

“The Idea of the Catholic University in the 21st Century”

March 15-16, 2018

ABSTRACT:

Mission Based Promotion and Tenure Practices at AJCU Colleges and Universities

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We often talk about hiring for mission at Jesuit colleges and universities. But recruiting is just one piece of developing a mission-based faculty culture. We should also ask whether Jesuit colleges and universities reflect mission at the time of promotion and tenure. In this paper we examine the promotion and tenure documents of AJCU Colleges and Universities against a set of peers matched based on size and type. We code the promotion and tenure documents of each institution in conjunction with the mission statement and other available statements of the institution’s mission. We then examine what these policy statements say about how institutional mission is reflected in its policies.

Since World War II, Catholic colleges and universities in the US have seen drastic changes in the makeup of their faculty: in 1900, 10% to 15% of faculty members at Catholic institutions were lay individuals. Eighty years later, 85% to 90% of faculty members were lay (Leahy, 1991). In response to this new reality, institutions have created practices that invite lay faculty into the culture and charism of the institution. These practices include hiring for mission, developing formation programs, such as Collegium or the Ignatian Colleagues Program, seminars, or retreats all focused on issues of Catholic and charism specific identity in faculty’s teaching, research, and service. We sought to understand if and how institutions recognize faculty engagement with their Catholic and Jesuit mission in promotion and tenure standards.

We compared the AJCU Colleges and Universities to a set of peers. Peers were chosen by drawing from a 2012 Chronicle of Higher Education Survey and further matched based on Carnegie type and region and student demographics. We gathered publicly available documents where available, and requested them from relevant academic offices when they were not. Documents were coded by the two researchers and triangulated with documents and statements about mission available from the colleges and schools.

The results show that relatively few AJCU institutions have promotion and tenure guidelines tailored to reflect their Catholic, Jesuit mission. By contrast, some peer schools, such as Valparaiso University in Indiana, have developed detailed guidelines and expectations that break from traditional tenure categories to better reflect institutional mission and expectations for the ways that faculty will develop throughout their careers as teachers, scholars, and members of campus and scholarly communities.

To claim that we are Catholic, Jesuit institutions who are mission centered and mission driven without tenure and promotion standards that value these identities and missions contradicts the very missions we claim to uphold. While only based on tenure and promotion practices in AJCU schools and their peers, this study offers insights into the way Catholic, Jesuit charisms may or may not influence these and other policy documents and the implications of those policies.

Leahy, W. P. (1991). *Adapting to America: Catholics, Jesuits, and Higher Education in the Twentieth*

Century. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Chronicle of Higher Education (2012). Who Does Your College Think Its Peers Are?
<http://www.chronicle.com/interactives/peers-network>