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Letters to the Editor

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Together in a Different World

Your first issue of *Conversations* was excellent. Discussion of the goals and mission of American Catholic Jesuit Universities is critical to their continued survival. The task, though timely and essential, is also formidable, largely because each of the major players—the Catholic Church, the Society of Jesus, and the United States Government—is in a state of transition.

The Catholic Church is still adjusting to the enormous changes initiated by Vatican II. These changes have rocked the very foundations of the Church and caused all but the youngest Catholics to reconcile their earlier beliefs and understanding with a rejuvenated church doctrine. The very meaning of Catholicism in a modern world is being reevaluated. This process is still in its early stages and a long way from completion.

The Society of Jesus is also evolving. Although they continue to be committed to the vision and teachings of Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuits themselves have undergone much change. General Congregation 31 helped to renew and redefine the mission of the Society. The cost of this redefinition, however, has been a continuous strained relationship between the Society and the Vatican. Also, some Jesuits' practical implementation of liberation theology in South America has put the Society at odds with both the Holy See and the United States Government.

The United States is still struggling with both its role in higher education and its relationship with religious-affiliated schools. Despite a continuing commitment to ensuring that higher education is not the exclusive domain of the country's elite, politicians have thus far failed to hit

upon an affordable mechanism to provide educational opportunities to the general public. As the educational loan program continues to shrink with each year's burgeoning budget deficit, more and more students must choose the less expensive public universities for both undergraduate and professional education. Furthermore, aid to religious-affiliated schools is always complicated by the required separation of church and state.

It is unclear what lies ahead for American Jesuit universities. The worldwide collapse of communism has simultaneously opened up religious freedom, inflicted a potentially lethal blow to liberation theology, and thrust the United States into a premier political and financial role in establishing a "new world order." These events will surely pose new

challenges for Jesuit universities in the 21st century.

While the dust settles following all of these sweeping changes, an open dialogue is essential if Jesuit universities are to prepare for a world that certainly will be different from the one we know today. Having survived for 450 years, the Jesuits are certainly used to change. But if Jesuit universities are to survive in America, all of their supporters—faculty, students, alumni, and friends—must work together. The Jesuits cannot do it alone.

I look forward to your next issue of *Conversations*.

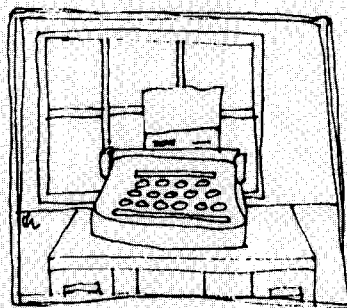
Timothy J. Jorgensen PhD
Assistant Professor

Georgetown University Medical School

Conversations welcomes letters from its readers as an important part of the dialogue it is designed to promote. Letters may be edited for reason of space or clarity, and publication is at the discretion of *Conversations*.

Please send letters to:

Editor, *Conversations*
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3700 West Pine Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63108

**Continuing Education and Jesuit Education**

Thank you for the National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education and for the first issue of *Conversations*. It is a tremendous accomplishment and promises to be a critical resource in our ongoing efforts to strengthen the meaning and significance of Rockhurst's Jesuit mission and identity.

All our board members and all three hundred faculty and staff of Rockhurst College have received copies of *Conversations*. We all intend to use this first issue and subsequent issues in our future discussions.

Last year Rockhurst created a new subsidiary, The Rockhurst College Continuing Education Center. Recently the Center acquired The National Seminars Group as part of the expansion of our innovative learning for adults in the workplace environment. The Center has a faculty and staff of four

hundred, all of whom will now receive a personal copy of *Conversations*. This publication is a very effective way to welcome these new colleagues and introduce them to the larger Jesuit mission of education. With its seminars and on-site programs in 1992, the Center will reach 400,000 people throughout the United States and Canada. It represents a tremendous opportunity for advancing the Jesuit educational enterprise, as we learn to incorporate and develop the Jesuit heritage in new ways for new groups of people.

Again, many thanks for your work.

*Thomas J. Savage SJ
President
Rockhurst College*

Humanities in the Engineering Curriculum

Congratulations on your first *Conversations*. I found it to be quite interesting and relevant. Coincident to your efforts, in the Engineering School at Santa Clara we have initiated an activity having some interests that closely parallel your objectives. I would like to make use of *Conversations* if possible to attempt to establish contact with other individuals or engineering groups who would like to trade ideas on the general issues indicated below.

We have formed an ad hoc group called The Engineering Council on the Humanities. Our purpose is to support the role of the humanities in the engineering curriculum and to help our students see how all of the courses in the curriculum come together in some sense to make a coherent whole.

One of the ways in which we hope to focus this study is to consider six questions which move from

the most abstract and philosophical to the most practical. It is our hope that through these questions we may erect a very fundamental structure on which to fashion our curriculum. Here are the questions we plan to ask:

1. What is the nature of the world?
2. What is the nature of human beings?
3. What is engineering?
4. What should engineers learn?
5. How can we tie all of the pieces of the curriculum together?
6. What are the implications of the above questions for the individual courses in the curriculum?

Sometimes in the background, sometimes in the foreground is a broader question: How does the concept of a "Jesuit education" impact the above questions?

If there are persons who would like to enter into our conversation on these matters, I would invite them to contact the undersigned. My phone, fax, and email are as follows: Phone: (408) 554-5309; Fax: (408) 554-5474; email: thealy@scu.bitnet.

*Timothy J. Healy PhD
Chair, Department of Electrical Engineering
Santa Clara University*

Well-Known Authors

The mail just brought me a copy of *Conversations* with a series of articles by people whom I know very well and whom I greatly admire. Knowing the authors, I am sure that there will be much that I can learn from the issue. Please put me on the mailing list for receiving the publications which the Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education will produce.

*Gerardo Arango Puerta SJ
Rector – Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Bogotá, Colombia*

Continuing Themes in Varied Settings

My congratulations and thanks for the first issue of *Conversations*.

Many of us at Fordham have considered some of the same themes in a number of settings, particularly in dinner discussions hosted by the rector of the Jesuit community here. It is interesting and helpful to see these topics in the broader context.

I know many join me in looking forward to future issues of what will surely prove to be a valuable journal.

*Michael Gillan PhD
Dean, School of General Studies
Fordham University*

A Starting Point

The issue of *Conversations* on Jesuit Education was distributed to all our faculty and stimulated many very profitable conversations among them. Some of the reflections also served as the starting point of a formal presentation that I made to the faculty last year in fulfillment of an obligation resulting from promotion to full professor. I look forward to hearing what other Jesuit colleges are doing to promote this identity. Once again, thank you for your interest and concern.

*Normand J. Paulhus
Academic Dean
Wheeling Jesuit College*