

BOOK REVIEW

Catholic Colleges in the 21st Century: A Road Map for Campus Ministry. By Jeffrey LaBelle, SJ and Daniel Kendall, SJ. New York: Paulist, 2011. 112 pp. \$9.95. ISBN 978-0-8091-4733-5.

Questions of cost and value in private, Catholic higher education dominate the national conversation. While families have tried to navigate through new and more challenging economic realities, decisions about the value of pursuing an education at a Catholic college or university often come down to the question of distinctiveness. "How will the experience be different if my child attends a Catholic university?" *Catholic Colleges in the 21st Century: A Road Map for Campus Ministry* by Jeffrey LaBelle, SJ and Daniel Kendall, SJ offers a clear and decisive answer to this question.

Laballe and Kendall examine the role of the university's mission and ministry functions in animating the Catholic identity of the institution. They speak about the academic, extra and co-curricular experiences that indeed make the choice to attend a Catholic university one that should stand apart from other private and public institutions. Relying heavily on the practices of the 28 American Jesuit colleges and universities, the authors offer a practical road map for parents, students and alums to measure the effectiveness of particular institutions. The book also challenges colleges and universities to assess their effectiveness as they seek to embed mission and Catholic identity into their students' experience. It is a useful tool for administrators and campus ministers who seek to assess their own integration of Catholic identity and mission at their home institutions.

Each chapter offers a rich yet focused recommended reading list that broadens the reader's understanding of the complexity of Catholic higher education in the 21st century. The authors' recommendations for further reading include church documents, sociological and developmental resources, and a wide array of theological writings. The collection of suggested readings is extensive, and its breadth underscores the pastoral, academic and theological issues that face college and university administration and faculty.

While the book highlights the opportunity for those in ministry to work with academics and student affairs, it emphasizes the importance of all who work on a Catholic campus to be focused on the Catholic identity of the institution and the students' experience. There is clear recognition that the role of the mission and campus ministry office is to make explicit what is implicit in the mission statement of the institution. "To face the changing composition of the student body and the globalization of the world, most of these institutions of

higher education consider campus ministry the key to communicating and maintaining the Catholic identity of their institutions”(3). To do this there must be a clear strategy and intentional plan for integrating mission and identity into the student and the communal experience.

Catholic Colleges in the 21st Century is bold in its instruction on what universities need to do to safeguard mission in these changing times. The importance of hiring for mission, being clear and unapologetic about Catholic identity and offering meaningful moments of catechesis and evangelization to all students, regardless of their faith are emphasized. The authors speak of the four marks of success of campus ministry programs, “Campus Ministry is successful when it has helped people (1) approach life with a critical mind, (2) realize that life is not lived in a vacuum, (3) actively show concern for others, and (4) deepen their faith” (46). These measures must translate into programmatic and co-curricular efforts if they are to be seen as a holistic part of the learning experience. The foundation of each of these measures is the ability of a campus minister to invite students to reflect prayerfully and thoughtfully on their experience as they seek to understand their place in our world.

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