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The Perceived Effects the Decline of Catholic Students has on Governance and Organization at an American Catholic University

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THE PERCEIVED EFFECTS THE DECLINE OF CATHOLIC STUDENTS HAS ON
GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION AT AN AMERICAN CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY

BY

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Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a case study of a Catholic university that is experiencing a rapid decline in the enrollment of Catholic students. Since 1990, this multicampus institution has experienced a 13% decline in the number of Catholic students, from 60% in 1990 to 47% currently on the main campus. Concurrently, the Catholic Church has implemented *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, an ecclesial document emphasizing the dual relationship Catholic institutions of higher education have to both the academic community and the Church. The rubrics put forth by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* are extremely difficult for campus leaders to implement when the campus culture does not embrace the same values.

This research examines the impact the decline in the number of Catholic students has on institutional governance and organization through the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders at American Catholic University (a pseudonym). The subsidiary questions include examining issues of spending and resource allocation, the changes in institutional programs and student activities, religious and symbolic changes to the physical plant, the successful implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and the hiring of new positions or the creation of new departments that assist in the propagation of the Catholic identity. The research method of this study uses qualitative techniques.

The researcher includes an examination of other denominational higher educational institutions that have experienced similar trends in the decline in students of the sponsoring affiliated churches. Many other churches, including the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, have and continue to struggle in maintaining their religious identity at their higher education institutions. An

examination of Church documents that have attempted to clarify and describe the dual and juridical relationship of Catholic higher institutions leading to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* are presented.

This study will highlight issues pertaining to Catholic higher education identity with an in-depth review of one specific institution. This study illustrates how American Catholic University senior administrators and campus leaders are dedicated to maintaining the Catholic mission and identity of the institution, and the day-to-day decisions they make to make this commitment real.

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“Pray and labor - Ora et labora.” Saint Benedict

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background

From the founding of the first American Catholic College, Georgetown College, in 1789, to the over 230 current colleges and universities operating today, Catholic institutions of higher education have remained key constituencies in American higher education. More than 724,065 students are currently enrolled in undergraduate and graduate Catholic institutions, accounting for almost half of all enrolled students at faith-based colleges and universities (Catholic Directory, 2005). Nationally, the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) indicates that the number of “nonreligious” American adults more than doubled between 1990 and 2001 while the number of “religious” and “Christians” declined. Those identifying themselves as “nonreligious” are now the fastest growing segment of the population. In this rapidly growing secular society, American institutions of Catholic higher education continually grapple with issues of identity, purpose, and mission in relationship to other institutions of higher education and their relationship with the Vatican and Church magisterium. In recent years, the Catholic Church has debated with affiliated colleges and universities over issues pertaining to maintaining Catholic identity, questions of orthodoxy of teachings and in programs offered on campus, hiring practices regarding religious affiliation of professors and administrators, and overall institutional goals and purpose (O’Brien, 2002).

In an attempt to clarify the relationship between Catholic colleges and the Church, Pope John Paul II introduced *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in 1990, a pontifical document

addressing issues of both teaching and administration at Catholic institutions of higher education. This document provides a description of the mission and identity, for nonpontifically and pontifically chartered Catholic institutions of higher education, and the importance of the relationship between the institution and the Church (Heft, 1999; Hellwig, 2003). Implementing the teachings found in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* can be challenging for an institution if the campus culture has moved away from Catholic tradition and rituals and if the majority of members of the campus community, including students, faculty, staff, or administrators, are not members of the Catholic Church. The campus culture in which *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is implemented is critical for its success.

Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education Campus Culture

With much debate over the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and issues of Catholic identity at institutions of Catholic higher education, there are several aspects of campus culture that affect the potential for the implementation of this ecclesial document (Hellwig, 1999). The first cultural or environmental factor is the laicization of Catholic higher education personnel. In the article, *Keeping the Faith on Campus: Not Just how but Who*, Holtschneider and Morey (2001) examine the changing Catholic college culture in regard to the decline in numbers of members of founding religious communities on campus. The research included 175 Catholic colleges in the United States at that time who responded to the survey. From their research, they discovered that 98% of the responding colleges reported a problem of the disappearance of the founding congregation members from campus. Of the respondents, 59% of these institutional leaders reported that their institution had no plans to address the problems stemming from

the disappearance of religious figures on campus. With the decline of the number of religious members on campus, Holtschneider and Morey suggested three paths that Catholic institutions could follow. These paths included becoming private and secular, thus forfeiting their Catholic identity. This is a path that many Protestant institutions have taken to remain competitive in enrollment and academic competitiveness. The second path involves becoming more universal Catholic, shedding the founding religious communities' charism and adopting a more broadly based Catholic character. This path highlights the decline in members of the sponsoring religious community. Several female religious institutions have already followed this path. Laypersons have taken on senior administrative roles but struggle in emphasizing the founders' charism on campus. The third path leads to a slow but continuous move further away from the founding congregation and Church teachings. The logical result of this path leads an institution to eventually having only ties to the congregation and the Church that are historic and nostalgic (Morey & Holtschneider, 2001). Attempting to implement *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* becomes much more difficult in this changing environment.

In an additional study by Morey and Holtschneider (2003), *Leadership and the Age of the Laity: Emerging Patterns in Catholic Higher Education*, the researchers surveyed 222 Catholic college and university presidents, of whom 116 were lay, examining issues of Catholic higher education's leadership. Their findings were as follows:

1. Catholic college and university presidents increasingly resemble their presidential peers elsewhere in U.S. higher education.

2. Women are disappearing from the presidency in Catholic colleges and universities.
3. Laypersons infrequently emerge as presidents from finalists containing members of the founding religious congregation.
4. There is a significant lack of formal theological and spiritual preparedness among presidents. There is also widespread agreement among presidents that inadequate lay preparation presents a problem for the future of Catholic higher education.
5. Forty-one percent of religious and twenty-six percent of lay presidents find the phrases “Catholic identity” and “Catholic intellectual tradition” to be fuzzy concepts that lack sufficient vitality on campuses.
6. Presidents desire a more supportive working relationship with the hierarchical church but find such a relationship elusive and complex.
7. Presidents acknowledge the central role faculty play at institutions. Nevertheless, many presidents report that the faculty is an obstacle to effective leadership in the area of Catholic character, mission and identity.

Morey and Holtschneider (2003) state that “[o]ne of the most significant losses Catholic colleges experience as congregation members disappear is the loss of witness. Therefore, a critical question they face in maintaining their unique cultural identity is how to create witnesses without religious congregations.” Issues regarding formation and development for lay leaders taking on senior level positions are extremely important to ensure strong

institutional affiliation with the Church. Realizing the complexities of the changing laicization of Catholic institutions of higher education leadership is imperative in understanding campus culture (Cernera & Mackin, 2005).

Another trend Catholic higher education is facing pertaining to campus culture, Catholic identity and the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is the decline in the percentage of Catholic students attending Catholic institutions of higher education. Hellwig (2000) states that Catholic students average 60% of the enrollment on Catholic campuses with a range from as low as 12% to a high of 90%. Whereas most Catholic scholars agree that there is a decline in the number of Catholic students enrolled in American Catholic higher education, the exact number or percentage of all Catholic students enrolled in all Catholic institutions is not currently available (D. Holtschneider, personal correspondence, April 16, 2006; Brown & Greeley, 1971; Hellwig, 2000). This difficulty in data collection is due to the differences in college and university data collection structures (M. James, personal correspondence, March 4, 2005; D. Holtschneider, personal interview, April 16, 2006). The question, however, remains: what percentage of a student body, faculty, staff, and administration at a Catholic college needs to be Catholic to maintain a Catholic identity and effectively implement the teachings of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*?

According to the United States Conference of Bishops statement on the application of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Catholic universities are participants in the life of the Church and the higher education community of the United States (USCCB, 2003). *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* states that Catholic colleges and universities are called to continuous renewal, both as universities and as Catholic. This twofold relationship is described in the

May 22, 1994, joint document of the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Councils for the Laity and for Culture, which states:

The Catholic university achieves its purpose when it gives proof of being rigorously serious as a member of the international community of knowledge and expresses its Catholic identity through an explicit link with the Church, at both local and universal levels – an identity which marks concretely the life, the services and the programs of the university community. In this way, by its very existence, the Catholic university achieves its aim of guaranteeing, in institutional form, a Christian presence in the university world.

Is an explicit link with the Catholic Church possible if participants in the higher education institution are not associated with this denomination? If the mission or existence of Catholic higher education is to promulgate a Christian presence in the university world, can this be achieved without a majority of the institution's students and personnel population being part of the Catholic Church? These important questions challenge denominational, specifically Catholic, higher education, to its very core.

Importance of Catholic Higher Education

Faith-based institutions played a significant role in the foundation and inception of American higher education. Denominational education provides students with a value-laden education. Dr. William Shea (1987), Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida, in his address to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) stated that throughout history denominational higher education has been deeply concerned with national interests and has not promoted itself as unattached

from the common good of our nation and society. Shea stated that Catholic higher education in particular has been clear about educating students to both preserve the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church and to serve morally fellow man, the nation, and God. Shea (1987) said:

The glory of denominational education is that it presents to society what public education thinks it cannot, a perspective from which one can sort out what rings true to human experience and what does not, and what is right from what is wrong. Denominational education has displayed to the American public two things: that one can believe and yet think, and that one can serve the common good while deeply involved in the life of a particular community of meaning and value. (p. 8:2)

Catholic higher education is extremely important in the landscape of American higher education for Catholic education serves as a template for value-based education. Holistically, Catholic higher education provides an opportunity for students to develop spiritually and academically while teaching students to be civic minded. Alan Wolfe (2002), Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College, suggests that what makes Catholic higher education institutions unique is their concern for social justice, their stance toward the poor and the abandoned, and their concern for the rights of workers. Through mission and programs Wolfe believes, Catholic higher education provides students with perspectives and experiences that educate them to be concerned about injustices and society at large. Catholic higher education serves students by working to integrate their beliefs and values with their educational experience. The tension of remaining faithful to religious identity and

mission versus institutional marketability, recruitment, and funding, challenges faith-based colleges and universities to make decisions that will affect the future path of the institution. Unfortunately, a majority of Protestant institutions have relinquished their Church affiliation, removed religion as a core element of the curriculum, and embraced secularism (Curran, 1997; Hutchison, 2001). Catholic institutions of higher education need to determine quickly how they are going to avoid the fate of Protestant higher education, for the loss of Catholic higher education would change the face of American higher education.

Issues of Governance and Organization

As stated by the United States Conference of American Catholic Bishops in the document on the application of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in the United States (1999), institutions of American Catholic higher education have a twofold relationship with the Catholic Church and the academic university community. A primary responsibility Catholic universities have is to the academic community. Catholic institutions of higher learning are called to create knowledge and promulgate truth. Jacques Barzun (1959) referred to the university as the house of the intellect. Catholic colleges and universities remain, as all secular institutions, as a place or house of intellectual discussion and discourse.

The second and more complex charge of this twofold relationship is with the local and universal church. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* states, "Every Catholic University is to maintain communion with the universal Church and the Holy See; it is to be in close communion with the local Church and in particular with the diocesan bishops of the

region or the nation in which it is located” (ECE, 1990, II, p. 5). Unlike nonfaith-based institutions, leaders of Catholic institutions of higher education must govern the institution in communion with the Church. Leaders of Catholic colleges and universities must be educated in matters of Catholic doctrine if they are going to properly lead an institution while remaining faithful to the Church. The role of the local Bishop is to communicate and safeguard the integrity of Church doctrine. The charge given to leaders who govern Catholic institutions of higher education and local bishops is to collaborate in integrating faith with life. The academic and religious roots of an institution must be intermingled. Catholic institutions that wish to provide students with a strong Catholic academic education must work institutionally to provide a curricular and extracurricular experience that incorporates quality education with principles of the Church (Gallin, 2000).

In presenting this charge, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* highlights four distinctive characteristics that are essential for colleges and universities to maintain a Catholic identity. These characteristics include Christian inspiration in individuals and the university community, reflection and research on human knowledge in the light of Catholic faith, fidelity to the Christian message in conformity with the magisterium of the Church, and institutional commitment to the service of others (ECE, 2001). How is it possible to govern a Catholic institution of higher education, following the rubrics to maintain a Catholic university identity, when the majority of the institution members are no longer Catholic or have specific clear understanding of Church teachings? *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* continues by stating that the Catholic university must include faculty, administrators, and trustees who implement the mission statement of the institution in

order to foster and strengthen its Catholic nature and character. Leaders face great challenges in attempting to foster and strengthen a Catholic identity at an institution with a minority of Catholic students and personnel understanding, following, or believing in Catholicism. Changes in governance need to be examined in light of the changing Catholic college or university culture if a true relationship with the Church is to occur.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae has a very clear stance regarding university personnel. The document states that, to every extent possible, the majority of the board of trustees should be Catholics committed to the Church, the university president should be a Catholic, and the institution, within legal boundaries, should make every effort possible to recruit and appoint Catholics in faculty positions (ECE, 2001). Regarding students, the document expresses that Catholic institutions should provide courses specifically in Catholic doctrine and that secular disciplines taught should include Catholic teachings, which provide professional ethics and moral discourse in alignment with the Church. In addition, students need to be provided the opportunities to practice the Catholic faith through sacraments and other authentic forms of Catholic spirituality (ECE, 2001). Oftentimes, issues of Catholic identity were believed to be addressed by courses in theology or found in stagnate mission statements. *Ex Corde Ecclesia* states that issues of institutional identity must permeate all areas of the institution, including curriculum, symbols and rituals, and institutional statements.

The challenges to governing and leading Catholic institutions have been dramatically affected by this document and the changing culture of Catholic higher education institutions. To diversify the institutions' administrative, faculty, and board members' ethnic and religious affiliation to mirror the student population but at the same

time remain true to the teachings of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is a great challenge (Heft & Pestello, 1999). A rationale needs to be made if an institution is to continue to offer classes in Catholic theology and provide sacramental liturgies on a campus that only has a minority of Catholic students remaining. Partaking in rituals that no longer have meaning for the majority of the campus community would be a fruitless exercise.

The laicization and changes in religious demographics of Catholic higher education students and personnel and the effects they have on the institution's governing administrator have only become more complicated since the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* by the American Council of Bishops. The complication is highlighted by the guidelines set forth regarding hiring practices, curriculum issues, and identity mandates that are more easily implemented in a Catholic culture. The document provides the following set of governance rules and guidelines:

1. A Catholic university should have a mission statement that clearly identifies the university as Catholic.
2. Official actions of university officials are to be consonant with the Catholic identity.
3. A Catholic university should be autonomous within the confines of the truth and the common good.
4. There are three types of Catholic universities:
 - a. Those established by the Vatican
 - b. Those established by an Episcopal conference
 - c. Those established by a diocesan bishop

5. A Catholic university must be in communion with the Holy See and with the local church and the diocesan bishop.
6. Bishops have the responsibility to promote Catholic universities and colleges in their dioceses and the right and duty to preserve and strengthen their Catholic character.
7. A Catholic university should communicate information regarding the institution to the bishop or ecclesiastical authority regularly.
8. Catholic institutions should collaborate together in confronting the complex problems of modern society.

These rubrics established by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* hold the university administrator to a close relationship with the institutional Church. By ultimately identifying the Bishop of the diocese as having the charge to preserve and strengthen the institution's Catholic character, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is holding the president and board of trustees accountable to the Church hierarchy. Governing an institution whose campus culture is not strongly rooted in Catholic tradition would be an enormous obstacle in implementing the governing guidelines of this document. The campus culture would then be in contrast with the teachings, making it almost impossible for successful implementation. Furthermore, without an understanding of what the Catholic Church teaches and values, how are non-Catholic personnel and students to understand institutional decisions that promote a Catholic identity?

Statement of the Problem

My research problem is to explore how the decline in the number of Catholic students at American Catholic University (a pseudonym) affects the institution's governance and organization as experienced through the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders. The study will include interviews with senior-level administrators and campus leaders who, for the purpose of this study, are defined as those members of the organization who have the ability to make changes to the institution, including, but not limited to, curricula, student and personnel programs, recruitment, hiring, physical plant, marketing, organizational structure, policy, budgetary and spending, and/or mission. American Catholic University offers an ideal site for this study. It has seen a dramatic decline in the number of Catholic students. The decrease on the main campus since 1990 is approximately 13%, including undergraduate and graduate students. The following table illustrates this recent trend (American Catholic University Institutional Research, 2005):

Table 1
Catholic Student (Graduate and Undergraduate) Historical Trends at American Catholic University (Main Campus)

Year	Total enrollment main campus	Catholic enrollment	Percentage of students Catholic
1990	16,472	9,920	60%
1991	16,371	9,906	61%
1992	16,221	9,494	59%
1993	15,772	8,877	56%
1994	15,421	8,606	56%
1995	15,021	8,156	54%
1996	16,386	9,187	56%
1997	15,593	7,177	46%
1998	15,268	7,986	52%
1999	15,477	7,782	50%
2000	15,669	7,719	49%
2001	15,579	7,676	49%
2002	16,269	7,282	45%
2003	16,684	7,632	46%

2004	16,534	7,771	47%
2005	17,040	7,983	47%

Source: American Catholic University Office of Institutional Research 2005

As institutions of Catholic higher education struggle to implement the rubrics presented in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to promote Catholic identity, the changes in institutional culture have the potential to cause a great deal of difficulty. At a time in Church history when the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church is struggling to align Church teachings and American university instruction, the decline in the number of Catholic students becomes a major obstacle in identifying institutional identity and mission, hiring a diverse faculty congruent with the diversity of student demographics, providing programs on campus useful to students but aligned with the Catholic Church, and having institutions promulgate Catholic teachings and values.

The religious congregation, which founded and currently governs American Catholic University, also presides over two additional universities. These institutions also have experienced a decline in Catholic student enrollment. The first, a small liberal arts university, has a total undergraduate enrollment of 2,942 (including full- and part-time students) and a student religious demographic of 60% Catholic, a decrease of 6% over the last six years. The second, a large research university, has a total undergraduate enrollment of 14,740 and a student religious demographic of 36% Catholic, a decrease of 11% over the past 10 years. As indicated, all three institutions governed by this one specific community are experiencing a decline in the percentage of Catholic students enrolled. This steady decline raises further questions regarding institutional governance in relation to implementing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and promoting a Catholic identity.

American Catholic University is governed by a Catholic priest as the president and a board of trustees, which includes both lay and religious personnel. However, this institution has seen a dramatic change in the laicization of many of the key positions on the campuses. Many positions once mandated by the institutional statutes to be held by members of Catholic clergy have been changed to allow laymen and women to fill these positions (Institutional Research American Catholic University, 2004). The early university charter of American Catholic University included rubrics that mandated that the positions of chairman of the board of trustees, certain college deans, and vice president of university ministry be held by members of the founding congregation. All of these university statutes have been changed to allow for lay leaders to hold these positions.

Understanding how enrollment and personnel trends affect an institution is important in addressing issues of Church affiliation, institutional identity, and governance and organization of the institution. The subquestions of this research include the following:

1. Has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected university spending and resource allocation?
2. How has the increase in the number of non-Catholic students affected university programs, events, curricula, clubs/activities, and hiring practices?
3. To what extent has the demographic change visibly (physical plant) affected the institution? Has there been any institutional administrative response?

4. Has the institution implemented the guidelines set forth by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? Has the decline in the number of Catholic students at the institution affected the implementation process?
5. Have any new departments been created to assist in the propagation of the Catholic (Religious Order) identity of the institution?

The researcher will gather data, through qualitative methods, pertaining to how decisions and policy implementations made by key personnel of the board of trustees, President's Office and senior staff, Academic Affairs, Student Life, Marketing and Communication, University Ministry, and faculty charged with leadership responsibilities have been affected by the declining number of Catholic students on campus. The researcher will attempt to discover how American Catholic University is working to ensure that the teachings regarding Catholic identity and mission presented in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* are being followed while experiencing a decline in the number of Catholic students each year. The research will examine the curricula, student programming, personnel hiring and training, campus physical symbols, and rituals and financial changes that, from the perspective of institutional leaders, have been affected due to this new phenomenon. The researcher will also examine campus rituals and symbolism found on campus pertaining to religious or secular identity, as this will illustrate the meanings, beliefs, and campus culture the institution is trying to instill and recognize (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Significance of the Study

With more than 230 institutions of Catholic higher education educating close to three-quarters of a million students in America, a significant number of faculty, staff, and administrators choose to be involved in this mission. The Church believes that education is one of the best ways to evangelize as well as discover truth. Pope John Paul II, in the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* states that the “objective of a Catholic University is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture” (Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities, 1990). The document continues to state that every Catholic university, as Catholic, must have the following essential characteristics: 1) A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but also of the university community as such; 2) a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research; 3) fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church; and 4) an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life. If institutions are not able to adapt and find new ways to promulgate the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith to a non-Catholic student population, institutions of Catholic higher education will become extinct. Institutional leaders at Catholic colleges and universities need to examine if they are following those mandates put forth by the Church to ensure an identifiable and vibrant Catholic identity (Curran, 1997).

As our society becomes more secular in nature, Catholic colleges and universities must be proactive in propagation of their identity within the institution to employees, including faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as to students. As our cities become

more diverse in ethnic and religious demographics so will our colleges and universities. What will become of faith-based institutions if students no longer mirror the religious identity of the institution? Some Catholic colleges and universities in recent decades decided to separate from their Catholic identity. Included in those who abandoned their Catholic identity are Medaille College, Villa Julie College, Daemen College, Nazareth College, St. John Fisher, Marymount Manhattan College, and Marist College. These schools have all decided to sever their ties with the Catholic Church and to continue as private, nonsectarian colleges (Holtzschneider, 2003). According to Holtzschneider (2003), each of these former Catholic institutions had many reasons, but all suffered from a decline in the number of members from the founding congregation working at the institutions. Holtzschneider also found that the lay leaders who have taken on senior-level positions at Catholic institutions do not feel capable or inclined to take on the responsibility of the religious nature of the institution.

Changes in society also mirror changes in religious life. The United States has seen a dramatic decrease in the number of men and women entering religious life. This decrease has affected the number of clergy able to take on leadership roles at Catholic colleges and universities and has led to an identity crisis at many institutions (Olin, 2005). For example, in 1965, the American Catholic Church had 58,132 priests to serve in various ministries. In 2004, that number had fallen to 43,304 (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005). Investigation of female religious communities illustrates that this decrease in personnel has been even dramatically felt. In 1965, religious women in America numbered 179,954, compared to the number today of 70,194. The average age of the religious men is 58 and religious women is 70 (United

States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004). These statistics strongly illustrate that Catholic institutions are also going to have to deal with fewer members of religious clergy in key administrative, faculty, and board of trustee posts. With schools already struggling in having members of the congregation of their founder's order on campus, the decline in the number of Catholic students could really serve as the final blow to the already thin thread between the institution and the Catholic Church. If institutions do not take proactive strategic steps to ensure that propagation of the Catholic traditions and identity are intentional, other Catholic colleges and universities potentially will sever ties with the Church.

Many Catholic scholars believe the debate over Catholic identity and affiliation is an ideological one in nature. Philip Gleason, in his book *Contending with Modernity* (1995), states that the current debate over identity involves a "lack of consensus as to the substantive content of the ensemble of religious beliefs, moral commitments, and academic assumptions that supposedly constitute Catholic identity and a consequent inability to specify what that identity entails for the practical functioning of Catholic colleges and universities" (p. 320). The current argument is not over whether an institution wants to remain Catholic by its affiliation but rather what does it mean to remain a Catholic institution of higher education (Gleason, 1995).

Understanding the multiplicity of the nature of the debate of Catholic identity is very important. Gleason categorizes issues of Catholic identity into areas pertaining to moral commitments, academic assumptions, and religious beliefs. Leaders and scholars of higher education often question if a university or college may have the benefit of academic freedom and nondiscriminatory hiring practices but still remain faithful to the

larger Catholic Church. Gleason (1995) believes that the turmoil of the 1960s has created an identity crisis for Catholic higher education that is still alive today. He believes that secularization is far advanced in Catholic institutions of higher education and identifies several trends contributing to this current state. Gleason (1995) believes that this notion of secularization at Catholic institutions stems from the decline in the number of religious administrators and faculty, the hiring of lay faculty without concern to the religious mission of the institution, and the loss of respect of ecclesiastical statements. Some scholars believe that the logical outcome of Gleason's research is that Catholic higher education institutions will lose their affiliation to the Church and succumb to secularization (Hunt, 2003).

In examining the issues of Catholic identity and affiliation, many scholars believe that Catholic institutions are following a similar path that the Protestant institutions did a century earlier. Alice Gallin (2000), former Executive Director of the ACCU, identified five similarities and five differences between Protestant- and Catholic-founded colleges in facing the challenges of secularism. The following points are identified in her study: The similarities include the following:

1. Founding purposes are similar; moral development of youth and prepare future Church leaders.
2. Institutions changes as respective Churches changed
3. Leaders were firmly committed Christians who believed that their changes strengthened the religious character of school
4. Separation of Church and State affected both

5. Both institutions struggles with how to affirm pluralism and at same time keep a clear understanding of their religious mission.

The differences include the following:

1. Protestant colleges moved away from Church control when science was exerting its dominance and the modern university was taking shape (approximately 1900). The Catholic institutions did not undergo his change until the 1960s.
2. Protestant institutions had a direct relationship with the Church regarding legal authority and financial support. Catholic institutions were founded mostly by religious orders with little financial support or leadership form the local Bishop.
3. When Protestant colleges went through significant change in the 1900s, enthusiastically embracing the dominant model of knowing and generating new knowledge was science. The change in Catholic higher education during the 1960s came about due to conflict and struggle over academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
4. Catholic higher education was more international in nature [due to] having to adhere to rubrics and Church documents issues by the Vatican in Rome. Protestant institutions were American Protestant institutions.
5. Catholic higher education maintained requirements in both theology and philosophy. Protestant institutions placed these disciplines in divinity schools and seminaries.

George Marsden, in his 1994 study *The Soul of the American University*, argued that Protestant leaders did not intend to secularize their institutions but did so by decisions

that they made (Hunt, 2003). Lawrence Veysey, an historian of higher education in America, believes that Protestant leaders during the early 20th century sought to secularize their institution, believing this was the best way to create a prestigious and modern university (Hunt, 2003). Following either suggestion, Protestant higher education provides an important comparison for Catholic institutions as these institutions find themselves in a crucial time regarding issues of identity and Church affiliation. For denominational institutions of higher education, specifically Catholic institutions, to remain faithful to the mission and identity and strong in affiliation, campus leaders must ensure that institutions carry on the dialogue between faith and culture. Administrators and faculty alike must work to ensure that institutions do not become secular.

Throughout the history of higher education, demographic changes have been experienced several times. The creation of land grant institutions and the change from a classical curriculum to a practical curriculum was one of the early changes to American higher education. The inclusion of female students and, eventually, female faculty also reinvented higher education and made the system both more inclusive as well as more enriched (Pulson & Higgins, 2003). Campus leaders slowly saw the integration of campuses and the enrollment of minority students, specifically black and Latino. Once again, public and private institutions reinvented themselves to incorporate the new issues of diversity. As society grows increasingly more religiously pluralistic, institutions of denominational higher education will need to examine the ways in which they remain faithful to their mission of Church and academic communities.

Today, Catholic institutions of higher education find themselves yet again being asked to reinvent themselves by embracing the religious diversity found on their campus

but also to be sure not to lose their Catholic identity in the process (Gleason, 1995). The purpose of this study will be twofold: first, to identify the methods American Catholic University has used to deal with the religious changes occurring on campus, which, in turn, may be used by other institutions facing similar challenges and, second, to identify gaps or ways in which the university is not addressing this new trend while remaining faithful to the Church. The goal of Catholic colleges and universities is to be able to provide a quality education rooted in the life of the Church. Being able to welcome and create a diverse student population but at the same time incorporate the values, beliefs, and ideals of the Catholic Church is an ongoing concern. Remaining faithful to both the Church and academic community is a continual challenge and balancing act that all members of Catholic higher education institutions must work to ensure.

Limitations

The proposed study is limited to American Catholic University, which is affiliated and founded by a specific religious community of priests and brothers. By using only American Catholic University, the research is exclusive of other Catholic religious orders and communities. There are several other religious communities, both male and female, that govern institutions of higher education. The religious orders governing the colleges and universities are as diverse as the students who attend them. For this study, American Catholic University was selected because it is currently listed as one of the top 10 largest American Catholic higher education institutions and, until 1999, remained 50% Catholic by student demographic. Studying American Catholic University at this time in the university's history will help identify any efforts being made to address this new trend

and the importance of this issue to key personnel. The focus on a single Catholic university for this case study was meant to provide a more in-depth study but discover findings that can be of use to Catholic higher education as a whole. More on generalizability will be discussed in the methods section in the third chapter.

Definition of Terms

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU). “The purpose of the association is to promote Catholic higher education by supporting the member institutions, especially with reference to their Catholic mission and character and to serve as the voice of Catholic Higher Education in the United States” (<http://www.accunet.org/homepage.asp>, n.d.).

Catholic. “literally, ‘universal’ or ‘found everywhere’; usually, however, a reference to the Roman Catholic Church, although the term also may include Anglican, Syrian, Greek, Coptic, Russian, and other churches.” (<http://www.saintpauls.org/glossary/c.htm>, n.d.). The Catholic Church is distinct from other Christian ecclesiastical bodies that do not recognize the papal primacy.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae. Translated as “From the Heart of the Church.” An apostolic constitution introduced by Pope John Paul II on August 15, 1990, which states the Church’s vision and guidelines for Catholic higher education.

Governance. The term implies not simply the system of administration and control but the whole process by which policies are formulated, adopted, implemented, and monitored. Governance is centrally concerned with the distribution of leadership

power and identification of those who get to make the final decisions (Buckland & Hofmeyr, 1993).

Institutional identity. The distinctiveness with which a college or university defines itself within the context of its mission, history, campus culture, rituals, and church affiliation for religious institutions.

Secularization. To transfer from ecclesiastical to civil or lay use, possession, or control (Merriam-Webster's, 2006).

Pluralism. A state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization. This includes a concept, doctrine, or policy advocating this state (Merriam-Webster's, 2006).

Outline of the Study

Chapter II is a review of the literature relevant to this study. The study will include a brief history of higher education in the United States with a special emphasis on the times of change found throughout history. These changes include the early role of religion and higher education, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, the impact of the GI Bill on higher education, and the inclusion of minority populations, including gender, racial, and religious issues. The literature review will also examine the history of institutions of denominational higher education, including Catholic higher education, and the significant changes that have occurred over time that affect these various institutions. An examination of Catholic higher education will include a review of Church documents: *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education), *Pacem in Terris* (Peace

on earth), *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (The Heart of the Church).

Chapter III will include the methodology used to collect, assess, and report outcomes. This section will include the qualitative method and case study research design used as well as discuss how the data collection and analysis will occur. Included in this chapter is the description of the institution being studied, the participants to be interviewed, development of the research instruments, and the validity and reliability of the design.

Chapter IV will serve to present data collected and an analysis of the findings. Chapter V will bring the research together by summarizing the conclusions found and identify future research needed on this topic. Included in this chapter is the answer to the research question proposed as well as possible recommendations for other Catholic institutions dealing with issues of religious diversification and the Catholic mission.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter, the literature review, has four components. First, this chapter will specifically focus on pertinent student demographic changes in American higher education over history. Second, a historical examination of denominational higher education will be presented that explores the beginning purposes and goals of the affiliated Church. Third, this chapter will examine the beginnings, purposes, and changes of Catholic higher education from its American beginnings. A review of Church documents explicitly related to higher education and a review of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* will be included. Last, a historical and philosophical examination of American Catholic University and the founding religious order will be presented.

Early American Higher Education and Denominational Roots

In 1636, the first American college opened its doors in Massachusetts. Harvard College was established by vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and was named for its first benefactor, John Harvard of Charlestown, a young minister. The importance of this new institution to the colony was witnessed by the Legislature at that time agreeing to spend more than half of the tax levy for the entire colony that year (Shand-Tucci, 2001). As with most of the early American institutions of higher education, the college offered a classic academic curriculum based on the English university model but consistent with the Puritan philosophy of the first colonists. Shand-Tucci (2001) states that Puritans' enthusiasm for education was rooted in their desire to

better know and do the will of God. It was also the belief during this time that the state would need competent rulers, an educated clergy, and a cultured society, all which Harvard College believed they fulfilled (Rudolph, 1962). In examining the early roots of American higher education, one can see the religious thread found throughout most institutions as well as the important role that religion played. Cremin (1970) reported that by 1689 there were 260 churches in the colonies: 71 Anglican, 116 Congregational, 15 Baptist, 17 Dutch Reformed, 15 Presbyterian, 12 French Reformed, 9 Roman Catholic, and 5 Lutheran. Beyond these sects, there were also a small communities of Quakers, Mennonites, Huguenots, Anabaptists, and Jews (Cremin, 1970; Morris, 1977). Early English settlers saw colleges and universities as a way to enhance society by producing a cultured population and ensuring religious survival (Hutchison, 2001). Early American colleges worked toward the education of clergy as well as protecting and spreading the faith. Of the 17 American colleges in existence by 1789, 15 had denominational roots (Power, 1958). The religious denominations included Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Baptist. The first Catholic institution was Georgetown College in 1789.

In addition to the religious ties of the early colleges and universities, Rudolph (1962), in his work *American College and University*, identifies several other important reasons that the new colonists wanted to create higher education, including fostering collaboration and unity among the new settlers, educating teachers for the new community and fighting against ignorance, and developing informed citizenry (Rudolph, 1962). Faith-based institutions were so common in the United States that by the time of the Civil War 175 of the 182 colleges were church related (Power, 1958). One of the first institutional changes seen in higher education was in 1837 when Mount Holyoke Female

Seminary opened its doors to 80 female students, the first college in the United States serving female students. This marked the first of many dramatic changes that institutions of higher education faced over the next few decades.

Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 and the GI Bill

The second change that significantly revolutionized American higher education history took place in 1862 with the passing of the Morrill Act, also known as the Land Grant Act. This new federal law donated public lands to states, the sale of which will be used for the:

endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life. (Act of July 2, 1862, ch. 130, 12 Stat.503,7 U.S.C.301 et.seq)

The Morrill Act not only launched public higher education into becoming a key stakeholder in higher education but also assisted in moving the classical curriculum to a more practical study including agriculture, mechanics, and industrial classes (Sass, 2005). What is important to realize that as with the opening of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, the Land Grant Act caused all institutions of higher education to reevaluate their mission and identity in the face of changing student demographics.

Higher education also dealt with the nation's racial equality struggles. In 1890, the Second Morrill Act was enacted, which not only provided more financial support for

the creation of state public higher education but also allotted funds for the creation of 16 historically black land-grant colleges (Sass, 2005). More importantly, in 1954 the Supreme Court announced its decision in the case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*, ruling that separate education facilities are inherently unequal (NAACP, 2005; <http://brownvboard.org>, n.d.). This case began the process of desegregating education in the K–12 and postsecondary system. The process of desegregating educational institutions included adjusting hiring practices, providing new support systems for a new student demographic, and creating new programs to help build bridges between those of the original charter and those of the new diverse campus.

The next shift or change in higher education occurred in 1944 with the implementation of the GI Bill, official known as the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (Sass, 2005). It is estimated that two million World War II veterans used this new legislation and attended institutions of higher education, doubling the current national college population. This change in student enrollment gave higher education a new image and also forced institutions to reevaluate curricular and student service issues. What was once seen as a privilege of only the rich, through the GI Bill of 1944, began to be seen as a system inclusive of the masses. Students from different financial backgrounds began to see higher education as a possibility. Colleges and universities, both public and private, began to educate a population of students that had never dreamt of attending postsecondary education. This change in student population brought many new issues to higher education. These issues included creating remedial course work for underprepared students, diversifying university and college majors and minors, dealing with nontraditional students, and increasing faculty and administrator hiring among many

institutions (Sass, 2005). Many new departments were also created, such as student affairs, residence life, career centers, and other support programs, to ensure education of the whole person. Once again, institutions needed to reinvent themselves to deal with the changing student demographics. As each change occurred, whether the inclusion of women and minorities or the movement to enroll the masses, institutions of higher education needed to reinvent themselves to stay open and remain financially solvent.

The development of various legislation such as the Morrill Acts and the GI Bill and the inclusion of minority and female students changed the face of higher education for public and private institutions. However, church-based institutions have a unique history and identity completely unto themselves. Christian-based faiths such as the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics, and Evangelicals have all at one time in history founded institutions of higher education (Burtchaell, 1998). Similarly, all of these religious sects have struggled at sometime during their history over issues involving institution identity, church affiliation, financial concerns, and governance issues.

Denominational Higher Education

Nine American schools founded before the Revolution survived and reached collegiate status (Burtchaell, 1998). Each of these institutions served a specific religious population. Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth served the Congregationalists of New England. William and Mary, Kings (later Columbia), and the Charity School (later the University of Pennsylvania) all served the Episcopalians in Virginia and Middle Atlantic cities. The College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) and Queens College (later

Rutgers University) served the Presbyterians and Dutch Reformed of the Middle Atlantic colonies, and Rhode Island (later Brown) served the Baptist community (Burtchaell, 1998). These institutions began with strong affiliation to the church and had leaders rooted in the teachings and practices of the faith.

These early institutions provided students with a rigorous classical curriculum and a strong religious influence woven into the collegiate experience. Many of these early institutions had an official order of day that students needed to follow. For example, bells at the first sign of daylight awakened students at Dartmouth, an originally Congregationalist institution, as early as 5 AM. Prayers followed in the chapel and then breakfast at 6:30 AM. The liturgical practices included daily prayers, which consisted of an invocation, Bible reading, and a closing prayer. These prayers were also conducted in the evening at 6 PM (Burtchaell, 1998). This rigid schedule came under constant scrutiny by students. At Dartmouth, president after president rigorously debated issues regarding the classical curriculum, mandatory prayer attendance, and religious affiliation. In an attempt to meet the demands of students, the religious practices were often decreased or made optional with each changing president. Burtchaell (1998) stated that by 1893 Dartmouth was an institution “where Congregationalism was pervasive in its presence, yet had virtually no standing in the unimaginative intellectual life that was defensively preserved on the campus” (p. 15). Different constituents argued various sides of the “religion” debate at Dartmouth. Many believed that religion helped to exert a healthy moral influence on students, and thus common prayer should be mandated. Others argued that at Dartmouth piety and not religious learning sustained the college’s religious identity (Burtchaell, 1998). The changing religious practices at the institution illustrate

the conflict the institution experienced. The rules regarding prayer changed over the years. Prayers were moved to later in the day, to only Sundays, to the eventual disappearance of evening prayer. At the same time, it was rumored among students that anyone who attended services on a regular basis would graduate Dartmouth regardless of his grades. Even though Dartmouth argued that it was not under any sectarian control, the trustees were Congregationalists, and loyalty to this denomination was clear (Burtchaell, 1998).

Dartmouth not only used religious rituals to infuse the institution's faith base but also used the students' code of conduct to educate students' behavior in the Congregationalists teachings. For example, throughout the 19th century, students were forbidden to play cards, roll dice, bowl, dance, drink ardent spirits, and take part in any activities on Sunday, including using the library. Dartmouth serves as an early example of how denominational higher education attempted, through curriculum, religious rituals and practices, and student life, to infuse the religious charism with a quality education. The hope was that this type of education would provide educated members of society grounded in the practices of the church (Burtchaell, 1998).

In 1893, under the leadership of William Tucker, Dartmouth began to move dramatically away from its religious roots. President Tucker, through word and deed, lead the institution with the thought that religion was not the institution's discipline. Some of the amendments he made include included the curricula and student rules and regulations. For example, he allowed the library to open on Sundays. Students were allowed to take part in dance instruction and play pool in the newly created student activities building. Eventually, mandatory attendance at daily prayer services was discontinued, and Sunday

vespers were the only required service (Burtchaell, 1998). At the same time, Dartmouth saw a dramatic increase in enrollment. Academic departments began to be created as academic specialization increased. With the increase of academic departments, a specialized faculty needed to be hired.

With the changes in the curriculum came an influx of new students and faculty who also had a diversity of religious beliefs. Faculty were hired based on their academic expertise, not their religious background. Student demographics also began to change. For example, Catholics began being matriculated into Dartmouth. Under Tucker's tenure as president, the library began to carry a variety of religious journals, including the *Congregationalist*, *Methodist Review*, *Expository Times* (Anglican), *Catholic World*, and *Lutheran Quarterly* (Burtchaell, 1998). In 1906, at the end of Tucker's presidency, even the board of trustees included seven Congregationalists, five Unitarians, and one Presbyterian. During this time, a proposal by the Carnegie Foundation stated that it would subsidize pension funds of institutions assisting with the retirement of faculty but would exclude schools with formal denominational connections. For the first time, Dartmouth identified itself as having no relationship whatsoever with any religious denomination. The chance of receiving the additional grant monies gave Dartmouth the perfect opportunity to officially state what had unofficially been happening for years, the dissolving of any ties with the Congregationalists (Burtchaell, 1998).

The Congregationalists were a major constituent in the sponsoring institutions of higher education during the colonial and federal periods in American history. However, scholars identify the Presbyterians, by the time of the Civil War period, as having the most expansive network of colleges (Burtchaell, 1998). According to the Presbyterian

Historical Society, Presbyterianism is the name given to one of the groups of church bodies that represent the features of Protestantism emphasized by French lawyer John Calvin (1509–1564). Calvin's writings made concrete much of the Reformed thinking that came before him (Presbyterian Historical Society, 2004). Today, 64 institutions of higher education remain in union with the Presbyterian Church.

Schism marks the history of the American Presbyterian Church and creation of colleges of this faith. Pertinent issues such as slavery caused enormous controversy and divisions among this religious community. However, in founding institutions of higher education, the Presbyterians were very successful. The Presbyterian Church created new colleges while maintaining the current schools. The high success rates among the colleges and universities they founded were also accredited with being able to maintain a majority enrollment of Presbyterian students until after World War II (Burtchaell, 1998).

Similar to most denominations, the Presbyterians opened Log College in Pennsylvania in 1730 as an institution to train future clergy. During the civil rights schism, various "branches" of this divided church founded colleges and universities. One of the more prestigious Presbyterian colleges, the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) was founded in 1746. More academic Presbyterian institutions soon followed. Many of the Presbyterian institutions were established to serve racial and ethnic communities that lacked access to education (APCU, 2005). As with many other Christian faith-based institutions, the Presbyterians have struggled with identity and affiliation issues in keeping their higher education institutions aligned with their faith and the Presbyterians Church.

Lafayette College, established in 1826 in Pennsylvania, is an example of this institution and church affiliation debate. When originally established, Lafayette College was not associated with any particular denomination. However, the founders of Lafayette College were all strong members of the Presbyterian Church. When financial struggles plagued the college, the leaders of the institution turned to the Presbyterian Church for assistance. Once the school accepted these church funds, it became much more centered in religious practices. Prayer attendance and mandates regarding the percentage of Presbyterian faculty hired and students enrolled were soon part of the school's practices. The leadership positions of the institution were soon required to be filled by practicing Presbyterians. This strong relationship between Lafayette College and the Presbyterian Church was short lived, however. It has been reported that by 1889 only 50% of students came from a Presbyterian practicing families, and only 33% of these students identified themselves as remaining as part of the Presbyterian Church. In 1966 only 33% of students at Lafayette identified themselves with the Presbyterian Church. The faculty mirrored this trend, and was reported to be only 20% Presbyterian (Burtchaell, 1998).

Similar to changes pertaining to church affiliation at many denominational higher education institutions, the college catalogue often serves as a way to trace these issues. At Lafayette College, leaders began making adaptations to the college catalogue in the ways in which the institution identified itself. In 1890, the college catalogue identified the institution as being under the general direction of the Synod of Pennsylvania of the Presbyterian Church, in accordance with the doctrines of that body. In 1950, the catalogue identified Lafayette College as a private, church-related college, organically connected to the Presbyterian Church. In 1989, the same catalogue stated that since 1840

Lafayette College had had a lasting, though evolving, relationship with the Presbyterian Church, but the school's programs embraced all faiths. In 1993, the college catalogue stated that in 1854 the college formed a mutually supportive association with the Presbyterian Church but that Lafayette is an independent, coeducational, residential, undergraduate institution (Burtchaell, 1998).

As the school's religious demographics changed regarding students, administration, and faculty, so did the institution's identity with the larger Presbyterian Church. Enrollment of non-Presbyterian students and faculty was needed to meet the challenges in enrollment and faculty recruitment. Marsden and Longfield (1992), in their research on Presbyterian higher education, state, "In the [twentieth] century the Christian character of many Presbyterian colleges have become so diluted that it is difficult to determine what distinguishes them from their secular counterparts" (p. 100). Today, Lafayette College is still affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, but the connection is very weak.

Another important Christian church involved in American higher education is the Methodist Church. The Methodist movement in America started with a predominantly rural and poor congregation. This congregation had a limited interest in higher education and more of a concern with meeting daily needs. The Methodist Church in America was one of the last religious institutions to enter higher education. In contrast to other churches, the Methodists started colleges, known as "literary institutions," for the laity and not for clergy training. These literary institutions grew in number as the religion grew throughout the South and eventually the United States as a whole. During this expansion, commonly referred to as the "Second Great Awakening," the parishioners' economic,

social, and academic aspirations grew (Burtchaell, 1998). This spreading of religious faith sparked an enormous expansion of Methodist literary institutions to meet the growing demand of education from this growing church. From 1829 to 1850, nearly 400 Methodist schools and colleges were founded. By the end of the expansion era, it is estimated that more than 1,200 schools has been established. However, this rapid expansion soon retreated, which caused more than 90% of these institutions to close, merge, or disaffiliate with the sponsoring Methodist Church (Burtchaell, 1998). Today, 87 universities and four-year colleges and 12 junior colleges remain affiliated with the Methodist Church.

Methodist institutions of higher education today, similar to many other faith-based institutions, struggle with their affiliation to the institutional church. Methodist institutions of higher education at one time mandated that two-thirds of their board of trustee positions were to be held by members of the Methodist Church. In struggling to understand how the institutional church and college or university was affiliated, the University Senate of the Methodist Church set forth guidelines. In 1893, the University Senate of Methodist Higher Education stated that for an institution to be Methodist the institution had to observe the requirements necessary to fulfill a bachelor's degree and accept the church's sponsorship. Many Methodist Church leaders or affiliated college administrators saw this as very vague and not complete. In 1912, the Methodist Senate adapted a new document that stated:

A Methodist Episcopal institutional is one which, frankly declaring it is under the auspices of the Church and distinctly claiming that it aims to plan and conduct its work so as to serve the Kingdom of Christ as represented by the life of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, shall have the recognition and endorsement of the Board of Education, and official classification by the University Senate. (p. 257)

This struggle of Methodist identity and church connectedness continued to plague Methodist higher education. By 1976, the National Commission on United Methodist Higher Education asserted that the colleges were not auxiliaries or properties but colleague and partner institutions. The church was to be seen as a support system, not a controlling agent (Burtchaell, 1998). The relationship of the Methodist Church to institutions of higher education has been in continual flux.

At first, Methodist colleges and universities relied on the institutional church and local parish communities for student enrollment and annual financial subsidies. However, current estimates report that the Methodist Church contributes only approximately 2% of the annual higher education budget. Enrollment at Methodists colleges, of Methodist students, average approximately 18% of the total enrollment. Junior colleges have a higher percentage of Methodist students, averaging 24%, while the universities are only 7% Methodist by enrollment (Burtchaell, 1998). This decline in Methodist students is part of the large decline in number of Methodists in the country. Overall, the American Methodist population decreased one-third from 1960 to 1980. This national decline indicates that enrollment of Methodist students alone will not be sufficient in keeping open current Methodist institutions of higher education. As the disconnect between the Methodist higher education institutions and the affiliated church continues and grows, the Methodist Church has stated that they expect that the Methodist identity will remain printed in college mission statements and other literature. This vague affiliation currently only recognizes the institution's religious roots as having a Methodist origin. In many of

their institutions, that is all that remains of the Methodist identity. Several institutions have ended their affiliation with the Methodist Church completely. Some of these institutions include Southern California University, Vanderbilt University, Northwestern University, Lawrence University, Wesleyan University, Green Mountain College, Asbury College, Dickinson College, Goucher College, and Wheaton College (Burtchaell, 1998). These institutions will only recognize the Methodist Church as the founding body of the institution. Of the Methodist institutions remaining open today, few have a strong relationship with the Methodist Church.

The Baptist Church has also been a stakeholder in American higher education. The Baptist Church has seen a great deal of division and unification over the years. According to Robert Agee (1997), the Director of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, more than 40 different groups are associated with term Baptist. The first Baptist College dates back to 1787. Historically, 13 Baptist colleges and universities were in existence by 1860. Baptist colleges and universities were more commonly established on the local level compared to an institutional church. Traditionally, a local pastor or congregation would come together with another small Baptist community and decide to create an institution of higher learning for future Baptist ministers. Unlike other denominational institutions, Baptists believed that education diminished the straightforward genuineness needed to preach the gospel. This early mindset not only worked against Baptist higher education from the start but also caused great debate over the original purpose of these institutions. In addition, originally created to serve only future ministers, these Baptist institutions could not support themselves

financially. Other areas of study needed to quickly evolve so that lay students would enroll and pay tuition (Burtchaell, 1998).

To organize both Baptist churches and schools, the Southern Baptist Convention was established in 1845. As with many denominations, schism plagued the early American roots of the Baptist Church. The Southern Baptist Convention was established after a schism with the northern Baptist Churches occurred regarding the issue of slavery and abolition. Unlike many other denominations associated with higher education, the Baptists never reunited; the two current governing bodies of American Baptist institutions are the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the American Baptist Church (ABC) (Burtchaell, 1998). The first institution of higher education recognized by the Southern Baptist Convention as being Baptist was the Oklahoma Baptist University, in 1911. Colleges such as Baylor, Georgetown, Judson, Mercer, Mississippi, Stamford, Union, and University of Mary Hardin-Baylor were all early members of the Southern Baptist Convention (Burtchaell, 1998).

Issues of church affiliation and accreditation quickly plagued Baptist higher education. In response to these issues, the higher educational institutions tried to identify themselves as nonsectarian. This term was used in an attempt to unite Baptists with other evangelical Protestants. Unfortunately, “nonsectarian” was seen as synonymous with nondenominational, and faculty, students, and administrators slowly became more secular in nature. The next blow to the already fragile relationship between the institutions and the Baptist Church was the issue regarding accreditation. In the early 20th century, institutions of higher education and policies of accreditation became a significant issue. Baptist colleges and universities resisted this procedure, arguing that evaluation of their

programs by an organization outside of their faith and geographic region was not necessary (Agee, 1997). However, it quickly became evident to Baptist institutions that if they were going to survive they would need to receive accreditation. By becoming accredited, their institutions would be seen as more academically competitive (or so the leaders believed). This in turn would foster student application and enrollment. Baptist Church leaders argue that the decisions made by the board of trustees and high-level administrators during the times of accreditation severed the ties between the Baptist Church and colleges and universities. Changes in curriculum and institutional governing policies regarding hiring practices are among top issues Baptist leaders identify as having a negative impact on institution and church affiliation.

With more than 250 Baptist colleges and universities, the Baptist Church has made a significant contribution to higher education (Brackney, 2005). However, similar to most denominational institutions of higher education, questions of church affiliation and sustainability of the Baptist ideals and beliefs remaining interwoven throughout the institutions are still being asked. Currently, the Southern Baptist Convention has approximately 50 members. In April 2005, educators associated with approximately 45 Baptist colleges and universities gathered to discuss the future of Baptist higher education. The topics included issues regarding accountability questions, partnership and affiliation with the Baptist Church, and secularization of denominational colleges (Kim, 2005). If Baptist institutions are going to remain in alliance with the Baptist Church, these central issues must be addressed.

American Catholic Higher Education

With more than 230 colleges and universities, the Catholic Church has been and remains a major constituent in American higher education. The history of Catholic higher education is not exactly clear. The Church's earliest roots in education were established by the creation of seminaries for the training of clergy. Prior to Vatican Council II, very little documented literature is available regarding the beginnings of Catholic higher education in the United States. American Catholic education beginnings can be traced back primarily to priests who accompanied French and Spanish settlers to the New World. Catholic institutions did not flourish during this time considering the limited number of Catholics in the colonies and laws prohibiting Catholic membership. For example, a law passed in Maryland in 1704 stated that any "papist" or person making profession of the "popish" religion would be lawfully convicted (Buetow, 1970; Power, 1958).

Most documentation regarding early Catholic-Church-sponsored higher education is found in religious community writings such as the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* or the Ursuline *Reglements* (Hunt, 2003; Burtchaell, 1998). Some historians trace the beginnings to Jesuit Father Andrew White in St. Mary's City, Maryland, in 1634 (Hutchison, 2001). However, Catholics had neither the social or financial resources at this time to begin and support a college. The first Catholic College opened its doors in 1789 and was called Georgetown College. As with many other denominations, Catholic colleges were created to prepare young men for ministry (priesthood), promote the faith and morals associated with the Catholic Church, and provide centers for missionary activity (Power, 1958; Hutchison, 2001; Burtchaell, 1998). After the opening of

Georgetown, several other Catholic colleges quickly followed, including St. Mary's in Baltimore (1799), Mt. St. Mary's in Emmetsburg (1808), and St. Louis College in Missouri (1818). These schools struggled at times and often needed to rearticulate the mission of the school. St. Mary's in Baltimore began as a minor seminary but admitted college students in 1803 due to the inadequate seminary enrollment and funding. Other schools were opened by one religious order, closed, and were reopened by another group (Power, 1958; Burtchaell, 1998).

The early path of Catholic higher education was a rocky path, and it was not for nearly 100 years after the opening of Georgetown College that bishops of the country decided that a national Catholic university, Catholic University of America, should be established (Burtchaell, 1998; Hunt, 2003). American bishops, during the period following the opening of Georgetown College, encouraged religious orders to establish boarding schools. Many of these schools eventually transformed themselves into colleges. By 1850, 42 Catholic colleges had been established. During this time, both public and private higher education institutions struggled to stay open. The 25% survival rate of Catholic institutions was actually 5% higher than that of other colleges (Power, 1958; Gleason, 1995). Many of the current prestigious American Catholic colleges and universities were established prior to 1850. These include Fordham, established in 1841, Notre Dame, established in 1842, and Villanova, established in 1842 (Hutchison, 2001).

As Catholicism began to grow and become more accepted throughout the country, a bishop to lead the American church was needed. John Carroll was named the first American Catholic bishop. In his first pastoral letter to Catholic Americans, he spoke of the importance of Catholic education and especially support for Georgetown College. In

this pastoral letter, he explained that some might be unable to pay to send their sons to this school. However, Bishop Carroll urged supporting the institution by those who did attend as well because by doing so they would affect their communities. He stated that graduates could potentially come back to neighborhoods to educate the Catholic youth of the town. The bishop went on to explain that the results of Georgetown College would include an increase of piety and morality of those who attended and society as a whole. In addition, the bishop hoped that this institution would assist in planting seeds of vocation to the priestly ministry (McCluskey, 1964).

Until the late 19th century, Catholic institutions of higher education focused on the moral formation of students (Dunn, 1996; Hunt, 2003). Clergy governed these early institutions of Catholic higher education and were also responsible for teaching classes, providing sacraments, and fundraising for the schools. Most priests served as generalist teachers and professors, instructing students in the classical curriculum. During the 19th century, the majority of the American population was Protestant. Catholic institutions of higher education were also in existence to ensure that the Catholic immigrants had a place to send their children to receive a both Catholic formation and education (Hunt, 2003; Burtchaell, 1998). Between the 1890s and 1930s, American Catholic colleges and universities restructured their programs to become similar to the traditional American system. Up until this time, American Catholic colleges followed the European system of a six-year college program: four years of preparatory work and two years of college. During the late 1930s, most institutions were restructured to mirror the American system of four years of high school and four years for a bachelor's degree (Dunn, 1996, Hutchison, 2001).

During the early 1900s, there are further changes in Catholic higher education. Gleason (1995), *Contending With Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*, states that enrollment in Catholic institutions dramatically increased during this period. In 1899, there were 5,500 college students attending Catholic institutions; however, in 1926 the enrollment was close to 19,000 (Gleason, 1995). Also during this time, the Jesuit community made large strides in opening institutions of higher education. Grimm (1954) states that Catholic education was advanced most rapidly by the Jesuits' influence, starting as early worldwide during the 16th century. In 1916, 26 of the 84 colleges were Jesuit governed. National religious demographics show that Catholics were a small portion of the American population until the massive Irish immigration that occurred during the mid-1800s.

The number of Catholics, estimated at 663,000 in 1840, increased to approximately 1,606,000 in 1860 (Power, 1958). This great population expansion of Catholics increased the demand and growth of institutions of Catholic education. Catholic education also played a key role in the creation of female colleges. By 1930, 14 of the 70 female colleges were Catholic (Gleason, 1995; Burtchaell, 1998). What began as a need to educate female Catholic clergy, namely nuns, quickly expanded to other laywomen. The Catholic Church remains an active voice in American higher education. As Catholic colleges and university struggle with questions of identity, it is important to see that the foundation was laid during a time of national change and turbulence (Heft, 1989).

Catholic institutions of higher education, in comparison to other denominations, are considered atypical. First, Catholic institutions currently outnumber any other denomination (Burtchaell, 1998). The number of Catholic institutions has changed

dramatically during the past century. Between 1920 and 1970, 76 Catholic institutions of higher education were founded, compared to Protestant denominations, which established approximately 32 (Burtchaell, 1998). By 1960, Catholic colleges numbered 231 with enrollment topping 300,000 (Hunt, 2003). This time of growth and expansion of Catholic institutions is credited with having provided an incentive to Protestant institutions to build new schools and keep the current schools in operation. During this same time period, the number of closures of Catholic women's colleges and universities hit an all-time high. A change in faculty demographics was noted in 1920 when three-quarters of the faculty teaching at Catholic universities were laypeople (Hunt, 2003; Gleason, 1994). By the 1950s, Catholic institutions of higher education saw dramatic growth in academic programs, graduate degrees were established, and the requirements for undergraduates to take core requirements in theology and philosophy were in place (Hunt, 2003).

Catholic higher education was one of the last denominations to move from single-sex institutions to coeducational. Since most of the high schools were single-sex institutions, traditionally governed by a specific order of religious men or women, single-sex colleges logically made sense. Women attending traditionally male Catholic institutions was historically first experienced by religious women. The first documented experience was religious sisters who were allowed to attend an undergraduate summer school program at Marquette University in 1909 (Burtchaell, 1998). Notre Dame University permitted religious women a similar experience for graduate credits in 1918 (Burtchaell, 1998). Catholic University, in Washington, DC, opened a Sisters College, offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees, in 1911. This program slowly began enrollment of laywomen. In 1914, DePaul University began to admit women on an equal

equivalence as men. In the 1940s, at St. Mary's in South Bend, the first doctoral program in theology for women was established (Hunt, 2003). Most other Catholic institutions of this time did not become coeducational until after World War II (Burtchaell, 1998).

From the founding of Georgetown until the early 1960s, Catholic institutions were understood as being created to assist in the spreading of the Christian message as the Catholic Church. McGrath (1962) states, "The one essential characteristic of a Catholic university was that by its constitution its teachings should be in harmony with the tenets of the Catholic faith." This statement echoes the sentiments stated by the Church about founding and supporting educational institutions. William McGucken (1962), a Jesuit scholar of Catholic education, noted:

Her [The Church's] primary purpose in the establishment schools, kindergarten, or university is not merely to teach fractions or logarithms, biology or seismology, grammar or astronomy, these subjects are subordinate to her main purpose to include the eminent knowledge and love Jesus Christ our Lord a knowledge so intimate, a love so strong, that it will lead necessarily to a closer following of Christ. (p. 15)

Laymen and clergy traditionally accepted this purpose of Catholic educational institutions. However, during the 1960s and the onset of Vatican Council II this definition was questioned on many levels.

The 1960s and Vatican Council II

The 1960s were a turbulent time for American culture, and the Catholic Church in particular. Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council to address Church issues

relating to liturgy, morality, and doctrine. In addition to the reforms brought about by Vatican II, the American Catholic Church of the 1960s experienced the largest decline in those entering and remaining in religious life. This decline in clergy and the increase in the number of laity obtaining doctoral degrees brought about a demand among laity to have a greater role in governance of Catholic institutions of higher education. Boards of trustees at Catholic institutions of higher education became occupied in much larger percentages by laypersons, and for the first time, hiring issues were being scrutinized, and court cases pursued over the explicit practice of hiring non-Catholic lay faculty. During the 1960s, the Church went through major changes as identified in Vatican II; with the changes came great debates and issues regarding Catholic higher education. Some of these changes included the renewal and *aggiornamento* (opening up) of the Church and affiliated institutions, secularization or laicization of Catholic colleges and universities, institutional autonomy, professionalism of Catholic education faculty and administration, and transition to coeducation (Rombalski, 2005).

The Vatican Council II meetings, held from 1962 to 1965, did not deal specifically with higher education. However, 1960 is seen as a starting point in reviewing Catholic higher education because many scholars see this as the beginning of the current era for Catholic higher education (Rombalski, 2005; Burchaell, 1998; Marsden, 1994; Gallin, 1996). Issues of Catholic identity in higher education were being explored during this time. Gleason (1994) states that the most striking point about the 1940s and 1950s, pertaining to the issues of the Catholic identity problems, are that they did not exist. This issue did not exist during this time because the Catholicity of institutions was a given (Gleason, 1994). The 1960s saw the beginning of four general movements in Catholic

higher education. These movements are identified as a shift toward academic freedom, questions of government funding, laicization, and the relationship between American Catholic higher education and the Roman Catholic Church (Rombalski, 2005).

These four movements are separate but yet interwoven when examining Catholic higher education of the 1960s. Efforts to improve academic freedom became important as external professional organizations and the growing number of laity employed by institutions pressured colleges and universities to develop honor codes of academic freedom within Catholic teachings. This movement toward academic freedom grew as religious faculty and administrators decreased and lay members no longer felt they had second-class status on campus. Financially, Catholic institutions of higher education became very concerned during the 1960s as states and federal court cases began ruling that grants given to church-related schools were unconstitutional. Cases such as *Horace Mann League v Board of Public Works of Maryland*, *Tilton v Richardson*, and *Roemer v Board of Public Works* are all cases seen post-1960 dealing with funding for religious institutions. The rulings of these cases varied, but they served as the start of Catholic institutions' desire to loosen their identity with the Church to secure government funds (Rombalski, 2005).

The next two movements experienced by institutions of Catholic higher education during the 1960s were the laicization of institutions and the weakening of the relationship between the American institutions of Catholic higher education and the Church. Laicization was experienced by many institutions post-Vatican II as the decline in religious people increased, and laypeople properly educated for leadership roles in the Church increased. Vatican II called for the "opening up" of the Church, a statement many

lay academic leaders quickly took as a call to lay leadership. Laypeople took active roles on boards of trustees and pertinent faculty and administration positions (Edwards, 1999). These changes helped diversify the institution and helped provide a more educated leadership team. However, this change also created questions regarding the institution and its relationship to the Roman Catholic Church. Religious communities, the primary leaders in Catholic higher education in America, began to create lay boards of intelligent and expert men and woman to serve as leadership boards for the institutions. Catholic institutions began to have these boards serve as the controlling agents of the institutions, a step saw by many as a step in disassociating with the Church. Institutions found themselves defending their Catholic identity and mission, and, for the first time, institutions began to articulate how they remained in union with the Church (Gleason, 1994; O'Brien, 2002; Gallin, 1996).

In examining significant documents from the Vatican II Council pertaining to higher education, the Church produced a document, *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education), that illuminated the goals in promoting Catholic education (Hunt, 2003). This document addresses questions regarding the philosophy of Catholic education and the importance of moral and religious education, and stresses the importance and relevance of Catholic higher education while clearly identifying the bonds between institutions and the Church (Hunt, 2003). Specifically pertaining to higher education, this document states that individual subjects should be pursued according to their own principles, according to the example of the doctors of the Church, so that there may be a deeper realization of the harmony of faith and science (“*Gravissimum Educationis*,” 1965). The document continues to urge Catholic universities to ensure

spiritual formation of students and to find ways to increase participation of students with minimal financial means.

Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth), a papal document authored by Pope John XXIII in the 1963, discusses the importance of the recognition of natural law. Many scholars believe that this papal document prompted many of the early changes found in Catholic colleges and universities (Hunt, 2003). Included in this document is the discussion of the centrality of the dignity of the human person and the respect for individual conscience and freedom. This papal encyclical also illuminates the importance of freedom in scholarly investigation and the human fundamental right to freely investigate the truth. The document states, “By the natural law every human being has the right to respect for his person, to his good reputation; the right to freedom in searching for truth and in expressing and communicating his opinions, and in pursuit of art, within the limits laid down by the moral order and the common good; and he has the right to be informed truthfully about public events” (“*Pacem in Terris*,” 1963). This was the charge that Catholic scholars needed to reshape how they research, investigate, and ultimately teach (Hunt, 2003). This document also is pertinent in the later debate on academic freedom at American Catholic institutions of higher education.

Two important Vatican II Council encyclicals, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) and *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), help set the context for the creation of change in both the Church and institutions of higher education. *Lumen Gentium* emphasizes a new understanding of laity and their role in the Church. The document states that the laity should understand their role as helping the world achieve its destiny in justice, in love, and in peace (“*Lumen Gentium*,” 1964;

Gallin, 2003). Excluding ordained ministry, many lay Catholic educators saw this charge as achievable specifically through education. *Gaudium et Spes* also plays a major role in setting the context for changes in the Church. The document identifies the world as the whole human family. In seeing the world in this light, human dignity is first and foremost, and problems must be addressed in a way that does not trespass on an individual's freedom. Many describe this document as crucial in addressing issues of academic freedom ("*Gaudium et Spes*," 1965; Hunt, 2003).

In comparison to other denominational church-sponsored institutions of higher education, Catholic colleges and universities have always been more independent in their governance, finance, and, ultimately, overall institutional autonomy. With the majority of Catholic institutions of higher education founded by religious orders, institutional autonomy was experienced from the very beginning. Currently, only 14 colleges and universities are sponsored by a diocese or bishop (Burtchaell, 1998). With the lack of diocesan and church hierarchal involvement in the creation and governance of the institution, the president, governing boards, and other higher-level administrators are responsible to the religious order's provincial or superior instead of a Church representative such as a bishop (Burtchaell, 1998). This loose connection of the Catholic college to the larger Church has often made the Vatican suspicious. As a result, many of the papal documents and Church teachings prepared on Catholic higher education focus on Rome's authority over the institution.

Juridical Relationship between the Church and Institutions and Ecclesial Document

Historically, the question of the nature of the juridical relationship found between the Church and the institution of higher education lies at the very beginning of the identity debate. In 1949, the International Federation of Catholic Universities was established. Pope Pius XII established this organization by the request of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities (Hunt, 2003). The Federation consisted of canonically created universities, established by the Church, throughout the world so they might unify in the mission of evangelization (Hunt, 2003). This organization met in 1965, post-Vatican II, to develop a document about the unique character of a Catholic college or university based on the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* (O'Hare, 1999). Two international congress meetings of Catholic universities were held at the Vatican from April 25 to May 1, 1969, and November 20 to 29, 1972. These meetings worked on preliminary documents attempting to define the relationship between the Church and Catholic colleges and universities.

Under the leadership of Father Theodore Hesburgh, CSC, from the University of Notre Dame, the International Federation of Catholic Universities in 1967 produced the Land O'Lakes document, "The Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University," that became a watershed in the history of American Catholic higher education. This document declared that "the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself" (Land O'Lakes, 1967). Many American institutions of Catholic higher education saw this document as a way to return to the religious founders' roots. Many Catholic higher education leaders also understood this document as the decline in Church

authority regarding issues of administration and governance and greater autonomy for the institutional leaders (O'Connor, 2001). This important document raised many questions and academic debates regarding how academic freedom was to be interpreted at Catholic institutions. The opening paragraph of the document states:

The Catholic University today must be a university in the full modern sense of the word, with a strong commitment to and concern for academic excellence. To perform its teaching and research functions effectively the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself.” (Land O’Lakes Document, 1967)

Incorporating the Land O’Lakes document’s issues of academic freedom and institutional autonomy with several of the other International Federation of Catholic University (IFCU) documents lead to the 1973 Church document *The Catholic University and the Modern World*. This Church document focused on academic freedom and institutional autonomy of institutions of Catholic higher education. This document identified the essential characteristics of a Catholic university. These characteristics became the basis of defining Catholic higher education. The characteristics identified in the document are as follows:

1. A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as a whole;
2. continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of the human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;

3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.

These principles have remained an important rubric in identifying the characteristics of Catholic higher education and are most recently cited in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Church's most recent document regarding higher education.

Most of the early documents placed the Church as judge of the orthodoxy of the teaching and research at universities but left academic and organizational governance to the individual institution (O'Hara, 1999). From 1978 to 1983, the Church proposed various drafts of Canon Law that would require a "canonical mission" from the proper ecclesiastical authority to those teaching Catholic theology, in an attempt to control issues of orthodoxy.

In 1983, the new Code of Canon Law was released. This document contained a new chapter devoted to "Catholic Universities and Other Institutes of Higher Learning" (O'Connor, 2003). The law stated that "no university may bear the title or name Catholic University without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority" (can. 808). The document further stated that the bishops of the country have the responsibility of seeing to it "that in these universities the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed" (can. 810 #2). Lastly, it is stipulated that "those who teach theological disciplines . . . have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority" (can. 812). For a short while after the release of this publication, few Catholic institutions reacted to ensure the

keeping of such mandates (O'Connor, 2003). However, this document was only the beginning of many future mandates from the Church regarding identity, mission, and teaching orthodoxy.

In 1984, the Congregation for Catholic Education began to examine the various identity and juridical issues plaguing Catholic universities and colleges and produced a revised document called "Schema." This document served as the template for *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the current Church document outlining the relationship between Catholic colleges and universities and the Catholic Church of Rome (O'Hare, 1999).

Secularization and Higher Education Governance

Issues regarding secularization of students, faculty, boards of trustee members, and administrators have troubled college and university leaders charged with governing faith-based institutions. Many scholars have observed that the secularization process in higher education is an outgrowth of secularization of America (Ringenberg, 1984). The history of secularization at institutions of higher education can be traced back to the late 19th century. During this time, large state universities and several select private institutions led the secularization movement. As seen through the examples of other denominational higher education, after World War I many religious colleges and universities began to follow this trend. According to Ringenberg (1984), academics who had once attributed much to a supernatural worldview now became much more intrigued with the humanities, with an emphasis on sociology, psychology, economics, and the biological and physical sciences. These academic areas gave new insights and lenses to understand the increasingly complex world. Introduction to Darwinism presented a new

way to understand the world through science. The role of science in the curriculum continued to grow from this point forward. The second academic movement that led academics to a more secular stance was the philosophy of relativism. Academic scholars who had once taught and believed in absolute eternal verities as expressed in the Bible gave way to relativist philosophers. This perspective suggests that what is true for one may not necessarily be true for another (Ringenberg, 1984).

The enrollment of same-faith students at an institution and the policies implemented at an institution are an important relationship to study. Ringenberg (1984) states that the extent to which a given college or university moves toward or away from secularization is based on how completely the college personnel still believes that the central act of history is the supreme revelation of God to humanity through Christ. When those who govern Christian-faith-based institutions of higher education begin to believe that the Christian religion is merely one of many good belief systems, then issues of hiring the same-denomination faculty and administrators become irrelevant (Ringenberg, 1984). The move toward secularization is often preceded by curricular changes. This changes often include theology requirements becoming reduced or even abolished, theology departments becoming religious studies departments that incorporate beliefs from a multitude of religious beliefs and worship availability, and the regularity of the founding denomination becoming minimal and insignificant as a campus or community ritual (Ringenberg, 1984; Marsden, 1994a; Gleason, 1995, McBrien, 2003).

When higher education institutions have severed their ties with the founding religious denomination, several trends or institutional movements occurred during the process. These movements included the following (Ringenberg, 1984):

1. The public statements about the Christian nature of the institution become vague and statements describing the Christian goals [are] more in sociological than theological terms.
2. The faculty hiring policies begin to place less emphasis on scholars being . . . committed Christians. Subsequently, fewer professors seek to relate their academic discipline to the Christian faith.
3. The importance of Christian theological studies in the general curriculum declines.
4. Institutional support of religious activities on campus declines.
5. The institution begins to disassociate with the founding denomination and grows more independent.
6. Budget decisions begin to reflect a reduced emphasis upon the essential nature of Christian programs.
7. An increasing number of students and faculty members join the college community in spite of rather than because of the remaining Christian influences, and the deeply committed Christian students become the minority.

All of the steps identified are issues or results of institutional governance. As denominational institutions of higher education struggle to maintain marketability to a larger student and faculty pool, secular language and policies are often seen as more inviting (Olin, 2005). Once institutions' official statements regarding religious affiliation are weakened, hiring practices, curricular secularization, budget reallocation, and a shift toward independence from church hierarchy may become the norm. The decline of

enrolled students from the affiliated church will often foster governance of the institution to become more secular. The change in the student religious demographic has often encouraged administrative leaders to hire a more diverse faculty and to create a more inclusive set of clubs and activities to meet the needs of the diverse student body. The question then arises: can an institution remain affiliated with a church when student activities, clubs, and/or curriculum are in direct conflict with the church's values and doctrine?

As same-denomination student enrollment began to decrease, higher education leaders often began to adapt the institutions' mission statements, the curricula in regards to religious studies, and student programming activities. Further complications arose due to funding issues. With the incentive to receive federal funds, institutions needed to further separate themselves from church affiliation. Once these changes occurred, little Christian identity remains for one to identify with. Philip Blosser (2003) notes that the inroads of secularization at Catholic institutions of higher education occur when institutions compartmentalize religious faith to theology classes only and do not have it permeate through all academic disciplines.

However, through a sufficient number of students, faculty, administrators, and trustees who understand and believe in the religious values of the institution and its public relevance, secularization at an institution may be overcome. Robert Benne (1967), in his book *Quality With a Soul*, discusses a theory of critical mass that states that religious institutions must have the critical mass of students and university personnel who are church adherents. This is pivotal to keeping or increasing church identity and decreasing secularization at religious affiliated institutions. Solomon (1995) argues that

hiring faculty members that exactly mirror the racial, religious, and ethnic demographics of the students enrolled will not contribute to pluralism and diversity but rather to sameness.

Morey and Piderit (2006) refer to Catholic higher education today as being in a “cultural crisis.” This crisis these authors refer to is dramatically affected by the decline of priests and nuns to serve at Catholic institutions. The authors state, “In order for (Catholic higher education) to sustain a vibrant Catholic identity and culture, they will need to replace the witness community of knowledgeable and committed cultural icons who were members of religious communities” (Morey & Piderit, 2006, p. 272). With laypeople traditionally not having the same preparedness or religious formation, the issue becomes what knowledge and level of commitment is needed to ensure the vibrancy of Catholic culture. The answer the authors offer is “determined by what is needed to sustain commitment in faculty, administrators, and staff and what is needed to help students progress in the knowledge, commitment, and appreciation of the Catholic faith” (Morey & Piderit, 2006, p. 272).

Understood as either the cause or result of secularization, the decline of same-denomination students at an institution has a considerable impact on institutional governance. Leaders today must make great efforts to educate and develop a religiously and ethnically diverse student population but, at the same time, remain faithful to the teachings of the Church and serve as teachers of the faith. If faith-based institutions do not have a critical mass of members of the campus community who believe and value the religious norms of the affiliated church, governing the institution with balance will be extremely difficult. The role of an administrator to create policies, norms, and curriculum

for a student body and faculty who do not understand or desire to engage in education with a religious foundation while remaining in relationship with the larger Church community seems unfeasible.

Morey and Piderit's (2006) research project, which included interviews with more than 124 senior administrators from 33 Catholic higher education institutions, included the following five general policy changes for today's current campus in supporting Catholic collegiate culture:

1. An increased emphasis on theology and philosophy is the most effective way to emphasize the Catholic intellectual tradition, even though there may be reasons that it is better to emphasize Catholic themes in individual academic disciplines. Whichever approach is taken, [the] lasting benefits should be transparent to students.
2. New faculty should be hired with the provision that, at a minimum, they are willing to take some steps to become familiar with the Catholic intellectual tradition and give students personal encouragement to become familiar with Catholic issues and practices. Once hired, new faculty should be given more extensive orientation in Catholic themes and practices.
3. Staff in residence life and student activities should clearly inform students about the Catholic moral tradition and more consistently require them to comply with the rules that flow from that tradition.
4. In many instances, campus ministry should be allocated additional resources.

5. Catholic universities should form visible groups among faculty and staff at their institution who have knowledge of the Catholic tradition and are committed to it. (p. 314)

Ex Corde Ecclesiae

In 1985, the Church produced the pontifical document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in draft form, which was accepted by the American Council of Bishops in 1999. This document attempts to align the teaching and administration of Catholic institutions of higher education with the teachings of the Church (Hutchison, 2001; Shaw, 2002; Gallin, 2000). Much of the recent dialogue and debate found over issues of Catholic identity and mission have been brought about by the pressure to implement the guidelines set forth in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The Church, under the leadership of Pope John Paul II, provided through this document a vision for Catholic higher education and presented specific guidelines or rubrics to facilitate the fulfillment of its vision (Hellwig, 1999). This document caused a great debate over academic freedom by faculty and institutional autonomy of administrators and staff. Many educators saw this document as the final blow to an already fragile connection between the Catholic Church and the academic community of Catholic higher education (McBrien, 1993; Nilson, 2001). In 2000, the Vatican approved the norms for American Catholic colleges developed and revised by *Ex Corde's* implementing authority, the National Conference of Bishops (Henkins, Dee, & Manzo, 2001). The regulations stipulate the following:

1. Catholic institutions are to express publicly their Catholic identity, either in a mission statement or other document.
2. Catholic teaching is to influence all institutional activity.

3. Courses in Catholic doctrine should be available to all students.
4. All teachers and administrators, at the time of their appointment, are to be informed about the Catholic identity of their institution and their responsibility to promote, or at least respect, that identity.
5. The majority of faculty members should be Catholic.
6. Presidents should express commitment to the Catholic faith consistent with canon law.
7. Catholic theologians are required to seek a mandate (*mandatum*) from their bishop. The mandate specifies that theology teachers are to acknowledge the Church as the authentic interpreter of Scripture and uphold the Church's interpretation in their teaching.

Many faculty members and high level administrators fear that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* works against the tradition and environment of academic freedom that is found in the American system of higher education (O'Connell, 2001). *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is an attempt to ensure that Catholic institutions of higher education keep their Catholic identity through orthodoxy of teachings and personnel constituency.

Today, in 2006, this document is still highly debated. The debate primarily focuses on the requirement that theologians obtain a *mandatum*, a type of contact, from the local bishop (O'Connell, 2001). The *mandatum* raises important questions about the ecclesial character of theology and academic freedom at Catholic institutions. Archbishop Michael Miller, the current secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, argues that the *mandatum* is an important aspect of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. He (2005) states, "It is a

good and reasonable thing to expect a Catholic professor teaching Catholic theology to be in communion with the church, that does not seem an excessive demand.” Furthermore, he believes that currently the Church must find a way to identify whether *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is being implemented and whether the effects are meeting the goals.

Archbishop Miller also suggests that, as in all outcome assessment, Catholic higher education must have some type of markers to measure institutional Catholic identity.

Archbishop Miller suggests the following benchmarks (2005, p.1):

1. Concern for social justice
2. Sacramental and devotional life
3. Curriculum—are theology and the Christian tradition core elements?
4. Percentage of Catholics among faculty, trustees, and staff
5. Religious and doctrinal attitudes of students over time
6. Practice of the faith—do students pray, go to Mass, express an interest in religious vocations ?

These benchmarks are currently just suggestions; however, the Church believes it will need rubrics to be able to measure institutional response to the pontifical document (Allen, 2005). As the debate over Catholic identity, affiliation, and the judicial relationship between universities and colleges and the Church continues, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* will continue to be a controversial document.

Historical Chronicle of American Catholic University

The groundbreaking ceremony for American Catholic University took place in 1868, and the college’s official opening was two years later in 1870 (Durkin, 2004). The

original campus of American Catholic University consisted of a college hall that included five classrooms, an auditorium, and a faculty residence. The college began with six faculty and administration officials and was inclusive of all clergy members of the founding congregation. By 1872, with the increase in enrollment, American Catholic University began their first campus expansion with the start of construction on a five-story building (Durkin, 2004).

The next physical and symbolic addition came in 1891 with the construction of a seminary building to educate local men for the priesthood. The conclusion of this project led the institution leaders to construct another symbolic building, a Catholic cathedral. This cathedral, constructed in 1894, stood as a symbol of the roots of the education taking place at American Catholic University and the connection to the Universal Church (Durkin, 2004).

Academically, American Catholic saw great expansion and diversity during the 20th century. The Conservatory of Music opened in 1908. This was preceded by another landmark for the university, the creation of the first graduate programs. The first school to offer a graduate degree at American Catholic was the School of Pedagogy. This was also the first school at American Catholic to admit religious women. The goal was to educate the religious sisters who were going to staff Catholic schools (Durkin, 2004). In 1933, the first applications for doctoral degrees were accepted.

With the growing enrollment and the demand for a need to diversify the areas of studies needed to prepare students for the world, American Catholic needed to acquire more land to construct more buildings. In 1929, a new twelve-story building was

constructed that housed newly created Schools of Law, Accounting, Commerce and Finance, and Pharmacy. This second campus remained open until 1972.

In 1936, with great foresight, the university purchased a former golf course. The administration thought that the school was running out of space in the current locations and would like one location to house all of the academic schools. The purchase included more than 100 acres, for a total price of \$510, 000 (Durkin, 2004). The groundbreaking ceremony for this new campus did not take place for another 18 years, when the university was financially stable and foresaw a projected enrollment growth. The construction of the new campus began with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, graduate and undergraduate, a building for the College of Pharmacy, a house for the priests, and a gymnasium. Later additions included additional classrooms and administration buildings in the 1960s. The later buildings included a freestanding library, a law school, Asian Studies buildings, and a business school (Durkin, 2004).

In 1971, American Catholic University was asked by a local bishop to take over a small struggling women's college. The administration agreed, and this became the first of the eventual four branch-campus of American Catholic University. Three additional campuses were acquired in 1995, 1999, and 2001. By 2001, American Catholic University was a multicampus faculty with an international presence.

American Catholic University Mission

American Catholic University grew from a local school serving 49 students to a comprehensive university serving more than 19,000 students from America and abroad (Pellow, 2006). In 1995, the board of trustees approved the university mission statement

prepared by the president and board of trustees of American Catholic University. The mission statement identified American Catholic University as a Catholic institution in the charism of the religious orders' founder and a metropolitan university established in 1870. The opening paragraph of the document states that, as a university, American Catholic University commits itself to academic excellence and the pursuit of wisdom that flows from free inquiry, religious values, and human experience (Mission Statement, 1999). However, American Catholic University is also a religious institution. The document states, "We commit ourselves to create a climate patterned on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ as embodied in the traditions and practices of the Roman Catholic Church" (Mission Statement, 1999). Being affiliated with the Catholic Church does not limit the institution's search for truth or experience but rather the university understands itself as a place where the Church reflects upon itself and the world as the school engages in dialogue with other religious traditions (Mission Statement, 1999).

As an institution created in the charism of a Catholic religious saint, the school's mission statement puts forth the characteristics of compassion and zeal for service. The goal of American Catholic University, as stated in the mission statement, is to provide excellent education for all people, especially those lacking economic, physical, or social advantages. Community service is emphasized through various venues for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The members of the religious order identify the following six rubrics as characteristics needed to be incorporated in the institutions mission if they are going to foster the founders' charism (Holtschneider & Udovic, 2001):

1. Educating the poor and their children, thereby breaking the vicious cycle of poverty within family units;
2. Educating first-generation college students, thereby enabling new immigrant groups and traditionally marginalized populations to enter the mainstream in the United States;
3. Presenting the Roman Catholic tradition as an interpretive framework and spiritual support for students, professional and personal lives, while respecting and being enriched by the great religious diversity represented in the university communities;
4. Instilling in all students an affective and effective love for those in need;
5. Researching poverty in society and looking for creative ways to moderate this social evil;
6. Offering the universities considerable resources (e.g., knowledgeable experts, volunteers, meeting space, financial support, contacts) to other local, national and international agencies and community groups with complementary goals.

The mission statement affirms that American Catholic University should seek to foster a worldview and to further efforts toward global harmony and development, by creating an atmosphere in which all may embody the spirit of compassionate concern for others. Lastly, American Catholic University is a metropolitan university. This allows the university community to benefit from the cultural diversity, various academic and artistic resources, and unique professional educational opportunities offered throughout the city in which the school is located. The mission statement attempts to weave together the

Catholic, religious orders founders' charism, metropolitan, and academic pillars that represent American Catholic University.

Derived from the mission and charism of the institution, American Catholic University also promotes six core values. These core values are promulgated as virtues the campus community is to embody. The core values include the following: 1) truth: knowledge in accord with reality, behavior faithful to ethical standards, 2) love: focusing and extending minds and hearts to nurture one's own and others' good, 3) respect: awareness of and esteem of all individuals, 4) opportunity: circumstances favorable to serving others and preparing one's self for fulfilling life, 5) excellence: striving, growing, and never being complacent, and 6) service: spirituality in action, a response to God's call to give of ourselves (American Catholic University Core Values, 1999).

In 2004, the university presented its institutional goals: 1) develop the academic and institutional culture to be student-centered and committed to lifelong learning, 2) enhance resource development and prioritize resource allocation to achieve the school's vision, 3) build an organization of strong leaders in which faculty, administrators, and staff are enabled, motivated, and engaged, and 4) institutionalize a new vision and planning culture in the context of mission and external challenges. Division leaders and departments were asked to find creative and practical ways to encompass these core values and institutional goals in all areas of staff development and strategic planning.

Ultimately, the sponsoring religious order wishes, through American Catholic University, to instill in each member that God is present in each person of the entire human family and that this charge calls forth a human response of respectful service, specifically for those at the margins of society. American Catholic University prides itself

on its values of respect, truth, respect, service, and opportunity. Using these values in service of the poor is the institution's ultimate goal. In addition to service, the institution is called to research into the causes and pursuit of eliminating poverty in our world.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

To understand the effects that the decline in the number of Catholic students has on governance and organization at American Catholic University, the researcher followed qualitative methods. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology perspective and techniques used for this study. The research is qualitative in nature and includes a case study with interviews and document analysis. Included in this chapter are the types of research used, data collection and analysis procedures, and a timeline for the research.

The term methodology, in a broad sense, refers to the process, principles, and procedures in which researchers approach problems and seek answers (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Qualitative research allows the researcher to perform an in-depth study with great detail and explore concepts and data whose essence is often lost when using other methods (Creswell, 2003; Bogdan & Biklen 2003; Patton, 1987; Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). The researcher's goal and purpose is to provide an in-depth study of the perceived effects the decline in the number of Catholic students at American Catholic University has on institutional governance and organization. According to Creswell (2003) this research design is useful to utilize when attempting to understand how individuals understand their environment, situation, position, or institution. Qualitative research helps illustrate how individuals' perceptions and intentions in a situation determine their actions and behavior (Creswell, 2003; Krathwohl, 1998). This research design method

produces an evaluation report that will provide information pertaining to the following (Patton, 1987, p. 8): 1) a detailed description of program implementation, 2) an analysis of major program processes, 3) observed changes, outcomes, impacts (or lack of), and 4) an analysis of program strengths and weakness as reported by the people interviewed. Creswell (1998) states that by using qualitative methods the researcher will produce a wealth of detailed information about a small number of people and cases that will increase the depth of understanding of the situation but will have reduced generalizability of other methods. Current literature on the topic of the declining number of Catholic students enrolled at Catholic institutions is broad in nature and is not specific to any one institution. This study is different in that it is aimed to investigate the perceived impact at one specific institution.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) identify five features of qualitative research. These five traits (naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive, and meaning) form the holistic cornerstones of qualitative research. As a naturalistic process, the researcher visits the actual setting as the direct source of data collection, and the researcher is the key instrument (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). This allows for the researcher to provide a holistic picture of American Catholic University. The context of the research is very important. Second, the process uses descriptive data, that is to say, using pictures and words, not numbers. This allows the researcher to analyze the data in all of the richness and completeness. Third, qualitative data are highly concerned with the process of research not just the outcomes (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). This process, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) examines how terms and labels come to be applied and utilized. They state that in comparison to hypothesis testing, qualitative

research tends to analyze data inductively. That is to say, abstractions are constructed as data are gathered and grouped together. Last, and of extreme importance, is meaning. The researcher in qualitative research must capture each participant's perspective most accurately to give the most accurate description and a detailed account of how the participant understands the world in which he or she functions, works, leads, and/or lives (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). The researcher for this study spent time at American Catholic University partaking in direct observations and dialogue with university personnel to understand the nature of the institution's climate and culture.

Qualitative research consists of three types of data collection: in-depth open-ended interviews, direct observations, and written documents (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 2003). The data collected in various formats allow for a complete and holistic perspective for the study. The researcher used all three methods in determining the perceived effects of the decline in the number of enrolled Catholic students have on the governance and organization of the institution. The data derived from interviews consist of direct quotes from participants who participated in the study. These quotes and interviews provide not just knowledge-based answers but also allow for the researcher to obtain opinions and feelings the participant has on a chosen topic. Being able to follow up with additional questions provides the researcher with a more comprehensive data compilation. Direct observations are also an important component in qualitative research. Observations provide the researcher with an opportunity to identify participants and institutions' activities, behaviors, culture, symbols, and actions. Interpersonal interactions and organizational processes are all part of the data a researcher hopes to encounter when using qualitative research methods (Patton, 1990). Lastly, document analysis provides the

researcher with quotes from institutional or organizational documents, insight into official institutional planning and changes found in publications, and a historical perspective on the research topic found through memos and report analyses. These three data collection techniques in qualitative research are traditionally used through fieldwork. Fieldwork allows the researcher to individually interact with the organization's culture, key personnel, and any symbolic or ritual activities important to the study (Patton, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen 2003)..

Sample and Data

The sample for this study was limited to American Catholic University located in the northeast United States. American Catholic University was founded and is currently governed by a religious order, not a diocesan institution. Using one institution allowed for an understanding of an institution from multiple perspectives. These perspectives included interviews with key personnel, identified as individuals who are senior-level administrators and campus leaders, who have the ability to make changes to the organization including but not limited to curricula, programs, recruitment, physical plant, organizational structure, policy, marketing, budgetary and spending, and/or mission, and document analysis, including documents such as the mission statement and archived letters from Church and religious orders authorities.

In selecting participants for this study the research selected one member from each respective area to discuss their perceptions on how the decline of Catholic students impacts the institutional governance and organization. These areas include the presidents office council, the board of trustees, the office of the provost and academic deans,

academic affairs, student affairs, marketing and communications, mission office, university ministry, and enrollment management. Of those selected for participation 7 are members of the Executive Planning Committee, a very selective and includes only the highest level administrators on campus that provides recommendations to the president. Ten participants, leaders of specific divisions and units directly report to members of the Executive Planning Committee. One participant serves on the board of trustees. Of the 18 participants, 4 are tenured faculty who now serve in administrative roles but continue to teach on a part-time basis. Five of the 18 participants are members of either a women or men's religious congregation. Where as each division or unit includes numerous institutional personnel that serves on a more junior level the researcher selected senior members first and then department directors secondly as prospective participants. The purpose of the researcher is to collect perceptions from constituents in numerous areas of the institution in lieu of numerous perceptions from a single department or division. The 18 people invited to partake in the study all agreed to participate.

This institution was selected, in comparison to other Catholic or religious order institutions, because the current Catholic enrollment trend places American Catholic University in a crucial decision-making position, and the researcher has access to key personnel and artifacts, having lived among this religious community and attended this university. This information will enhance the depth of this study and provide the researcher with a stronger context in deciphering institutional culture.

Research Design: Case Study

The research design was prepared using a case study approach. A case study is a particular method of qualitative research. In comparison to other research methods, case studies involve in-depth examinations of an instance or event. As a result of using this research method, the researcher will gain greater insight or understanding about why a situation or change has occurred (Patton, 1986; Yin, 1994). According to Yin (1994) case studies are traditionally used to create a hypothesis rather than for hypothesis testing. Often, studies using qualitative research are written as case studies. Patton (1987) notes that, regardless of what specifically will be studied, a qualitative case study seeks to describe the unit in depth, detail and context and holistically (Patton, 1986, p. 19). Yin (1994) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that does the following: 1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when 2) the boundaries between contemporary phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which 3) multiple sources of evidence are used. This definition clearly illustrates the purpose and usefulness of case studies as a tool of research.

In examining the quality of research designs, Yin (1984) identifies four design tests that the researcher must address to ensure the quality of the case study research performed. The four assessments he includes are; construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 1984). In ensuring that the research protocol and the reported conclusions are valid, Yin suggests that the researcher must be aware of the various designs tests. The first design test, construct validity, is identified as the most problematic in case study research (Yin, 1984). In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary tool used for data collection. If only one method of data collection is utilized, the potential that the researcher could taint the data collected is high. To best ensure

construct validity, the researcher must use multiple sources of evidence. This promotes the notion of using multiple types of inquiry and sources for data collection. Using archival records, pertinent documents, interviews, direct observations, and examination of the physical campus in data collection permits the researcher to have multiple sources of data collection and establishes a chain of evidence (Yin, 1984).

The second design test according to Yin that needs to be performed is on internal validity. Internal validity is a concern for causal studies. Causal studies attempt to determine if one specific event led to another specific event. If the research does not take into account other possibilities the research design has failed to deal with some threat to internal validity. Internal validity is defined as the “approximate validity with which we infer that a relationship between two variables is causal” (Cook & Campbell, 1979, p. 37). Three data analysis procedures that strengthen internal validity are pattern matching, explanation building, and time series analysis.

The third research design test, external validity, is concerned with whether the conclusions of the study are generalizable beyond the specific case study. That is to say, are the conclusions found in one research project applicable to a similar situation found in a different setting? Many researchers criticize the case study approach to research as having a low or poor basis for generalizing due to the dependence on a single case. Hamel (1993) and Yin (1994), however, argue that the relative size of the sample does not transform a multiple case into a “macroscopic study”. Tellis (1997) suggests that the goal of the study should establish the parameters, and then should be applied to all research. This way, even a single case is acceptable, provided it meets the established

objectives. Yin (1994) also states that generalization of results from either a single or multiple design is made to the theory and not to the population.

Reliability, according to Yin, is the final test for research quality. Reliability questions if a different researcher conducted the same exact research, would the outcomes and conclusions be the same? Yin (1984) concludes that using a proper and well-defined case study protocol and developing a case study database will ensure high reliability. Reliability helps to minimize errors and biases in a study (Yin, 1984).

Yin (1994) identifies five components for research design that are important for case studies. These include the questions of a study, its propositions (if any), its unit(s) of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings. Yin (1994) suggests that, for case studies, the researcher needs to follow a protocol as part of the research design that includes overview of the project (including project objectives and case study issues), field procedures, questions specifically those that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection, and the guide of the report. Following this protocol will produce a holistic understanding of the area of research.

Once data are collected, Yin (1994) suggests that researchers need to make every effort to produce analysis of the highest quality. To obtain this goal, Yin suggests four principles that should be followed in data analysis for case study research design. He suggests that the researcher should show that the analysis relies on all relevant evidence, includes all major rival interpretations in the analysis, addresses the most significant aspect of the study, and uses the researchers' prior expert knowledge to further the analysis.

Regarding the types of data that must be collected, the researcher gathered a variety of sources addressing issues of Catholic mission, identity, and governance. These documents included but were not limited to mission statements prior to the current 1999 document, planning documents (including decisions reached by the university planning committee), articles of incorporation from the founding religious order community and the university, archived university information and charter changes, statutes and by-laws of the university, admission materials, student life program changes, campus ministry bulletins, and a review of the trends of student demographics. The researcher used the documents to develop the context and identify the changes this new trend in a declining number of Catholic students has had on the institution.

Table 2
Document Analysis

Categories
Mission statement
University bulletins
Religious community & Church correspondence
Curriculum & program documents
University charter
Employee handbook and Human Resource documents
Additional archived university material

Second, the researcher performed interviews with pertinent personnel from the institution's board of trustees, President's Office and senior staff, Academic Affairs, Student Life, Marketing and Communication, University Ministry, and faculty charged with leadership responsibilities. The number of administrators the researcher invited to participate in the study was 18. These members were selected based on their ability to make changes to the organization, identify trends in institutional data, have financial power and decision-making ability, and have been given the charge to promote the

Catholic and religious mission at the institution. It is the goal of the researcher to identify the emerging trends stemming from the research problem by interviewing the various constituencies at American Catholic University.

Last, the researcher examined and studied the organizations' campus to examine any symbolic or cultural changes found at American Catholic University in connection with the issues of Catholicity. As the student demographics have changed over the years, what physical or symbolic changes have accompanied the trend in the decline in the number of Catholic students? Has the institution implicitly or explicitly made any symbolic and cultural changes in an attempt to address the religious demographic trends?

Table 3
Campus Symbols and Rituals to Investigate on Campus

Religious symbols and rituals
Building names
Statues
Scripture verses
Classroom symbols
Location and frequency of Chaplain's Offices
Church or prayer spaces
Other symbols
Campus-wide religious rituals and activities

The qualitative method outlined above will provide answers regarding the perceived changes that are occurring due to this new trend at American Catholic University. Creswell (1998) states that qualitative research allows for exploration in research that describes and elaborates what is occurring in a detailed and descriptive fashion. The researcher's goal is to identify what actions have been initiated by American Catholic University leaders to address this new enrollment trend in student demographics. Using the qualitative method outlined above allows the researcher to utilize a more

flexible research approach (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). This is important for this research project since the research depends heavily on personnel interviews and participants' perspectives. However, by incorporating interviews, document analysis, and investigation of physical and symbolic cultural changes, the researcher hopes to present a holistic assessment of the research problem.

Data Collection Methodology

The researcher conducted 18 semistructured, audio-taped interviews with the university personnel outlined above. The subjects who participated in the study have confidentiality, and their names and positions will remain under the sole care of the researcher. All respondents' responses were combined in the presentation of the data. The subjects had the right to review the audiotapes and/or transcripts and request that any or all portions be destroyed. The interviews were all held at the university and were approximately 1 hour in length. Each interview contained the same questions (identified in Appendix B). The interview questions, semistructured and open ended, allowed the interviewer to provide follow-up questions and probe further into the responses made by the interviewee. When the interview questions were created, the following topics were taken into account: institutional identity, financial and budgetary changes, program changes in student activities, curricular issues, campus rituals, hiring and implementation of new departments or positions, and any other perceived proactive and reactive measures involved in the change in student religious demographics.

The subjects were not required to answer any question they did not feel comfortable responding and could conclude the interview at any time without prejudice.

Participants who decided not to participate also would have their anonymity protected. The only expectation is that the subjects who participated answered the questions to the best of their ability and as honestly as possible. All audiotapes and transcripts from the interviews are being kept in a locked, secure location under the exclusive care of the researcher for a time of 3 years, upon which they will be destroyed. The researcher took notes during the interviews of any subject who wished to participate but not be audiotaped. The researcher did not use the subjects' names, positions, or titles on the audiotapes or written transcripts. All transcripts typed were saved to a CD-ROM that will be stored in a locked, stored location for a period of 3 years and then destroyed. Each participant was given a number, and the audiotapes, transcriptions, and notes identify each subject by only this number. The researcher is the only person with access to the number that identifies each subject. All participating subjects' responses were combined in the presentation of the data. While excerpts of the interviews were used in the narrative, the anonymity of the individual was maintained. A pseudonym (American Catholic University) was used for the name of the institution.

Participants selected by position to be interviewed received an invitation letter by email or phone call to follow up with details of the research project. All participants were informed that their actual names would not be used and that a pseudonym, American Catholic University, for the university would be used in this case study. All information regarding the researcher's purpose, contact information, dissertation chair, and attending institution was provided in the letter of informed consent. Prior to contacting any participant, the researcher submitted the proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at American Catholic University and Seton Hall University to ensure that the

participant's rights and welfare were adequately protected. Interviews and initial invitations to participate commenced only after the IRB approved the research.

Analysis

Once all participants were interviewed, institutional documents were collected, and symbolic and physical plant attributes were recorded, analysis of the data collection began. The process of analyzing qualitative data is eclectic; there is no specific right way, rather there are many techniques available (Tesch, 1990). However, several rubrics guided the analysis of the data. These techniques include the following four rubrics. First it is important to conduct data analysis as an activity concurrently with the data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting writing. This allows for a more precise collection and analysis of the data. To ensure accuracy the researcher audio taped the participant interviews and divided the transcriptions into themes. Next, identify how the analysis process will include data reduction and interpretation. Data collected was placed into tables to provide clarity of themes and institutional activities. It is important that this process remain consistent throughout the research project. Third, present the data and analysis using matrices for clarity and better understanding. Lastly, identify the coding procedure to be used to reduce the information into categories so that the study may be replicated with accuracy (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Tesch, 1990; (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Tesch (1990) has outlined a process for a researcher to pursue in analyzing qualitative data that the researcher will followed. After completing the interviews, the researcher coded the transcripts from the interviews. The process included reading

through all transcripts and identifying underlying meanings and themes. The researcher first divided the responses of the participants into the fourteen areas corresponding to the questions asked by the researcher. The participant's answers were then preliminary divided by the researcher into broad themes. Making a list of topics and clustering similar topics established major themes, unique topics, and surplus information. Next, the researcher produced abbreviated topic and marked the transcripts accordingly. The individual topics were then grouped according to themes and interrelationships determined. Lastly, the researcher assembled the data belonging to each category and began the preliminary analysis.

In analyzing the data collected from the participant interviews, document analysis and review of the physical campus the researcher constructed Tables 4 through 7 to present the data collected in a comprehensible manner. Table 4 includes faith-based awards and celebrations, activities, and outreach that was either collected during participant interviews or collected during analyzing institutional documents. This Table illustrates the diversity of awards and religious outreach sponsored by American Catholic University. Table 5 identifies the physical and religious symbols found on campus at American Catholic University. It is the hope of the researcher to provide a description of the symbolism found on campus that promotes the religious roots and identity of the institution.

The last two Tables, 6 and 7, illuminate the religious programs and activities that were created to propagate the Catholic and religious charism of the institution. Table 6 addresses programs offered through the Center of Church and Society and Table 7 presents the activities and initiatives offered by University Ministry. These two tables

present the activities of American Catholic University that work to strengthen and clarify the Catholic identity.

In addition to the tables identified above the researcher included direct quotes from participants, direct quotes from relevant documents, and a synthesis of all data collected. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that writing the findings in qualitative research include using quotations and the researchers interpretations intertwined to for a flowing paragraph that modulates the particular with the general (p. 196). By providing a section presenting the findings and a section on the synthesis of the findings for each subsidiary question the researcher provides a complete presentation of the data.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

In order to understand how the decline in the number of Catholic students affects institutional governance and organization through the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders, this chapter consists of the summary and key findings of three types of data collection. The data collection includes 18 semistructured interviews with senior-level administrators and campus leaders, a review and synthesis of institutional documents ranging from founding documents to the present-day statements on institutional policy, mission, and values, and direct observations, which include people and institutional activities, behaviors, campus culture, symbols, and actions. The researcher hopes that by using this threefold approach in data collection a holistic depiction of American Catholic University, regarding the research question and subsidiary questions, can be presented.

Semistructured Interviews

To understand the perceived effects the decline in the number of Catholic students has on governance and organization at American Catholic University by senior-level administrators and campus leaders, the researcher has proposed five subsidiary questions that give insight and clarity to the research question. The subsidiary questions include the following:

1. Has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected university spending and resource allocation?
2. How has the increase of non-Catholic students affected university programs, events, curriculum, clubs and activities, and hiring practices?
3. To what extent has the demographic change visibly (physical plant) affected the institution? Has there been any institutional administrative response?
4. Has the institution implemented the guidelines set forth by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? Has the decline in the number of Catholic students at the institution affected the implementation process?
5. Have any new departments been created to assist in the propagation of the Catholic and the religious community identity of the institution?

To address each of these subsidiary questions, the researcher established 14 semistructured interview questions to ask each of the participants. Each question was combined with the institutional archival research and observations of the campus culture and climate to elucidate how the campus leaders understand the impact the decline in the number of Catholic students has on governance and organization of American Catholic University.

Subsidiary Question 1

The first subsidiary question examines the perceptions of campus leaders regarding how the decline in the number of Catholic students affects university spending and resource allocation. The researcher discussed with participants funding for department and program creation, budget allotments used for promotion of faith-based

programs and any additional funds that participants perceived that the decline in the number of Catholic students was associated with in their departments.

Participants interviewed were unable to identify an exact cost associated with the enrollment of non-Catholic students but were quick to identify programs and departments that the campus leaders believed were created to address this new student demographic. One participant stated, “Financially, I would say the clear, clear commitment to campus ministry is witnessed by our budget and in the commitment to our growing personnel, and to our training.” American Catholic University has seen a dramatic increase in the hiring and training of campus ministry personnel. Ten administrators have been hired over the past 10 years, including three who live among students in the resident halls. The changes to this department have been dramatic. One participant stated:

I mean, when I started at American Catholic University in 1994, it was three campus ministers, and no programming at all. It was really a presence model with retreats and mass offered, and the St. Vincent dePaul Society. That's it. I mean, that was what my experience of campus ministry was, so I mean, we're in a whole new phase of offerings and personnel. We have 13 full-time ministers including residence ministers and a full program calendar. Financially, that is a commitment from the institution.

In addition to changes to campus ministry, participants discussed the creation of two new departments they perceived to be established as a result of the decreasing Catholic student constituency. These include specifically the Center for Church and Society and the newly created Mission Office. The institutional costs of these departments include administrative and staff personnel, program budgets, and campus

space allocation. Participants perceived the creations of these departments as a clear institutional decision to be proactive in attempting to promote the Catholic identity to a declining Catholic student population. The Mission Office and the Office of Church and Society are lead by an executive vice president who reports directly to the president of American Catholic University. This reporting structure, participants believed, emphasizes the importance these two offices hold on campus.

In addition to programs and departments that work with current students at American Catholic University, participants discussed the Catholic Student Scholarship Program for the 2006-2007 academic year. The purpose of this program is to increase the number of academically strong Catholic students who apply and attend the university. The requirements for students is that they are Roman Catholic, have a minimum B average and an SAT score of 1100 (Math and Verbal sections), and graduate high school by June 2007. Award amounts range from \$1,000 to \$2,500, depending on financial need. Applicants are required to write a 300- to 500-word essay describing how their Catholic faith has influenced their lives. Participants spoke of this initiative as the clearest financial and proactive attempt to alter the current trend in the decline in the number of Catholic students.

Each participant mentioned at least one campus program that he or she perceived to be an example of how the university was spending additional funds to promulgate the Catholic nature of the institution to the non-Catholic population or programs actually implemented for non-Catholic students. For example, participants mentioned the increase in multi-denominational student organizations. These organizations include the Chinese Christian Fellowship, Christian Fellowship, Coptic Society, Hindu Students Council,

Korean American Christian Fellowship, Muslim Students Association, and the United Sikh Association. These clubs all require funding and meeting space on campus. In addition to these organizations, participants spoke about the added time given to student summer orientation, which has increased from a two-day to a three-day program. This increase has permitted the program to provide additional sessions to students on the Catholic and religious mission of the institution. Lastly, participants referred to the resources used to host the Founders Week Program. The university established Founder's Week in January to coincide with the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul on January 25. This program includes dozens of programs, service opportunities, lectures, awards banquets, and liturgical events highlighting and celebrating the Catholic and religious mission of the institution.

One participant concluded the financial impact to be campus wide, including program, recruitment, and physical issues. The participant stated:

I think a few things that you can point to (financial impact of the decline in the number of Catholic students) that we have a fully resourced and funded campus ministry department. I don't know how many folks exactly are in there, but you know, the development of a new worshipping space, clear efforts in terms of the campus of embracing Catholicism—symbols, statues, crosses—and I think efforts and costs at really supporting the recruitment on a national level of students from Catholic high schools who are leaders in their high schools, believe very deeply in community service, and they do have a real, deep commitment to faith.

Although participants found associating an exact dollar amount when asked about the

financial impact the decline in the number of Catholic student has on the institution difficult, identifying programs, personnel, and departments they perceived used to address this trend for most participants was effortless.

Findings Synopsis for Subsidiary Question 1

The participants interviewed for this study found great difficulty in assessing any changes in specific dollar amounts from their own budgets that could be directly associated with the decline in the number of Catholic students on campus at American Catholic University. However, 16 participants mentioned the increase in the size and predominant role of programs to foster understanding of the mission and Catholicity of the institution. According to the participants' perceptions, as enrollment of non-Catholic students began to increase, the institution began to grow and foster programs to "church" this new population. From an increase of personnel, which affects institutional finances, 12 participants indicated that over a 10-year period the Department of Campus Ministry increased from a department consisting of three to a department of 13, including organizational divisions of service and social justice, faith formation, residential ministry, music, liturgy, and sacraments. The department includes a vice president of University Ministry, a director of University Ministry, and 11 other administrators serving in various roles. When the participants were asked questions about how the decline in the number of Catholic students affects university spending and resource allocation, participants overwhelmingly perceived this increase in personnel and programming as the largest costs associated with this trend.

In addition to the Department of Campus Ministry, participants also mentioned the creation of the Office of Mission and (Founders' Charism) Center for Church and Society. Although these offices are small in the number of personnel, participants spoke of the space, programming budgets, and personnel costs as a financial impact directly created in response to the decline in the number of Catholic students on campus. The last department, which four participants referred to, was the Office of Academic Service-Learning. Academic Service-Learning at American Catholic University is a classroom-based program that involves students in some form of required community service activity and uses that activity as a means of understanding course concepts. Created in 1995, the Office of Academic Service-Learning works to link service to the community with academic and career goals. The goal of Academic Service-Learning at American Catholic University is to challenge students through planned reflection and analysis to grow intellectually and emotionally while actively participating in the Catholic and religious charism of service to the marginalized and the poor. This office includes several administrative and staff personnel.

From a program standpoint, not including events sponsored by campus ministry, Office of Mission or Center for Church and Society, 11 participants interviewed spoke about the recent change of student and parent summer orientation from a two-day to a three-day program. This new program was increased by a day to include a more comprehensive presentation of the institution's mission. The spiritual mission and the Catholic nature of the institution were given a dominant role during orientation. The revamping of the orientation program is estimated at a total cost of exceeding a million

dollars. The participants directly associated this cost with the need to religiously educate the continually increasing religious diverse population.

Lastly, all 18 participants spoke about the financial investment of building a new church in 2001. The \$10 million costs associated with one of the newest buildings on campus was widely known among participants. Many participants believed that the building of such a dominant structure on campus during a time of continued decreased enrollment of Catholic students was clearly a symbolic decision, a type of evangelization or figurative reminder to the campus community of the charism of the institution. In addition, the creation of the Catholic Student Scholarship Program is a clear financial attempt to address the trend in declining Catholic student enrollment.

Subsidiary Question 2

The second subsidiary question explores the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders regarding the impact the decline in the number of Catholic students has on institutional programs, curriculum, events, clubs, activities, and hiring practices. The participants discussed many programs and institutional initiatives in examining American Catholic University from this perspective. The researcher divided the collected data into the areas of curriculum, scholarship, hiring and employee program opportunities, and institutional faith-based programs, excluding University Ministry. University Ministry programs will be presented in subsidiary question 5.

Curricular issues.

To understand the shifts in the curriculum, the researcher reviewed college catalogues and class offerings found in the university archives. As with many Catholic institutions, in the beginning, the curriculum of American Catholic University on the collegiate level was separated into two categories. The first was the traditional classical curriculum. The second option was a commercial program that replaced some of the classical courses with other classes preparing students for the business world. The classical curriculum included Latin, Greek, German or French, Rhetoric, Composition, Poetry, Elocution, History, Math, Chemistry, Astronomy, and Philosophy. In 1880, American Catholic opened the Preparatory Department, to serve those students not yet ready for college-level classes (Durkin, 2004).

The commercial program included many of the classical courses but also Arithmetic, Letter Writing, Bookkeeping, and Commercial Law (American Catholic University College Catalogue, 1880–1881). Students graduating from the classical program received a Bachelor of Arts compared to those completing the commercial program who received a Commercial Diploma. According to the college catalogue, Christian doctrine was taught throughout all courses (American Catholic University Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1879–1880). Institutionally, American Catholic University saw its role as being in the place of the Catholic community. In this role, the college, to the extent possible, was to ensure that the students in its charge were fulfilling their obligation as members of the Roman Catholic Church (Morris, 1977; American Catholic University Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1879–1880).

In 1891, American Catholic University began to provide seminary education, creating a very visible tie to the hierarchal Church. This training of future priests lasted for four decades, serving as the only resource for clergy training in the diocese. Also, in 1936 American Catholic University established a School of Social Action that provided laity education in the areas of religious, social, economic, and culture subjects that would help the laity promote Catholic thought and teachings into society. The connection between the institution and the Church was so strong that even in the early 1960s the bishop refused the president's pleas to allow women to enroll and attend the liberal arts college, claiming that it would be against Catholic ideals (Morris, 1977).

As stated in the 1921–1922 college catalogue, religious education was a primary focus of the curriculum. The college catalogue states:

Intellectual training and learning of themselves have no moral force. Only religion purifies the heart and guides and strengthens the will. Therefore, running through this whole scheme of the education is the effort to build character; to check and correct wrong tendencies, to draw out and strengthen high aspirations; to instill noble ideas. Here religious instruction finds its function. To banish it from the curriculum would be to leave the student's soul without a guide, without a fitting destiny.

In 1935, the ninth president of American Catholic University in speaking to the alumni association stated that the institution would continue to “stretch out to greater, bigger, nobler things for the spread of Catholic education, to promote Catholic action in the sense our Supreme Pontiff, Pius XI, has spoken and to develop to utmost with

Apostolic zeal, the Cause of Christ on earth, the promotion of the Kingdom of God, the human salvation of human souls” (Hauppe, 1955; Morris, 1977).

Between the years 1965 and 1989, two distinctive partnerships with the Church occurred. First, in 1973 American Catholic University founded the Institute for Advanced Study of Catholic Doctrine that offered master’s degrees in theology and pastoral ministry. This new academic area allowed for research and scholarship on the study of contemporary questions of great importance for the Church from a conservative ideology (American Catholic University Archives, 1973). The president at that time thought that the theology department had gotten too liberal (Morris, 1977). Second, the president in 1969 refused newly created state government aid provided by Article 129 of the State Aid for Independent Institutions of Higher Education Program, known as Bundy Aid, because it would mean a removal of institutional curricular mandates of Theology and Philosophy courses, removal of the word Catholic from school statutes, and even removal of classroom crucifixes. The refusal to make these institutional changes and receive government aid clearly demonstrated the institutional commitment to keeping its Catholic identity. The money that American Catholic University would have received from the Bundy Aid between the years of 1973 to 1989 would have totaled more than \$71 million (Pellow, 2006). The refusal of this money was a very clear statement about the Catholic commitment.

All undergraduate students enrolled in the liberal arts program were required to take 20 semester hours of philosophy, in the Thomistic perspective, and 12 semester hours of theology. Catholic students were required to take specific Catholic theology courses, but non-Catholic students were permitted to take any theology class offered by

the department. These courses comprised approximately 24% of a student's total academic program. Those enrolled in professional programs were required to take 12 semester hours of philosophy and eight credit hours of theology, comprising 16% of a students' academic program.

In 1975, the board of trustees approved a change to the foundation of the curriculum, which decreased the number of theology courses to nine semester credits, philosophy to nine semester credits, and three additional credits in either philosophy or theology, as chosen by the student. This policy remained intact until 2001 when American Catholic University created and implemented a new university-wide core curriculum. The creation of this new curriculum came from suggestions from the Middle-States evaluation team that the five undergraduate colleges that compose American Catholic University should have a central educational base or core in common instead of five independent colleges trying to act as a university. During this time, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was introduced by the American Council of Bishops, and the institution's curricular issues were reviewed to meet the proposed requirements.

In 2001, all five undergraduate colleges agreed upon and implemented the new core curriculum. The committee that created this new academic curriculum believed that it expresses the particular academic character of an American Catholic University education. In an evaluation by the University *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* Committee, the committee stated that this new curriculum articulates the Catholic identity of the institution in the following ways. The committee states: (American Catholic University *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* Executive Summary, 2004):

1. The undergraduate core curriculum reflects the [u]niversity's concern for the formation of the whole person, fostering an awareness of our rich and diverse cultural heritage, equipping our students with the tools of critical inquiry, and promoting concern for human dignity.
2. The core curriculum aims to enrich the study of the arts and sciences with the perspectives and traditions of the Catholic faith, and to encourage students of all faiths to seek truth in a universal spirit of openness.
3. The required undergraduate core courses in theology and philosophy embody the Catholic Church's emphasis on the harmony between faith and reason (ECE, 1990, p. 16). All theological education at American Catholic University endeavors to effectively communicate the Christian tradition in light of the questions raised by contemporary culture (ECE, 1990, p. 29).
4. American Catholic University embraces its responsibility to teach critical evaluation of cultural norms and values according to a Christian perspective, and to communicate to students the ethical and religious principles "which give full meaning to human life" (ECE, 1990, p. 33). All students take "Theology 1000C: Catholic Perspectives on Christianity," which emphasizes living a moral life. There are an additional two theology courses in the distributed core curriculum, one of which focuses upon ethics. (The distributed core indicates those requirements which are met by various courses in the different schools, reflecting the students' school or major.) The distributed core curriculum also includes one philosophy course in ethics. For example, pharmacy students take medical ethics, and business students take business ethics.

5. The core freshman seminar course introduces new American Catholic University students to the distinctive founders' charism and spirituality dimension of the University's mission. Campus Ministers support this effort by scheduling a single class period for a presentation about Church and University history, and the impact of the religious founders charism on the University and its students. All presenters cover the same content and use a video on the religious tradition at American Catholic University. Educators can also employ the mosaic in the narthex of the church to help students become acquainted with some of the religious heroes in our tradition.

When the researcher interviewed the participants regarding changes to the curriculum they associated with the decline in the number of Catholic students, 18 participants identified the implementation of the 2001 core curriculum with an emphasis on the theology and philosophy requirements. However, one participant questioned, how Catholic are our Catholic students? Do our Catholic students know and understand the rituals and teachings that embody the Catholic Church or were they simply baptized and confirmed as a child? Regarding the Catholic theology requirement, a participant stated:

When we were deciding on what the core course in theology would look like, one of the things that was of grave concern to us, and still is, it's not just with our non-Catholic or non-Christian students, but that the Catholic students that we get here are literally religious illiterates. I mean, they truly know nothing. Most of the Catholic students know as little as most of the non-Catholic students, and I mean, that's just across the board. That's been our experience, so when we were trying to

decide on a core course, part of what we said is, when you look at all of the students—you look at the pharmacy students, many of whom are non-Christian, but they still take Christian marriage. They still take spirituality. They still take courses that somehow are related to our Catholic heritage, and so what we decided is that a core course would be a common course. We shouldn't follow the old line of thinking that said any non-Catholic student can take any theology course to satisfy the requirement. To us, there was no coherence to it, so what we said is that every student takes Theology 1000. This is a course that communicates to the students a sense of the Christian tradition. We are not proselytizing. Even among the faculty, people would say, “How can you require this, because it will be proselytizing?” I said, “Then what you don't understand is the academic discipline of theology.”

American Catholic University has made great strides in creating a curriculum based on the teachings set forth in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* but eight participants who were interviewed identified the need to assess whether professors across disciplines are infusing their curriculum with the mission approach outlined by the Core Curriculum Committee. The second concern identified by participants was how students were being assessed regarding their understanding of the Catholic and religious mission of the institution through the lenses of their area of study. As one participant stated, “Are we graduating education majors who are teachers or are we graduating education majors who become teachers who understand their careers as being of service to others and rooted in the Catholic charism of respect of the human person and grounded in truth, love, and respect?”

Scholarship.

As a university, American Catholic University is concerned with scholarly research. In serving the Church and the world as a Catholic institution of higher education, the institution diligently works to ensure that the institution's research meets this objective. The American Catholic University Ex Corde Ecclesiae Evaluation Committee explored the ways in which the institution scholarship activities meet the objectives set forth in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The findings reported by this committee identified that the "institutional commitment" of the university "to the service of the people of God" is reflected not only in its mission and vision, but also in the particular academic activities listed here (American Catholic University Ex Corde Ecclesiae Executive Summary, 2004):

1. Academic Service-Learning is a form of learning that very directly embodies the charism of St. Vincent de Paul. Through this method of teaching, students engage in structured service projects that are designed to promote reflection on questions related to their coursework. Since the program's founding in 1995, thousands of students have encountered human needs and served in a constructive way.
2. The graduate programs of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies (MA, MDiv, and Graduate Certificate) have a key role in serving the Church directly by training lay women and men, priests and religious from the metropolitan area, the United States and from around the world, equipping them for ministries that range from religious education to seminary formation and youth ministry.

3. Through their scholarship and their leadership in scholarly societies and as consultants to local, national and international Church agencies, American Catholic's Theology [and] Religious Studies faculty engage in direct service to the Church.

4. As a Catholic University with the gift of an extraordinarily diverse population, American Catholic University provides a space for serious and respectful ecumenical and interreligious discourse, a goal expressed by *EcE* 47. Those faculty who research the spiritual traditions of the world religions also further the interdisciplinary understanding advocated by *EcE* 19[,] which is central to the increasingly diverse community at American Catholic University and of the world.

Hiring and employee program opportunities.

All employees at the time of their hiring must participate in human resource orientation. This orientation program works in collaboration with the Office of University Mission and introduces all aspects of the American Catholic University mission to new employees. This includes the founders' charism and spirituality and the Catholic nature of the institution. Faculty specifically also begin the academic year with a New Faculty Convocation. This convocation begins and concludes with a prayer, and the keynote address is given by the previous year's selected faculty-scholar who most embodies the religious founders' charism that year.

Fourteen participants discussed the importance of recruiting administrators, staff, and faculty who embody, or at least value and respect, the Catholic nature of the institution. One participant stated:

I'm looking for people who see how they could be a professional and give fullest expression to that in a professional, Catholic, and metropolitan environment. And I don't think the entities are exclusive of one another. I think there can be that, so I'm very conscious. I sit in every finalist interview throughout the division, and you know, people might say, "Why would you do that as the vice president?" but I really want to meet the people myself who are finalists and be able, in a certain sense, to say yea or nay. And part of that what I'm looking for is the convergence of values about being a professional and being at a Catholic, (founders' charism) and metropolitan university. So it's very conscious on my mind, and I think the senior staff at the institution knows that as well, and are very conscious about hiring in that way as well.

The sentiments of this participant were echoed throughout all of the interviews. The only discussion of hiring that questioned the hiring of Catholic employees was that of campus ministry. Currently, the university board mandates that all persons hired by the Department of Campus Ministry must be practicing Catholics. Upon reflection about the increase of non-Catholic students enrolled at American Catholic University, four participants questioned if more campus ministry personnel from other faiths should be employed. One participant stated:

I have mixed feelings about it. I agree with it, and I don't agree with it, but I think right now I'm leaning toward not agreeing with it, because I think it forces Catholic campus ministers to retool and re-evaluate how well they are doing? The Director of Faith formation has been trying to pull them (non-Catholic-faith-based student organizations) together to not pray Catholic, but to pray together, each in our own way. That's been the thrust that we've been doing with them, and that's been sometimes an uphill battle, because other groups have become so identified as another identity that they're not comfortable with us.

Institutional faith-based programs and activities.

The last category that participant responses included was that of institutional activities initiated to promote, celebrate, or enhance the Catholic and religious nature of the institution. For sake of clarity, the researcher included specific programs of campus ministry, Office of Church and Society, and Mission Office programs under a separate category in review of subsidiary question 5. The institution-wide celebrations, awards, and outreach are included in Table 4. The activities in these categories are a collection of responses of participants when they were asked what had been the institutional response to the decline in the number of Catholic student enrollment. Participants identified these programs as not being solely created to address this new trend but believed the centrality of these events in the life of the institution was meant to be both symbolic of the heart of the institution's Catholic beliefs and roots. As the institution experiences a decline in the number of Catholic students, participants believed that the institution needed new ways to celebrate and claim its Catholic identity. Table 4 presents data presented in a theme

matrix from participants regarding the institutional activity they believe has been implemented to build a Catholic environment in spite of the decline in the number of Catholic students.

Table 4
Institutional Faith-based Awards and Celebrations, Activities, and Outreach
(Excluding University Ministry Programs, Which Are Found in Table 6 and 7)

Activity	Eligible members	Description
University awards	Faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni (Laywomen)	Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton Medal: Awarded to an outstanding Catholic laywoman who has embodied in her life the values and vision of Mother Seton
	Faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni (Laymen)	St. Vincent de Paul Medal: Awarded to an outstanding Catholic layman who has embodied in his life the ideals and values of St. Vincent de Paul
	Faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni	Caritas Medal: Given for service of the poor
	All members of the university community	Additional awards include the Faculty Outstanding Achievement Medal, the Administrative Outstanding Achievement Medal, the Staff Outstanding Achievement Medal, the Alumni Outstanding Achievement Medal, the Pietas Medal, the President's Medal, the Medal of Honor, the Gold Medal, the International Medal, the Founders Mission Award, the Founders Teacher-Scholar Award, and the Cardinal Cooke Medal
	Students	Annual awards include the St. Catherine Laboure Award for Faith Formation, the Mother Teresa Award for Appropriating the Faith, the Thomas Merton Award for Forming the Christian Conscience, the Dorothy Day Award for Education for Justice, the Frederic Ozanam Award for Facilitating Personal Development, and the St. Peter the Apostle Award for Developing Leaders for the Future
Founders' Week and the Founding Communities Convocation	All members of the university community	American Catholic University annually celebrates its founders' heritage through the annual Convocation and the events of Founder's Week. The Mission Council has promoted annual celebration of Founder's

		Week, by sponsoring lectures, service days, and other activities. The Convocation is a highlight of Founder's Week, at which a distinguished speaker is invited to reflect upon the legacy of the Founder of the institution. The distinguished speakers honored with the degree Doctor of Humane Letters.
Honorary degrees	Open	Through honorary degrees, the university publicly recognizes and celebrates individuals of notable achievement, selected with awareness of their suitability to be honored by a Catholic community. The criteria include having a public role and voice consistent with Church teaching and demonstrating great support of American Catholic University as an institution. Most importantly, honorees must be an example of our mission and represent the success it is hoped our students will achieve.
Academic calendar	All members of the university community	The official registrar's academic calendar includes Christian feast days, noting the observance of All Saints' Day, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and Easter.
Interfaith outreach	All members of the university community	American Catholic University is committed to reaching out to the religiously diverse population and assisting students in their own faith development. Currently, there are approximately 10 registered religious student organizations. These include Muslim and Jewish students organizations, as well as numerous groups representing Christian denominations.

(Ex Corde Ecclesiae Committee, 2004)

The majority of institutional activities identified in Table 4 are symbolic by nature. For example, the institutional awards given and honorary degrees granted, all emphasize the fundamental charism of the institution. Where as these awards and degrees are given to individuals who have actualized through scholarship or direct service the

mission of University of service to the poor and / or Catholicism, these initiatives impact only a few members of the institution. Where as only three participants interviewed identified specific awards granted by name, they did mention the importance of Founders Week, when all of these awards are distributed. Even though eight participants questioned the participation rates among students specifically at Founders Week, the clarity of the institutional commitment to advance the charism of the religious nature of the institution is evident. The institution must continue to discuss ways to include more students and University personnel in faith based programs and activities.

Regarding the academic calendar, American Catholic University closes for all holy days of obligation. In interviewing participants of this study they overwhelmingly saw this commitment to follow the Church calendar as an institutional connection to the Church. One participant when asked about how the institution is Catholic stated:

The way in which American Catholic University follows a calendar that highlights the Church feast days demonstrates Catholic identify of the school. I am not sure if students actually know why they do not have classes on these days but hopefully they are asking the question and the faculty and administrators are explaining well.

This participants' response illustrates that even though the institutions academic calendar is perceived as a symbolic connection with the Church it has the potential to serve as a tool to educate students on the practices and beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Lastly, Table 4 identifies interfaith outreach to the non-Catholic students at the institution. Currently 10 denominational religious student organizations exist and are recognized on campus. These student-facilitated organizations enroll several hundred students and are quite active on campus. Where in the past these organizations were housed under Student Affairs and operated somewhat disconnected with University Ministry, there is a new institutional initiative to facilitate more interfaith prayer experiences. By bringing the different faiths (Catholic, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) together to pray and dialogue each community could learn more about the other. The fact that Catholic and non-Catholic students could learn about each other helps to both propagate the teachings of the Church to nonbelievers as well as prepare all students to go out to the world with a greater understanding of other cultures and belief systems.

Findings Synopsis for Subsidiary Question 2

Subsidiary question 2 explores the impact the decline in the number of Catholic students has on institutional programs, curriculum, events, clubs, activities, and hiring practices. The overwhelming consensus among participants, is that as the Catholic student enrollment began to decrease at American Catholic University and the institutional Church began to question how Catholic higher education institutions were in union with Rome, several changes began. These changes included an increase in campus programs pertaining to Catholicism and the founders' charism, newly created departments with a focus on the Church and mission, renewed mission and vision statements, new programs for recently appointed faculty, administrators, and staff members providing an in-depth understanding of the mission of the institution, and

curriculum changes with the implementation of a core curriculum that highlights the institution's mission and Catholic nature.

The participants believed that American Catholic University has made great efforts in creating a Catholic “web” that is inclusive of both curricular and program areas. The participants associated this recent explosion of Catholic-centered events and activities as a response to the increasingly growing diversity of the students' religious backgrounds. Overwhelming, 16 participants perceived the increase of activities such as Academic Service Learning, Founders Week activities, newly created university awards, and the university celebration of Catholic holidays and rituals, as being directly associated with attempting to educate the growing religiously diverse student population.

Not all participants felt that the increase in Catholic-based programs was the correct path to follow. Four participants who had this perspective were not against the Catholic nature of the institution but questioned if this was the best way to address the increase of non-Catholic students. One participant stated:

Because as the trend of students [increase in the decline in the number of Catholic students] and their socioeconomic background and status changes before they come to college as far as their faith, and they could've been sexually active and know about safe sex and Planned Parenthood and things like that, and then when they get to college here at American Catholic University, there's a stop, and we don't offer those services. It is directly related. The programs and services that we offer are directly in conjunction with the Catholic teachings, so you have 47% that are getting it, and the other 53% are saying, “Well, what about me?” You know, “I want to have sex. I want to have my partner stay overnight.” That's

something that we grapple with as well. There are no support services for gay and lesbian, bisexuals, transgender students that are public at this university, and some of those students feel very comfortable practicing Catholicism and their Catholic faith, but there still is no support for them being a gay student. I think that that is very challenging sometimes for them, and not just gay students, but people of different faiths—you know, Jewish students and students who are Buddhist, students who are Presbyterian and Lutheran. I think what kind of services are we providing them that are in conjunction with their faith and not strictly catering to the Catholic students? And it's hard, because there's a drive to do more based on the Catholic religion, so I think sometimes things get messy.

A small percentage of participants indicated concern that the programs served more as a “tally sheet” of Catholic events rather than being successful in helping students and university personnel truly come to know and understand the Catholic faith. These six participants overwhelmingly believed that that the institution did a much better job through programs, events, and curriculum to evangelize the university community to the teachings of the founders’ charism and doing service rather than educating about the Catholic nature of the institution. The perception among the participants is that more must be done to help the university understand the connectedness between being Catholic and the founders’ spirituality, for the two are inseparable. An additional concern participants identified was the number of students and employees partaking in the campus activities associated with the Catholic and religious mission nature of the institution. Participants spoke of the need for assessment to determine if the same 200 students were

attending Founders Week Activities, attending Mass on Sunday, taking part in academic service learning, and volunteering at service sites. More insight regarding these participant perspectives will be presented in the review of subsidiary question 5.

Participants also spoke about the emphasis of the new core curriculum, which highlights the Catholic and spiritual mission of the institution. However, eight interviewed participants questioned how many faculty were attempting to interweave the Catholic and spiritual mission of the institution with the secular discipline they are teaching. Some of the participants indicated a certain amount of pushback from professors in including service learning as part of their curriculum or presenting their discipline from a Catholic lens where appropriate. As with the concern about the real results of the dramatic increase of “Catholic” programs and activities on campus, participants associated the curriculum changes as a result of both the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and in the decline in the number of Catholic students on campus but questioned the real effects changes in the curriculum had on students.

Subsidiary Question 3

The third subsidiary question explores changes to the physical plant and any parallel association with the decline in Catholic student enrollment through the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders. Throughout American Catholic University’s campus, there are several recent visible reminders of the Catholic identity in the statues on the grounds and the saints’ names marking the buildings. The researcher observed and participants identified several physical symbols pertaining to the Catholic nature of the institution. In addition, participants were asked about their

perceptions of the Catholic symbolism found on campus and if they perceived any correlation between the physical campus changes and the trend in the decline in the number of Catholic students. Table 5 identifies the religious symbolism found on the main campus of American Catholic University.

Table 5
Physical Religious Symbols on Campus at American Catholic University

Category	Place/item
Campus-wide statues and religious art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. St. John the Baptist 2. St. Vincent DePaul 3. Celtic Cross 4. Founder's Mural outside University Center 5. St. Vincent and Friends 6. Virgin Mary Statue (2) 7. Bishop Bust in library 8. St. Albert the Great 9. Religious order statues in the residence halls
Space allotted for prayer and ministry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Campus Ministry Offices (9) 2. Center for Church and Society 3. Executive Office for Mission 4. Prayer rooms in the residence halls (5) 5. Campus Church 6. Prayer Rock Garden
Catholic physical and symbolic presence of found in the campus church	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gospel Windows 2. Mosaic of the Orders Religious Members 3. The procession of 18 holy people of the Congregations' Community 4. St. Catherine Laboure 5. Blessed Sacrament Chapel 6. Stations of the Cross (devotional walkway) 7. Shrine of Mary and Shrine of St. Thomas More
Other visible signs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clerical presence on campus 2. Outer Gate Large School Seal and <i>Catholic</i> Identifier 3. Building cross on top of St. Augustine Hall, St. John Hall, St. Albert Hall, St. Vincent Hall 4. Ten Commandments on Law School Building 5. Large Crucifix in Resident Hall Cafeteria 6. Classroom crucifixes 7. Celtic Cross on Great Lawn 8. Cross on Newman Hall 9. University seal on St. Augustine Hall 10. Mission and Vision Statement in all University Offices 11. Nativity scene during Advent 12. Raising of the Chapel Cross in the Residence Village

Building names	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. St. Thomas More Church 2. Marillac Hall 3. St. John Hall 4. St. Augustine Hall 5. St. Albert Hall 6. St. Vincent Hall 7. Newman Hall (named for a priest and former administrator) 8. O'Connor Hall (named for John Cardinal O'Connor)
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Ex Corde Ecclesiae Committee, 2004

As for the perceptions of these symbols among the participants, the answers were somewhat varied. All participants identified the changes to the campus regarding an increase in religious symbolism. Participants perceived this increase in religious symbols found on campus over the past 10 years as both a response to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and as a reminder for the Catholic and non-Catholic members of the community of the roots of the institution. Whereas participants did not identify these physical changes as being solely associated with the decline in the number of Catholic students now enrolled on campus, the participants did see the need to increase the symbolism specifically as a way to educate the “unchurched” Catholic and non-Catholic population. Some participants believed that the campus had an ample number of religious symbols. But the majority felt that the institution has further to go. One participant stated:

I would say that my problem with the Catholic symbolism is that it's in pockets rather than permeating the campus, which, again, says to me, “We're trying to put a Band-Aid on it.” So we have the nice cross. We have a statue here and there. So we've got a couple of things on that quad, but does that mean that Catholic symbols are everywhere or that somehow our Catholic symbols contribute overwhelmingly to the Catholic identity? I don't think so.

Another participant stated:

I like . . . the fact that the cross on the top the library is huge. I love that. It's a huge thing. You can't miss it. And right near that, I love the fact that the St. Thomas Church has the signage saying "St. Thomas Church," and that's another huge building. The institution could do a lot more work, the concept of passive programming. I love that concept. In other words, more statues and more religious symbols are needed to have students and employees really feel the Catholic presence in the physical structures on campus.

Findings Synopsis for Subsidiary Question 3

American Catholic University main campus is located on 96 acres in an urban community. The campus is contained within a gated perimeter. When the participants were asked about their perceptions as to how the campus has physically changed since the increase of non-Catholic students, they mentioned a long list of symbols. The first physical change all 18 of the participants indicated was the construction of the new church (2005) located in the center of campus. More subtle were the outside statues of the founding saint, the patron saint, and other religious statues recently placed on campus. Participants indicated that these statues were too limited in number and were placed in insignificant locations to have a strong impact on campus. One participant stated:

I think where most places that you go you have a sense that you're at a Catholic environment or a Catholic university or the different statues that are strategically placed and fonts and different things throughout the university contribute to that, and I think students can find a great respite, not only in the church, but throughout

the campus, in terms of the various statutes, the fonts, and the different ways in which the university's tried to create an environment that can provide for reflection and the invitation that's embedded in every symbol to sort of reflect and go deeper and reflect on your own lives within the context of faith.

Nine participants spoke about the crucifixes hanging in offices, cafeterias, and classrooms. However, many questioned and identified the perceived disappearance / reduction of crucifixes in the classrooms, an original symbol dating back to the opening of the institution. They did not believe this disappearance was deliberate, but no indication of a replacement seemed imminent. Additionally, 10 participants spoke of the increase in other religious symbols and the decrease of Jesus or Christ symbols. A participant, referring to the symbolism on campus, stated, "I say yes to the Mary statues, and I say yes to the saint statues, but what happened to Jesus, the reason and focus of our institution?"

Participants, six in total, spoke about the original, large crosses placed at the top of several of the original buildings on campus but also about the absence of such a symbol on the tops of any of the eight newest buildings, constructed since 1980. These buildings include student residences, classrooms, administrative offices, and athletic structures. Participants questioned whether the absence of the crucifix on these buildings was symbolic of the changing religious demographic among the students or were simply an architectural issue. Five participants indicated that the appearance of religious saints and the decrease of Christ or Jesus imagery indicated a safer spiritual tone rather than the explicit Catholic nature of the institution. Both the increase in general religious symbols

and the decrease in specific Catholic symbols were noted. One participant stated, from his perception, “Spirituality is ‘in,’ but organized religion and church is on the ‘outs’ with students.” Participants overwhelmingly believed in the importance of religious symbols as a way to proclaim the Catholic nature of the institution.

Five participants spoke of additional symbols that have been discussed for the campus that would further enhance the symbolic nature of the Catholic environment. The institutional leaders are strong in their commitment to continue fostering the Catholic environment through the physical structures.

Subsidiary Question 4

The fourth subsidiary question examined the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders in regard to the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The application of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* calls for “[e]very Catholic University is to maintain communion with the universal Church and the Holy See; it is to be in close communion with the local Church and in particular with the diocesan bishops of the region or the nation in which it is located.” The president of American Catholic University works diligently to ensure continual dialogue between the local bishop and the universal Church. This includes an annual meeting and the appointment of a pertinent clergy member of the diocese to the board of trustees. Until recently, an auxiliary bishop of the diocese maintained an office on campus. In addition, every three years the president hosts the board of directors’ meeting in Rome, Italy. The president also represents American Catholic University at the Vatican at the annual meeting of the Congregation of Catholic Education.

As to the hiring of Catholic faculty who are informed about the Catholic identity of their institution and their responsibility to promote, or at least respect, that identity, the institution has worked to better recruit and hire employee candidates who are aware and respectful of working in a Catholic environment. The faculty contract expresses this same commitment. Paragraph four of the Employment Agreement reads:

The Mission Statement of the University identifies American Catholic University as “a Catholic University.” It has, therefore, an institutional commitment to be faithful to the Christian message as it comes through the Church. Accordingly, Catholic ideals and principles will penetrate and inform University activities wherever possible. A faculty member specifically recognizes the resulting responsibility to adhere to this commitment and the Mission of the University.

Participants felt that American Catholic University was on par with the expectations of issues of implementation. One participant stated:

There has tended to be, from my limited perspective, sort of a perceived distrust of what's in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and it really centers on the *mandatum*, it seems to me. But if you read the document, it's a beautiful document, and what we found was that we (American Catholic University) were doing a lot of things that were recommended in the document, in terms of programs and services, the academic environment, the commitment to social justice, the physical environment, creating faith opportunities for students—for Catholic and non-Catholic students as well.

Many participants seemed least comfortable in answering questions regarding *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Responses to the questions regarding participants' understanding of this document and the success or weakness in the university's implementation of the rubrics put forth in this document were often brief. The majority of participants suggested that these questions would be better addressed by the University Ministry or the Mission Office. Upon reading the American Council of Bishops guidelines for implementation, a participant stated:

Yes, I would say 100% that (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*) is implemented at American Catholic University. Specifically with the hiring process here and the mission and role how the Catholic faith drive the policies and procedures. I think that's something we're doing very well. I think we're doing it all well.

This participant's somewhat simplistic answer reflects the manner in which some of the other participants answered questions regarding *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The discomfort seemed to be with not being completely knowledgeable about the document's content and a concern about identifying institutional shortcomings to meet the Bishops' recommendations.

As for the actual rubrics found in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, participants questioned whether the literature the university uses to market itself to truly promote the Catholic identity. One participant stated:

It's [proactive to] look at the scenario and how our leadership chooses to advance, and the things that we clearly would say—and I hope this isn't talking out of turn, and this would be part of one of my answers that I was like, oh, but I want to be honest—is you know, we look at our admissions binder, and you don't find

Catholic until page 13 or something crazy like that. If you really look at our literature, who are we asking to come in? Who are we recruiting? And I think that's going to be a huge issue, and that's going to be a decision that admissions makes and marketing makes in regard to what are we saying this university is, and what are we claiming it—the impact could be great.

Findings Synopsis for Subsidiary Question 4

All 18 participants believed that American Catholic University is attempting to implement the rubrics put forth by the American Council of Bishops. Participants' felt most strongly about the way the institution expresses publicly the Catholic identity through the mission statement. Participants included the mission statement as being the strongest way that American Catholic University expresses publicly its Catholic identity, a topic later addressed under subsidiary question 5. Six of the participants questioned whether beyond the mission statement if the Catholic identity was strongly stated through admissions material and other recruitment documents. These participants felt that during the student recruitment process often the literature was reluctant to strongly identify the Catholic nature of the institution. One participant stated:

We have gone through a continual shift regarding our institutional communications and marketing. During the '80s, I felt our communication material had a strong use of Catholic symbols. [In] the early 1990s, the recruitment materials and marketing materials seemed to be void of crosses or images of clergy or the Catholic identity. As 2000 approached and the mission statement was created, the (founders' charism) took a central role [in] literature,

bringing back our Catholic identity. It seems we have gone almost full circle but strongly end up in a time where the (founders' charism) is the clear distinction of this institution compared to other Catholic schools.

Five participants believe that the University does a better job promoting the Catholic nature of the institution only once students are accepted. As for the rubric in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* stating that all institutional documents are to demonstrate the Catholic identity, participants believed that this could be presented more strongly in recruitment literature. As for the decline in the number of Catholic students and the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, one participant stated:

I would ask if we're really working hard at trying to live out the spirit of it, I would say without a doubt. You know, we're trying, and we are working on it, and we're growing, and I think that we're in a very different place than we were 20 years ago, but I think that we have to deal with the reality that unless you're in a very small, liberal arts college or at Notre Dame—you know, or maybe Georgetown. I'm trying to think of the places where the predominant number of students would be Catholic. I would say for most Catholic colleges, you've got a more diverse population that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* would recognize. I would say it would be very challenging for any diverse campus to have those [*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*] aspirations met.

There was no question among participants about the institution's success in following the rubrics of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, with all 18 participants stating that courses in Catholic doctrine were available to all students and that all teachers and administrators,

at the time of their appointment, they were informed about the Catholic identity of the institution and their responsibility to promote, or at least respect, that identity. American Catholic University is very strong in offering courses in Catholic theology and in assisting new hires in coming to understand the Catholic identity of the institution. However when it came to hiring of personnel some concerns do exist among participants. Regarding hiring, one participant stated:

We need to go deeper into the roots of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. It's not enough to hire people who are mission (Catholic) informed. We need to look at hiring mission advancers, and I make that distinction because anybody can say, "Oh, yeah. I like the mission. It's nice." But as an administrator, I believe that there's another charge there—another mandate—to OK, this is the context of which you've chosen to work, and part of this is a very clear mission statement. We need to continually take it (mission statement) off the wall and put it into our hearts and use it as our motivation.

Another stated:

You need people who know how to do that—who know how to use that language like the Catholic speak, you know, spirituality speak. So I believe that in the hiring—and we have every right to do it—that is in our advertisements, you know, then it needs to be very clear—not just we need a good guidance counselor. We need a Catholic mission-based guidance counselor. That's what I believe.

A third participant stated regarding hiring issues:

When we're talking about our higher administration on every level when they're

hiring, is that (hiring Catholics) even like a blip on the map, for lack of a better word, but is that a conversation, and obviously, I would never want to come across in a discriminatory way. As long as someone is able to understand and support and advance, then obviously, they would be a part of this community, but again, then it does become a question of really, well, what is your percentage, and that would become a question later on, but at this point, I would hate to say that someone Catholic is better, then, because who knows what the Catholic practice is? I mean, as long as those values are understood and how they articulate them and understand them to be a part of the job that they're doing.

In addition to hiring personnel who are rooted or at least respect the Catholic perspective, nine participants had concerns about the lack of on-going faith development. These participants felt that the programs offered by the Office of Mission or the Office of Church and Society should work more with independent departments to help foster on-going development departmentally in lieu of external programs traditionally outside of the workday.

The last two rubrics of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* note that the majority of faculty members should be Catholic and that the president should express commitment to the Catholic faith consistent with canon law. Currently, as of the 2004 data, 51% of the full-time faculty are Catholic, and 54% of the part-time faculty are Catholic. Respectively, full-time administrators average 64% Catholic. Four participants spoke about the struggle that hiring committees face in the hiring of faculty members. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* calls forth the faith commitment of the president to the Catholic Church consistent with canon

law. The president of American Catholic University, as indicated in the interviews of three participants, was involved in the early stages of drafting *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and was also active in its final development as a board member of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.

A split could be seen among participants in the discussion as to how strongly participants believed Catholic teachings influence all institutional activity, as put forth by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Seven participants believed that when it came to student programming the “Catholic” word was used almost as a “can do” or “can’t do” guide. In addition, three participants discussed the amount of training Resident Assistants and Resident Directors receive pertaining to the Catholic nature of the institution and the rules that are enforced in the Residential Village that adhere to Catholic morality. Here participants, although at times stating they did not believe it was used correctly, believed that Catholic teachings influenced institutional activity. Where questions arose was in the conflict between weaving the Catholic views in secular courses and research.

Subsidiary Question 5

The last of the subsidiary questions explored the perceptions from senior-level administrators and campus leaders regarding any new departments or programs specifically created to assist the propagation of the Catholic or religious community spirituality at the institution. Table 6 illustrates the findings from reviewing the archived institutional data and the interviews of the participants.

Table 6

Programs and Activities That Assist the Propagation of the Catholic or Religious Mission of the Institution (Non-inclusive of Campus Ministry)

Building the Catholic culture through the Office of Church and Society and the Mission Office	
1. Endowed chairs in theology	1. Paul E. McKeever Chair in Moral Theology 2. The John A. Flynn Chair 3. Chair of Social Justice (Open to all Department Faculty)
2. (Founders' Charism) Center for Church and Society	This Center serves the internal University community and the external church community by providing a wide range of the founders' charism centered events and church programs. The Center serves as a clearinghouse for and developer of information related to poverty research and social justice resources.
3. Catholic Healthcare Administrators Program (CHAP)	A weeklong education program for developing the Catholic identity of hospitals.
4. University Service Council, University Service Day, and the Social Justice Movie Series	These activities bring community members together to discuss social justice issues and take part in community serve.
5. Annual Conference on Poverty Studies	Conferences have included such topics as <i>Faces and Facets of 21st Century Poverty</i> and <i>Hope: Foundation of a Civilization of Love and Justice</i>
6. Faculty Fellows Program	This initiative includes several faculty who serve as Fellows to form a learning and sharing community on issues of poverty and social justice, as well as religion and science.
7. Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations	Faculty are requested to provide expertise on particular problems such as deforestation, cloning, and women's issues on an ad hoc or ongoing basis as needed.
Mission Office	The Mission Council is a University-wide committee dedicated to awareness of the institutions Church and founding congregations' mission. Part of the work of the Mission Council is self-education and formation through the new Spirituality Certificate Program and new hire orientation program . The Mission Council also conducts a mission audit, assessing the level of the charism literacy among campus constituencies.

(Ex Corde Ecclesiae Committee, 2004)

Presented in Table 6 are the works of the Mission Office and the Office for Church and Society. The efforts of the Office for Church and Society include the endowed chairs in theology, the faculty fellows program, and various conference and workshop series. The programs are important to illustrate the institutions commitment to foster Catholic scholarship from various perspectives however they involve only a small

percent of University personnel. Many of the participants interviewed for this study knew only of the department but little of the efforts and work actually preformed.

The newly created Mission Office has implemented several initiatives to impact the larger University community. First, a required workshop for new employees that teaches about the religious mission and history of the institution has now been implemented into the overall human resources training program. This program not only engages new employees in dialogue about the roots of the institution but also demonstrates the institutional commitment to continue this mission. Second, a newly created certificate program in the charism of the religious founder spirituality is now being offered. This new program is offered to all staff, administrators, and faculty members. Where as this program is new, future assessment will be needed as to determine its impact. As illustrated by Table 6, American Catholic University has taken great steps to show the symbolic connection to the Catholic roots of the institution but needs to find ways that the initiatives impact a greater number of students, staff, faculty, and administrators.

Table 7

Campus Ministry Programs and Activities That Assist the Propagation of the Catholic or Religious Mission of the Institution

Department of Campus Ministry	
1. Faith development and spirituality	Goals of Programs and Student Meetings: Forming the Christian Conscience Educating for Justice Facilitating Personal Development Developing Leaders for the Future Interfaith Activities
3. Leadership/Education for Justice	V.I.T.A.L: a four-year progressive student program that combines faith and student development theories, with practical leadership development. The requirement of service, apostolic reflection, and a commitment to

	<p>prayer are also asked of participants.</p> <p>Student Organizations: St. Vincent de Paul Society, Habitat for Humanity, Students for Life, Students for Global Justice and Pax Christi</p> <p>Activities include: Hunger Awareness Month, Sleep-out for the Homeless, Walk for the Homeless, Hunger Banquet and the Urban and Rural Plunge Program.</p>
4. Catechetical efforts/ evangelization	The RCIA provides opportunities for catechesis and evangelization. Campus Ministry has also begun scripture study groups.
5. Liturgy and worship	<p>School Liturgies: Mass is offered twice daily including Sundays. All major events are programmed around liturgy, e.g., the opening school mass, Baccalaureate mass, and Founder's week.</p> <p>Students are selected, trained and serve in the roles of Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and Music Ministers.</p> <p>Other liturgical activities include Novena's, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Bereavement Prayer Group, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Blessing of the Brains, Stations of the Cross, and Blessing of Women.</p>
6. Apostolic and pastoral outreach	Each year thousands of service hours are performed. This includes Student Mentors, Soup Kitchen and work with the Homeless, and Psychological Services.

(Ex Corde Ecclesiae Committee, 2004)

Table 7 identifies institutional programs and activities that attempt to propagate the Catholic or religious mission of the institution. These initiatives impact different constituents of the institution. For example, the department of Campus Ministry works primarily to evangelize and propagate the faith dimension of the institution to students. Different activities of the department reach different students. For example liturgical events including daily and Sunday Mass, reconciliation services, and other worship and

other liturgies impact different students. With the recent addition of residence halls the Sunday evening student Mass traditionally serves 200 students weekly compared to the weekly day masses that serves more administrators, faculty, and staff than students. To bring more students to attend larger liturgies such as the Back to School Mass and Founders Week Liturgy, awards are distributed to different student leadership groups. This has been an attempt to bring students to understand that the heart of everything that happens on campus as being rooted to the faith life of the institution.

Where as all participants discussed Campus Ministry and the growth of this department as a specific initiative believed to be in response to the decline of Catholic students, the number of students impacted by this department is questionable. Participants all applauded the great works of Campus Ministry; the question as to how many students were actually engaged in their activities was often raised. For example, the approximately 12 retreat experiences offered annually only serve a very small percent of the student body. Even with the dramatic increase of personnel in this department the impact experienced by the overall student body is perceived to be small in nature.

Through Campus Ministry students partake in thousands of hours of community faith based service. Athletes, clubs and activities, Greek organizations, and student government members are all encouraged, and at times required, to participate in service opportunities offered through Campus Ministry. In addition the What A Difference A Day Makes Program, a co-sponsored program including the Mission Office and Center for Church and Society, includes several hundred employees each year of various departments who take part in a day incorporating prayer and community service. The

goal of the program is to introduce members of the institution to both active participation in prayer and service, the roots of the institutions charism.

Historical Synopsis of Institutional Mission

What was clear among all participants was the work the institution has done to increase awareness of the mission statement. In order to better understand the religious commitment and direction of the institution, the researcher used archived documents of American Catholic University to gain further insight. For much of the university's early existence, a formal mission statement did not exist; however, institutional documents and early writings on the institution give great insight into the early purpose and mission of the institution. Leaders of the religious community who founded American Catholic University saw establishing and leading a Catholic university as an opportunity to extend the mission of the Church and serve those underserved in society (Morris, 1977; Pellow, 2006). American Catholic University, according to the founding bishop, was founded to provide young men an opportunity to pursue a strict schedule of secular studies at the preparatory and collegiate levels, rooted in Catholic principles (Durkin, 2004, Morris, 1977). The bishop's long-term goals for American Catholic University were that it would also eventually serve as a seminary for priesthood vocations for the diocese (Morris, 1977). As early as 1904, the American Catholic college catalogue stated the purpose or mission of the institution was to provide for the mental, moral, and physical development of young men (American Catholic University, 1904–1905).

In 1921, American Catholic University presented its understanding of the dual relationship the institution has between the Church and the school's mission in its college catalogue. The document states:

The state, in conferring a charter upon an institution of learning, requires that it impart instruction according to a definite standard; that is to teach the youth who seek its guidance principles of sound morality and enlightened patriotism; that is inculcate the highest ideals of citizenship. On the other hand, the Church demands that a Catholic College be a herald of revealed truth to the young, whose spiritual interests must be deemed paramount. There must never be any lowering of this standard, for any lowering of it would inevitably destroy the entire system.

For the local bishop, American Catholic University served as a "Catholic center" of the diocese, offering support for church-sponsored activities and inviting Catholic speakers to key events on campus. Dr. Orestes Brownson, an American intellectual who converted to Catholicism, was the first guest lecturer at the opening of the university on the topic of papal infallibility (Morris, 1977). Many saw this first lecturer as symbolic of the institution's place in the academic community and its commitment to the *magisterium*. Prestigious clergy members of the Catholic Church were also in regular attendance at campus events and formal occasions. The Catholic identity and culture of the institution was transparent (Morris, 1977).

From 1965 to 1989, American Catholic University was under the leadership of one president, who lead the university through the turbulent '60s, including societal and Church transformation and turbulence. During this time, the university's mission

statement, identified as the “Objectives of the University” went through many changes. From 1947 to 1967, the mission statement illuminated the university’s deep connection with the Catholic Church. Pellow (2006) explains that the “Objectives of the University” included language and wording that alluded to the principles and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, supernatural destiny, divine revelation, and divine natural law. In 1968, pertinent changes to this document can be observed. The document still emphasized the link to the Catholic Church but for the first time was inclusive of academic research and the urban roots of the institution. During the mid- to late 1970s and 1980s, the university leadership expanded the mission statement to be inclusive of serving local students, institutional emphasis on academics, and a description of living out the Catholic mission by serving the underprivileged.

American Catholic University’s statutes were published for the first time in 1951. The aim of these statutes, as stated by the president, was to embody in a formal way the traditions and regulations that had been the established pattern of governance from the university’s inception (Statutes of American Catholic University, 1960). The statutes were revised in 1959 when a committee was established to address the growth of the university and the governance of the newly created administrative offices. This committee also defined the connection American Catholic University had to the academic community and to the Catholic Church. The result is presented in Article 1, Section 1 of the revised statutes, which states:

American Catholic University has the general objectives of offering such opportunities to achieve traditionally classical and professional education as well enable men and women to develop in learning culture according to the

philosophical and theological principles and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. (Statutes of American Catholic University, 1960)

In addition to the institutional statutes, the institution created its first mission statement, originally called the general objective of the university. This original document states:

To make students conscious of the fact that they are not merely natural men but that in addition they possess a supernatural destiny.

To bring to the fullest expansion in them the total range of their natural and supernatural capacities.

To develop their intellects to know not merely the content of the humanities and sciences, but also the deposit of Divine Revelation.

To shape their wills to do good not merely according to the Natural Law but also according to the Divine Positive Law.

To train them to recognize and love God as the Supreme Being and their fellowmen as creatural equals before God.

To nurture in them a profound respect for intellectual honesty.

To indoctrinate them with the philosophy of responsibility.

To expand in them not only their native ability to inquire but also their elementary capacity to create.

To encourage them to pursue graduate studies in the classical, the scientific, or professional field.

To make them thoroughly conscious of the social pattern in which they, as college graduates, have a distinguish[ed] setting.

To enkindle in them a deep and lasting love and respect for their country and the truly democratic principles on which it was founded and on which alone it is capable of surviving.

To inculcate in them the duty of knowing the history and the traditions of all the members of the family of nations so that they may be made conscious of the obligations to practice universal Christian justice and charity as the best means of improving international relations and of establishing world peace.

To provide, for persons who are employed and thus unable to pursue a fulltime schedule of studies, programs of part-time instruction of the same caliber as those offered to fulltime students.

By 1965, the Church was in deep debate over change and revitalization, as were many Catholic college campuses. American Catholic University not only experienced a great tension among faculty regarding academic freedom and institutional governance but also struggled to decide the institution's affiliation with the Church. In 1965, the founding Congregation leadership and the board of trustees decided that American Catholic University should remain as a traditional Catholic institution of higher education. This included remaining faithful to the teaching *magisterium* of the Roman Catholic Church, teaching nothing that is in direct contrary to the *magisterium*, requiring Catholic students to study Catholic theology, maintaining a campus environment that fosters Catholic ideals, and providing liturgical services to members of the university community (Morris, 1977).

By 1975, having experienced a public and ugly faculty strike, the Church's transformation due to Vatican II, and the turbulent time of college campuses of the 1960s, American Catholic University revised a new creed of university objectives. These revised objectives once again reiterated American Catholic University's commitment to the Catholic Church. The statement read:

American Catholic University is a Catholic institution of higher learning founded and sponsored by (founding Congregation). The fundamental purpose of the University is to offer men and women, in a Catholic atmosphere, the opportunity to achieve for themselves a higher education in the liberal arts and sciences and to prepare for certain professions.

As a university, American Catholic University is dedicated to the intellectual growth of its students and to the advancement of knowledge through research. It aims to help students attain a mastery of the essential preparation for the success in a chosen career, the ability to think clearly and consistently, an appreciation of our intellectual heritage, a facility in written and oral communication, and an appreciation of the aesthetic values in life.

As a Catholic University committed to a Christian vision of reality, American Catholic University hopes to further in its student a deep appreciation of Christian ideals of living and a true sense of Christian responsibility to self and others. Moreover, American Catholic University hopes to be a locus where the Church is able to reflect upon itself and its mission employing all the resources and scientific techniques of a university in its continued effort, through the

medium of free inquiry after truth, to comprehend its nature and its role in God's plan.

As an urban institution of higher learning, American Catholic University aims to contribute to the cultural, commercial, industrial, and professional needs and desires of the community, and in turn to draw upon cultural richness that a metropolitan area affords. (American Catholic University Statutes, 1975)

In 1997, American Catholic University underwent significant changes to the institution's mission. Established and then still operating as a commuter school, the administration of American Catholic University made a strategic plan to become a residential campus. In 1999, following the opening of residence halls, American Catholic University amended institution's mission statement to the following:

American Catholic University is Catholic, (religious order name) and metropolitan.

As a university, we commit ourselves to academic excellence and the pursuit of wisdom, which flows from free inquiry, religious values, and human experience. We strive to preserve and enhance an atmosphere in which scholarly research, imaginative methodology, and an enthusiastic quest for truth serve as the basis of a vital teaching, learning process and the development of lifelong learning. Our core curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences aims to enrich lives as well as professions and serves to unify the undergraduate experience. Graduate and professional schools express our commitment to research, rigorous teaching standards, and innovative application of knowledge. We aim not only to be

excellent professionals with an ability to analyze and articulate clearly what is, but also to develop the ethical and aesthetic values to imagine and help realize what might be.

American Catholic University is a Catholic university, founded in 1870 in response to an invitation of the bishop, to provide the youth of the city with an intellectual and moral education. We embrace the Judeo-Christian ideals of respect for the rights and dignity of every person and each individual's responsibility for the world in which we live. We commit ourselves to create a climate patterned on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ as embodied in the traditions and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Our community, which comprises members of many faiths, strives for an openness which is "wholly directed to all that is true, all that deserves respect, all that is honest, pure, admirable, decent, virtuous, or worthy of praise" (Philippians 4:8). Thus, the university is a place where the Church reflects upon itself and the world as it engages in dialogue with other religious traditions.

American Catholic is a (religious order name) university, inspired by *our patron's saint* compassion and zeal for service. We strive to provide excellent education for all people, especially those lacking economic, physical, or social advantages. Community service programs combine with reflective learning to enlarge the classroom experience. Wherever possible, we devote our intellectual and physical resources to search out the causes of poverty and social injustice and to encourage solutions which are adaptable, effective, and concrete. In the Religious community tradition, we seek to foster a worldview and to further

efforts toward global harmony and development, by creating an atmosphere in which all may imbibe and embody the spirit of compassionate concern for others so characteristic of (Patron Saint).

American Catholic is a metropolitan university. We benefit from the cultural diversity, the intellectual and artistic resources, and the unique professional educational opportunities offered by our city and other international cities. With this richness comes responsibility. We encourage these metropolitan communities to use our resources to serve their needs. On the local, state, national and international levels, our alumni serve as effective leaders and responsible citizens. We pledge to foster those qualities required for anticipating and responding to the educational, ethical, cultural, social, professional, and religious needs of dynamic cities in a dynamic world. (American Catholic University, March 1999)

At the same time the institution created a university vision statement. The statement stated:

American Catholic University will empower diverse learners with quality education for life. Through innovative teaching, research and service, we will foster rational, spirited inquiry and intelligent reflection. Our student-centered approach will be shaped by a caring, energized, nimble culture. Enlivened by our distinctive mission, our graduates will excel in the competencies and values required for leadership and service in a rapidly evolving global community. As a Catholic and (religious order's charism) university, we will be known worldwide

for addressing issues of poverty and social justice. (American Catholic University, November 2000)

The recent mission and vision statement hold a strong place in the life of the university. When participants were asked about the reaction the institution has made regarding the trend of the decline in Catholic student enrollment, participants overwhelmingly expressed the institutional usage and perpetuation of the mission statement. Participants discussed the mission statement when discussing hiring new employees, training student leaders, and implementing new programs. The emphasis and centrality of the mission statement, for some participants, have become too vital at the cost of more perceived Christian symbols. For example, 1 participant, when asked about the physical symbols that represent the Catholic nature of the institution, discussed the mission statement. She stated:

I don't know if this building has a Catholic symbol in it. Is there a cross in the lobby where you enter, a cross in the hallways, the main office of this division, in the offices? No there isn't, but we have a mission statement hung. I think we lost something. When we heightened the emphasis on the mission statement we lost the Catholic piece.

Participants believed that the current mission statement highlights the Catholic nature of the institution but questioned whether this document is being used in place of other stronger Catholic symbols and if the mission statement places the metropolitan and founders' charism nature of the institution on the same par as the Catholic identity.

Findings Synopsis for Subsidiary Question 5

The institutional commitment and effort in implementing programming and creating departments to address the proclamation of the institution's Catholic and spiritual underpinnings are profound. The institution hosts hundreds of programs a year that directly promote the Catholic identity for those who participate. Table 6 indicates a list of programs and activities that the institution sponsors to foster the Catholic identity to students and employees. Responses of participants regarding the institutions proactive activities to propagate the institution's Catholic and religious mission fell into the works of the Department of Campus Ministry, Office of Church and Society, and Mission Office. The researcher separated the programs implemented to promote the Catholic identity into areas of building the Catholic culture both internally at American Catholic University and to the greater world community, promotion of the institutions founders' charism and spirituality, and the works of service, evangelism, and liturgical rituals lead by University Ministry.

Fifteen participants, who were interviewed, from a diversity of departments and divisions, verbally applauded the work of the offices assigned to promote the Catholic identity to campus community for their creativity in programs and the quantity of opportunities available. Of the hundreds of activities and opportunities presented by these various offices, participants had two concerns. Eight participants questioned the perceived link students make when taking part in service opportunities or even academic service learning. Do students see service as a "feel-good" opportunity whose result is to

simply help someone less fortunate or as a way to fulfill the university's Catholic and religious mission? One participant stated:

One of the things that I hear a lot is that the students want to do service, and I think that's a great thing, but where I think the Catholic identity needs to be infused into service is for us to be asking the question, how is this different from the atheist student that's attending another university that's doing a great thing by doing service?

Students have many opportunities, but participants believed how this is part of the Catholic mission and roots of the institution need to be discussed.

One participant indicated that this issue has been heard by those charged with bringing the Catholic mission to students. The participant stated:

Campus Ministry has added a component of what we call "*Insights*," which is a reflection on service. Rather than having students just do service for the sake of doing service, at the end of it to slow it down and to process a little bit where did you see God. So while not explicitly using the word Catholic or Catholic teachings, they are doing it. They are learning that the Catholic social teachings are in play strongly when they are feeding the hungry and clothing the poor—those kinds of things—helping them to make the connections rather than they have just a do-gooder feeling. They'd say, "Well, this is flowing out of your value system, or a value system that you're creating—a value system that we at the university have promulgated since the beginning, which very easily is a Catholic value system."

How well this process above identified as “*Insights*” is will determine how successfully students come to understand the Catholic nature of the institution. Participants noted there are many activities, which they saw as a response to the increase in “unchurched” and non-Catholic students, but caution that these programs are beneficial only if used with proper reflection and teaching.

In addition to new programs and departments, the university has made several changes to the mission statement to rearticulate the institution’s commitment to the Church, the city community, and the spirituality of the founder of the religious community. Participants spoke in detail about the institution’s commitment to perpetuate the mission statement to students, faculty, and administrators. All 18 participants stated that every office has a copy of the mission statement posted in a visible location and that on every employee’s midyear and end-of-year review 20% of the overall rating is dedicated to how the employee exemplifies the values instilled in this document. The only concern among participants was whether this document has become the campus symbol of the Catholic nature of the institution in lieu of a crucifix or more Catholic/Christian symbol.

Pertaining to employee training, the mission statement is also used in all student leaders’ training and new student orientation. Students serving as resident assistants, student ambassadors, and members of either the campus ministry or student life leadership programs all are trained in the teachings of the mission statement. In addition to student leaders, all students are taught the mission statement through the required

Freshman Seminar Course. When the new core curriculum was implemented in 2001, the aspiration to integrate the mission statement into undergraduate education was fulfilled.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

Summary of the Problem and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of senior-level administrators and campus leaders at American Catholic University regarding how the decline in the number of Catholic students affects governance and organization. The subsidiary questions included perceptions of campus leaders regarding changes to institutional spending and finances, the physical plant, program, curricula, hiring, and scholarships, the impact on the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and a review of any new programs created to propagate the Catholic identity of the institution.

With the growing enrollment of non-Catholic students at American Catholic University and increasing pressure to ensure that institutions of Catholic higher education remain in union with the institutional Church through *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, this research is very important. As Catholic institutions are forced to examine issues of campus culture and identity as well as work to implement the rubrics found in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the religiosity of the campus community is pertinent. Of the three institutions of higher education sponsored by the congregation overseeing American Catholic University, all are experiencing a trend in the decline in the percentage of Catholic students. How an institution responds can be the difference between maintaining a relationship with the Church and promulgating a vibrant religious identity or surrendering the religious roots and nature of the institution and becoming private and secular. The latter, a fate experienced by many Protestant institutions of higher education, could eliminate the

presence of Catholic higher education. The decisions that institutional leaders make now may determine the fate of the institution's Catholic identity.

The method the research used was a qualitative case study. By using this method, the researcher was able to perform an in-depth study with great detail and explore concepts and data whose essence is often lost when using other methods. This methodology permitted the researcher to understand American Catholic University in a holistic manner and with comprehensive detail. The researcher used personal interviews, archival research, and direct observations of the campus, students, and personnel. By interviewing 18 key personnel from the areas of the board of trustees, President's Office and senior staff, Academic Affairs, Student Life, Marketing and Communications, University Ministry, and faculty charged with leadership responsibilities, the researcher was able to better understand the impact the trend of the decline in the number of Catholic enrolled students has on the various aspects of the university.

Summary of Findings

From the data collected, the researcher believes the decline in the number of Catholic students at American Catholic University has forced the university to respond in the academic, environmental, institutional and student activity areas. The impact does not simply affect one component of the institution but rather is intertwined among various departments, divisions, and personnel.

The first finding of this research focuses on the transition and implementation that American Catholic University has made in the academic requirements and scholarship of the institution. Participants believe that the decline in the number of Catholic students has

been associated with the need to create an educational experience that generates a seamless educational curriculum incorporating the religious mission and values that a Catholic institution of higher education is to promote while providing a quality education. American Catholic University implemented a core curriculum in 2001 that “aims to enrich the study of the arts and sciences with the perspectives and traditions of the Catholic faith and to encourage students of all faiths to seek truth in a universal spirit of openness” (Ex Corde Ecclesiae Committee, 2004). In addition, the core curriculum is rooted in nine semester credits of theology courses and nine semester credits of philosophy. These 18 credits are mandated for every undergraduate program at the university. In addition, all students are required to take a three-credit freshman seminar course that emphasizes the Catholic and religious roots of the institution and acts as an introduction to the founders’ spirituality of service to those less fortunate.

American Catholic University also maintains an academic calendar recognizing Catholic religious holidays. By closing on religious days of obligation, the administration is illustrating the institution’s priorities. Recruitment efforts have also been affected. By implementing the new Catholic Student Scholarship Program, the institution hopes to increase the critical mass of enrolled Catholic undergraduate students. The hope among campus leaders is that this new initiative will foster more applications from Catholic, academically sound students. In addition, the university has taken steps to promote scholarship that reflects the institutional commitment to the hierarchical Church. For example, senior-level administrators encourage all classes to offer Academic Service-Learning. The graduate programs in theology offer numerous programs that lead to ministry on various levels. Members of the theology and philosophy departments serve

on various Catholic Church committees and partake in scholarly activity. The university has created endowed chairs in theology to emphasize scholarship in areas of moral Catholic theology and social justice. In addition, the Faculty Fellows Program identifies and supports academic scholars and researchers in various disciplines that examine issues of social justice, science and religion, and poverty. Lastly, the university promotes the dialogue of ecumenical discussions in academic forums to better understand and address the spiritual and academic needs of a diversifying student population.

From an academic and scholarship perspective, American Catholic University has made these significant shifts in curriculum and scholarly activities to ensure that even though the campus has diversified in students' religious demographics, the Catholic nature and mission of the institution will permeate all intellectual activities. The institution has increased the number of academic lectures addressing the topics of religion and science, social justice, and institutional mission-related programs. Several participants recommended that an assessment be made of whether the attempt to root academic and scholarly activities on campus in Catholicism has made an impact among students.

The implementation of a new core curriculum, a focus on the Catholic nature of scholarship at the institution, and an increase in academic lectures and workshops that present issues related to the Catholic mission of the institution are examples that participants cited as evidence of how the institution has reacted to the increase in student religious diversity on campus. Specifically, American Catholic University has put into practice the notion of a curriculum rooted in Catholic scholarship by the mandate of having students complete 18 credits of theology and philosophy. The theology

requirement begins for all students with a course titled Catholic Perspectives on Christianity. This three-credit course is described by the college bulletin;

“This course introduces Christianity, highlighting belief statements, practices, scripture, rites, theological writings, artistic expressions and other discourse manifesting and expressing the Christian faith in its various traditions through its development.” (American Catholic University Bulletin, 2002, pg. 27).

Once a student completes this course he / she is required to take two additional courses in theology. These two additional classes include a course in moral theology and one elective in theology which would include theology of other faiths and traditions.

Similarly, students are required to enroll in three courses in philosophy. This area of study mandates students to begin with philosophy of the human person course. This course is described as;

“This course investigates the general question, what does it mean to be a human person? It places special emphasis on the nature of human freedom, consciousness and cognition, and the original significance of life. Central to the course will be the discussion of the spirituality, immortality, and dignity of the human person. The course begins with an introduction to philosophy and critical thinking.

(American Catholic University Bulletin, 2002, pg. 27).

Once a student completes this course the next two classes are more specifically defined than that of theology. The second philosophy class students are required to take is an philosophical ethics course with relevant connections to a student's major. For example students in the medical fields take morality of healthcare, or business students take morality of the marketplace. Lastly, the third class in philosophy required of all students

in a course in metaphysics. This course includes discussions on the evidence of God's existence, issues pertaining to the problem of evil, and examines the principles of knowing and being.

The second impact participants associated with the decline in the number of Catholic students was in the increase of visible symbols of Catholicism on campus. Participants indicated that as the administrators, faculty, staff, and students became more religiously diverse, the need to create a Catholic environment was essential. The perceptions of the participants were split as to the impact, quantity, placement, and symbols used to promote the Catholic identity. All participants spoke of the \$10 million new church built in the center of a campus that has only a 47% Catholic base of students. As the importance of the Church being built on campus was widely believed, the usage was questioned. The widespread belief among participants was that the institution was making a clear statement to members of the community that all activities of the institution are centered in the Catholic faith.

American Catholic University has increased the number of religious statues on campus, but participants questioned the type of symbols used. Although the campus has seen an increase in religious saints and religious language, participants questioned why the number of crucifixes on campus seemed to be declining. Participants overwhelmingly believed the institution did a great job exhibiting the founders' charism but the Catholic identity was not as explicit.

Another area participants overwhelmingly discussed was the activities of the Department of Campus Ministry, the newly created Office of Mission, and Center for Church and Society provide throughout the year. During the last 10 years, more than 10

new campus ministers were hired as well as the administrators and staff personnel needed to staff the Mission Office and Center for Church and Society. This clearly indicated the institution's priority to promote the Catholic identity to a campus increasing in religious diversity. Institutional programs including service opportunities, faith formation, liturgy and sacramental services, faith-based awards, and Catholic leadership programs are offered, and all students are encouraged to participate. Participants indicated that the increase in these programs in correlation with the decline in the number of Catholic students indicates the institution's commitment to bring the Catholic faith's ideals and values to all students regardless of religious background.

In addition to specific religious programs as facilitated through the Department of Campus Ministry, Mission Office, and Center for Church and Society, many participants discussed the implementation of Catholic morals and values in student activities and residence life, and the filter in determining speakers permitted to present on campus. Recently, student orientation was revamped to include a stronger emphasis on the institution's mission and religious nature. Currently, students are housed on same-sex floors, a symbolic rubric reinforcing Catholic morals and values, and the residence life handbook models these same ideals in other rules and policies. In addition to implementing Catholic values in student activities, American Catholic University has recognized several other denominational clubs that foster students' own faith-based spirituality as well as provide an opportunity for interfaith dialogue among students.

Lastly, many participants struggled with having an in-depth understanding of the rubrics found in the application of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. For an institution to strengthen its identity with the institutional Church and for students to receive the benefits of a Catholic

education proposed by the papal encyclical, administrators and faculty must not only understand the nuances of the document but also look for creative ways to implement the teachings and assess the outcomes. Unless American Catholic University provides further training and discussions on *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the teachings of the document could stagnate.

Limitations of Data Collection and Sample

Upon conclusion of the data collection and analysis of the data the researcher has drawn the following conclusions pertaining to the research protocol. First, the researcher believes that the use of a recording device potential limited the responses of participants. Senior administrators at American Catholic University have taken great efforts to have the Catholic and religious founders charism permeate all institutional activities. By asking these same members questions pertaining to the religious climate of the institution with a recording device present potentially limited the number of negative or concerned answers from the participants. If this study was duplicated the researcher would recommend an anonymous survey to also complement the interviews.

Secondly, the researcher would suggest the expansion of the pool of participants to include students currently enrolled and faculty teaching at American Catholic University. This study is limited to senior administrators and campus leaders. Further studies which included students perceptions would give further insights into weather the programmatic, symbolic, curricular, and other institutional advances pertaining to mission made are truly impacting the student experience. Further incorporation of faculty from secular disciplines would further enhance the findings of this study.

Understanding faculty perceptions pertaining to incorporating catholic ideals and values into the secular disciplines would give greater insight into the educational experience both Catholic and non-Catholic students receive.

Lastly, the researcher including only senior level administrators the researcher believes that additional studies including midlevel administrators, traditionally those who work more directly with students, may have results that serve as a relevant comparison to the findings of this study. Where as senior level administrators serve to set the agenda of the institutional priorities it is often the midlevel administrator who is faced to implement such agendas and policies. Understanding the difficulties of implementing the programs and activities discussed in this study would be important for other faith-based institutions that are attempting to follow the approach taken by American Catholic University.

Findings Within the Context of Extant Literature

The findings of this study complement the earlier extant works of Gleason, Marsden, Hellwig, and Gallin as well as the contemporary studies of Holschneider, Morey, and Piderit. Whereas these researchers and authors identified changes and challenges to religious higher education, the findings of this study illustrate one institution's response to the challenges while attempting to maintain its Catholicity. Gleason (1995), in his work *Contending with Modernity*, presents a holistic picture of Catholic higher education developments starting back in the late 19th century through Vatican II. Gleason's dominant discussion is the shattering of the stronghold that neo-scholastic philosophy had on Catholic higher education. This philosophy guided and rooted all Catholic higher education curriculum. His argument is that during the 1960s

Catholic institutional leaders, who once challenged modernity, now accepted it. The consequence of this movement, according to Gleason, is a debate among college leaders on what it means to be distinctively Catholic.

The findings of this study illuminate the response one Catholic institution has made in light of grappling with modernism, specifically during a time highlighted by the enrollment of fewer Catholic students. American Catholic University took a holistic approach by having institutional departments, specifically Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and University Ministry, instill the Catholic perspective or values in all curriculum, policies, and programs. The goal of American Catholic University is not to deny modernity as defined by Gleason but rather to provide constant dialogue among society, church, and students. Participants in this study identified this dialogue as the key to keeping Catholic higher education as a vibrant and relative constituent in American higher education. The researcher believes that by welcoming the dialogue on modernism, American Catholic University has been able to support and promote a different lens, specifically Catholic, to understand academics, society, and the world.

Marsden's research (1994), in *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to the Established Non-belief*, provides an in-depth discussion of the secularization of Protestant higher education. Marsden presents the decline of Protestant identity at Protestant institutions of higher education through the embrace of scientific naturalism and truth. He concludes that these institutions surrendered their religious integrity and the only remaining fragments are social service opportunities and character-building programs. Whereas the Catholic hierarchical Church has attempted to stop Catholic higher education institutions from following a similar path by

implementing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the findings of this study illustrate how institutions must make intentional decisions to foster religious identity. For example, the creation of Catholic Student Scholarships, the building of a grand church in the center of campus, and the creation of faculty fellows from various disciplines engaging in Catholic research and scholarship demonstrate American Catholic University's intentional decision and resource allocation to maintain a strong religious identity.

American Catholic University has taken a different path from the Protestant institutions described by Marsden; however, his research corroborates the importance of the dialogue that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* has begun among Catholic higher education leaders. Whereas the findings of this study illustrate an institution in direct contradiction to the experience Marsden explores in his study of schools forgoing their religious roots, American Catholic University ought to continually reexamine the institution's activities to ensure that the curriculum, activities, programming, recruitment literature, and scholarship all continue to place the institution's Catholic identity at the core of all proceedings.

Gallin (2000), in her study *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education Since 1960*, identifies what constitutes a Catholic institution of higher education. Her research states that with the current decline in the number of clergy members found on campuses institutions must have a communal commitment to Catholicism, be faithful to the Church in matters of faith, and serve students according to its Catholic mission (Gallin, 2000). The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the actions taken by American Catholic University similarly imitate the philosophy presented by Gallin. Through curriculum, programs, and scholarship, American Catholic University demonstrates the

“communal” commitment to its Catholic mission. Whereas the participants of this study question the regularity of the assessment done to determine the effectiveness of this commitment, there is no doubt about the institution’s dedication.

This study also adds to the research on Catholic higher education more recently performed by Hellwig, Holschneider, Morey, and Piderit. Holschneider and Morey have conducted numerous studies of the decline of religious community’s personnel, the increase of laity in leadership roles, and the impact that has on the Catholic identity of the institution. In their research, senior campus leaders were questioned regarding their own preparation to foster the religious charism of their institution. The research presented in this study compliments the work of Holschneider and Morey by incorporating a trend in student religious demographic related to the impact of institutional identity.

Morey and Piderit in 2006 presented a study reviewing the current state of affairs in American Catholic higher education. A critical part of their study findings speak to the notion of Catholic vibrancy. This research included a discussion of the need for a critical mass of administrators, faculty, and staff members who are knowledgeable and committed to Catholic teachings and beliefs, ways to use curricula in various disciplines to promote Catholic themes, and issues of hiring and student personnel administrators. Whereas Morey and Piderit’s study discussed the critical vibrancy among university and college personnel, this study raises issues pertaining to the critical mass of the student population and the institution’s response to maintain the Catholicity of the educational experience. The research presented in this study examines the impact of an institution no longer having a critical mass of Catholic enrolled students and the institution’s response.

When reviewing the extant literature and research of Gleason, Marsden, Holschneider, Morey, and Piderit, one can quickly sense the cautionary warnings that these authors present pertaining to Catholic higher education's future in American higher education. The research they present raises the question if these institutions can remain successful and academically sound all while embracing a Catholic identity? Whether it is the loss of the Neo-Scholasticism philosophy addressed by Gleason, the emphasis on scientific truth of the Protestant institutions as outlined by Marsden, or the decline of members of religious communities or critical mass of institutional leaders, faculty, staff, or students, as addressed by Holschneider, Morey, and Piderit, Catholic institutions of higher education have had many challenges to face over the generations, but continue to reinvent themselves. Monika Hellwig, the former President of the American Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and researcher of Catholic higher education, has a much more positive outlook on Catholic higher education. In an article she wrote for *America*, a national weekly Catholic magazine, she (2001) states:

Catholic higher education is alive and well in its cooperate expression on our campuses, not everywhere, not always, not in every professor or administrator, but predominantly and very actively. Where the religious congregations are diminishing, a new generation of lay leadership has come to the helm with considerable energy, good will and a sense of purpose and direction. (p. x)

As with the perspective of Hellwig, the research presented in this study illustrates that in new ways, and with a different student demographic, American Catholic University continues to maintain a strong Catholic identity through great efforts. Whereas much more still needs to be done to ensure the continued vibrancy of the Catholic

distinctiveness of American Catholic University, the findings of this research provide hope for the future and relevancy of Catholic higher education.

Participants Concerns for American Catholic University and Maintaining a Catholic Identity

Issues of hiring of new employees including faculty, staff, and administrators included great debate among participants. For example, in the hiring of residence directors, administrators who live and work among students, participants discussed the great time and emphasis taken during the interview process to ensure that potential candidates respect and are willing to model Catholic values and morals. In many other areas, participants stated that hiring committees would either have a campus ministry administrator to ask the “Catholic” question or that this issue would not be addressed at all. Many participants perceived that greater efforts must be made to ensure candidates understood and were willing to respect the Catholic nature of the institution.

Overwhelmingly, participants stated that a greater effort must be made by the institution to provide faith formation opportunities for employees. In addition to the initial new employee training workshop on the Catholic and religious mission of the institution, participants perceived minimal faith formation opportunities beyond service days.

Several participants questioned what assessment was being implemented to know if the changes made institutionally to better foster the Catholic identity were actually affecting the religiously diverse student population. Do the changes to the curriculum, religious symbols added to the physical plant, increase in campus ministry activities and personnel, addition of two new departments to promote Catholic activities and

scholarship, and all other intentional Catholic initiatives affect students' beliefs, values, respect, and understanding of the Catholic faith? Understanding the impact of programs and initiatives will foster better decision-making among institutional leaders regarding building a Catholic identity among non-Catholic students. In addition, further student tracking must be implemented to determine how frequently students attend programs and who these students are. Are Catholic students the major participants in many of the institutional programs fostering the Catholic identity or do non-Catholic students attend these events? Understanding and creating new ways to reach out to non-Catholic students is important to have the Catholic nature of the institution permeate throughout the campus.

Participants believed that American Catholic University needs to better bridge the gap among students and employees between the Catholic and religious charism of the institution's founder. The most common example participants cited was the enormous student involvement in service opportunities. Students, through Academic-Service Learning, campus ministry, and other student activities, perform service in the local community, specifically the poor and abandoned. Participants in this study perceived that students and employees involved are not engaged in theological reflection to help understand and learn how this service is linked intimately to the Gospel message and Catholic social teachings. American Catholic University should continue to explore ways to incorporate a deeper theological element to service opportunities.

Implications for Catholic Higher Education

The implications of this study for campus leaders at other American Catholic higher education institutions are considerable. American Catholic University, understanding the charge from the hierarchical Church through *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to maintain a Catholic identity while fully aware of the decline in the number of Catholic students, has set in place a holistic web of Catholic-centered institutional responses. The response of this institution was not merely to implement a few program changes but rather begin a campus-wide transition or refocusing that attempts to center all institutional activities in a Catholic tradition. The campus climate, which these institutional activities were implemented, was set by the intentional implementation of a new mission statement that strongly identifies the institution's roots and commitment to the Catholic Church. This campus Catholic "web," including academic and curricula, symbolic changes in both physical plant changes and policies, refocusing of campus and student activities to be rooted in the Catholic and religious mission of the institution, the creation of two new departments charged with the promotion of Catholic values and mission, a dramatic increase in administrators charged with ministry to students, and a more focused attempt to recruit Catholic students, works to incorporate all aspects of the university in the proclamation of the Catholic identity of the institution to students.

By implementing the strategy that American Catholic University utilized to address the decline of Catholic students, while maintaining in good relation with the hierarchal Church, is not a universal solution that "fits" all Catholic institutions of higher education. Each of the 230 Catholic institutions of higher education has a distinct campus culture. For example, as sited in chapter 4, American Catholic University has a fulltime administrative staff that is 64% Catholic and a fulltime faculty composed of 51%

Catholic members. Implementation of this “Catholic-web” has only been able to take root because the majority of University personnel have experience in the Catholic traditions, culture and rituals. At a different institution, who has only a minority of Catholic administrators and faculty, the researcher questions if this approach would be able to be applied. Secondly, American Catholic University is governed by a president who is a priest and a board of trustees containing 11 members of the Catholic clergy. An institution experiencing a decline in religious personnel in leadership positions on campus may not have the support to move the institution to make such decisions to foster the Catholic identity. American Catholic University had the internal structure, clerical leadership in senior administrative offices and a critical mass of Catholic administrators and faculty, to implement such a campus wide attempt to strengthen the religious identity of the institution.

What can be taken from this study by all Catholic higher educational institutions is the need for dialogue among all constituents and stake holders on why and how to have the Catholic identity permeate all institutional activities. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* serves as a great beginning for institutional dialogue that pertains to issues of Catholic identity. Institutions may first need to build a critical mass of campus community members (students, faculty, and administrators) who are able to articulate and propagate the Catholic roots of the institution. Only once the larger campus community sees and understands the importance, value, and priority given to this mission will they begin to be open to program implementation, curricular reform, and church dialogue. Without this critical mass, it is the opinion of the researcher, that accusations of infringement on academic freedom and apostatizing will occur.

American Catholic University has made an institutional commitment to attempt to engage all students, regardless of religious tradition and beliefs, to know and understand the values, traditions, beliefs, and morality of the Catholic faith. Whereas American Catholic University may no longer serve a majority of Catholic students, the new paradigm of having Catholic spirituality attempt to permeate all institutional activities may in turn serve as a model of evangelization and ecumenical dialogue for other Catholic institutions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Much time, effort, and money has been spent at American Catholic University in the renewal of institutional activities to be infused with the Catholic charism. However, further research must be done to assess the impact of the institutional changes made to address the decline in the number of Catholic students enrolled. The researcher's first recommendation is the need to study exclusively faculty members' level of commitment and methods in perpetuating the values and beliefs of the Catholic charism when working with students inside and outside the classroom. In addition, an examination of how faculty are being trained to incorporate issues of the religious mission and the Catholic nature of the institution and the outcomes of this training is imperative. Administrators and campus leaders may make changes to the curriculum to help promulgate the Catholic charism to students but unless faculty members are teaching through this lens, and assessment occurs, the impact of this effort will be fruitless.

The second area of study the researcher recommends is investigating how students, both Catholic and non-Catholic, selected a faith-based college. In addition,

understanding the knowledge base students have pertaining to Catholic teachings, traditions, values, and morality coming into college and again at the completion of their studies. The measurement of an increase or decrease in institutional activities pertaining to issues of Catholic identity and charism has minimal insight in actually knowing how much student development occurs regarding students' religious growth. Knowing how well students come to know and understand the values, morals, and teachings of the Catholic Church by the end of their studies will affect the future of Catholic institutions of higher education.

Conclusions

Throughout this study, the researcher examined the impact an increase in enrolled non-Catholic students has on the governance and organization at American Catholic University. This study presents the planned and reactive responses one institution, struggling with this trend, makes to maintain its Catholic identity and implement the rubrics of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Whereas the findings illustrate quantifiable data such as the number of programs, policies, hiring rubrics, and curricular changes made to address the institutional aspiration to maintain a Catholic identity, the most important theme that emerged from participants is their commitment to promote the Catholic and spiritual mission of the institution. As the researcher concluded each interview, each participant was asked whether continuing Catholic higher education when trends show that some institutions might soon have a minority of personnel and students that are members of the Catholic Church was a worthwhile venture. Participants overwhelmingly stated that Catholic higher education would always have a place as it introduces students of all faiths

to understand the world and its peoples in a different way. Participants believed that there is a new paradigm in which we need to understand Catholic higher education. This paradigm, as stated by one participant, includes “touching people’s hearts (Catholics and non-Catholics) and challenging the minds of students to address issues of poverty and those most marginalized in our society.”

Another participant answered this question with an experience he had last semester. He stated that at a presentation to the board of trustees, two students, one Catholic and one non-Christian, presented their experiences as American Catholic University students. The participant stated that both spoke powerfully about how the mission and religious roots of the institution affected them and what they take with them as they prepare to graduate and enter the work force. The participant stated:

Isn’t this what Catholic higher education and even evangelization is all about? I believe we do not just want to strengthen the Catholic student population of our community but rather dialogue with non-Catholic and non-Christians, to expose these students to new beliefs and truths. The decline in the number of Catholic students has made us [institutional leaders] think more serious about how we bring the Catholic teachings to students, and be deliberate in doing so. Not a bad consequence.

Burtchaell, in his 1998 study, *Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and University from their Christian Churches*, presents a bleak future for denominational higher education based on various trends, including declining clergy numbers, further separation of Church and higher education institution, financial and enrollment implications, and softening of mission statements and issues of identity. However, after

collecting data from the participant interviews, it is apparent to the researcher that Catholic higher education, with dedicated and well-informed Catholic leaders, has the potential to not only remain a key constituent in American higher education but also offer a value-laden educational experience that permits interfaith dialogue throughout a diversity of academic disciplines and students. The research presented in this study highlights the ongoing changes being implemented at American Catholic University during a time of a changing student religious demographic that illustrates the commitment campus leaders have to educating all students in the Catholic charism and to maintaining the school's Catholic identity.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE WITH REV. DENNIS H. HOLTSCHEIDER, CM

From: Holtschneider, Fr. Dennis [PRESIDENT@depaul.edu]
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2006 10:33 PM
To: James Keane
Subject: RE: Dissertation Question / Jim Keane

Hi Jim,

Michael James is correct. The ACCU used to track that data, but it's been 12 years or more since they did so. There is currently no good data base with this data.

You could certainly develop such a data base yourself - but it would be a load of work, and would have to be done in a way that solved several methodological problems. It's manageable, but I'm not certain it's the best use of your time at this moment. If you decide to do so, I would be happy to discuss the methodological issues with you.

You are correct to mistrust the data in the Catholic Directory. There is no standard protocol for how those percentages are calculated (i.e., what constitutes the standard numerator and denominator for the percentage)

You can assert some very basic truths, such as "the percentage of Catholics at Catholic universities has dramatically fallen since the 1960's," etc... using Greeley's data. But there' isn't anything to describe the current percentages. The problem is that many colleges - including DePaul - don't track it and can't even give you an exact answer. The best they can do is tell you what entering freshmen report on the national survey of freshmen. That obviously doesn't count graduate students, transfer students, or students who didn't take or submit the survey. It may suggest some intriguing hypotheses to look at this data, but it won't give you defensible stats by institution.

For now, I suggest that you keep this letter, and show it to your committee in case they ask.

Wish I had better news for you. But as you will soon learn, there is little good data about Catholic institutions. That's why Dr. Melanie Morey's and my research has gone as far as it has. We decided to go out and get hard data, and were the only ones in the country with it.

Andrew Greeley did the same thing in the 1960's and early 1970's, but it's been decades since he went after institutional information on the Catholic institutions as well. Our latest study will be released by Oxford Press in the next few weeks, but it tracks presidents and faculty, not students.

There's lots of room for another researcher to specialize in getting this hard data. If you ever decide to build a research agenda around these topics after your doctorate, let me know. For now, I'm afraid I have frustrating news for you.

Give me a call if you want to talk this out more.

Dennis
(Rev.) Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.
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APPENDIX B
SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING SUBJECTS

1. How many years have you been employed at this university?
2. What is it that makes this university Catholic? (Symbols, Rituals, Policies, Programs)
3. In the years that you have been employed, how has the university retained its Catholic identity?
4. As a leader of a division at the university, how do you promote the Catholic identity of the institution? To students? To employees?
5. Have you implemented any new programs or reinvented existing programs that emphasize the Catholic identity of the institution? If so, at what cost?
6. What training/professional development/team retreats/or other opportunities are available to you that foster a better understanding of the Catholic mission of the institution? How often are these available to you?
7. How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected your division/department specifically? Budget, Program, Curriculum, Hiring?
8. How do you perceive the effects the decline in the number of Catholic students has on the institution? What do you believe to be the institution's response?
9. What changes have occurred in the physical plant (campus) directly related to promoting the Catholic identity?
10. How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected university spending (or your division) and resource allocation?
11. Are you familiar with *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? How has the university/your division worked to meet the norms presented in this document?
12. How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected the implementation process of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*?
13. As the student religious demographics have changed and diversified, how have hiring practices been affected?
14. What policy changes or new policies have been implemented as a result of the change in the student religious demographics?

APPENDIX C
Subsidiary Questions and Interview Questions Matrix

Subsidiary Questions	Question Number	Interview Questions
Has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected university spending and resource allocation?	5	Have you implemented any new programs or reinvented existing programs that emphasize the Catholic identity of the institution? If so, at what cost?
	7	How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected your division/department specifically? Budget, program, curriculum, hiring?
	8	How do you perceive the effects the decline in the number of Catholic students has on the institution? What do you believe to be the institution's response?
	10	How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected university spending (or your division) and resource allocation?
How has the impact of non-Catholic students affected university programs, events, clubs/activities, and hiring practices?	4	As a leader of a division at the university, how do you promote the Catholic identity of the institution? To students? To employees?
	6	What training/professional development/team retreats and/or other opportunities are available to you that foster a better understanding of the Catholic mission of the institution? How often are these available to you?
	7	How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected your division/department specifically? Budget, program, curriculum, hiring?
	8	How do you perceive the effects the

	13	<p>decline in the number of Catholic students has on the institution? What do you believe to be the institution's response?</p> <p>As the student religious demographics have changed and diversified, how have hiring practices been affected?</p>
To what extent has the demographic change visibly (physical plant) affected the institution? Has there been any institutional administrative response?	2	What is it that makes this university Catholic? (Symbols, rituals, policies, programs)?
	8	How do you perceive the effects the decline in the number of Catholic students has on the institution? What do you believe to be the institution's response?
	9	What changes have occurred in the physical plant (campus) directly related to promoting the Catholic identity?
	14	What policy changes or new policies have been implemented as a result of the change in the student religious demographics?
Has the institution implemented the guidelines set forth by <i>Ex Corde Ecclesiae</i> ? Has the decline in the number of Catholic students at the institution affected the implementation process?	11	Are you familiar with <i>Ex Corde Ecclesiae</i> ? How has the university/your division worked to meet the norms presented in this document?
	12	How has the decline in the number of Catholic students affected the implementation process of <i>Ex Corde Ecclesia</i> ?
Have any new departments been created to assist in the propagation of the Catholic religious identity of the institution?	3	In the years that you have been employed, how has the university retained its Catholic identity?
	4	As a leader of a division at the

		<p>university, how do you promote the Catholic identity of the institution? To students? To employees?</p>
	8	<p>How do you perceive the effects the decline in the number of Catholic students has on the institution? What do you believe to be the institution's response?</p>
	14	<p>What policy changes or new policies have been implemented as a result of the change in the student religious demographics?</p>