

**The University of Notre Dame's catholic and Catholic future: professors, teaching, and scholarship
A White Paper, 2008**

Building on our tradition as a Catholic university, and determined to be counted among the preeminent universities in this country, Notre Dame will provide an alternative for the 21st century – a place of higher learning that plays host to world-changing teaching and research, but where technical knowledge does not outrun moral wisdom, where the goal of education is to help students live a good human life, where our restless quest to understand the world not only lives in harmony with faith but is strengthened by it. -Rev. John I. Jenkins, C. S. C., Inaugural Address as 17th President of Notre Dame, September 23, 2005

The vision of Notre Dame as a distinctively Catholic research university sharing in academic preeminence makes it unusual, perhaps singular in one way. There exists no accessible model for Notre Dame's project of becoming a preeminent research university by growing the Catholicism of both its academic programs and its faculty. To develop further as a comprehensive (or catholic) university, it must continue to grow its faculty academically, recruit and retain more women and minority professors, and maintain religious diversity and inclusiveness within the faculty. The American academy generally and properly shares those as essential goals. Only a few research universities here and abroad, including Notre Dame, support the deeper and wider development of the academic potential of the intellectual and cultural resources of Catholicism. Notre Dame, however, also seeks to advance as a Catholic university by recruiting and retaining greater numbers of first-rate Catholic academics.

It is perhaps the University's biggest challenge. For over seventy-five years no preeminent American university has noticed religion when hiring professors, except to discriminate against those who were not People Like Us—often Jews. Today in some religiously affiliated colleges and universities, one form of exclusion or another usually shapes projects of recruiting faculty to support the institutional mission. Though legal, such a bias can prove ethically dubious and intellectually stifling, and it is inadmissible at Notre Dame.

Academics may reasonably view the University's commitment to recruiting faculty to advance it as a Catholic university with skepticism, embarrassment, dismay, or fear, as well as with interest and support—mindless hostility is a case apart. Creating a distinctively Catholic, academically preeminent university will require candid, searching conversations involving professors and administrators as well as trustees and alumni; refining, where appropriate, the policy in light of those conversations; framing a strategic plan to implement the policy; designing and managing tactics and structures to assist the University's colleges and schools in executing the policy; and providing the resources to implement it. The success of those conversations depends on an understanding of the unique situation and uncertain prospects of the contemporary university.

I. A Very Superficial History of Western Higher Education

Catholic Higher Education as Human Education.

The modern research university is one of the principal contributions of Europe and North America to world civilization. Today its dominant program everywhere is the discovery and transmission of knowledge, which is primarily conceived of—in the mathematical, physical, and biological sciences or by analogy to them—as scientism.

That goal diverges from the aims of postchildhood education as experienced in other literate societies prior to the nineteenth century. With the obvious caveat that educational practices often mocked theory, a few big generalizations seem tenable: The concern of earlier schools was encompassing; both historically and cross-culturally, education was meant to further the socialization of students within communities of belief and practice. They were not mere individuals, and their schools offered them ethical and, usually, physical training in addition to sacred and secular knowledge.

It did not take a whole village to educate those students, but their communities shaped them, and they were meant to flourish in their communities. Their shared usages were regarded as virtuous habits, which students were expected to learn and to imitate. By living with their students, worthy teachers created an ethos and exemplified habits that fostered virtue as well as knowledge in the young. The educated, for their part, possessed the qualities requisite both for governing themselves and for ruling or being ruled.

The knowledge conveyed in lectures, scrolls, and, with the advent of Christianity, recognizable books was also decisive for postchildhood education. What seemed to be properly academic education basically meant expounding and learning received or revised wisdom and knowledge rather than new discoveries. Unless vocational instruction served either political or religious ends, it was mostly disdained in postchildhood schools.

Because the University of Notre Dame is a Catholic academic community of higher learning, that long history of human education informs its mission and identity. To the classical moral virtues (justice, fortitude, temperance, and prudence), Christianity added the religious virtues of faith, hope, and love. Christianity's distinctive beliefs, ethics, and worship were meant to infuse the usages that gave schools their ethos, and it in turn imbued teachers with exemplary habits.

As a medieval invention with a churchly and professional ethos, the Western university institutionalized learning. Its mission was to teach texts and license degree-holders. Its students were adolescents, but they, along with their teachers, were also clerics/clerks. The broader responsibility of providing these students with human education fell to colleges and houses of studies. Long after the Middle Ages, Catholic universities asserted and exercised a teaching authority within the church that both complemented and contested that of prelates.

The Research University and Its Distinctive Knowledge.

Conflating secularization with being modern began as a prophecy, became a truism, and is now at least arguable. As a result, the contemporary research university has mostly secularized knowledge. Founded in 1810, the University of Berlin served as the ideal type throughout the world. Not quite discontinuous with some earlier universities, the new university had its own set of truth claims informed by ideals of service, national as well as intellectual.

Though abridging Christian human education, John Henry Newman's *The Idea of the University Defined and Illustrated* (1853) is still invoked as a blueprint for Catholic universities. He was a critic of the research university, more than of the secularization of knowledge. His great book must be read as a genius's backward-looking vision, born of his memory of an Oxford more medieval than modern, not the fruit of his participation in and meditation on a thriving educational reality with a future. In his view, "the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement" was the university's responsibility. Despite his soaring eloquence, the future of higher education belonged to the research universities. Because modern, dynamic societies live off discovery, they came first to monopolize the education of the professoriate and then to provide the model of how to educate undergraduates.

Cardinal Newman and the makers of the German research university agreed that the intellectual life has an intrinsic good apart from mere vocational utility. They also agreed about Christianity's proper, limited contribution to knowledge. By effectively reducing Christian learning to theology, both Newman and the German academics fostered the secularization of knowledge. Like many others, they imagined a rupture between classical antiquity and the medieval Latin West, where church and society often appeared coterminous. Much of the later Catholic intellectual and cultural inheritance was similarly marginalized or neutralized. As a result, it long seemed persuasive to treat anything that appeared to mean simply Catholicism as possessing no value at all in the university, or to view valuable achievements as not specifically Catholic despite their Catholic provenance and timbre. It followed that every specific Catholic cultural and intellectual achievement worth preserving remained meaningful only insofar as its religious import could be minimized or bracketed, i.e. secularized.

But the secular rejection of revealed religion—and of Catholicism in particular—is comprehensible only in relationship to Christianity. Intellectually, culturally, and ethically, contemporary secularism depends on its reaction against, and its selective expropriation from, Christianity, and hence from Judaism. The naive assumption has been that the result will succeed in preserving whatever seems good. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the assertion that becoming modern means becoming secular is once again merely another competing prophecy, not the self-evident march of history. The academy now

struggles with the apparent failure of the prophecy that informed the research university for most of the twentieth century.

Catholicism, Its Universities, and the Burden of Modern Knowledge.

Before the revolutionary wars of 1792-1815 gave birth to the University of Berlin, they uprooted Europe's Catholic universities and thwarted their evolution into modern research universities. A pre-revolutionary innovation at the University of Bologna suggests that the old Catholic universities might have evolved creatively under enlightened leadership. In 1731 Laura Bassi, an anatomist turned physicist, became the first woman professor in a European university; her patron was Prospero Lambertini, archbishop of Bologna and later Pope Benedict XIV. Soon afterward, two more accomplished women scientists were appointed to Bologna's faculty. The Bologna experiment proved fruitless. It was a loss to the academy and to women everywhere. Harvard first appointed a woman assistant professor in 1919, to be followed by Notre Dame only in the 1960s.

The University of Leuven (Belgium) captures the fate of Catholic higher education in modern Europe. Founded in 1425, suppressed by French conquerors in 1797, and re-founded in 1834, it pioneered efforts to connect new disciplines, such as experimental psychology, with Catholic philosophical traditions. During the last century German invaders twice wrought destruction on Leuven, effectively killing the prototype of a distinctively Catholic preeminent research university that fosters not only the disciplines of theology and philosophy, but also the discovery of viable alternatives to essentially secularized knowledge from within Catholicism's intellectual and cultural resources.

Roman skepticism about the Leuven project evidenced the deep and not always implausible Catholic fear of the modern world as hostile. Official Catholicism proposed a view of modernity that mirrored the view prevailing in the research university. While modern secular minds deprecated the Middle Ages, many clerical minds elevated the medieval and deprecated modernity. Both sides worked to trivialize numerous distinctively modern Catholic cultural and intellectual achievements. Not until the 1960s did the Church officially recognize that it "goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does." Then sponsorship of cultural medievalism ended, and a predictably indiscriminate anti-medievalism ensued, notably on America's Catholic campuses. But the long Catholic deprecation of the modern world seemed to vindicate the secular cliché that Catholicism has little to contribute to present-day civilization.

American Catholic Colleges Trying to Become Universities.

During the twentieth century American Catholic institutions tried to accommodate themselves to the dominant secular research universities. Like much of the rest of higher education in the United States, Catholic schools were entrepreneurial from their beginning, founded to serve specific communities, often

immigrant or local. After World War II the Catholic colleges and universities emulously faced the great American research universities, which had now become elite corporate units of society. Church-schooled to conformity while simultaneously hungry for American legitimacy, the Catholic academy was insecure about its status and insular in its outlook. It possessed, moreover, no model of a great research university that advanced scholarship, some of which was specifically Catholic but neither theological nor medieval. It came to seem self-evident on most Catholic campuses that modern knowledge, apart from theology, is essentially secular and that to modernize was inevitably to secularize.

The orders of religious women and men that created such institutions and continued to staff them in great numbers into the 1960s provided their Catholic ethos. Thus Notre Dame was founded and remains animated by the Congregation of Holy Cross. Its members sought to teach and exemplify distinctive and habitual Catholic beliefs, ethics, and worship for the students with whom they lived and worked. Residing in dormitories and therefore humanly available to students, Holy Cross priests and brothers offered much human education beyond the classrooms and chapels. Undergraduates absorbed from their pedagogues the habits they needed to fulfill what Newman called their “secular duties” as Catholics.

During the 1960s, social justice became a mark of American Catholic higher education, both as an intellectual resource and as an aspect of its characteristic human education—another reminder of the myopia of confusing what has prevailed in the academy with what will come. Because Catholic social teachings help to define Catholic universities and colleges, scholars are indispensable to study it, grow it, and apply it. The Vatican and Catholic campuses worked in tandem to make their Church a force for building human solidarity. In 1987 Pope John Paul II reaffirmed the “enduring relevance” of his predecessors’ insistence that the Church work for universal solidarity in the pursuit of social justice. While addressing all people of good will, he appealed especially to other Christians, to Jews, and to Muslims. He asked, moreover, that Catholic higher education make “an institutional commitment” to the material, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being of the “the human family.”

Early on, Notre Dame acted creatively to begin making “solidarity in action at this turning point in human history . . . a matter of urgency.” Three major institutions illustrate how integral to Notre Dame’s Catholic identity and mission is the pursuit of social justice. The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies both investigates and supports development; some of its former fellows were instrumental in helping Chile and Argentina transition from dictatorship to democracy and in building Brazilian democracy. The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies has produced alumni who make its presence felt in sixty-eight nations. And the Center for Social Concerns, launched in 1983 to oversee and coordinate existing domestic service initiatives and to develop new ones, helps to make the teaching and pursuit of social justice integral to the University’s distinctive project of human education.

Another major change on Catholic campuses occurred during the late twentieth century. In the mid-1960s two eminent secular sociologists were surprised to discover that it was primarily the numerous vowed religious who gave most Catholic colleges and universities their distinctive ethos. In a prescient chapter that is the lodestar for this paper, David Riesman and Christopher Jencks anxiously hoped that numerous religious would become academics competent to populate Catholic classrooms and laboratories as well as chapels and dormitories. Without such religious, they warned, Catholic universities would succumb to the regime of “lay professionalism.” By then academics already were increasingly professionals who identified more with national and international disciplinary communities than with particular institutions. Today professionalism has become even more the rule, sometimes indistinguishable from careerism.

Because graduate schools control what and how colleges teach, Riesman and Jencks saw them as crucial for the future of Catholic higher education. Prefiguring Notre Dame’s vision of providing an alternative for the 21st century, they wanted Catholic universities “to make a distinctive contribution to the over-all academic system” by providing “an ideology or personnel for developing alternatives to the Harvard-Berkeley model of excellence.” They hoped that “the richness of the Catholic traditions, apart from specific creedal elements, may work against the fragmentation of learning that characterizes the secular university and against the divorce of introverted research from missionary teaching.” By “missionary teaching” they meant not religious propaganda but a human education that could engage and sometimes transform undergraduates, and perhaps touch some graduate students as well.

In the event, however, religious vocations have eroded at Notre Dame and elsewhere, and the potential that Riesman and Jencks hoped for remains underdeveloped. Academic specialization narrows. Administrators of many Catholic colleges and universities are now concerned about widespread indifference, and even hostility, to Catholic traditions among their professors.

II. Fact and Value in the American Academy

Human Education Now: the Research University and the Liberal Arts College.

American research universities are the most formidable heirs of the German originals. Nineteenth-century American professors regarded Germany as “the Camelot of erudition,” but because of American creativity and European catastrophe, the twentieth century reversed the flow of emulousness. Although America’s great university colleges continued to try to offer programs of human education to undergraduates into the last generation, in the universities that educate the vast majority of Notre Dame’s faculty, lay professionalism obtains, skepticism is public reason, and graduate deans fret about how ill-prepared their students are even to teach and convey information and concepts to undergraduates.

After 1945, the business of the great American universities became discovering and transmitting knowledge without trying to habituate adolescents in the practice of virtue. As the scope of human education

contracted, what Riesman and Jencks in the late 1960s called “missionary teaching” was becoming outmoded. “Preaching about values” out of a set of coherent, shared principles was largely restricted to sermons in university chapels. In some circles the word “theological” became a synonym for mystification and irrationality.

There were, however, some impressive late harvests for human education. Nearing death, James O. Freedman, the late president of both Dartmouth College and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, remembered that as a Harvard undergraduate during the mid-1950s he met

teachers and writers who changed me utterly and forever. They were models of the life of the mind in action. And few influenced me, a Jew, more than two Christian clergymen: George A. Buttrick and Reinhold Niebuhr [likely the most influential American theologian of the period]. Memorial Church, located at the geographical heart of the university, was not a classroom, but it was an important part of my undergraduate experience.

Since then, those fervently held beliefs and proscriptions called values have multiplied on campuses. But even the most appealing of them, such as universal human rights, can prove to be essentially a matter of strong feelings—vulnerable before a purely skeptical reason because they are disconnected from any first principles, much less endowed with a transformative aspiration.

The 1960s mostly finished the custom of university colleges acting in loco parentis for undergraduates and, with it, student services’ residual duty of enforcing sundry public proprieties. At some of America’s best liberal arts and university colleges the determination to make human education available to undergraduates survives. The ethos and habits they want their professors to exemplify for their students are often generous and vital but inevitably abridged.

Bright students everywhere gratefully share in indispensable human goods like inquiry. As much as did the young James Freedman, however, they question “the meaning and purpose of life.” Unlike him, they can express frustration because their “college and its system of beliefs do not encourage the asking of such questions and, more importantly, they do not provide satisfactory answers.” It is now thinkable that the research university’s atrophied educational agenda may prove to be a failed twentieth-century experiment.

Notre Dame: Catholic Human Education and Scholarship.

Notre Dame is pulled on the one side by the research university’s tendency to reduce education to discovering and transmitting knowledge, and on the other by the Catholic goal of providing human education. The tension can be either creative or destructive for the University, but it is permanent. History moves in only one direction. There is no going back to the future.

Notre Dame’s flourishing depends on strengthening its academic excellence and reputation, as well as its distinctively Catholic ethos and appeal. Overwhelmingly, the University’s students are, and will remain, undergraduates, and every year between 82 and 85 percent of them are Catholic. Notre Dame also

appeals to parents: A recent national survey asked 1,045 of them, “What college would you most like to see your child attend were prospects of acceptance or cost not issues?” Notre Dame ranked eighth. Notre Dame appeals as well to an important group of Catholic students who can choose. A recent econometric study analyzing the matriculation preference ranking of colleges and universities with a national draw showed how critical Notre Dame’s identity and reputation as a national, academically rigorous university college with a Catholic ethos are in attracting talented high school graduates from throughout the country and abroad. Nationally, the University is the top-ranked religious institution in student preference ranking.

A generation ago alert observers doubted that schools like Notre Dame could appeal to the ablest children of America’s Catholic leadership. They were wrong. Today the University educates the daughters and sons of America’s Catholic leaders in great numbers, and their composition is changing. Now it includes the Latinos and Latinas who constitute 8.3 percent of the student body. Another reality underscores the connection between sustaining the University’s Catholic identity and the realization of its lofty academic ambitions. Our generous alumni and donors are also committed to the University’s distinctive ethos.

Notre Dame prizes the generous and necessary secular values esteemed at every responsible college. Additionally, its distinctive identity requires that it deepen the Catholic spiritual and ethical education that most of its undergraduates began at home, and even experiment with extending it to graduate students. Unlike secular institutions, Notre Dame properly aspires to “provide [such students] with explicit advice about moral virtue” and religious faith and knowledge as well. The University must articulate what defines professors who can participate in fulfilling its “pastoral obligation” to Catholics and other students who enroll here expecting a Catholic ethos and human education. Otherwise, Notre Dame, though catholic, will cease to be distinctively Catholic and will thereby forfeit a mainstay of its academic appeal and its opportunity to make a distinctive academic contribution.

The task is urgent. Research by the Notre Dame sociologist Christian Smith shows that American Catholic adolescents’ religion, like that of most of their peers, tends to be more apathetic than dogmatic. They are mostly uninformed about Catholic theology and even less aware of Catholicism’s intellectual and cultural resources. They are disposed to be “moralistic,” wanting to be “good and nice” but lacking a reasoned conviction of participating in a coherent moral tradition. They also tend to be “therapeutic,” more focused on themselves and their own well-being than on others or the Other. Finally, their God can resemble that of “deism,” distant from their everyday lives unless needed to solve a problem, to improve things, or at least to feel better.

Notre Dame must continue educating its Catholic undergraduates so that their Catholicism is not only hereditary and convivial but also informed by reasoned conviction and generous action. If they come to the University from various Catholic neighborhoods, they must leave equipped to form Catholic and other

religious and ethical networks, wherever they are. Only thus will our alumni be able to cooperate intelligently with Catholics and other persons of good will to promote social justice.

Notre Dame's pastoral obligation to its Catholic students includes offering them the opportunity to know and share Catholicism's intellectual and cultural traditions as part of their human education. That knowledge should complement the deepening of their spiritual and moral education. Its existence also suggests the paradox of Notre Dame's position in the academy. As Riesman and Jencks foresaw, a Catholic university's academic presence will become more important insofar as it becomes somewhat more distinctive. The last three words are important. Notre Dame's continued academic advance requires a degree of difference, but only that.

Educationally, the University is stronger and more attractive than a generation ago, or even a decade ago. In most respects it is and will remain academically indistinguishable from secular American universities. The University recruits, supports, promotes, and esteems promising and proven faculty members because of research, teaching, and service that most of them could accomplish as successfully elsewhere.

Reclaiming Catholic intellectual and cultural resources for Catholicism is a task for academic specialists working in normal departments. Along with Notre Dame's eminent Theology Department, the accomplished philosophers who work in subdisciplines with Catholic implications are academically indispensable. Their departments continue to enjoy a formative role here, but our Catholic academic project is now more extensive.

The University already supports the research and creativity of many faculty members whose scholarship and art deepen the Catholic intellectual and cultural achievement. Even more diverse Catholic scholarship is needed if the University is to fulfill its ambitious mission statement by realizing its own "special obligation and opportunity, specifically as a Catholic university, to pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning . . . [so that] Catholic intellectual life in all disciplines [can] be animated and fostered and a proper community of scholarly religious discourse be established."

Such scholarship and creativity are likely to be crucial for strengthening the social sciences, humanities, and arts at Notre Dame, even as the physical and biological sciences grow in importance. Such scholarship and creativity can also enable the University to gain a distinct advantage within the larger academy. By engaging more fully major Catholic intellectual and cultural resources that scholarship has tended to secularize or neglect, the University can play a more vital and visible role as a Catholic university.

For Notre Dame to specialize in, and even create, more academic subfields with a Catholic import depends on the Catholic idea of tradition: It is not some intellectual and cultural dead hand, or the savoring of curious erudition, but today's intelligent engagement with and development of the past. Because history

flows on, any academic project that purports somehow to effect a Catholic “restoration” is at best fanciful. Propaganda and moralism never substitute for scholarship. Notre Dame’s Catholic academic enterprise presupposes creative, rigorous, and learned scholars who help to make the University a stronger presence in the academy and draw other talented academics here. Many able graduate students choose Notre Dame because of our strengths in areas with an important Catholic or other religious component. Far from taking for granted our competitive advantage, we must retain and expand it by improving these strengths.

We must also explore new possibilities. Could the University, for example, help to reform American graduate education by developing for its doctoral students a nurturing and challenging program of human education, ethical and even spiritual as well as intellectual, so that they are better prepared to be academically and humanly engaging college teachers?

Notre Dame’s capacity to support additional and more sophisticated scholarship in Catholic cultural and intellectual resources also depends on the presence of an aggregation of faculty members, Catholic as well as other believers and nonbelievers, specialist and non-specialist alike, who value those resources, even when they do not study them. (The binary Catholic—non-Catholic is simplistic, perhaps patronizing, but useful shorthand for a more complex human reality.) The progress of Jewish studies in the contemporary American university is instructive. Jewish culture was rich for a couple of millennia before its discovery by the mainstream academy, but before World War II there were relatively few Jewish professors and students in the major American universities. A handful of schools supported a specialist or two in some aspect of Judaica, along with a larger number of scholars—mostly non-Jewish—of what was then called the Old Testament. There existed seminaries and theological colleges to train rabbis. Only in 1927 was Yeshiva College (later University) founded, and it was long unique.

After 1945 the ranks of Jewish students and faculty burgeoned. Programs in Jewish Studies debuted in major research universities during the 1960s and exploded during the 1970s. For example, scholarship at the University of Pennsylvania Center for Advanced Judaic Studies complements the Jewish Studies Program’s rich offerings of undergraduate and graduate courses. Penn reasonably offers no parallel program in Catholic studies. A fair division of academic labor would hold neighboring Catholic institutions responsible for cultivating that cultural and intellectual vineyard, but if a Penn undergraduate would be hard-pressed to find courses that study, say, the Catholic poets Paul Claudel and Denise Levertov, so would her counterpart at a neighboring Catholic school. Everywhere in the academy, numerous alert and engaged faculty, students, and donors make the difference between attention and oblivion.

Notre Dame and the Venture of a Catholic Research University.

A serious research university whose appeal is also distinctively Catholic must offer spiritual and moral education to its Catholic students, particularly to its undergraduates. That requires the academic

resources of many disciplines—as well as a residential life that supports community, a sophisticated campus ministry, programs that enable social justice and social concern, and an aggregation of Catholic faculty humanly available to their overwhelmingly Catholic students. If the cultivation of a distinctive human education distinguishes such a university from its secular counterparts, like them it respects the fundamental academic protocols in faculty recruitment, promotion, and research. In addition, such a university will support research and creativity that investigate, express, or grow Catholic intellectual and cultural resources. The merits of a particular achievement invite academic scrutiny, and scholarly work on it must be technically proficient. Such a university sees those achievements as informed by religious belief, accessible to us but also open to eternity. Finally, such a university's ethos will feel different from that of its secular counterparts. It will be populated by intellectually alert and honest people who appreciate that faith and doubt are now correlative. Serious religions, including Catholicism, cannot therefore be patronized or ignored at such a university. In turn, Catholic and other honest believers there can respect and cooperate with honest doubters because they, too, understand doubt.

Three challenges now confront the University of Notre Dame as it aspires to be a preeminent research university that is both manifestly catholic and distinctively Catholic: (1) explaining the division of labor among its faculty, all of whom participate in their students' human education; (2) making Notre Dame academically a Catholic preeminent university; and (3) recruiting and retaining faculty members who can sustain Notre Dame's distinctively Catholic ethos and human education.

III. The Faculty and Notre Dame's Catholic Mission and Ethos

Notre Dame's mission statement promises its students, above all its undergraduates, that they will find here the opportunity for a distinctively human education which fosters

the development in . . . [them] of those disciplined habits of mind, body, and spirit which characterize educated, skilled, and free human beings . . . [as well as] a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice.

The University encourages a way of living consonant with a Christian community and manifest in prayer, liturgy and service. Residential life endeavors to develop that sense of community and of responsibility that prepares students for subsequent leadership in building a society that is at once more human and more divine.

Because the whole faculty, along with many others, is responsible for sustaining this complex educational mission, the University seeks to recruit and retain professors for whom teaching and scholarship are more than one more career choice. And it has been largely successful. Many Notre Dame faculty members foster in their students the intellectual and ethical virtues that support the “disciplined habits of mind, body, and spirit which characterize educated, skilled, and free human beings.” The faculty's pursuit of

understanding and truth requires of them integrity, hard work, the accurate and helpful use of language, and cooperation with and care for other people. The human education that the University seeks to offer depends on the deep vision of humanity that infuses the faculty who exemplify those virtues: yes, we are minds, but we are also bodies and spirits. Notre Dame aspires, moreover, to build on those sacred habits in order to offer its students a human education open to God's mysterious transcendence incarnated in us and in our world. Without the virtues of the whole faculty, the University must fail in its lofty aspiration.

Sustaining such an ethos requires a division of labor among the faculty, with Catholic professors sharing principal responsibility for the religious dimension of its overwhelmingly Catholic student body's human education. The division informs perhaps the most contentious sentence in Notre Dame's mission statement: the "Catholic identity of the University depends upon, and is nurtured by, the continuing presence of a predominant number of Catholic intellectuals." That has been the reality of Notre Dame from the beginning. The official commitment has two purposes. First, it aims to make the University home for an aggregation of professors—female and male, lay and religious—that embodies, inside and outside the classroom, the legitimate diversity of adult Catholicism for their Catholic students. Second, the commitment aims to ensure that the faculty contains an aggregation of professors concerned with the "special obligation . . . to pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning . . . [so that] Catholic intellectual life in all disciplines [can] be animated and fostered and a proper community of scholarly religious discourse be established." Absent sufficient numbers of Catholic professors, how can the University properly attend to a distinctively Catholic intellectual and cultural achievement?

Since 1993 Notre Dame has made its official commitment integral to every effort to search for and recruit faculty members: "All who participate in hiring faculty must be cognizant of and responsive to the need for dedicated and committed Catholics to predominate in number among the faculty." The Rev. Edward A. Malloy, C. S. C., president from 1987 to 2005, wrote those words and added this clarification: "[A predominant number] refers to both more than 50 percent and not simply being satisfied with 50 percent. It's an effort, without specifying a specific number, to take seriously that numbers and percentages make a difference."

Realism informs the commitment to a division of labor within the teaching and research faculty so that more than 50 percent of them are Catholic. Professing—even practicing—Catholicism or any other faith is no guarantee of the religious seriousness, ethical responsibility, good sense, and support for the University's religious identity that human education requires. A particular faculty member's declaration of Catholicism does not necessarily entail support for Notre Dame's distinctive mission.

During the last generation Notre Dame has attracted a more religiously diverse and inclusive faculty. The percentage that identifies as non-Catholic has risen from 34.1 percent in 1985-86 to 47 percent in 2005-

06. Meanwhile, the percentage of that segment of the faculty who identify themselves as Catholic has fallen from 65.9 percent in 1985-86 to 53 percent in 2005-06. When the prospective rate of Catholic retirements is plotted against the present rate of Catholic hires as a constant, it is clear that within a few years Notre Dame's teaching and research faculty will no longer include a predominant number of Catholics. The University must, therefore, invest resolve, imagination, and resources into recruiting and retaining able new Catholic professors.

Princeton was the last major American university to enforce such a policy. Why it ended there captures why it ended in other great universities. After the Reverend Francis L. Patton, only one more clergyman served as president of Princeton. In the 1890s Patton frustrated Professor Woodrow Wilson's effort to recruit the eminent historian Frederick Jackson Turner because he was a Unitarian. As Princeton's first lay president, Wilson ended denominational hiring, recruited his alma mater's first Jewish, Catholic, and nonbelieving faculty members, and secured the university's redefinition as nonsectarian. By the late 1950s it almost seemed that the direction of discrimination had reversed. Religiously serious professors at Princeton could feel intellectually and spiritually isolated. A senior historian once received a letter on which his chair "jocularly" wrote, "'Referred to the departmental Christian.'" Princeton's ethos was transformed. Now, two-thirds of its students are indifferent to organized religious activities.

History and demography make Catholics and other minorities generally allergic to exclusionary and discriminatory policies. That reality frames the theoretical and practical inclusiveness of Notre Dame's policy of recruiting faculty to support its mission. The University imposes no religious test on its faculty for hiring or promotion, and it actively enlists and promotes all qualified academics who can contribute to its catholic—and in some cases Catholic—flourishing.

Notre Dame does not elevate Catholic professors above their colleagues of other religions or none but recruits them to serve students out of their own religious witness and, in some cases, Catholic learning. All professors fully belong, and they can thrive here. Nathan O. Hatch (Wheaton, '68), a Presbyterian and a minister's son, made his academic career at Notre Dame. A specialist in American Protestantism, he served in the History Department and, successively, as associate dean, acting dean, vice president, and provost until, in 2005, he was appointed president of Wake Forest University. At Notre Dame, Hatch attained the highest position to which anyone who is not a Holy Cross priest can aspire. Academics are not mere individuals. They exist and thrive in communities, including communities of faith. For faculty members who are not Catholic to share in the University's mission, it must ensure that, whatever their religion, they are present in sufficient numbers to enjoy a supportive religious community.

Most Catholics are integrated into the American mainstream. Preserving their identity requires that they nurture excellent institutions that express their own particularity. Only thus will they be preserved from

so completely integrating into the mainstream that they lose anything usefully distinctive to contribute to the nation's academic mosaic.

IV. Making Notre Dame a Catholic Preeminent University

To become a distinctively Catholic great university, Notre Dame must widen and intensify the study and teaching of Catholicism's cultural and intellectual achievements beyond the disciplines of theology and philosophy. Alasdair MacIntyre, a distinguished Notre Dame philosopher, imagines a Catholic academic project that is more than doctrinal and theological, less sharply etched and more expansive:

In a Catholic university a central task . . . is to introduce the student to a variety of culturally diverse forms of specifically Catholic achievement: to Giotto and Bernini, to Dante and Racine, to Hopkins and Shusako Endo and Flannery O'Connor, to Augustine and Aquinas and Newman and Edith Stein. He might have added the composers Wolfgang Mozart and Olivier Messiaen, the film directors Robert Bresson and John Ford, and scores of modern cultural and intellectual eminences. If Catholicism and culture were almost coterminous in Latin Europe from ca. 400-1500 C.E., much of modern civilization, the sublime and the repulsive alike, becomes unintelligible absent the variety of Catholic intellectual and cultural resources.

As MacIntyre's invocation of the late twentieth-century Japanese novelist Endo suggests, such resources exist worldwide and they continue to multiply. The Catholic Church was the original global institution. In colonial Mexico, the Carmelite poet and playwright Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz lived Catholicism's ambivalent capability as a woman and a nun. Spiritually and artistically her religion inspired her, but its hierarchy curbed her. In the last century Léopold Sédar Senghor, poet and theoretician of *négritude*, showed how Catholic cultural and intellectual resources could both adapt to and be used to help create postcolonial Africa. The academic task of a Catholic university is neither curatorial nor parochial. Rather it realizes the idea of tradition as today's lively engagement with a multicultural past in service of the global future.

For a Catholic university to fulfill its responsibility of offering Catholic intellectual and cultural education, many of its faculty must be able to teach students out of their own research in major cultural and intellectual expressions of Catholicism. The richness of those resources can, moreover, academically strengthen some of Notre Dame's doctoral programs. With the revival of religions' destructive capacity felt worldwide and the aging of some fashionable theories in the humanities, the subject of religion has now reappeared, if still fuzzily, on the academic radar. Because Notre Dame rejected the prophecy that modernization entails secularization, it is uniquely positioned to lead in discovering how to reintroduce religion – and not just Catholicism – into the academy, to lead in creating the twenty-first century university.

There are, moreover, signs of a desire for a renewed academic engagement with the depth of the human person, and hence with questions of meaning and purpose. The several poststructuralist theories exhibit intricate differences; all of them, however, reject the model of a deep human subjectivity and dwell on a world of surfaces. Depth is what Israel taught Catholicism to expect as a universal human potential. Insofar as the academy again faces the possibility of human depth, including the question of meaning and the possibility of transcendence, the issue will be not whether to engage religion but what kind of religion to engage: the fanatic, ignorant, and dangerous, or the intelligent, learned, and self-critical? Crucial to answering the question helpfully is that much of the cumulative ethical and intellectual cost of Christianity, and more specifically of Catholicism, now stands exposed. Pope John Paul II's litany of apologies during his last years suggests that the Church is facing the ambivalent burden of its past. If so, Catholicism now has the capacity to recognize "human nature in the fullness of its health and strength," along with its essential dependence and recurrent malice. The results can be catholic as well as Catholic.

For Notre Dame to cultivate more fully the study of specifically Catholic intellectual and cultural resources demands much imagining, planning, and executing. The University must devote attention and resources to making an even more original contribution to American higher education, while accelerating the conventional academic trajectory that has so improved it. Many of Notre Dame's departments creatively deploy their human and other resources in academic enterprises in which Catholicism matters, or can matter, and those departments are growing better.

V. Faculty Members to Sustain Notre Dame's Distinctively Catholic Ethos

Three groups of faculty members—some non-Catholic and some Catholic—are needed if Notre Dame is to fulfill its specifically Catholic academic mission: (1) Catholics for Catholic Human Education and Scholarship; (2) Non-Catholic Scholars of Specifically Catholic Achievements; and (3) Religiously Learned Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

(1) Catholics for Human Education and of Catholic Intellectual and Cultural Traditions

Notre Dame depends on Catholic faculty members who can help to sustain its Catholic ethos and its mission. Working with colleagues of all religions and none, they realize Notre Dame's catholic mission and advance its Catholic mission by supplementing the Congregation of Holy Cross's pastoral work of animating Notre Dame as a Catholic academic community of higher learning. That the University continues to act in loco parentis for its residential students helps to embody Notre Dame's ideal of itself as a family. Inside and outside classrooms and laboratories, Catholic professors must be humanly available to their younger coreligionists, especially to undergraduates. Whatever their academic disciplines, such faculty live the shared unity without uniformity that enables them to model the legitimate diversity of intelligent, adult Catholicism.

Catholic professors can academically enrich Notre Dame in other ways as well. There is a world religion, and more Catholic professors from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America could help our students outgrow the insularity that now encloses the United States. Such faculty members would help to ensure that “the Notre Dame family” is more than another genial tribal slogan. Moreover, those Catholic professors whose research centers on some Catholic intellectual and cultural resource also contribute to advancing Notre Dame’s distinctive Catholic mission and identity.

Actively recruiting and retaining a variety of Catholic faculty members imposes two serious responsibilities on the University. First, much of Notre Dame’s distinctively Catholic human education has been implicit knowledge—virtually a benign form of priestcraft. What it entails must now be articulated for the benefit of an overwhelmingly lay Catholic faculty. Second, attracting such Catholic professors and keeping them requires that Notre Dame be able to satisfy their special religious needs. Recent initiatives within the University have enabled scholars with Catholic learning to deepen the theological and other religious knowledge of their colleagues, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. It is imperative that those initiatives be supported, coordinated, and expanded.

(2) Non-Catholic Scholars of Catholic Intellectual and Cultural Traditions

Scholars of Catholicism who are not Catholic also help Notre Dame to realize its ambitious mission. For the University to grow academically, it must also successfully recruit and retain in greater numbers professors, believers and nonbelievers alike, who specialize in some aspect of the Catholic cultural and intellectual achievement, and who also support Notre Dame’s mission. Supportive scholars who become specialists in one or another Catholic resource after making their home here also promote that aspect of the University’s academic mission.

3) Religiously Learned Christians, Jews, and Muslims

Roman Catholicism tries to be respectful of all serious religions. Because God makes the “dialogue of salvation” universally accessible, the Church’s “dialogue too should be as universal as we can make it,” Pope Paul VI wrote in 1964. In conversations with Hindus and Buddhists, for example, the Catholic Church relies on common spiritual and moral values to promote liberty, solidarity, civil society, and widened access to “education, culture, [and] social welfare.” Those are indispensable human goods that Notre Dame must exemplify. Catholicism enjoys, however, a unique theological and spiritual kinship with other forms of Christianity, with Judaism, and with Islam. As religions worshipping the one God, they share and contest a religious idiom. The unique relationship imposes on Catholics as Catholics a religious obligation of maintaining serious, learned conversations with the other Abrahamic religions.

If the University is to pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning and build a proper community of scholarly religious discourse, it must successfully recruit and retain professors who belong to

other Christian churches and communities and study their distinctive achievements. Their learned participation is required for Notre Dame to fulfill the ecumenical imperative defined at the Second Vatican Council. For our Catholic undergraduates to be truly Catholic, they must know and understand their fellow Christians.

If Notre Dame's overwhelmingly Catholic undergraduates are to participate in what the University's mission statement calls "an authentic human community graced by the Spirit of Christ," they must come to know God more deeply. That requires that they know and understand the people whom He first made his own. Notre Dame must successfully recruit and retain more Jewish academics whose belief and learning both strengthen their own people and support the University's mission.

The Second Vatican Council was revolutionary in its view of Muslim-Catholic relations. Pope John Paul II in 1999 appealed to Christians and Muslims to walk "together on the path of reconciliation and renounce in humble submission to the divine will any form of violence as a means of resolving differences." For religious, academic, and civil reasons, Notre Dame as a Catholic university must successfully recruit and retain Muslim academics whose belief and learning enrich their religion and who support the University's mission. Our undergraduates must learn to understand Islam as a religion that human beings practice rather than as an alien product of history, culture, or politics. Religiously learned Muslim professors are indispensable to the University's academic future.

VI. The Way Ahead for Notre Dame: Questions and Opportunities

Among the questions about the course Notre Dame seeks to pursue, two are related and seem foundational. First, is it possible to create a catholic research university that shares in academic preeminence, while also preserving the strengths and benefits of a distinctively Catholic college? Or will the attempt result in a hybrid embodying some of the deficiencies of both models of education while compromising their respective virtues? Second, will Notre Dame's biggest challenge ("continue to grow its faculty academically, recruit and retain more women and minority professors, and maintain religious diversity and inclusiveness within the faculty," while "recruiting and retaining greater numbers of first-rate Catholic academics") prove insurmountable?

There are corollary questions. Can Notre Dame's effort to pioneer a new way in higher education be made intelligible to the first-class academics whom it seeks to recruit, in light of their secular experience of the research university? If so, will they find the experiment inviting or off-putting? In the age of academic professionalism, is it practicable to ask faculty who are not Catholic and with good prospects elsewhere not only to respect but also to support the University's distinctive Catholic ethos? Can Notre Dame nurture an academic culture founded on a shared sense of University citizenship among a religiously diverse faculty? Whither Notre Dame in, say, 2028 should it not endeavor to move in the direction suggested here, or frame a

viable alternative strategy for sustaining its historic mission and identity? Only the future will answer the two foundational questions and their corollaries. The one certainty is that it is myopic to see the secularism that has prevailed in the academy for about one century as what must be forever. Thus the University finds itself presented with a rare academic opportunity.

Cosmopolitanism, the belief that humanity constitutes a single moral community united by common rules and rights, is again becoming academically fashionable. In principle, this development is salutary for Notre Dame as a Catholic and catholic university. In practice, however, cosmopolitanism and religion barely coexist on many campuses. The need of religious believers to live together in security and unity seems to threaten the restrictions and conventions that follow when cosmopolitanism shrinks to the fear of difference and the need to reduce or efface it.

One academic response is to prohibit groups that insist on maintaining their distinctiveness, but that leads into self-isolation. The other conventional academic response is to try to fabricate a universal spiritual denominator and hope that it can somehow bridge religious differences. But such efforts fail to meet real believers' spiritual needs and their desire for belonging, but on their own terms and with inevitable differences.

In contrast, a graduate student who has served as secretary of Notre Dame's Muslim Student Association reports that she and her coreligionists "love being here," because as "a Catholic college, Notre Dame has been more welcoming, more accepting, and more supportive of Muslim students than most secular colleges." A Muslim undergraduate has also described his experience of the University's religious cosmopolitanism this way: "Being in an environment where they practice faith and appreciate faith and there's so many opportunities for people to exercise their faith really makes it easy for me to feel welcome and for me to do the same in my own way."

Those students' testimony suggests that Notre Dame is attracting the people whom, as Riesman and Jencks foresaw, a Catholic research university needs to create an alternative to the "Harvard-Berkeley model of excellence." Their sense of belonging points to a social reality that can obtain inside and outside the academy. When people and institutions really know themselves and are at their best, they can feel more comfortable with people and institutions different from themselves. And sometimes they can be more generously welcoming of the other and thus grow and change themselves.

The ethos that supports Notre Dame's human education has that capacity. Its combination of religious community, intelligent faith, and scholarship is unsurpassed anywhere in the academy. The University takes its Catholicism seriously as ethos, as teaching, and as research. It therefore has the capacity to engage other Christians, along with Jews and Muslims, as intelligent believers and their distinctive intellectual and cultural traditions as expressions of a shared faith in the one God. It can also respect the

religions and persons of Hindus, Buddhists, and others who seek a different path to discovering “a relationship with the Absolute Being.” Notre Dame can, finally, engage with respect intelligent unbelievers, for whom belief is the correlative of their own unbelief.

Insofar as Notre Dame’s Catholicism is learned and self-confident, it will be strong enough to support religious inclusion without demanding religious dilution, or even religion, of those who belong here. To know oneself through and apart from the other; to seek agreement while respecting difference; to live together in comity without seeking uniformity—these phrases may sound bland and clichéd, but they evoke something of authentic cosmopolitanism, a rhetorical commonplace which is rare in life.

That is Notre Dame’s opportunity: In the measure that we continue to become more cosmopolitan as a Catholic university, we can reasonably hope to become preeminent as a catholic university.

*Robert Sullivan,
Department of History & Erasmus Institute,
with the editorial assistance of Walton R. Collins,
emeritus, Department of American Studies,
University of Notre Dame*