"The Idea of the Catholic University in the 21st Century"
March 15-16, 2018

ABSTRACT: Renewing Our Commitments as Sponsoring Communities and Universities

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      Respondents:
      Michael Galligan-Stierle, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
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Beginning in 2015 the Provincial Assistant for Higher Education of the Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus started asking the Jesuit communities attached to universities how they understood their communal role, with respect to the mission and identity of the Catholic, Jesuit universities in which they worked. Because the initial conversations did not yield a sense of direction and purpose, he then developed an evaluation process for university communities to engage assorted models, and intentionally identify the ways in which they wish to be collectively known and engaged. The models encompassed a range of potential relationships between Jesuit communities and the university. They depict distinct images, reflecting Jesuits as contractual, animating, nostalgic, collaborating, or covenant partners.

This presentation envisions a panel consisting of various religious sponsors of Catholic universities, each responding to the models and their applicability within the universities of their own tradition. McDonald and Russell will begin by elaborating why such discernments are critical to the mission integration equation. From that platform they will offer reflections which might be helpful to strengthen the apostolic contributions of religious communities and their institutions. Having framed these possibilities, the panel will be invited to consider their own community's version of the models. In so doing, the discussion will elaborate on the richness of each community and evoke how the models might be applied within the structures of their institutions.