impact student enthusiasm for school overall and that professional development helps them improve instruction. In turn, Fairfield students report that the experience helps them better understand issues related to diversity, even as they struggle to make sense of the complex social justice issues at play. For some, it has affirmed their desire to teach in an urban district while others feel called toward policy work. There is much more to uncover here as the work moves forward.

As leaders of this initiative, we are occasionally asked to justify the decision to invest so much in one school, especially when there are 32 other elementary schools in the district facing challenges as severe as or worse than CBES. Our response is that we need

to see the dial move – to gain evidence of real, lasting change before we can consider this as a model worth replicating. We are not interested in simply placing hundreds of bodies into struggling schools in hopes of having a positive impact. Too much is at stake; the crises are too urgent. As Jesuit schools, educators, and students, in the spirit of *magis*, we are called to do more and to do better. For the time being, then, we are “all in” with our partners at CBES.

We fully expect that the road will be long, sometimes frustrating, and rife with political obstacles. We are living the challenge of bridging different worlds and trying to apply a place-based method to this suburban-urban partnership. With our partners, we remain optimistic and hopeful in what CBES principal Hector Sanchez has labelled, “A Beautiful Thing.”

*Melissa Quan is the director of the Center for Faith & Public Life at Fairfield University. Bob Hannafin is dean of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions at Fairfield University.*



# Jesuit Universities Serving the Local Church

By Tom Reynolds

As Jesuit colleges and universities increase their engagement with their surrounding neighborhoods and communities, they have been drawn into deeper relationships with the network of schools, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, health care providers, and local governments. In more recent years, the 28 Jesuit, Catholic colleges and universities have embarked on a joint effort to reflect on their Jesuit, Catholic identities through the Institutional Examen process, which includes an examination of the oldest and most central set of relationships with Catholic parishes, dioceses, schools, and other organizations of the local church.

## Historical Context

These relationships have long historical roots. Many Jesuit institutions trace their founding to the initiative of local bishops to serve their growing Catholic populations. In fact, bishops were involved with the founding of all the Jesuit universities established before the Civil War. These schools served almost exclusively the needs of the Catholic community. Jesuit schools in the U.S., notably described as streetcar colleges in Jencks and Riesman's *The Academic Revolution* (1968), provided educational opportunities for generations of urban Catholic immigrant students.

Phillip Gleason, in his history of Catholic higher education, *Contending with Modernity* (1995), documented the close connections between Catholic colleges and their sponsoring dioceses for much of their histories, as well as the growing pressures on these schools to modernize their curricula, faculty, and administrative practices using norms common to the rest of American higher education. This gradual movement toward professionalization of Catholic schools was accompanied by an increasing auton-

omy from traditional church institutions, including dioceses and religious orders.

The "Land of Lakes" statement of 1967 essentially clarified this movement, which was less a declaration of independence from the Catholic Church or abandonment of Catholic identity, as charged by some critics, and more a description of the new reality Catholic institutions needed to acknowledge in order to remain relevant in the evolving American educational landscape. The powerful impetus of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, with its emphasis on "a faith that does justice," also encouraged new initiatives to align university service programs with international immersion experiences and local projects with marginalized communities.

## The Institutional Examen Process

In 2010, in concert with the 20th anniversary of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) issued *The Jesuit Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, noting the role of Catholic universities as "important ministries of the Catholic Church." Two years later, the AJCU and the Jesuit Conference (U.S. Jesuit provincials) jointly approved *Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: A Self-Evaluation Instrument*, intended to provide a framework for reviewing and affirming the Jesuit and Catholic identity of the 28 AJCU member schools. Three universities, Xavier, John Carroll, and the University of San Francisco, became the pilot schools for this self-study/peer review process in spring 2016, with five subsequent schools participating the following year and eight more in 2017-18.

In addition to characteristics that focus on Leadership, Academic Life, Campus Culture, Service,



Integrity, and Jesuit Presence, the Examen process asks institutions to reflect on their Service to the Local Church, (Characteristic 5), with attention to “educational and formational programs and resources that build up the local Church; in union with the local Church, it also provides a locus where people of faith can wrestle with difficult questions facing the Church and the world.”

## Engaging and Serving the Local Church

Obviously graduate programs in theology or pastoral ministry, which prepare “the next generation of Catholic intellectual leaders,” are a profound service to the Catholic community.

Jesuit institutions also offer programs in adult faith formation for Catholic laity, addressing a gap in Catholic literacy in the U.S. and providing a forum to address difficult challenges within the church and between the church and the wider culture. Some examples of such initiatives include: The Church in the 21st Century program at Boston College; the Bannan Institute at Santa Clara University; the Curran Center at Fordham University; The Hanks Center at Loyola University Chicago; the Loyola Institute of Ministry at Loyola University New Orleans; and Spring Hill College’s graduate theology programs taught in Mobile and Atlanta and on line.

In addition, other related institutes and centers (for example, the Institute for Christian-Jewish Relations at St. Joseph’s University, the Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture at Seattle University, and the Institute on the Common Good at Regis) offer the opportunity for interreligious dialogue between different faith traditions, another missing piece in the formation of many American Catholics.



Designed by Jeremy Leichman and Joan Benefiel, “Examen” is a two-part sculpture of St. Ignatius at Fairfield University.

Serving the local church can often center on the relationship between the local bishop and the university. The “Challenge” section in Characteristic 5 of “Some Characteristics” notes diplomatically, “There is, at times, mutual misunderstanding between some bishops and some universities on what academic freedom rightly requires of Jesuit, Catholic universities. How successfully has this institution managed to build bridges and foster mutual understanding in this realm?” Such misunderstandings have included disagreements over the rights of faculty members to disagree publicly with church teachings, particularly around “hot-button” issues;

the presence of LGBTQ student organizations on campus; and commencement speakers or performances of plays such as *The Vagina Monologues*.

The relationship depends largely on the personality of individual bishops and individual Jesuit university presidents, and how they work together. More fundamental is how each partner understands the role of a Catholic university, not only as a university, but as a ministry of the Catholic Church distinct from other ministries. Universities are not parishes, serving only Catholics, nor are they seminaries preparing students for the priesthood or catechetical programs giving basic doctrinal instruction.

Instead of focusing on these inherent sources of potential conflict, Jesuit schools participating in the Examen have found productive conversations around partnerships that bring university resources to bear on shared projects with the local church. Among the eight participating schools that have completed their self-study reports and visits, examples have included:

- Tuition support or discounts for clergy and other diocesan employees to further their professional education;
- Support for local Catholic K-12 schools, particularly those serving the urban poor, such as the Cristo Rey network high schools and the Nativity-San Miguel middle schools;
- Financial support for Catholic school teachers and administrators completing licensure requirements and training programs for new teachers modeled after the Notre Dame ACE program;
- Joint programs with local Hispanic Catholic ministry programs;
- Continuing education, opportunities for Catholic health care facilities, Catholic Charities, and other Catholic non-profit groups.

## A Way Forward?

By shifting the conversation to how the school can support and build up the Catholic community, instead of dwelling on frustrating disagreements on the proper nature of a Catholic college/university, both groups may come to see themselves as partners rather than rivals. Such collaborative efforts make both more aware of their shared faith commitments.

Jesuit schools have significant resources and expertise that the Catholic community needs. They emerged “from the heart of the Church” in the past 200+ years in the United States, and they have much to offer and much to learn from the lives of “the people of God.”

*Tom Reynolds is the provincial assistant for higher education for the Central and Southern Province of the Jesuits. He recently retired as vice president for mission at Regis University.*

## Resources - The Examen

**A collection of websites from some Jesuit sources addressing the issue of the daily Examen, referenced in some of our articles.**

This website provides information on how to make the Examen part of your day, variations on the Examen, reflections on praying the Examen, and a handout (found on many AJCU school websites.)

**<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen>.**

This PDF provides a concise explanation of each of the five steps in the Examen.

**<https://www.gonzaga.edu/student-life/CCP/inc/Resilience/The%20Examen%20infographic.pdf>.**

This document provides different versions of the Daily Examen including an annual Examen and an Examen for Managers and Parents.

**<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/news-events/Daily-Examen-Resources.cfm>.**

These documents provide examples of simple questions you can ask yourself during each step of the Examen.

**<http://president.loyno.edu/chaplain/examen>.**

**<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/AudioRetreat/Kroll-01-2010/Kroll-T11-01.pdf>.**

This short reflection on the Examen with a student focus includes 3 videos at the end to help guide individuals through the practice.

**<https://www.creighton.edu/creighton-magazine/2015fallnewsexamen/>.**

Each document presents questions to the reader, guiding them to the “why” behind incorporating the Examen into their daily life

**<http://www.marquette.edu/faith/examen-of-consciousness.php>.**

**[https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/C-%5Cfakepath%5CThe%20Ignatian%20Examen\\_Scala.pdf](https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/C-%5Cfakepath%5CThe%20Ignatian%20Examen_Scala.pdf).**

Includes the My Examen Prayer to be said during the daily Examen

**<https://www.gonzaga.edu/about/Mission/LibraryonMission.asp>.**



# Community Partnerships? Ask our Alumni

By Jacob Dillabaugh

**It was only** a matter of time when I graduated from St. Joseph's University that my friends and I began receiving numerous calls from the university development office and a legion of well meaning undergraduates armed with telephones. These calls for donation give little consideration to the tuition spent, the debt accrued, or even the variety career paths chosen by graduates. The meager contributions that are given have little relative impact on the operation of the university and are one of the least effective ways of engaging young alumni in making greater the impact of universities. Instead, we should be utilizing the gifts our alumni possess in their new positions and networks to create and cultivate more dynamic partnerships with the cities, communities, and organizations around us, especially when so many of them end up right in our backyard.

The supposed aim of Jesuit Higher Education touted by admissions offices, print materials, and presidential addresses is always toward some form of educating "women and men to be with and for others." If we indeed do produce graduates that seek to be so oriented within our society, then why not utilize them? Regardless of their chosen major or career path, each graduate represents a possible connector to untapped opportunity of partnership for universities to actually have substantial impact on the surrounding community. Take, for example, those who pursue their career or vocation in the world of nonprofit service organizations. I admit that it is possible and desirable for all graduates, regardless of field, to act in ways that are oriented towards a state of being with and for others. However, those in the nonprofit sector represent an alumni cohort decidedly committed to that ideal.

Many alumni who find work in the nonprofit sector after graduation often times are continuing experiences that they had during undergrad in community service or service-learning programs. Through a service placement or an internship they find full-time employment at the same organization or within the same field. Because of their age and experience, these young alumni often fill roles that have some direct supervision over incoming volunteers or partnership management. Given their positions these recent

alumni are strategically placed to be directly involved in the establishment or further development of university community partnerships with the neighborhoods and communities around them.

Examples of this dynamic are borne out in a study, currently underway, of the partnerships between service-oriented programming at a Jesuit university in the Northeast and their community partner organizations. The preliminary findings of this research have shown that a significant number of the directors, volunteer coordinators, or even general staff at the community partner organizations are tied to the university, typically as alumni, with which they are partnered. Their status as both alumni and, now, professional staff allows them to act as bridges between their organization and the university. As an alumna/us they understand the institutional capacities of the university, and as nonprofit professionals they understand the abilities and needs of their organization. This dual-sided understanding allows for the better construction and development of partnerships.

A positive experience of an alumna/us with the university-based programs leads them to re-engage with the university and offer a meaningful way of expanding the impact that our universities have on neighborhood and community partnerships. If viewed as in-kind gifts, these partnerships offer far more to the expansion of a Jesuit university's mission than small sums of money ever could. If we instead turn back to our mission and recognize that we have, indeed, educated women and men for others we can actually propel that mission by engaging alumni well beyond the scope of a phone call and a credit card transaction. If I were to, instead, receive a phone call asking about how I might facilitate a university-community partnership, I would absolutely be more invested and give more of myself.

*Jacob Dillabaugh is a candidate for master's degree in sociology at Boston College, '18. He is conducting research on the relationships between service-based campus organizations, such as BC's PULSE Program for Service Learning, and the community partners where students are sent to serve during the year.*

## AN HISTORICAL MOMENT



Left: The first building constructed by the Jesuits in 1829 to house Saint Louis College

Below: Saint Louis University downtown campus, 1890.

Inset: Peter Verhaegen, S.J., the college's first president.

All photos courtesy of Saint Louis University Libraries Digital Collections.

# Saint Louis University

## 200th Anniversary of Saint Louis University

By Amelia Blanton Hibner



## Founding

In 1818, on the banks of the Mississippi River, Bishop Louis DuBourg founded Saint Louis Academy. After it expanded to a college in 1820, DuBourg realized the college was more than he could manage and appealed to the Belgian Jesuits at Georgetown College for assistance. In 1823, twelve Jesuits made the treacherous



journey to St. Louis and took control of the college three years later.

Under the leadership of the college's first president, 29-year-old Fr. Peter Verhaegen, S.J., the college began its history of "firsts." In 1832 it changed its name to Saint Louis University and received its formal charter from Missouri, making it the first university west of the Mississippi. It followed

with two more firsts west of the mighty river, opening medical and law schools in 1836 and 1843.

## Race Relations

Though not often remembered, six Jesuit-owned slaves traveled west with the Jesuits from Baltimore in 1823 and worked on a farm in Florissant, Missouri. These same slaves, or others hired, likely contributed to the construction of the college's new building in 1826. Sadly, the





Left: Philosophy students with Tom Sherman, S.J., circa 1880s.

Middle: Students lining up to register, 1951.

Bottom: A woman accepting her graduation award, 1956.

Jesuits in St. Louis continued their history with slavery, purchasing a slave as late as 1862 before Missouri abolished slavery in 1865.

The university's history with race took a turn in 1944, when Fr. Claude Heithaus, S.J., delivered a sermon where he lambasted SLU for its failure to racially integrate and called upon students and university officials to act. While it resulted in his banishment from Saint Louis, the sermon also moved the university to admit its first five students of color, making Saint Louis the first university in any of the former slave states to establish an official policy of integration.

Challenges over race were brought to the forefront of the university's consciousness with the recent occupation of campus by student protestors in 2014. These protests were eerily similar to the 1969 occupation of an office by the Association of Black Collegians, which resulted in a list of ten demands from the students. The peaceful occupation in 2014 resulted in a thirteen-point agreement between the protestors and the university that commit SLU to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion.



## Beyond the Society

As the university expanded, it wrestled with the equally expanding roles of women and lay people. In 1908 the university admitted five women to the Law School, marking the beginning of women's history at SLU as students. In

1929 the university conferred its first PhD, in physics, to a woman, Mother Marie Kernaghan, R.S.C.J. However, it wasn't until Fr. Paul Reinert, S.J., became president in 1949 that women and men were allowed to sit side-by-side in class.

Fr. Reinert's vision for expansion continued with the establishment of a lay board of trustees in 1967, the first of its kind at any Catholic

college or university in the United States. When the new board met for the first time, ten Jesuits, nine Catholic laymen, and nine men of other faiths were in the room. In 2014, the university celebrated another milestone with the inauguration of its first lay president, Dr. Fred P. Pestello. Under his leadership the university has seen new strategic and master building plans.

*Amelia Blanton Hibner, MTS, is an alumna of Saint Louis University and is currently a doctoral student in higher education administration and works in the School of Social Work at the University.*

*In the spirit of reflection, we pose these questions as an opportunity to extend the conversation. We hope that by offering these ideas, the discussion continues on your campus—with colleagues, with students, and with your community.*

## Ten Questions for Continuing the Conversation

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How are invitations to campus extended to community members? Does the community invite the university to participate in community events?

What vocabulary is used to discuss relationships with the neighborhood, community, organizations? What do those words say about the relationships?

What is the role of your university in the place it sits?

How does faith drive relationships between the university and the local community?

Where does mission of the university drive relationships with the local community?

Does gentrification play a role in the way your university interacts with the community?

What role do government or community organizations play in university decisions? (mayors, governors, city planners, neighborhood associations)

How are Jesuit communities using their spaces to respond to the needs of their community?

How do our universities reconcile campus safety while maintaining openness with the local community?

Does the physical space of the university promote connections with the surrounding community? What barriers or welcome signs exist?



# Finding a Place on Campus

By Samir Aslane

**I have found** that when it comes to the question of finding a comfortable space to call your own, people have plenty to say about how they found theirs. “Go join a bunch of clubs that interest you,” “Talk to everyone you can,” “*Just be yourself,*” they say.

However, my experiences are not like theirs, just as your experiences are not like mine. We all have our own story. My story is not one about finding an existing space to fit in; it is about carving out a new space that I can call my own.

I have often struggled with finding a space where I feel comfortable. My life is constantly lived somewhere in the middle, never fully immersing or being accepted into a single circle or

community: being half-Moroccan and half-Irish; being a person of color at a predominately white institution; and being a Muslim at a Catholic, Jesuit institution.

It is not that I have felt uncomfortable or unwelcome in my life or in my communities, but spaces for biracial students are often paradoxical: welcoming, but hard to fully assimilate and feel totally connected. Nonetheless, I entered Boston College fully committed to be my most authentic self and to shed the mask that I often wore in high school.

I applied for the “Multicultural Living Experience,” a unique opportunity to live on a floor that emphasizes conversation on the intersections of race,

religion, and culture. I have been immersed in those contrasting Moroccan and Irish cultures my whole life and saw this as an opportunity to continue to learn about myself and from others. As a community, we grew closer than just floor mates; we became brothers in experience and expectations. This brotherhood was pivotal in helping me find my footing my first year at BC.

In addition, I became involved in the “FACES Council,” an antiracist organization committed to promoting dialogue on issues of race and systems of power and privilege. Through the group, I committed myself to helping others find their voices in this ongoing discussion of racial justice just as I found my own voice as a biracial man.

Finally, last spring, I accompanied 20 other students to Kingston, Jamaica, as part of the Jamaica Magis Service Immersion Trip. In Kingston, we worked at the Holy Family Primary School with the students and others in the community. Through our commitment to justice and providing a voice for the voiceless in Kingston and beyond, I connected with a true community.

Overall, finding a comfort zone here at Boston College is not a linear or finite process: I am still searching for comfortable spaces. But I have found that it is much more liberating and meaningful to *carve* out those spaces for yourself.

*Samir Aslane is a member of Boston College's class of 2019.*



# Students Found a New Journal

## *Sharing Ideas on Campus*

By Billy Ford

**America has reached** a critical juncture in its history. Across our country, men and women, politicians and pundits seem incapable of engaging in civil discourse. Instead they lambaste their ideological opponents, and strict ideological labels like Democrat and Republican prevent individuals on both sides of the aisle from coming together to craft the policies we need to improve our healthcare system, our economy, our immigration system, and our foreign policy. Now more than ever – as populism and xenophobia rear their ugly heads, as the global refugee crisis continues to fester, as climate change uproots homes and upends lives – it becomes important for people in America and across the world to think critically about the problems that we face. It becomes necessary to discern our duty to others. It becomes necessary to reject this status quo of divisive politics and ineffective policy-making, repair the sundered bonds between ideological opposites that cleave our communities into hostile factions, and forge a new path forward.

When I came to the College of the Holy Cross in the late summer of 2015, I hoped to discern this path forward through my coursework; I hoped to deepen this discernment through an outside outlet, through which I could author opinion pieces on those issues about which I am particularly passionate.

When I arrived to campus, however, the existing student publications were not discussing in any meaningful way the problems we face as a world, as a country, as a local community, and as individuals. Moreover, these outlets did not publish or highlight student research, nor did they contain the space necessary to publish the long-form pieces required to address the critical issues before us.

In response to this gaping void in campus discourse, and to the growing inability of both students and adults to disagree without being disagreeable, I began to think about creating a new journal of opinion at Holy Cross, one that championed civil discourse and committed us unequivocally to serving the common good.

It began in my dorm room, on the second floor of Wheeler Hall. My friend Connor Hennessey and I sat down and started thinking about how we might structure this hypothetical journal. Opening a Google doc and exchanging our ideas with increasing rapidity and excitement, we spoke about what we hoped to accomplish. Soon all speech stopped, replaced only by the rhythmic beating of fingers on computer keys as we sought to get down on paper those thoughts racing through our heads.

We wanted a vigorous exchange of ideas. We wanted animated prose that communicated the hope of young minds. We wanted people of different ideological backgrounds to come together and in a single forum both to contend fiercely and to listen closely. Acutely aware of our own shortcomings and our limited knowledge and experience, we sought not to exclude from this dialogue any individual who could express his or her thoughts clearly, forcefully, and civilly. We knew that this journal must be open to people of all faith and ideological backgrounds.

After sharing my idea with Connor, I began to approach other students. It wasn't a difficult sell. Andrew Smith, a bright conservative from my macroeconomics class, jumped at the idea. Mithra Salmassi, a writer and researcher in Holy Cross's Digital Transgender Archive, signed on immediately after I shared my proposal. Our staff began to grow.



As I thought about this idea more throughout the summer of 2016, the purpose of this project became clearer to me. It was, it is, about harnessing the electrifying hopes of young people and encouraging them to make these hopes concrete in such a way that rejects both the venom and visceral political binary of this discursive moment. By doing so, I hoped to reclaim – if only on Holy Cross’s campus – the now radical notion that my ideological opponents and I are engaged in a common enterprise. Be one Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, or none of the above, we all seek a more perfect union; stronger, more loving communities; and a brighter future for our children and our children’s children. We all know that we have more work to do.

We will always have more work to do.

But if we can reclaim the notion that we share similar, if not the same, goals, and simply disagree over the proper way to get there, the deafening contempt and useless noise of our current politics will fade away. What will be left after that is what should have been there all along: productive discussion, aimed at maximizing our common good.

This is the type of discussion that this journal, *A Contest of Ideas*, hopes to model for the Holy Cross

community. We took our name from President Barak Obama’s speech to the 2016 Democratic National Convention. Ideas do struggle with each other, even as they complement each other.

We at *ACI* acknowledge that our impact will likely be small, and we shall ever seek to expand it. But change starts small.

If we truly seek to reduce inequality, to serve the poor and the marginalized, to better the country, the economy, the environment, or the future of our world in some other way – if we hope to have any impact on this world – we must rehabilitate our broken discourse. We must respect, engage civilly with, and learn from those with whom we disagree.

We must start this work now.

*Billy Ford, assistant editor in chief of A Contest of Ideas, is in junior year at the College of the Holy Cross; he spent the first semester in Amman, Jordan, and is to spend the second in an internship in Washington. See [www.acontestideas.com](http://www.acontestideas.com).*



Wheeler Hall,  
College of the  
Holy Cross





*The Parable of the Good Samaritan by Jan Wijnants (1670)*



# TALKING BACK

## The Quality of Mercy at the Heart of Sanctuary

By Paul Lakeland

**Looking at the** spectacular issue of *Conversations* (Fall 2017, “Sanctuary for Truth and Justice”) I reflected on all the wonderful initiatives talked about in those pages. Something, I thought, has to link all that we do with all that we are, something that connects the bonds that tie us together with the bonds we try loose among those to whom we reach out. I want to suggest that this something is the virtue of mercy.

Mercy helps us see what to do with our critical and sophisticated grasp of what our world is really like. Mercy, in fact, can be two related, but quite distinct, things. First, mercy can mean withholding or easing up on the punishment or suffering someone actually deserves. When a judge imposes only a light sentence on a person convicted of a crime with extenuating circumstances, we call it mercy. And when we go easy on a friend who has deeply offended us, this is also the same kind of mercy. This is *mercy as leniency*. But there is another and perhaps more important understanding of mercy, closer certainly to the mind of Pope Francis and to St. Ignatius’ call to a generous life. When we do something to alleviate the suffering of another person who has done no wrong and doesn’t deserve the suffering he or she is undergoing, we are practicing mercy. This is *mercy as healing*, and it works in surprising ways. In this

second kind of mercy, we encounter what Miranda Richard in her *Conversations* article (Becoming “Us” in a Polarized Age) called “the Jesuit tradition of compassion, empathy, and service” (26-27).

Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan in response to the question, “Who is my neighbor?” The Samaritan is a stranger and an outcast – a heretic whom the good people of first century Judaea despised. He comes to the aid of someone who has been robbed and left for dead. Respectable religious leaders have “passed by on the other side.” But the Samaritan, who has no responsibility for this person, goes out of his way to help, providing aid and finances to assure the other’s recovery. The man left for dead does not deserve the suffering, and the Samaritan has no responsibility to help him. The Samaritan acts in this compassionate way because, well, because this is the kind of person he is. He would have done the same for someone else, and perhaps had done so many times before. So this single act of mercy displays not simply a merciful act but the practice of someone who is consistently merciful. It shows one instance of how the virtue of mercy could be at work in healing the world.

This understanding of mercy needs to saturate the culture of our universities. We get a hint about

its importance from the treatment of the parable in the writings of the great French philosopher Simone Weil. When Weil analyzes the parable, she sees that the bleeding victim needs something to restore him to his full humanity, namely, the care and concern of another. The Samaritan divests himself, if only of money, but by doing so he grows into a richer humanity. Now of course we rarely if ever encounter someone on our campus who is in anything like the man in dire need whom the Samaritan encounters. But if we keep our eyes and our hearts open, there will be many calls upon us on some days, and some calls upon us almost every day. Explicitly or not, we are constantly asked to give of ourselves. The demands that are made upon us by living in community do cost us, our time or energy if not money. But the costs are returned to us many times over in the rich growth of our human capacities to be vulnerable in face of the needs of the other.

Jesuit universities are called to model the kind of society in which we would all like to live. This is the sanctuary that Howard Gray talks about (“Sanctuary for the Heart,” 8-10), though it should be our wish for such sanctuary to be unnecessary. Sanctuary should be the air the whole world breathes. As we struggle to be sanctuary, we recognize that we are far from perfect. But we know that the direction in which we must move is towards recognizing the full humanity of all those around us. So, the way we treat one another, the way we speak of one another, especially of those who are somehow different from us, is either a building block towards a better world or a vote for destruction. Transfer the lesson of the gift-exchange to our campuses today: the person of color has much to teach the possessor of white privilege, and sometimes the opposite is true. In the exchange between the two, perhaps understanding and, yes, even love may begin to flourish. We are gay and straight, black and brown and yellow and white, rich and poor, men and women. We have transgendered people in our community. We are Christians and Buddhists and Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and people of no religion at all. Some of us are beneficiaries of

President Barak Obama’s DACA program for so-called Dreamers, at least for now. Some of us are people suffering from addiction. And some of us are ill, physically or mentally. But as the story of the Good Samaritan shows, the practice of mercy transcends all these differences.

I am reminded of some words of Rainer Maria Rilke in his *Letters to a Young Poet*, where he wrote: Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.

Mercy requires the courage to be vulnerable, the kind of courage that carried Dorothy Day through a lifetime of engagement with the urban poor. She saw the connections between desperate poverty and homelessness on the one hand and a society driven by greed on the other. You may find it shocking when she says, “Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system.” But I hope you see the wisdom of her conviction that “the greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us?”

I have suggested that at this stage of life, here in the incubator of a college education, our way is to study hard so as to truly know the world and to practice the virtue of mercy towards one another, especially to the dragons in our lives. It’s a simple equation: learning + virtue = wisdom. Our world and our lives may be full of what appear to us as dragons. Our national and global leaders certainly give most of us pause for thought. But a little more love and mercy can turn at least some of them into princesses.

*Paul Lakeland is director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Fairfield University. His most recent book is The Wounded Angel: Fiction and Religious Imagination (Liturgical Press, 2017). He explains, “The book explores the relationship between the act of faith and the act of reading. Really.”*



# A Call for Prophetic Jesuit Leadership

By Sarah Hansman

For two decades, Fr. Michael Himes has welcomed generations of incoming freshmen at orientation with his explanation of what makes Boston College and their impending Jesuit education so meaningful. “The measure of the success of your education,” Himes intones with conviction, “is the measure to which people who *never got* to come to Boston College lead richer, fuller, and more genuinely human lives because *you did* go to Boston College.” Father Himes emphasizes the importance of giving away one’s education – the critical-thinking skills, the acquired talents, the lived experiences – to those who were not privileged with such an opportunity. Former Superior General of the Jesuits Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., argues that at the heart of the Society of Jesus, and subsequently of every Jesuit institution, is “the service of faith” and “the promotion of justice.” Jesuit schools at their best produce dynamic students equipped with both the skills to excel and the conscience to do so ethically. More important, they produce students who are eager to share their education with those in need. Jesuit graduates are commissioned to use their education to create a more just, more compassionate society.

But shaping men and women to enact positive change once they leave campus is not enough. In a position of such immense power and influence, the Jesuit university, specifically university officials, has the task to speak prophetically on issues of social justice. This duty emerges from the core of the Catholic faith, from St. Ignatius’ founding of an order that actively promotes justice, and further back from the gospel itself and the call by Jesus to care for the least among us. Jesuit leadership must model and practice the values they preach. In such a divisive time, this is difficult to do. But for the same reason that it is difficult, it is equally important.

As a senior at BC, there are areas in which I am proud of the administration’s commitment to the “promotion of justice.” Service-learning courses such as PULSE and immersion trips both domestic and international reflect the heart of this mission. However, there have been moments in which I felt that the university fell short in opportunities to reject inequity

**“The real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become.”**

*-Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.*

and speak out on behalf of the marginalized. For example, there is a lack of space to facilitate and hold conversations or rallies around pressing social issues. Often, it isn’t what the university says and does, but rather what the university *fails* to say, *fails* to do. It is the silence that hurts the most. And in historically divisive times like the one we are living through now, that silence is resounding.

This is not to oversimplify; before condemning administrative silence as cold, students must recognize the intensely competitive, ever-changing world of higher education. Running a top tier university is incredibly difficult and involves a number of moving pieces and unique goals. But if money, prestige, and reputation are taking precedence over combatting injustice in all its forms, I urge our Jesuit universities to reconsider their priorities.

Father Kolvenbach writes, “The real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become.” If BC expects its students to work for a more just and compassionate society, university leadership must first model that passion for justice. Boston College is a place we come from; and I hope that when my class graduates this spring, we leave with a greater call to strike through the silence and speak out against injustice and, as St. Ignatius said, to set the world aflame.

*Originally from Duxbury, Mass, Sarah Hansman is a senior at Boston College studying theology and higher education. With a passion the Jesuit education, Sarah plans to do a post-grad year of service and then get an M.A. in theology and ministry.*

# How Should Jesuit Universities Respond to the Repeal of DACA?

By Rachel Wifall

In a 2017 study conducted for the finance website WalletHub.com, Jersey City, N.J., was declared the nation's most diverse city, based on ethnoracial, linguistic, and birthplace data. According to Mayor Steven Fulop, "Jersey City has always been a welcoming home for new groups seeking a better life, bringing a diversity of cultures, religions, and languages here, which is truly the embodiment of the promise of America." Accordingly, Saint Peter's University in Jersey City appears on the *U.S. News and World Report* "Best Colleges" list for diversity (2016-17), with 42 percent of its students of Hispanic origin. In order to serve these

students, Saint Peter's has created both an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and The Center for Undocumented Students (TCUS), housed in the King-Kairos Social Justice House.

When the Trump administration ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, Saint Peter's University President Eugene J. Cornacchia is-

sued a statement inspired by the words of Pope Francis: "The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place or disposable." Dr. Cornacchia assured the university community that Saint Peter's will not consider immigration status in the admission

and financial-aid process, will never inquire about a student's immigration status, and will not share any personal data with anyone without a warrant or a subpoena. The volunteer-driven Center for Undocumented Students and the social justice program, often in conjunction with the Office of Campus Ministry and community organizations, in-



Jennifer Ayala, director of The Center for Undocumented Students, TCUS, is pictured here in a meeting with staff and volunteers for the center.

Photo courtesy of Corey W. McDonald, *The Jersey Journal*





The King-Kairos Social Justice House at Saint Peter's University in Jersey City.

creased their efforts on behalf of the immigrant student population, hosting licensed professionals who provided pro-bono counseling sessions and immigration lawyers who offered free "Know Your Rights" workshops. The groups have also provided staff and faculty training regarding the special needs of undocumented students, as well as student-led vigils, marches, and phone-banking marathons.

While undocumented students cannot obtain federal loans or grants, "Li" – an immigrant from Mexico and a 2017 graduate – was able to attend Saint Peter's through the generosity of anonymous donors who set up a Dreamer Scholarship Fund. He felt protected by the Saint Peter's community and his DACA status. However, "After Trump was elected, it sunk in that I was living my last year as a student and that

the protections that came with being a 'dreamer' student would not apply anymore; I would become an undocumented adult." Li asserts that we need to find a way to provide real sanctuary for undocumented people beyond the "Dreamers." Jennifer Ayala, professor of education and director of TCUS, agrees that we must also reach out to nonstudent members of our community, perhaps in conjunction with local churches.

Anna Brown, associate professor of political science and director of the social justice program, warns against "resting on our Jesuit laurels," assuming that because we are Jesuit institutions we are automatically on the side of the oppressed and need not take strong measures to confirm our commitment to justice. Like Dr. Cornacchia, she cites Pope Francis, who encourages us to "honor human dignity, build

solidarity, and create a culture of encounter" and ask ourselves one of the oldest of all questions: "Where is your brother?" In the August 2017 issue of *Conversations*, John McKay encourages all Jesuit universities to declare their campuses sanctuaries for their students and "send a powerful message of support when [it] is most needed." As for further measures, perhaps we should follow the example of Vince Boudreau, interim president of City College of New York, who called for action including demonstrations, pressuring elected officials, and learning the "rules of engagement with immigration officials."

*Rachel Wifall is an associate professor of English at Saint Peter's University; she is also a member of the Conversations seminar.*

# Emmaus: The Nature of the Way

By Chris Yates

(Note: The previous issue of *Conversations* ran a notice about a new book about the Jesuits at Loyola Marymount University, and we noted that the author Chris Yates would have some words for us later about the background. Here is Chris's story.)

**They told us** that the NBCUniversal Campus 2 Career Internship Program had a more exclusive acceptance rate than Harvard, but it took an entire year for me to realize that even this could not fill the God-shaped hole that was in my heart. I remember sitting at my desk on the top floor of the Comcast NBCUniversal building, reading a script for a show that would air eight months later,

and I had a realization. Historically, there has not been a lot of overlap between the entertainment industry and faith, so I took that same mentality. And it took me four years to realize that they did not have to be separated.

Many people ask me what I am – photographer, filmmaker, director – but at my core I am a storyteller. I find stories that need to be told, and in this case, *Emmaus: The Nature of the Way* proved to me that faith and art go hand and hand.

I completed my undergraduate education at Loyola Marymount University and was very involved in Campus Ministry as a student. I had found a treasure trove of spiritual tools in the Je-

suits that I met, but what I also found changed my life forever: friendship. I wanted to find a way to express to the world the friendship and humanity that these Jesuits so humbly shared with me.

About a year into creating *Emmaus: The Nature of the Way*, it became blatantly clear that for the majority of people, there was a disconnect between a priest and a human being. And because of this, there were barriers that made these men unapproachable and not relatable. Ever since stepping onto LMU's campus, my personal experience has been nothing but the opposite and therefore heavily inspired the creation of this book.

This book's existence is lived experience and is a dynamic piece of art that changes as much as the person who views it. Whether you know all 22 Jesuits photographed or know zero, what you will come to know is a narrative of collective experiences that extends a hand out to you, as a friend. You will read word-for-word stories about a Jesuit's mother's first Alzheimer's episode, a Jesuit's fight with addiction, and how a second grade class helped a Jesuit overcome his stroke.

The Nature of the Way as defined here is not an adjective, but a verb. It is a way of relating in which you view your personal journey to Emmaus with the understanding that no matter what your destination or your path is, you are not alone.

*Chris Yates graduated from Loyola Marymount in 2016; after spending a volunteer year in campus ministry at the University of Illinois Chicago, he returned to LMU to manage their photography labs. His collaborator, photographer Robert Macaia, graduated from LMU in 2014 and works as a professional photographer in Los Angeles.*



Chris Yates (left) and his collaborator, photographer Robert Macaia (right, seen from behind), set up a shot for *Emmaus, the Nature of the Way*.



# Doing Time, Redeeming Time

## *Teaching in the Saint Louis University Prison Program*

By Daniel L. Smith

*"I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me..."*  
(Matt 25:43)

In Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, found only in Matthew's Gospel (25:31–46), the Son of Man sits on a glorious throne and judges the nations. The work involves sorting out the sheep from the goats, the former for salvation, the latter for condemnation. The damning rebuke of Matt 25:43 highlights the goats' failure to show hospitality to strangers, their refusal to care for the poor, and their indifference to the plight of the sick...and of prisoners.

As a first-year assistant professor at Saint Louis University, I had never given much thought to the plight of prisoners until I was asked if I might be interested in teaching for the SLU Prison Program. As a pedagogue, my curiosity was piqued, and as a New Testament professor, I was excited to have the opportunity to fulfill a gospel imperative – an imperative embraced by the SLU Mission Statement, with its call for the "promotion of faith and justice in the spirit of the Gospels."

So, having agreed in the spring to teach in the fall, I spent the summer attending training, undergoing mandatory tuberculosis testing, and finally achieving certification as a Missouri Volunteer in Corrections. On August 12, 2013, I was on my way into the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center (ERDCC) in Bonne Terre, Mo, armed with syllabi, hand-outs, and a lesson plan for day one. After resolving a paperwork problem that left me stuck on the outside while my students waited inside, I reached the visitor room where my class awaited. We would meet only nine times – four hours every Monday morning for nine weeks, so I had to squeeze the equivalent of approximately four normal classes into each meeting.

It was exhausting. The beginning-of-class adrenaline boost could only carry me so far. At the request of the nicotine users, we took breaks every 60 minutes, and

I appreciated the chance to breathe and recharge. Yet the nicotine-free would grumble, disappointed to lose these precious minutes. This class was the highlight of the men's week. Many of the incarcerated students prepared for class by working through assignments multiple times. Their comments revealed that they had not only read thoroughly and repeatedly, but some took time to look up every parenthetical biblical citation in the readings! I could ask a question, any question, and hands would fly up around the room.

Physically, Monday mornings were challenging, but the reward came in the form of a pedagogical nirvana, where students over-prepared for every class, engaged enthusiastically in class discussions, and eagerly sought out additional readings and feedback. Though stripped of many freedoms, the incarcerated do possess one good that the rest of us crave: time. I am reminded that our word "school" ultimately derives from a Greek word (*scholē*) meaning "leisure" – these men with "leisure" time and unfettered minds took delight in their "schooling."

## TEACHING THE MISSION

I taught the incarcerated class, the “insiders,” from 8am to noon. Then I would head for the public library to decompress (and grade), before completing the marathon Mondays that dominated my semester: I taught the “outsiders” class – composed of corrections officers and other ERDCC staff – from 5pm to 9pm. Obviously, this class was even more challenging for an embodied creature like me. But these students were no less inspiring. Most of them were piling an intensive nine-week course onto a full-time job, in addition to any other family responsibilities they might have. There was no question of doing the reading three times under those circumstances, but the desire for learning and growth remained powerfully present.

They say that corrections staff are doing time, too – they just do time “in shifts.” Yet all of us were working to redeem the time. For example, one staff member used a final writing assignment to bring the story of the crucifixion fresh into all of our ears, drawing from his own experience with executions to retell the passion narrative in a 21st-century context. Another time, two of my incarcerated students failed to come to class when we started our unit on Paul. As the rest of us read Paul’s letters from prison, these two remained in administrative segregation, reading Paul for weeks in isolation. Then they returned, having been cleared of any wrongdoing. I honestly believe their faces were glowing as they spoke of their

experience. And, of course, they did all their homework, too. Thanks to the selfless efforts of a staff member in my outsider class, they were even able to submit their work in timely fashion while in solitary confinement!

Teaching in the correctional setting brought me face-to-face with many of the complexities of our nation’s prison system – a system that affects the lives of millions of our fellow human beings. The need for reform has gained momentum in recent years, but the task of reforming such a massive institution can be incredibly daunting. The SLU Prison Program works with the Missouri Department of Corrections to provide educational opportunities that can transform not only the lives of “outsiders” and “insiders” but also the outlook of even more outsiderly outsiders like me. My nine weeks reconfigured the way I hear the New Testament, the way I read the New Testament, the way I teach the New Testament, and the way I try to live out the New Testament, including its call to visit the prisoner.

*Daniel L. Smith started as an assistant professor of New Testament at Saint Louis University in fall 2012. He used an early draft of his second book, Into the World of the New Testament: Greco-Roman and Jewish Texts and Contexts (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), while teaching for the SLU Prison Program.*



Jonathan Sawday discusses William Blake as part of the Inside Out Speaker Series



## THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION

The goal of the National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education and its publication *Conversations* is to strengthen the Jesuit identity of our 28 colleges and universities. First, each issue is written to stimulate the campus dialogue – through departmental discussions or faculty symposiums – on the pursuit of various ideals. Second, through our various departments –

feature articles, forums, book reviews, and reports – we want to keep the conversation going to build on the progress we have made. Our members, representing various institutions and disciplines, visit three colleges and universities a year and listen to groups of faculty and students in order to decide the themes for each issue.

### Members of the Seminar

**Gerard A. Athaide** is a professor of marketing at Loyola University Maryland.

**Heidi Barker** is an associate professor in the department of education at Regis University.

**Timothy P. Kesicki, S.J.**, is President of the Jesuit Conference.

**Patrick J. Howell, S.J.**, executive director *ad interim* of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality, Orange, California, is on a one-year leave from Seattle University.

**Molly Pepper** is the associate dean of the undergraduate program and a professor of management at Gonzaga University.

**Jennifer Rinella** is the director of non-profit leadership studies and an assistant professor at Rockhurst University.

**Stephen C. Rowntree, S.J.**, an associate pastor at the Holy Name of Jesus Church in New Orleans, is the secretary of the National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education.

**Julie Rubio** is a professor of Christian ethics in the department of theology at St. Louis University.

**Edward W. Schmidt, S.J.**, editor of *Conversations*, is senior editor of *America* magazine.

**Michael Sheeran, S.J.**, is President of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

**Clint J. Springer** is an associate professor of biology at Saint Joseph's University.

**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.

### Writing for *Conversations*

Most of the articles are commissioned according to a certain theme for each issue, but we welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Ideally they should explore an idea that will generate discussion. Try to avoid articles that simply describe a worthy local project. Guidelines.

- Please keep unsolicited submissions to 1000-1200 words. We may ask for reductions depending on the topic.

- Do not include footnotes. Incorporate any needed references into the text.
- The *Conversations* style sheet is available on request.
- We welcome photographs, fully captioned, preferably of action rather than posed shots.
- Send the manuscript as a Microsoft Word attachment to [conversamag@gmail.com](mailto:conversamag@gmail.com)

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COMING UP Issue #54 (Fall 2018)  
Mental Health & Illness





Gasson Rotunda.  
Boston College, Massachusetts.

**Georgetown University**  
*Washington, DC, 1789*

**Saint Louis University**  
*Saint Louis, 1818*

**Spring Hill College**  
*Mobile, 1830*

**Xavier University**  
*Cincinnati, 1831*

**Fordham University**  
*New York, 1841*

**College of the Holy Cross**  
*Worcester, 1843*

**Saint Joseph's University**  
*Philadelphia, 1851*

**Santa Clara University**  
*Santa Clara, 1851*

**Loyola University Maryland**  
*Baltimore, 1852*

**University of San Francisco**  
*San Francisco, 1855*

**Boston College**  
*Boston, 1863*

**Canisius College**  
*Buffalo, 1870*

**Loyola University Chicago**  
*Chicago, 1870*

**Saint Peter's University**  
*Jersey City, 1872*

**University of Detroit Mercy**  
*Detroit, 1877*

**Regis University**  
*Denver, 1877*

**Creighton University**  
*Omaha, 1878*

**Marquette University**  
*Milwaukee, 1881*

**John Carroll University**  
*Cleveland, 1886*

**Gonzaga University**  
*Spokane, 1887*

**University of Scranton**  
*Scranton, 1888*

**Seattle University**  
*Seattle, 1891*

**Rockhurst University**  
*Kansas City, 1910*

**Loyola Marymount University**  
*Los Angeles, 1911*

**Loyola University New Orleans**  
*New Orleans, 1912*



**Fairfield University**  
*Fairfield, 1942*

**Le Moyne College**  
*Syracuse, 1946*

**Wheeling Jesuit University**  
*Wheeling, 1954*

**COMING IN FALL 2018:**  
**#54 Mental Health & Illness**

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