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THE CHALLENGE AND PROMISE OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: THE LAY PRESIDENT AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
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ABSTRACT
THE CHALLENGE AND PROMISE OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE LAY PRESIDENT AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Kathy A. Herrick, B.S., M.S.E.

Marquette University, 2011

Twenty years after *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the papal proclamation that defined the relationship between the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions of higher education, these institutions continue to seek ways to strengthen their Catholic identities. As they do so they are faced with a declining number of religiously vowed men and women available to lead them. An institution's history is often linked to the mission of its founding congregation. As members of the congregation become less actively involved, the connection of the institution's mission to the founding congregation and their particular charism is likely to be less visibly evident. Additionally, the role of the American university president today is viewed by many to be an almost impossible job. As members of the laity are increasingly assuming the leadership of these institutions, it is important to presidents, their institutions, boards and founding congregations to have a deeper understanding of how the lay president understands the role of supporting and advancing the Catholic mission and how the lay president is prepared to do so.

This dissertation provides a broad review of the history of the mission of Catholic institutions of higher education and of the changing role of the American college president, particularly presidents of Catholic institutions. An in depth qualitative study of one current lay president with ten years of service utilizing interviews, observations and artifact/document reviews was conducted. Three major themes emerged from the data: the significance of the president's own Catholic identity, his vocation as a Catholic educator, and the intentionality of his leadership for mission specifically. The president's preparation revealed that the lay president's personal formation as a Catholic and exposure to strong leaders in Catholic education were more critical to his leadership style than theological training or a terminal degree. The president's leadership style is also discussed in relationship to the success of the institution he leads and in context with the leadership styles described in *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis* (Morey and Piderit, 2006).

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Kathy A. Herrick, B.S., M.S.E.

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Chapter One
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In 1994, the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., the long-term president of the University of Notre Dame and one of most prominent figures in all of Catholic higher education (CHE), wrote about Catholic institutions:

> Most basically, this is a place where reason and faith intersect and influence each other; even reinforce each other, as they grapple with all of the problems that face the transmission and growth of knowledge and the multiplication of new and complex moral problems. It would also be fair to say that we are here particularly concerned with a quest for justice and peace in our times, a continuing and increasing quest for intelligence and faith (p. 372).

Writing only four years after the publication and distribution of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae (Ex Corde),* an apostolic constitution promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1990 to define the relationship between CHE and the institutional Church, Hesburgh described what he, as the president of the most prestigious Catholic institution in the United States, believed to be the *promise* of CHE. Hesburgh is an ordained Catholic priest and a member of the Holy Cross congregation (Congregatia a Santa Cruse, a religious order founded in France). As a president, he followed a long succession of Holy Cross priests who had led Notre Dame since its' founding. In 1990 when *Ex Corde* was published, the majority of the presidents of Catholic institutions were religiously vowed and thus had formal training in the doctrine and beliefs of the institutional Church. Now, twenty years after *Ex Corde*, Notre Dame continues to be led by a member of Congregatia a Santa Cruse, but religious presidents are becoming a rarity for Catholic colleges and universities. Lay presidents now lead over half of these institutions and the support and advancement of their Catholic identity is in their hands.

One of the most significant *challenges* to the promise Hesburgh believed unique to CHE would be in the decline of the number of religiously vowed Catholics available to serve as presidents of Catholic institutions. When priests and religious sisters served in the presidential role, and as faculty and staff members, at institutions founded by their religious congregations, the substantiation of Catholic identity was considered to be evident in their presence. As the number of lay presidents increases, the Catholic identity of these institutions is less outwardly visible. Yet, through the edict of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Church called for the identity to be *prominent*.

Catholic institutions of higher education (CIHE) have been a part of the landscape of post-secondary education in this country since the founding of Georgetown in 1789. Prior to 1990, the majority of American Catholic institutions, those founded by religious orders, had not looked to the institutional Church to define their missions or their promise. These sponsoring religious communities defined the distinctiveness of their institutions in relationship to their order. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was the first document ever issued by the institutional Church that would outline the "essential characteristics" of Catholic identity for all Catholic colleges and universities, including those in America. *Ex Corde* describes the basic mission of *any* university to be "a continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication for the good of society" (30) but adds specifically, "A *Catholic* [emphasis added] university participates in this mission with its own specific characteristics and purposes" (30). The document outlines those purposes as service to church and society, pastoral ministry, cultural dialogue and evangelization (31-49). It is in these characteristics that Hesburgh found promise.

However, the document not only outlines the Church's understanding as to the purpose of the Catholic university, but the general norms by which these purposes are to be carried out. These norms delineate how a university is to carry out study and instruction and clearly establishes the relationship of the university to the Church including the expectation of faculty and students: "all Catholic teachers are to be faithful to, all other teachers are to respect, Catholic doctrine and morals in their research and teaching" (Article 4:3) and "Those university teachers and administrators who belong to other Churches…and also all students, are to recognize and respect the distinctive identity of the University" (Article 4:4). Additionally, the document requires that "the number of non-Catholic teachers should not be allowed to constitute a majority within the institution, which is and must remain Catholic" (Article 4:4) and that the education of students "is to combine academic and professional development with formation and moral and religious principles and social teachings of the Church" (Article 5).

Though Hesburgh looked for the *promise* in the unique identity of these institutions many, including the leadership of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), struggled with *Ex Corde* because it called for every Catholic University to "maintain communion with the universal Church and the Holy See" and "in particular with the diocesan Bishops of the region or nation in which it is located" (Article 5:2). This particular directive declared a major change in the relationship of the American Catholic university with the institutional Church. Never before had the institutions of higher education in the United States been required by the Church to communicate with the local bishops as a means of claiming to be Catholic. The challenge became the immediate focus of the CHE community (Estanek, James &

Norton, 2006). Estanek, James and Norton reported that following the publication of *Ex Corde*, "the Catholic higher education community engaged in an intense period of analysis and discussion on higher education" (p. 203). They noted that most of the discussions focused on the resources, structures and processes "critical to implementing initiatives supporting Catholic identity (p. 203)," and particularly on the hiring of new employees, both teachers and administrators, to fill the gap created by the declining number of religiously vowed men and women who had previously filled these roles.

The relationship with the bishops continued to unfold. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) produced their own document, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States* (2000) outlining their understanding of the relationship including the purpose of the norms set in the original document. In regards to the leadership of the universities, the Bishops state: "To the extent possible, the majority of the board should be Catholics committed to the Church (Article 4:2a)" and "The university president should be Catholic" (Article 4:3a). It is the role of the administration to "inform faculty and staff at the time of their appointment regarding the Catholic identity, mission and religious practices of the university" (Article 4:3b).

In January of 2011 the USCCB announced that the ten-year review process for *Ex Corde* would entail a conversation between the president of each Catholic institution and the bishop of the diocese. The review will include a dialogue about Catholic identity, mission, ecclesial communion, service rendered by the university, and continued cooperation between the bishop and the president (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011).

The Challenge Today

Twenty years after *Ex Corde Ecclesiae,* institutions of higher education continue to sort through their relationship to the institutional Church, and as they do so they are faced with a declining number of religiously vowed men and women available to lead these organizations. Additionally, an institution's history is often linked to the mission of its founding congregation. As members of the congregations become less actively involved and/or retire from the institutions, the connection of mission to the founding congregation is less evident, and sometimes in conflict (Gallin, 2000; Morey, 2005; Morey & Piderit, 2006). As members of the laity are increasingly assuming the leadership for these institutions, the question of whose responsibility it is to uphold or redefine the Catholic mission is a critical one.

Fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops' statement in order to maintain their Catholic identity has been a significant challenge for American institutions because not only have they had to sort through the implications of the document to their individual institutions, but they have had to do so in an increasingly competitive national post-secondary education environment. Twelve years after Hesburgh pointed out the *promise* of CHE, Morey and Piderit (2006) noted the on-going *challenge* concluded from their research on Catholic university leadership, "Catholic colleges and universities operate in an atmosphere of cultural antagonism and must compete successfully with all other higher education institutions in the United States in order to survive" (p. 11). Morey and Piderit suggested that the expectations for these institutions, expressed by the institutional Church in *Ex Corde* and the Bishops' Statement, are in conflict with an American culture of education which does not embrace the connection of faith to reason. The responses to

this challenge have included the reclaiming of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) and a focus on service based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). However, understanding CIT is not a simple undertaking, it is a 2000-year conversation with the Catholic faith and the world; choosing to embrace it as an institutional expectation and norm, and integrating that norm into institutional culture, is a complicated task. CST is a simpler concept, but service alone does not distinguish a Catholic institution. Critically, a lay president with little or no formal training in Catholic doctrine will likely be unfamiliar with either CIT or CST; and may be reluctant to encourage the establishment of either.

There are currently 201 CIHE in the United States. Utilizing the United States Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (known as IPEDS), there were more than 900,000 students enrolled in Catholic institutions in 2006-2007 as compared to 570,961 students in 2000-01. "In the twenty-five years between 1980 and 2005, Catholic higher education enrollment increased by 60.9 percent and ten new Catholic institutions were founded" (Morey & Piderit, 2009, p.1).

Though these two hundred institutions represent only a little over four percent of the total number of colleges and universities (4861) recognized by the United States Department of Education in 2006, CIHE outnumber colleges affiliated with any other particular religious denomination and with enrollment increasing and new institutions being founded, it is apparent that CHE continues to have a place in the higher education landscape of America.

However, as with all other institutions of higher education, they are faced with the challenges of increased accountability required by the American public, the federal

government, and by rising competition for students and funding. The amplified accountability is evident in the accreditation requirement. Though voluntary, all institutions of higher education are expected to participate. As part of that process, institutions must be clear about their mission and provide evidence that they are meeting its intent. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the major accrediting of post-secondary education, lists *mission and integrity* as its first of five criteria that must be met to receive accreditation (North Central Association, 2010). As institutions compete for both public and private funding, clarity of mission is the first expectation. Thus the call for identity is clear from both the Church's perspective and the higher education community.

The Lay President of the Catholic University

Ex Corde outlined a distinct identity for Catholic institutions and outlined the relationship of the institutions to the Church. The Church, through the Bishops' document, set the expectation that the university president should be Catholic. It is unclear, however, what qualifies a president, particularly a lay president, as *Catholic*, and *how* the Catholic president is to keep the Catholic mission and identity distinct. In a major study of CHE presidents, known as the Emerging Trends in Leadership (ETL) study published in 2006, Morey and Piderit, reported that: As a cohort, Catholic college and university presidents increasing resemble their presidential peers elsewhere in U.S. higher education; there is a lack of formal theological and spiritual formation among presidents, and there is widespread agreement among presidents that inadequate lay preparation presents a problem for the future of CHE. Despite this, Morey and Piderit

found that few lay presidents report that they personally feel ill equipped to lead the religious missions of their institutions.

The ETL study also reported that the presidents "desire a more supportive working relationship with the hierarchical church but find that relationship elusive and complex" (p. 14). They found that the board of trustees who hired the presidents had not yet identified minimum standards of religious education and training they deemed essential for all Catholic college and university presidents. Referring to lay presidents in January 2010, Mary E. Lyons, a lay president and the outgoing chair of ACCU, noted in her closing address to the Association that "if at the heart of our mission is some demonstrable and personal integration of 'faith and reason,' it is helpful that the leaders themselves are so integrated and give public witness to this". She suggested that many lay people lacked confidence in the theological training they themselves believed necessary to lead a Catholic institution.

Today's College President

In addition to the unique challenges of leading a Catholic institution, the role of the American university president today is seen by many to be an almost impossible job. Rita Bornstein (2002), president of Rollins College wrote about "Redefining Presidential Leadership in the 21st Century" in an edition of *The Presidency*. She noted, "The college presidency is all-consuming—challenging and exhilarating, though often frustrating" and "it may be one of the hardest jobs in America." She recognized that there are many current discussions about college presidents in the media. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* regularly features some article that addresses the ongoing challenges of the role. Reports include not only the telling of presidential searches gone awry and failed

presidencies, but also the seemingly endless daily battles that come with the role of the president. These include being under pressure to fundraise in a struggling national economy, hire winning athletic coaches, explain off-campus student behavior, defend or squelch tenure for their faculties and build relationships with board members (e.g. Chait, Ryan & Taylor, 2005; Malm, 2009; Nelson, 2009; Shirvani, 2009; Simon, 2009).

Nelson (2009) suggested that in addition to the daily challenges of the role that presidents play a critical part in determining the legacy of an institution, stating: "The role of presidents on the historic shape and trajectory of the academy can have lasting effect" (p. 2). He argued that though the study of the impact of the president on the institution is "highly elusive" that the "questions it raises are pivotal" (p. 2). The research that is available on college and university presidents both historically and currently has been largely demographic or biographical (Bolman, 1965; Corrigan, 2002; Cohen & March, 1974; Ferrari, 1970; Sontz, 1991) but it is clear that the role has become increasingly complex at any institution of higher education.

Navigating and promoting the promise of an institution's distinct mission has become one of the most challenging parts of any president's role, but the additional issues presented by the history and current status of CHE make the role of the lay president of the Catholic university an extremely complicated one. The role of the leadership of these institutions is to navigate this complex puzzle of promise and challenge. The *promise* of the Catholic university is in the hands of lay presidents who find themselves with multiple *challenges* to meeting that expectation.

Rationale for Study

This is a critical time in the history of CHE. Twenty years after the release of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae,* the leadership of CHE continues to discuss with the USCCB the relationship of the institutions to the Church. Once a more private discussion, this relationship is now receiving national attention. Recent examples of public interest in the relationship include the heightened media attention surrounding the University of Notre Dame's invitation to President Barack Obama, a pro-choice politician, to speak at their 2009 commencement (Brown, 2009) and Marquette University's decision to rescind an offer of deanship to a known lesbian in 2010 (Dillion, 2010). In both cases, the decisions were followed not only by local administrators and students and faculty, but also by the national media. Additionally, *The Cardinal Newman Society*, a conservative Catholic watchdog organization publishes *The Newman Guide*, now in its second edition, which provides a list of colleges they believe met the standards set forth in *Ex Corde*. In 2004, the *Society* released a report entitled: *The Culture of Death on Catholic Campuses: A Five Year Review* in which the *Society* documented almost two hundred incidents of speakers and honorees who had vocally opposed Catholic teachings (Hendershott, 2009, p. 189).

In the fall of 2009, Fr. James Heft, S.M. the Founding Director of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California, presented a lecture in Rome to the General Assembly of the International Federation of Catholic Universities on the status of American CIHE since *Ex Corde.* He noted that though some progress had been made, that significant works remained to be done. He argued that:

> Absent a vibrant Catholic intellectual tradition, the forces of market economy may well overwhelm our colleges and universities, reducing them to training grounds that produce students who fit seamlessly into seriously flawed corporate or government institutions (Heft, 2010).

If Fr. Heft is correct, the *promise* Fr. Hesburgh saw in 1994 is meeting serious challenges twenty years after clear characteristics for Catholic institutions were outlined by the Church. In order to hold true to the promise Hesburgh believed possible, it is important to take a closer look at who is supporting and advancing the Catholic mission at these institutions. With the growing number of lay presidents, who have increasingly complex and demanding roles, and a diminishing number of religious on campus, it is important to the future of these institutions, and the promise of CHE in America, to understand the lay president's role on the "lasting effect" and legacy of the Catholic identity and mission at this time in the history of CHE.

Catholic institutions in the United States have a unique opportunity at this time in history to be distinct in their Catholic identity, because both the Catholic Church, and the culture of American higher education, call for them to do so. There are an increasing number of laypersons in leadership roles in CHE and a decreasing number of religiously vowed and trained men and women working within these institutions. Yet, the research indicates that the presence of the sponsoring religious communities has had a significant impact on an institution's understanding of its Catholic identity, and most of the laity has had little or no theological or spiritual training to prepare them for these positions. There is limited research on the college presidency and though there is increasing interest within CHE regarding the role and preparation of the lay president, there is no in-depth study of how a current president understands his/her role from a multi-faceted perspective or the leadership approach s/he utilizes to support and advance the Catholic mission.

The purpose of this study was to understand how the lay president at one Catholic institution understands her/his role in supporting and advancing the distinct Catholic identity of their institution and how they were prepared for this role. A rich understanding of one president's experience will add to the research on the specific leadership necessary for CIHE and provide other lay presidents with a reference for understanding their role.

My research questions were: (1) How does the lay president in an institution founded by a sponsoring religious community (SRC) understand his/her role as president? (2) How does the lay president understand his/her role specifically related to supporting and advancing the Catholic mission of the institution? (3) How was the lay leader prepared for his/her role as the leader of the Catholic mission and (4) What type of preparation does the president believe he/she should have had?

In the next chapter I provide a review of the literature of the history of CHE in America, the history of the role of the president, recent research on the current role of the president in CHE, and a theoretical framework for examining the Catholic lay president's role. Chapter Three details the methodological approach utilized in this study.

Chapter Two
Review of Literature

Twenty years after the apostolic promulgation *Ex Corde*, and more than two hundred years after the founding of the first Catholic college, CHE has found itself at a critical juncture. In 1990, *Ex Corde* called upon Catholic institutions to become more distinctively Catholic. At that point in history, more than 70 percent of the presidents of these institutions were vowed-religious men and women. In 2000 the United States Bishops produced their subsequent document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States*, declaring that: the president and majority of the board of trustees of Catholic institutions should be Catholic and the role of the administration should include informing faculty and staff of the Catholic identity, mission, and religious practices of the university.

In 2011 lay presidents lead more than half of the Catholic institutions in the United States, with the number of religiously vowed men and women in America continuing to decline, the number of lay presidents will inevitably increase in the coming years. An understanding of the history of CHE in the United States is helpful in understanding this critical juncture from a mission perspective; in other words, why is it so important that the lay president be a part of the mission discussion? The history of CHE revealed that because these presidents have almost exclusively been religiously vowed men and women, appointed to the position by the congregation that founded their institutions, that there is limited research on how lay presidents are prepared for their unique role in higher education or the effective leadership approaches that are apposite for supporting and advancing the distinctive missions of their institutions.

The role of the president in CHE, however, is not limited to his/her relationship to the Catholic identity of the institution. S/he must navigate his/her institution through a myriad of current issues in higher education in America and be able to relate to multiple constituencies: students, faculty, board members, the public, and the government. The latter issues are not unique to the Catholic leader; they are pertinent to all current leaders in higher education. A review of the literature on the increasingly complex role of the university president in general is helpful in grasping the intricacy of the role for the Catholic college president, who not only has the challenges of supporting and advancing the Catholic identity, but is also faced with these additional responsibilities and obligations.

Therefore, the literature review focused on three areas: the first is a history of CHE and Catholic presidents, along with a historical analysis of the role of the college president in the United States. The second is a review of the current research (since 1990) on CHE as it relates to institutional mission and the role of the president. Finally, the theoretical framework that will be used to conduct this study is explained.

History of Catholic Higher Education: Mission and Leadership

Though Georgetown was founded in 1789, the history of CHE is for most part ignored in the history of American higher education (Cohen, 1998; Lucas, 1994, Rudolph, 1962). A review of the historical literature reveals that CHE in America is intricately linked to many of the same cultural, social, and political issues as mainstream higher education; however, because CHE has always been related to the institutional Church, this relationship becomes the predominant focus of Catholic historians (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 2003; Leahy, 1991; Power; 1972).

George Cheney (1990) explains the complexity of the Roman Catholic Church as "bureaucratic and hierarchical" and that it transcends national borders, economic systems, and innumerable cultures (p. 35). Their relationship with the institutional Church makes CIHE distinct in the world of higher education. Thus, in attempting to understand the role of the lay president in CHE today, it is critical to review the beginnings of American CHE and its evolving mission in the context of its relationship to the institutional Church.

CHE historians label the periods of history and development differently but they do agree that changes in CHE are directly connected to important moments in the history of the Catholic Church in America (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 1995, 2003; Leahy, 1991; Power, 1972). Though they understand CHE to have been influenced by secular higher education and that changes in secular higher education have had an impact on how CIHE understand their *missions*, they would conclude that the periods of development for CHE do not mirror those of the majority of post-secondary institutions in America (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 1995, Leahy, 1991; Morey & Piderit, 2006; Power, 1972).

The history of the position of the college president in Catholic institutions, and American higher education in general, informs the prominent question of the study presented here, which asks how the lay president understands his/her role in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission of the institution in light of what has become an increasingly complicated job. Research on successful presidents is limited; most of the work is commentary or biographical. However, there is enough history to indicate the growing intricacy of the position and the relationship between the president and institutional mission.

What emerged from an examination of these multiple histories is that lay presidents of Catholic institutions have few models from which they can draw any understanding of the role, other than to develop a sense of its complexity.

In order to understand the multiple relationships between the history of CHE, the history of higher education in general and the histories of the role of the Catholic institution president and the functions of the college president in general, six historical timeframes were developed. The significance of the six time periods is delineated by the starting date. The dates chosen are significant to CHE based on the influences of *both* the Catholic Church and the cultural, power, and social tides that affected American higher education. When utilizing both of these lenses, it becomes evident that the two are intricately linked to the current status of CHE and thus have an impact on the role of the lay president.

Before Catholic Institutions

The founding of Harvard College in 1636 marks the beginning of American higher education (Lucas, 1994; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004). Though the beginning of CHE in America is not recognized until the founding of Georgetown College by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1789, more than one hundred and fifty years later (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 2003; Leahy, 1991) trends in early American higher education, and the role of its leadership, would have an impact on CHE in the future. American higher education historians understand that the earliest institutions were founded by religious denominations with the purpose of educating future clergy in order to proliferate their faith in the new country (Lucas; 1994; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004).

Though Thelin (2004) focused primarily on secular education, he asked a critical question about the leadership of colonial colleges that would later become relevant to Catholic institutions: "What were the distinctive features and contributions of these colleges that make them central to American heritage?" (p.7). He provided the significant analysis that the first American colleges followed more of a Scottish model than an English. The Scottish institutions had external boards. These boards, he noted, vested the college president with administrative authority. In contrast, the English colleges emphasized the role of the teacher. The creation and refinement of the external board with a strong president, according to Thelin, is a legacy of the colonial colleges that has defined and shaped higher education in the United States.

Early colonial college presidents were chiefly members of the clergy whose role included passing on the mission of the religious organization to which they belonged. Histories of the college presidency depict the role as one of prestige and power, and often the president was the sole employee (Handlin & Handlin, 1970; Lucas 1994; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004). Handlin and Handlin stated:

> Sometimes, indeed the president was the only teacher. Always he was the source of discipline, the continuing force in setting instructional policy, and the focus of the authority to dispose of the college's financial resources. (p. 14)

Handlin and Handlin (1970) argued that this position was unique to the American college president, and unlike the faculty of their early colleges, the president had no "precise English model" (p. 14). The quandary and importance of institutional mission also emerged at this early stage as noted by these same authors: "The hazy goals of the early colonial colleges created an unending set of dilemmas for their administrators" and "the effect was uncertainly of purpose, visible in the curriculum" (p. 14). Cohen (1998)

noted, “The dominant president dates from the Colonial Era—a president appointed by the board and responsible to it alone” (p. 39).

Though there were no Catholic colleges in the new world until the founding of Georgetown in 1789, the early acceptance by the colonial colleges of the Scottish model of a strong board, and the early role of the American college president as a strong administrator, often solely responsible for the advancement of the institutional mission, in contrast to the English perspective of a dominant faculty, would affect the American Catholic institution in the years to come.

Founding of Georgetown College to Free-Standing Seminaries, 1789-1850

CHE until the 1880s was most closely associated with the overall development of the Catholic Church in America. The founding of Georgetown College in 1789 by the Jesuits, marks the beginning of CHE in America (Leahy, 1991), but bishops often played a role in establishing early Catholic colleges because many of them included seminaries and secondary level schools (Power, 1972). Religious communities, such as the Jesuits, Sulpicians, Dominicans and Vincentians, all male orders, had established colleges by the 1840s, laying the groundwork for the future of their own communities by founding their own institutions (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 2003; Leahy, 1991; Power, 1972).

Power (1972) labeled these *The Formative Years*, and explains that Catholic institutions were slower to emerge than other institutions because the population of Catholics in the colonies was hardly more than 22,000 in 1770. Once they were founded, however, their original missions and their presidents had similarities with the early colonial colleges. What differentiates the early Catholic institutions from those of the early Protestant colleges was not only the number of years it took Catholics to establish

their schools, but the role of the institutional Church. Power provides critical analysis by clarifying the role of the bishops in establishing CHE. His research indicated that though the bishops had final approval of the establishment of colleges for laymen that they personally showed little interest in higher education for anyone but future priests. Catholic parents, however, lacking what Power stated as "both intellectual and religious sophistication," refused to enroll their sons in institutions not controlled by the clergy. Power adds:

> Catholics identified a fundamentally Catholic education with instructions by persons in some grade of holy orders; and this durable myth infected Catholic thought for years to reinforce a clerical monopoly over all levels of Catholic education. (p. 45)

Thus, because the primary mission of early Catholic institutions was more focused on the preparation of men for the priesthood than academics, the qualifications for the president of these early institutions were different than those of other institutions of their time. Power noted: "the qualifications for a president were non-academic; his scholarly pedigree was unimportant; but his standing as a sound and solid cleric mattered" (p. 71). However, though they did not have the academic qualifications of other college presidents at the time, they did have all of the authority of other presidents and "both faculty and students were subservient to" the president (p. 70).

Gleason (2003) provided a thorough examination of the research conducted on the history of CHE by historical periods and his essay is an exhaustive list of research including general works, institutional biographies, special studies (including those on Catholic women's colleges) and the proceedings of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU). He marked the early years of CHE as *The Old-Time Catholic College, 1789-1880s,* noting that higher education was closely connected with the

development of the Church and that both bishops and religious communities played a role in their formation. He pointed to Power's (1972) history and institutional biographies as the main sources for understanding this period. He did not make any connections to the relationship between secular higher education in America nor point to any discussion on the role of the president.

Thus, from the founding of Georgetown until about 1850, the mission of CHE in America and the role of the president were quite clear. The mission was to recruit and educate men for the priesthood as a means of sustaining the Catholic faith in a new country. The president's role was first and foremost to be a priest. Therefore, preparation for the role of the president of the CIHE was also very clear: the president had to be an ordained member of the Catholic Church. There was no need to question the preparation for the role, nor was there a need to look to how other institutions of higher education were preparing or hiring their presidents. Not unlike any president from the colonial days to the mid-nineteenth century, the priest-president was clearly the lone administrator of his institution and in addition to planning, and recruitment, he was also the guardian of the curriculum and the students.

Free-Standing Seminaries - *Third Plenary Council*, 1850-1884

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Church began to establish freestanding seminaries to prepare men for the priesthood and thus became less interested in the colleges. This is a significant moment in CHE because henceforth, the sponsoring religious communities (SRCs) became the dominant force in establishing and maintaining Catholic colleges for lay people (Gleason, 1995, 2003; Leahy, 1991; Power, 1972). This would become a distinctive and significant characteristic of American CHE. Between

1850 and 1900 there were one hundred and fifty-two Catholic colleges for men established, and of these, ninety-eight (64%) were founded by religious orders. Though many historians recognize the significance of the founding religious communities, Power again inserted the importance of the local bishop. Though they may not have overseen the day-to-day affairs of the institution, the "bishop's shadow was long," since no college could operate without his approval, presidents and their religious communities were sensitive to the bishop's opinion (pp. 76-77). CHE remained within the boundaries of the Church because of the relationship of the SRCs to the Church.

After the founding of Georgetown, most historians see the establishment of the Catholic University of America (CUA) in 1884 as the next significant moment in the history of CHE (Leahy, 1991; Gleason, 1995). The opening of CUA constituted a response to the intellectual and educational challenges confronting American Catholics at this point in the country's history. Originally intended to be the Catholic response to graduate school, it served according to Gleason as the "major center from which the outlook and methods of research scholarship were diffused outward to other Catholic schools" and became the major training ground for faculty in Catholic post-secondary institutions. Unlike most of the other institutions, the CUA was founded by the bishops. The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) was formed in 1899 and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) in 1904. These organizations began to work cooperatively to address issues of Catholic education in the United States. The founding of CUA and the formation of the ACCU and the NCEA substantiate a growing interest by Catholics in higher education for more than just the preparation of the priesthood.

Secular higher education.

The Morrill Act of 1862 marks a significant turning point in the history of higher education in the United States (Chambers, 1960). The Act spread the growth of the public institution, thereby creating a new institutional mission in the country, one with accountability to the public and to state legislatures. According to Cohen (1998), "When the states began founding public institutions, the legislature typically described the parameters of the college" (p. 82) and Chambers stated that this new vision for American colleges troubled presidents and boards, "This movement, proceeding in disregard of the nature of the university, was scarcely hindered by the justified outcries of university presidents and governing board members" (p. 40). During this movement, presidents emerged as the dominant voice of higher education (Bledstein, 1976; Cohen, 1998; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin; 2004) but they had a new constituent, the federal government, with whom they would need to learn how to relate. Thus the role of the president was becoming increasingly complicated.

The role of the president.

Bledstein (1976) credited the strength and character of the university president in furthering universities and colleges in the late nineteenth century, stating that "they guided American colleges into an age of the university, and they played an important role in institutionalizing the culture of professionalism" (p.130). Historians make the case for what could be considered the golden age of the college presidency, from the1850s to the early 1900s, a time in which college presidents were viewed by many as not only institutional leaders, but leaders in American society (Bledstein, 1976; Rudolph, 1962;

Thelin, 2004). By the early 1900s the president's influence exceeded the boundaries of his campus with inauguration and annual presidential addresses being circulated and read throughout the country (p. 323). Rudolph affirmed this new type of president noting that as institutions evolved into more complex organizations they required "a new kind of executive officer" (p. 417). In these emerging organizations "Growth fed upon growth, and the answer to the problems of growth—unless it was to be chaos—was organization," stated Rudolph (p. 417). He added:

> The new era…demanded men who knew what they wanted and, better yet, what their various publics wanted, men who were prepared to try the impossible task of being the 'reconciler of irreconcilabilities,' the leader to students, faculty, alumni, and trustees—groups that too often did not find a common purpose to transcend their differences until the president found it for them. (p. 423)

Thus the role of the president continued to grow in its complexity. Whereas early presidents had been the lone administrator and the sole teacher, the president's role became more complicated as institutions developed into multifaceted organizations with numerous constituencies.

Government influence continued with the passage of the Hatch Act of 1887 that supported "the habit of annual appropriation of money to the states for higher education," and the Second Morrill Act of 1890, both of which led to major growth in the number of institutions of higher education in America (Brickman and Lehrer, 1962). There were 363 institutions in 1870 compared to 977 by 1900 (Bledstein, 1976, p. 261). Presidents were to see "the development of colleges in the West, the land-grant college, and the university, modeled after the German concept of research and detached scientific study" (Kaufman, p. 1980, p. 5). Presidents in this era still had responsibility for hiring faculty and responding to student issues.

Like the other presidents of their time, Catholic college presidents were focused on raising money, recruiting students, designing curriculum and acquiring land to build new buildings; however, because their faculty typically came from within the founding order and the students had no voice in the government of the institution, they spent little time recruiting faculty or dealing with student issues. Power (1972) points out, however:

> What was left undone was probably more important than the administrative duties zealously cultivated, but Catholic college presidents tended to form an image of themselves as custodians of a *status quo* rather than as innovators or reformers. On the whole, they seemed content to remain indifferent to broader issues in higher education that even in the nineteenth century were admitted to the deliberations of many good non-Catholic schools. (p. 84)

In contrast to their secular peers, presidents of CIHE had no need to develop a new vision for their institutions, nor for their roles.

Power's (1972) research into the role of the Catholic president indicated that they attempted to carry out a monumental role and serve as priests, administrators, educators and disciplinarians. He questioned whether the president's training for the priesthood prepared him for the other roles and concluded that it was not the lack of academic or administrative training, as many college presidents outside of CHE at the time were also primarily prepared for the clergy or the faculty and had no additional training. However, it was because the priests "subordinated their academic to their clerical responsibilities. First, they were priests, then academicians" (p. 86). Additionally, the priest-presidents were appointed to their roles by superiors with no regard to their "academic experience, scholarly aptitude or personal ambition" (p. 86). Presidents were typically shifted after a six-year term, determined by canonical limits of religious superiors and thus, even those who had learned the necessary skills on the job were moved, and a new president-priest had to learn the roles. The length of service of the Catholic college president differed

dramatically from that of presidents of non-Catholic institutions, many of whom were in office for an average of fifteen years.

It is understandable why most higher education historians ignore CHE in this time period. This was a time of major growth of public institutions and their focus was on training students for the professions. The presidents of these institutions and many of the private, non-Catholic institutions, such as Harvard, were figureheads not only in their communities but nationally. CHE, though clearly Catholic, was developing in a different manner, with bishops developing free-standing seminaries to train future priests in the dioceses and orders founding institutions to train lay Catholic men. Though Catholic presidents did not have to respond to the public accountability established by the federal government's support of higher education, they did have to consider the "long shadow" of the bishop. What is most significant from this time period is the major role the SRCs played in establishing Catholic institutions, the growth of the public institutions, and the role of the president as reconciler among constituencies. These factors would contribute to defining the future missions of Catholic institutions and the complex role of the president. Catholic presidents were not required to be innovators and reformers as were their colleagues of the time, but the priest-presidents had formal formation in the institutional Church.

***Third Plenary Council* – The Great Depression, 1884-1929**

The number of Catholics in the United States in the early 1800s was relatively small, estimated at about 195,000, but from 1830 to 1852, the waves of immigrants increased the Catholic population to 1,980,000. The vast majority of the people in the United States were Protestant and the institutional Church became concerned for the

Catholic formation of immigrant children. Subsequently, the *Third Plenary Council of Baltimore* decreed that every Catholic parish should also establish a primary school.

The Council, Power (1972) ascertained, had a major impact on the growing number of Catholic colleges for women. He noted that though the *Third Plenary Council* was not intended for higher education, its focus on education for Catholic children, including girls, was significant in that it set the tone for the development of these institutions. The importance of this document receives little, if any, mention from other CHE historians, most of who focus on *Vatican Council II* as the first significant Church document to influence American Catholic colleges and universities.

According to Power (1972), the delay in carrying out the pronouncement of the *Third Plenary Council* to educate women in order to "fit them for service to the Church" resulted in the fact that most Catholic school teachers were teaching in parish elementary schools without any college education. He was correct in noting that most teachers of the time, including those in secular schools, did not have such an education and that this was not a default of Catholic teachers alone. He added that most Catholic institutions for men at the time chose to ignore the mandate from the bishops and did not open their doors to women, which resulted in the establishment of colleges for women. In his history of the Society of Jesus in America, Leahy (1991) makes note of the attempt of only one Jesuit institution, Marquette College, to assist with this endeavor. Thus, we see at least some evidence of the tension between the religious orders, in this case the male orders, and the institutional Church represented by the bishops. The first Catholic women's college, the College of Notre Dame, was founded in 1896 and in 1900 there were half dozen colleges for women. Many of the women's orders had opened academies that started out as high

schools and a number of these would grow into colleges following the *Third Plenary Council* (Oates, 2002).

Catholic colleges for women.

During this era many of the Catholic academies for young women would upgrade themselves to the college level and other new colleges for women were founded. Gleason (1995) and Power (1972) noted less than a half dozen Catholic colleges for women in 1900, but this number would increase to around seventy by 1930. Gleason provided a detailed evolution of several women's colleges, connecting the critical role the local bishop often played in establishing the schools, particularly the need to train sisters of the founding congregations to teach in Catholic schools. He noted that by the end of World War I, the *North Central Association*, the accreditation body for colleges, "was moving toward the specification of credit-hour requirements in education courses as the minimum qualification for teachers in secondary schools" (p. 95). Though Gleason provided information on the early formation and mission of women's institutions, he did not examine their role in the changing nature of CHE.

Women's colleges evolved almost exclusively from academies founded by women congregations (Power, 1972; Gallin, 2000). Power noted: "With the exception of Trinity College, all early Catholic women's colleges matured from academy foundations and in this respect they differed from the first non-Catholic colleges for women preceding them" (p. 297). Because they evolved from academies, these schools, unlike the schools for men, had early scholastic foundations. Power argued that Catholic colleges for women took non-Catholic colleges for women as their model noting that where the Catholic men "refused to learn from their academic forebears; colleges for women…were

anxious to absorb any lessons history could teach" (p. 298). Non-Catholic women's colleges were able to reject vocationalism and professionalism for the most part and focus on liberal learning. However, this was not to be the case for the Catholic women's schools. Power (1972) noted:

> Catholic colleges for women, however, right from their beginnings were deprived of the luxury of even hoping for a precise, single purpose; instead they were faced with the extraordinarily difficult task of trying to educate women along liberal lines and at the same time to fit them for service to the Church as teachers in the schools prescribed by the *Third Plenary Council* of 1884. (p. 303)

As with their male counterparts, institutions founded by women's congregations were almost always led by the religious superior. As long as she remained the leader of the congregation, she would remain president of the institution. More extensive research on the history of the colleges founded by female SRCs has been collected by women historians (Schier & Russett, 2002). Oates reported:

> Among American women's colleges, the Catholic institution stood out in important ways. Their primary distinguishing feature was that, to a greater extent than was in the case of other private colleges, women founded, directed, staffed and subsidized them. (as cited in Schier & Russett, 2002, p. 164)

The women's SRCs were able to play a significant role in the founding of institutions of higher education because their communities were large, well established, and efficient organizations. Because the male SRCs had been reluctant or lax in opening their doors to women, the female SRCs, who had a long history of educating girls in their academies, filled the void for Catholic women, both religious and lay. The women of the SRCs were highly visible in dress and lifestyle and well respected by Catholics of every social class. Oates (2002) concluded, "For many the institution's Catholic identity came, in large measure, from the sister's example" (p. 174). However, though male institutions allowed lay men to join their faculties, this was rarely the case for the women's colleges (Power,

1972, p. 324). Most likely because of their insular nature, women's institutions were less likely to open themselves up to the academic influences of the outside world and thus later were less likely to compete in the volatile market of higher education that was to happen in the years to come (p. 323).

Much of the history of these institutions is lost because the congregations were so focused on establishing and continuing these institutions that they failed to keep detailed records (Gallin, 2000; Power, 1972). Thus, though Power limits the history of women's Catholic colleges to a chapter of twenty-five pages, he provides a general background that indicated an important intersection between the need for Catholic school teachers to receive further training in education, the belief by Church officials that this education should take place in a Catholic institution, and the role of women's congregations in founding these institutions. Though ignored by most higher education historians and researchers, even those who study CHE, these institutions, now majority coeducational, constitute a significant number of the Catholic institutions still in existence.

The increasing number of institutions founded by women's congregations was one of the significant parts of institutional expansion for the Church in the early Twentieth Century. The identity of the Catholic institution and the preparation of their presidents remained clear at this point in history. Even as women's institutions emerged, they were distinctively Catholic and the presidents came from within the founding congregation.

Secular higher education.

The number of higher education institutions in the country increased from 977 in 1900 to 1409 in 1930, and enrollment in these institutions jumped from 238,000 to

1,101,000 respectively (Bledstein, 1976, p. 323). Bledstein described this growth as society's need to certify the growing middle class that defined itself by the certification it received from attending higher education. Handlin and Handlin (1970) agreed, quoting a 1907 president's report: "Parents whose hard working lives have always spelled duty, choose each year to beat their way against rigid economy, penury, and bitter loss, that their sons may possess what they themselves never had, a college education (p. 49)."

CHE for the most part had followed the old European system of a six-year college program, four years of *gymnasium*, followed by two years of "college." By the turn of the century, this approach did not fit with the new model of the American education system, which driven by American culture and the rise of a middle class of professionals, had developed into four years of high school followed by four years of college (Bledstein, 1976; Gleason, 1995; Rudolph, 1962). Thus, from the 1890s to the 1930s, Catholic institutions began to restructure their institutions to fit into this system (Gleason, 1995). Gleason connected the modernization of Catholic colleges and their Catholic identity to the changes within American higher education. He stated:

> The organizational modernization…made it possible to institutionalize the intellectual revival in the colleges, while the revival in turn reinforced the Catholic identity of the colleges at a time when they were undergoing a process of institutional modernization. (p. 137)

The presidents.

The spread of colleges in the latter half of the nineteenth century was in part due to the money donated by those who had become wealthy during the industrial revolution. At the end of the century, these men, according to Kaufman (1980), "hired strong presidents to develop their institutions. The clergyman president gave way to a more

secular, sympathetic-science model, and a new generation of 'builders'" (p. 5). The beginning of the Twentieth Century brought new challenges to the institution and to the college presidency. Prior to the turn of the century, both secular and Catholic presidents, served dual roles of teacher and administrator. By the beginning of the twentieth century this would change for the secular president, and he was rarely the lone administrator. The evolution of the administrator role is further noted by Kaufman, "The first book entirely devoted to college administration was published in 1900" (p. 6).

However, Kaufman (1980) and others denoted from their research that not everyone was pleased with this growing administration and the "empire-builders" as some of the presidents were called. Institutions struggled with the question of developing or standardizing admission processes and the place of the faculty in the role of the administration of the college was in question. Governance systems had yet to be established and faculty were agitated about "power, status and salary" (Handlin & Handlin, 1970, p. 67). Presidents had to decide if they would be more involved with fundraising, the curriculum, internal governance, trustee relations or admissions. Dean positions and other administrative roles emerged during this time period to assist the president and the increasingly complicated role he played in the life of the university.

Cohen (1998) stated that though "presidential power varied among institutions…their role was to guide the institution in directions while managing complex organizations" (p. 152). He argued that the outside recognition presidents received brought prestige, resulting in income, to their institutions. Thus we see the emergence of the president as not only financial manager and fundraiser, but also as a public relations

director (Thelin, 2004). Cohen added, "The leading presidents were key figures, standing astride the institutions, gaining power as budgets and enrollment grew" (p. 154).

This is not to suggest that all of the constituencies responded well to the president as autocratic leader of the many groups. The faculty in particular often saw the president's role as tyrannical. The public was also aware of the growing power of the president. According to Kaufman (1980), American novelist Upton Sinclair declared the college president to be "the most universal faker and the most variegated prevaricator that has yet appeared in the civilized world" (p. 6). Cohen (1998) noted:

> To a man they determined to build great universities that would serve the business, the professional and industrial interests of the nation. The classical curriculum might be tolerated for a time, but it certainly would not be allowed to stand in the way of the more practical emphasis in which the trustees were interested (p. 153). They knew how to accommodate the desires of the board and to negotiate with the faculty, although their tendencies toward strong leadership often brought them into conflict with a faculty becoming aware of its own power. (p. 154)

During the first few decades of the Twentieth Century, while presidents of non-Catholic institutions were becoming the leaders of complex organizations and hiring numerous administrators, including academic deans, the Catholic president retained almost all of the authority and kept the number of administrators to a minimum (Power, 1972, pp. 281-282). As Catholic colleges increased their enrollment, laymen begin to serve on the faculty but not in administrative roles. According to Power, "lay men in Catholic colleges were excluded from all higher administrative positions, and even from leadership in departments, because the managers of Catholic colleges so decreed" (p. 285).

What is most significant about this time period is the effect the *Third Plenary Council* and the *North Central Association* would have on the changing mission of CHE.

Where in the past the primary focus was on educating men particularly for the priesthood, the *Council* and the accrediting association would lead to the development of institutions of higher education for Catholic women. These institutions were in response to the public requirement that teachers become certified. Ignored by even most Catholic historians, the emergence of the women's SRCs in the development of Catholic colleges to prepare women to be teachers would prove to be significant to the mission of CHE over time (Morey, 1995). The presidents of Catholic institutions could no longer ignore the outside influences of American society but their positions remained insular and the role and preparation well defined.

The Great Depression – *Vatican Council II*, 1929-1962

During the fourth period of the history of CHE, the number of overall American institutions and students enrolled rose significantly. In 1930 there were 1409 institutions and by1957 there were 1850. Student enrollment increased to 2,637,000 by 1960 (Bledstein, 1976; Handlin & Handlin, 1970). Though institutional enrollments increased significantly during this time period, university presidents of the time were confronted with the effects of the aftermath of the First World War and the Depression. Handlin and Handlin stated: "It was difficult to distinguish between long-term and short-term trends" (p. 71). For example, during the Depression years institutions received federal loans and grants for the construction of buildings (Brickman & Lehrer, 1962). Though few jobs were available during the Depression, one option for young adults was to attend college, and though difficult to fund, some did. Bledstein's (1976) view that the growing middle class wanted education as certification to succeed in the new professions is further substantiated by the growing number of bureaucracies in business and government

resulting in the need for higher training for the new professional (Handlin & Handlin, 1970). Handlin and Handlin noted:

> The insistence of an increasing proportion of young people between 18 and 22 upon a period of college was due in part to the economic value ascribed to the degree, and, in part, to the failure of society to make alternative provision for this age group. (p. 72)

Thus, though the Depression immediately affected institutions by providing access to funds for building, it eventually had a long-term effect on increasing enrollments. Following the Second World War, the G.I. bill brought even more men to college and a 1947 President's Commission indicated that institutions of higher education should become not only an avenue for educating a middle class, but would be open to "every citizen" (Handlin & Handlin, 1970). This was a significant recommendation for the future of all of higher education.

Catholic higher education.

Morey and Piderit (2009) referred to the time immediately following World War II until 1967 as the first phase of the modern period of American CHE; it is a time when American educators realized they needed to be more in touch with changes in American culture and there were significant changes within the institutional Church that would have great and lasting effect on Catholic institutions.

Power (1972) made another significant contribution to the dialogue within the CHE community noting their reaction to the 1947 *Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education*. The report addressed the need to democratize American higher education and outlined opportunities to do so, including what would become a tier-system of higher education: the four-year undergraduate experience, the four-year

experience followed by graduate school for some students and for others a two-year experience in a student's home area, thus the idea of the community college. Power noted that whether Catholic schools were threatened by the idea of the further democratizing of higher education, or the belief that community colleges would become a strong competitor, Catholic educators began opposing this plan. Shortly thereafter, Power (1972) noted, "We hear Catholic college leaders advocating not retrenchment but a renewed effort to broaden the opportunities available" (p. 398). Power added: "So the call now was not only to make CHE excellent but also to make it authentically Catholic and the latter assignment was a huge one which inevitably caused a good deal of trouble" (p. 339).

This was a major period of contention in the development of CHE, as the increase in accreditation and standardization was coming from the American government and the public, many Catholic institutions begin to shift from a classical education to a more practical curriculum. Gleason's 1995 history of this time period focused primarily on curricular changes in CHE as it confronted a growing secular world of post-secondary schooling. He noted that World War II and the postwar educational boom accelerated the changes in CHE. An important and critical contribution to the discussion of CHE during this time period, Gleason's history is limited in scope when understanding the role of the president and his/her preparation.

Morey's (1995) review of CHE during this time period led her to state:

> In the 1950s and early 1960s the Catholic identity of Catholic college and universities were obvious to all. The thrust of the Catholic-American debate in those years was how Catholic colleges could break out of the narrow parochialism that confined them in order to become significant players in mainstream higher education. (p.127)

Role of the president.

The role of the secular college president was becoming increasingly complex. Kaufman's (1980) research revealed that a review of the publications about college and university presidents following World War II exposed, "how differing and contradictory were the role expectations" (p. 7). The president's relationship to the faculty was becoming increasing strained. Kaufman noted, "For the most part, professors were critical of all leadership styles and the exercising of any presidential authority" (p. 7). Sources noted a growing professionalized faculty with many of the professors now having doctorates in their field (Cohen, 1998; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004). With the growing number of faculty and professional associations of the era came a change in governance. "Governance structures shifted notably in the direction of administrative hierarchies and bureaucratic management systems," noted Cohen (p. 151). An administrative paradox developed. As faculty gained more control in terms of hiring, curriculum and degree requirements, they rejected the authority of the strong administration, typically represented by a strong president who was supported by a board comprised of men from business, another American bureaucracy. Faculty governance systems emerged as bureaucracies to bargain with bureaucracies and in turn more administrative positions were developed.

It became evident to many of the researchers of higher education history that the role of the college presidency had become one of a leader in paradox. Kaufman (1980) stated, "In the 1950s there was a considerable conflict over the issue of presidential leadership in higher education. Was the president the facilitator, the caretaker or the

leader?" (p. 8). The former president of Princeton University, Harold Dodds, wrote in 1959 about the role of the president:

> Those who enjoy it are not very successful, and those who are successful are not very happy. The explanation is hidden somewhere in the philosophy of power. Those who enjoy exercising power shouldn't have it and those who should exercise it are not likely to enjoy it. One thing is clear: colleges must have presidents and it makes a great difference who they are. (as cited in Kaufman, 1980, p. 9)

This is a significant point of change for American CHE, as Catholic institutions found themselves being pulled in a more secular direction in regards to curriculum, there is a growing number of students entering higher education and a growing number of institutions for women, founded by women's SRCs. Catholic identity was still clear to both the Church and the public because the leadership of the institutions, and the majority of the faculty, remained religiously vowed men and women. However, the effects of the 1947 *Commission on Higher Education* and the rising role of the faculty in governance would have significant influence on a growing tension between CHE and the institutional Church.

***Vatican II – Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 1962-1990**

Student enrollment in institutions of higher education in 1960 was 2,637,000 and by 1969 it had more than doubled again rising to over seven million. (Handlin & Handlin, 1970, p. 84). By 1975, enrollment across the country had increased to eleven million (Cohen, 1998, p. 196). The increase was due to a massive infusion of federal funds and the rise of the birth rate two decades earlier (Cohen, 1998; Handlin & Handlin, 1970; Thelin, 2004). Access to higher education for minorities also increased following several federal rulings, most notably *Sweat v. Painter, McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for*

Higher Education, and Brown v. Board of Education, in the 1950s. The extension of this latter ruling to higher education in *Florida ex rel. Hawkins v. Board of Control* in 1956 significantly opened up higher education to minorities, at least in theory (Cohen, 1998, p. 184). Thus though institutions of higher education continued to struggle with academic requirements for admission, they were also highly influenced by legal mandates to open higher education.

Societal movements at the time resulted in the passing of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and later Title IX of the Educational Amendments in 1972 (Cohen, 1998). Cohen indicated: "The federal government now seemed to be the champion of social justice and the universities to be lagging in their civic responsibilities" (p. 185). Student activism rocked the campuses through the 1960s and into the 1970s with students protesting not only for equality but also for more freedoms. They objected to: "parietal rules, college grading systems that seemed better suited to managing children, faculty who expected students to remain passive learners, curricular irrelevance, and eventually the draft and the Vietnam War" (Cohen, 1998, p. 203).

Student protests subsided with the military draft in 1973 but the mid 1960s proved to be a very difficult time for college administrators (Cohen, 1998). College presidents found themselves in constant conflict with and between students and faculty as some students wanted more of a voice in such decisions as tenure and institutional governance and many faculties were divided in support of student movements.

Role of the president: Organizational manager.

Presidents that survived the turmoil of the 1960s and early 1970s would also be faced with the growing moment toward faculty unionization in the early 1970s. By 1974,

the American Federation of Teachers had more than 30,000 members in more than 200 of the institutions (Cohen, 1998). As student and faculty numbers and issues rose, so did administrative positions. Presidents not only had academic deans, but they now had assistance in business and student affairs. Cohen reported, "Tasks that were once performed by the president and the faculty, along with many that were previously unknown, were assigned to middle management" (p. 245). There was increased pressure from external forces as outside agencies stepped in to review the efforts of higher education in effecting a changing and troubled society. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, and its successor, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies, produced 118 volumes commenting on the role of higher education and the relationships between institutions and their faculty, students, and the administration (Cohen, 1998). The president became more of a people and organizational manager than an educational leader. Faculty and student governments rose in prominence and began to limit the role of the president in the curriculum, faculty selection, and student life ensuring "that the president's role was limited to macro-managing, fundraising, and representing the institution to the governing board" (Cohen, 1998, p. 247).

According to Kaufman (1980), a 1976-1977 *Education Directory: College and University* publication on educational statistics reported 363 presidential changes in post-secondary institutions—a thirteen percent turnover rate. The average tenure of Association of American University presidents had decreased from seven years in 1929 to two years in 1969.

With the increased turmoil on campuses, the selection of presidents seemed to take on more importance. Numerous pieces of literature were produced between 1960

and the mid 1970s that attempted to define the role of the college president and give boards and faculties outlines for recruiting the "right man." Several of the publications mention the importance of the president having a "good wife" (Bolman, 1965 and Ferrari, 1970). Bolman noted that of the 116 presidents he studied, 114 of them were male and married and added, "Merely having a wife, however, is not sufficient qualification. The candidate must have a 'good' wife, and many selection committees go to great lengths to assure themselves on this point" (p. 28). Though there had been women who had served as college presidents in all-women's colleges, few had made it to the presidential rank at coeducational schools.

Moving into the 1980s, the role of the president was increasingly complex and difficult. Reisman (1980) wrote:

> Today we have seen how limited is the leverage of a college or university president and how short the average tenure (now five years). The president is hemmed in on all sides, and if authority is exercised too strenuously, will be resisted by faculty members, who will resort in unionization if they have not already done so. (p. 293)

Higher education had changed significantly by the 1980s. There was still a significant amount of outside influence, but students and faculty, though organized and represented in governance, had settled in their roles and there is little evidence of significant challenge to the college president from within his or her own institution. Following a relatively calm period in the 1980s, the 1990s brought a concern for declining resources as federal support declined by as much as 28 percent (Cohen, 1998). The concern for funding forced institutional leaders to look internally which resulted in an evaluation of programs for cost effectiveness and the raising of student tuition. In the early 1990s many colleges raised tuition by eight to 12 percent (Cohen, 1998). Student aid increased,

but mostly in the terms of loans. Despite the increase in cost, college enrollments overall continue to increase, though some colleges experienced downturns in the early 1990s. Cohen (1998) cited the National Center for Education Statistics survey for the fall of 1995 that "found 14, 261,781 students enrolled in 3280 institutions classified as 'higher education'" (p. 323).

Many more students were working at least part-time and there was a significant increase in part-time students. Students were less invested in their institutions, and the institutions were less invested in their communities, prompting a study by Ernest Boyer, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1996. Boyer and Derek Bok, who was president of Harvard University at the time, agreed that society needed more from higher education than it was getting (Cohen, 1998). With finances tight, presidents had to be concerned with funding and much emphasis was placed on fundraising with the intent of building foundations and endowments that would secure an institution's future.

Faculty were placed firmly in the governance systems that had solidified by the 1970s. The biggest change was the growing number of them and growing number of women within the faculty ranks. The number of faculty doubled between 1970 and 1995, according to Cohen's (1998) research, "with the number of men employed increasing by 62 percent and the number of women by 240 percent;" women now accounted for 40 percent of the faculty (p. 333).

During the 1980s there is a reemergence of the institutional mission statement. Organizational theory of the time entered a new era with the mission statement viewed as a frame or lens by which to view and promote the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

The American Council on Education published a study conducted by Gilley, Fulmer and Reithlinghoefer (1986) on colleges that were moving towards new levels of excellence and effectiveness and of the 20 schools they classified as having met their criteria, each had an institutional mission statement. The researchers stated, "The document addresses contemporary issues and concerns and cultivates external support for the school (Gilley et al., p. 8). This growing interest in the institutional mission statement centered on the presidential role. John D. Mosely wrote a chapter on "The President and the Role and Mission of the College" for a book on presidential leadership in the church-related college and proclaimed:

> The president is inevitably the symbolic head of the institution and he or she must given leadership in the renewal of the mission statement to meet the changing needs of society. In order to provide this crucial leadership, the president must understand the institutional nature and character of the college: how the college fits together as a whole operation, which equals more than the sum of its parts and has a tradition and a life of its own. The president also needs to understand the changed role of today's college president. Varied and serious expectations add up to an almost impossible job. (as cited in Dagley, 1988, p. 17).

Dagley (1988), writing for the college president of the time, devoted chapters to discussing institutional advancement, administrative management, student services, board relationships and financial management, indicating the growing complexity of the role of the president.

Catholic higher education post *Vatican II.*

Though Gleason (2003) noted that very little historical research has been conducted on CHE in this era, he does refer to Gallin's (2000) Negotiating Identity: CHE after 1960 as the premier work of this period, and most of the other work is noted as contemporary analysis or commentary. Gleason (2003) and Gallin (2000) recognized

that the second *Vatican Council* that began in 1962 and ended in 1964 had a profound impact on CHE. Gallin, writing about the CIHE in the 1960s noted:

> While the approximately 250 Catholic colleges and universities in 1960 were not identical, they clearly had a common culture. The mission statements were almost interchangeable, and their commitment to the liberal arts, character formation, and a sense of community as spelled out it their annual Bulletins was openly proclaimed as rooted in the Catholic faith (p. 1).

In the years following Vatican II there were spectacular changes for all of American higher education including years of growth, diversification, and an economic roller coaster (Cohen, 1998; Lucas, 1994; Power, 1972; Thelin, 2004). For Catholic colleges and universities there was an added factor: fundamental change in what they regarded as their *distinctive* mission precisely as Catholic (Gallin, 2000).

Power (1972) and Gleason (1995) both noted that what was happening in the United States in the 1960s moved Catholic educators from a point where they challenged modernity to a point where they accepted it. Gleason wrote:

> This formulation comes closer to capturing the fundamental shift that took place in CHE when the assimilative tendencies that had been gathering strength since World War II met and intermingled with the seismic forces unleased by Vatican II and the social, political, and cultural crisis of the 1960s. (1995, p. 318)

In addition to the social, political, and cultural changes in the United States, one of the most pertinent results of *Vatican II* was the unprecedented decline in men and women in religious roles in the Church. Gleason (1995) reported that almost 5000 priests resigned from the priesthood between 1966 and 1975 and the number of Jesuits, the most active men's community in higher education, declined by about thirty-eight percent in the twenty-five years after *Vatican II*. The number of women in religious congregations decreased in equal or greater numbers (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 1995). As the religious orders were its founders and leaders, CHE was clearly headed for a crisis. Morey (1995)

noted that since 1966 the women's congregations and the colleges they founded "have undergone revolutionary and evolutionary changes. These dramatic changes form the backdrop for relational shifts between the colleges and congregations which are still evolving" (p. 2). Hutchinson (2001) reflected on the status of CHE at this time:

> In the midst of the turmoil, the common theme within the CHE became a renewed quest for meaning and identity. Whereas some institutions had been accused of being "too Catholic" in the 50s, the charge in the 60s was that the institutions were not Catholic enough. (p. 7)

Power (1972) acknowledged a growing set of administrators of Catholic colleges in the 1970s, though he does not delineate between men's and women's institutions. Most CHE historians believe that CHE was confronted with the same issues as secular education in the 1960s, particularly the demands for student involvement and curricular and governance change. Power and Gallin (2000) recognized the growing role of lay boards and Power suggested that to be Catholic in the late 1960s and early 1970s somehow hurt a college's image. He wrote:

> First, the identification of the college as the creation of a religious order or diocese threatened its public image, and Catholic college administrators, capitulating to superficial public opinion, began to believe what they had so often heard, that at bottom, educational policy and religious commitment are unavoidably hostile. (p. 441)

Gleason (1995) made a significant contribution when noting that although most Catholic institutions survived and improved their academic standing in this period, that their identity crisis still existed. This was not an institutional or organizational issue but an ideological one. He wrote:

> That is, it consists in a lack of consensus as to the substantive content of the ensemble of religious beliefs, moral commitments, and academic assumptions that supposedly constitute Catholic identity, and a consequent inability to specify what that identity entails for the practical functioning of Catholic colleges and universities. More briefly put, the crisis is not that Catholic educators do not want

> their institutions to remain Catholic, but they are no longer sure what remaining Catholic means (p. 320).

Between 1967 and 1972, the IFCU met a number of times to deliberate on the purpose of CHE (Gallin, 2000; Gleason, 1995; Hutchinson, 2001) resulting in what is known as the *Land O'Lakes* document. It would mark a new era in American CHE. The document, written by leaders of Catholic institutions, and not by Church leaders, would proclaim the American Catholic college as an academic and scholarly institution committed to truth, an exclamation of sorts of academic freedom (Gallin, 2000, Gleason, 1995, Hutchinson, 2001). Though not denying its Catholic identity, the leaders of the American institutions declared their roles as academics.

By the late 1970s, enrollment in Catholic colleges and universities had reached approximately 535,000 students and by 1988, it would reach 609,359. At this time, 59 percent of those students were women but only 27,295 were enrolled in Catholic women's colleges, indicating that most of the all male institutions, in fact all but one, had become coeducational (Gallin, 2000, p. 170).

Perhaps in response to the *Land O' Lakes* document, Gallin (2000) notes an attempt by the United States' Catholic bishops to define CHE in 1980 through a pastoral letter, *Catholic Higher Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church*. This letter followed an earlier report by the *Commission on Higher Education* from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1973. According to the *Commission*, the clarification of mission was essential if higher education was to regain favor with the public. In 1980, the Catholic Bishops called upon the message of the *Second Vatican Council* and stated clearly:

> The Catholic identity of these institutions should be evident to faculty, students and the general public. Policies, practices, programs and the general spirit should communicate to everyone hat the institution is a community of scholars dedicated to the ideas and values of Catholic higher education. (as cited in Gallin, p. 158)

Gallin added: "By 1985 the responsibility for governing American Catholic colleges and universities in harmony with their distinctive mission as Catholic had passed from the religious communities that founded them to independent boards of trustees" (p. 179).

Additionally, Gallin (2000) noted, that while boards expressed appreciation for the religious heritage of the institutions, their major concern was for the fiscal responsibility of the institution and that boards "want to leave the educational and religious aspects to the founding community as long as some of them are around" (p. 180). Noting the declining number of religious who were now working directly with these institutions, particularity with institutions founded by women's congregations, she suggested "that the 'window of opportunity' for the religious who founded the colleges and universities to pass on the torch to their lay successors may not be open for much longer (p. 180).

Morey and Piderit (2009) recognized 1967 to 1990 as the second phase of the modern period and a critical moment in the history of CHE:

> Development at this time not only led to further increases in enrollment, but also to changes that challenged the Catholic identity of the institutions. The adjustments made by founding congregations, administrators, and boards during this second phase made an impact on the structure and Catholic identity of many Catholic institutions and set off ripple effects still felt today.

The Catholic college president: Critical turning point.

Though the appointment to the presidency was still being made by the religious superiors into the late 1960s, the technical appointment to the position was made by

election by the board of trustees. This became more significant in 1967 when Catholic institutions began to gain autonomy from their sponsoring religious organizations by adding laypersons to their boards (Gallin, 2000; Power, 1972). In 1967, Webster College, led by Sister Jacqueline Grennan, S.L., announced that a lay board would control the college. Other institutions, including two major ones, the University of Notre Dame and St. Louis University, established lay boards, but kept the understanding that a member of the founding order would continue to serve in the role of president (Gallin, 2000; Power, 1972). Writing in 1972, Power recognized this critical point in the history of CHE, but by 2000, Gallin was able to delineate what made this a significant moment, noting that the presence of lay persons at the board level not only meant that the institutions were no longer clearly Jesuit, Mercy and Franciscan—a visible statement of their Catholicity—but that the transfer of legal and fiscal affairs to these boards created an ambiguous role for the congregations.

By the late 1970s a group of some twenty or thirty lay men, and a few women, had assumed the presidency in colleges sponsored by women religious or the local diocese, but the larger universities sponsored by male orders, continued to select their presidents from within their own ranks (Gallin, 2000). This shift was to continue and by 1980 there were lay presidents in approximately 35 Catholic institutions and by 1990 this number would increase to 99 (p. 117). In Gallin's assessment, the single most important aspect of CHE between 1960-2000 was the startling rise of the laity within the faculty; but there were a number of other major changes during this time period that would radically affect Catholic institutions, most significantly, the increasing number of lay presidents, and the fact that few of them had had formal religious training.

What is most significant for CHE in the time period following *Vatican II* is the decline in religiously vowed men and women who would be available to serve as leaders. Prior to this time period, the distinct mission of CHE was most evident by its leadership, the Catholic priests and nuns who served as presidents. Though they may have lacked professional training in administration and in some cases academia, they were clearly identified to their various publics, faculty, students, alumni, donors, and the community as *Catholic*. The beginning of the decline in the number of religious to lead these institutions, coupled with the establishment of lay boards, came at the same time as the very identity of these institutions was in question, thus a prelude to their becoming a culture in crisis. Morey (2002) argued, "Responding to the Second Vatican Council, colleges and their founding congregations experienced a kind of institutional identity crisis," (p. 274).

Leadership and Mission: 1990-2010

No current study of CHE is complete without attempting to understand the impact of *Ex Corde* issued by Pope John Paul II in 1990 as an apostolic constitution on CHE. In this document the Pope defined what constituted the Catholic identity of Catholic post-secondary institutions. Prior to this document, most institutions viewed themselves as more connected to their founding order than to the institutional Church, but the apostolic constitution became binding on Catholic colleges as an application of Canon Law. Morey and Pidert (2009) label 1990 to the present as the third phase of the modern development of CHE and noted that these institutions continue to adjust to three major ecclesial and secular trends: few Catholic students on their campuses, fewer religious on

their campuses and higher student expectations with respect to academics, athletics and residential facilities, all while trying to respond to the call of *Ex Corde.*

Fewer religious on campus would lead to a compelling question about the role of the Catholic college and university president. For most institutions sponsored by a religious order, the declining membership in the congregation would necessitate a transition to lay leadership. Religious men or women led seventy percent of the Catholic institutions in 1993, but by 2000 more than half of the roughly 250 Catholic institutions had lay leadership (ACCU, 2010).

Catholic Presidents: After *Ex Corde Ecclesiae,* 1990-2000

A number of studies examined the question of who is responsible for leading the Catholic mission in higher education from 1990 until 2000 (Bourque, 1990; Dwyer & Zech, 1996; Introcaso, 1996; Janosik, 1996; Lannon, 2000; Murphy, 1991; Salvaterra, 1990). A review of the literature indicates a growing interest in the research on the role of the SRC, the effects of the declining number of religious men and women on campus, the importance of the role of the president in the leadership of the mission and the increasing number of lay presidents.

Salvaterra's work published in 1990, the earliest research found in the third phase of the modern era, examined the changes that had taken place at two institutions that had *previously* identified themselves as Catholic. One institution exhibited a weak Catholic culture and the other demonstrated a strong one. She found that the role of the SRC was vital to maintaining a strong and distinctive institution. In discussing the finding, she commented:

> If colleges founded by religious orders are to remain true to their heritage at a time when religious personnel are dwindling and more and more lay people are employed in all aspects of the college, then sponsoring religious communities must make clear their role in sustaining the Catholic character of the institution. (p. 209)

Murphy (1991) conducted case study research on five different types of Catholic institutions to examine their *Catholicity*. In all five, he found core values in the rituals and stories of their cultures and leaders and he detailed how college presidents communicated the values and visions of their institutions to the university community through speeches, rites, rituals and honors. He concluded that the values shared in each institution were connected to Catholic tradition, but also marked by the charisms of their SRC. Bourque (1990) conducted a study on the presidents of Franciscan-sponsored colleges during this same time period. Utilizing leadership questionnaires, Bourque asked fifteen presidents, nine of whom were religiously vowed Franciscans, and one a diocesan priest, and members of their staffs, about the role of the president. His recommendations included the suggestion that religious superiors, college presidents and members of the boards of these colleges all give "seasoned" reflection to the nature and meaning of being a Catholic and Franciscan college. Published in the very early 1990s, these three studies would have been conducted prior to, or shortly after the pronouncement of, *Ex Corde* and while the majority of the Catholic institution presidents were members of clergy or member of a religious order. Collectively, these studies point to the growing concern about not only Catholic identity, which would later be outlined by the institutional Church in *Ex Corde*, but the legacy of the SRC.

It is important to note that the majority of researchers who study the history of American CHE recognize the intricate relationship between an institution's Catholic

mission and its founding order/sponsoring religious community. In the 1990s, two important studies were conducted on institutions founded by women's orders. Morey (1995) found that "the legacy of the congregation is an integral part of the identity of the colleges" (p. vi). Her work focused primarily on how the two leaders of these unique entities, the college president and the head of the congregation, understood the role of the founding congregation and its legacy in the life of the college. Surveying the two leaders from eight colleges founded by women's congregations, she found that while both leaders agreed on the importance of the legacy, they often disagreed about the content of the legacy, what it implied for the college, and who ultimately was responsible for the legacy.

In selecting the eight colleges to study, her most important criterion was who occupied the office of the presidency. The sites represented institutions where the presidents had "a long term and deeply personal connection to the founding congregation and others who had encountered the congregation for the first time when they became president" (pp. 19-20). Five of the eight presidents she interviewed had some prior connection to the founding congregation. Four of the eight were religious men or women. Morey's work is extremely helpful in understanding an additional layer of complexity for the president of a Catholic institution founded by a congregation that continues to be connected to the institution even though they may no longer appoint the president.

Also of great significance in understanding the role of the SRC is the research conducted by Introcaso (1996). Utilizing a qualitative study of five institutions founded by women's SRCs, she utilized document analysis, observations and interviews and

concluded that Catholic identity was strong at these institutions as evident in the cultural paradigm that included physical, symbolic, behavioral, values and structural elements. Her research revealed that presidential leadership, whether lay or religious, was critically important to Catholic identity both in the articulation and the clarification. She noted that there was very little difference between lay and religious presidents in terms of the Catholic identity but stated:

> The difference lies in the intentionality; that is lay presidents make the articulation of the Catholic identity more deliberate. What may formerly have been taken for granted when the visible head of the colleges was a sister must now be voiced. (p. 391)

Introcaso's research led her to identify four main factors that would indicate an institution's Catholic identity was at risk. These four were: (1) the lack of clarity over Catholic identity; (2) a weak relationship between the college and the founding religious congregation; (3) a distant relationship with church authorities, and (4) a lack of a critical mass of people supportive of Catholicism (p. 392). In reference to the bond of the college to the SRC, she noted: "Where Catholic identity lives most powerfully there is clear evidence of a strong relationship between the college or university and the founding religious organization" and she added that some of this strength came from the fact that the sisters were still present in significant numbers (p. 393). Morey (1995) and Introcaso (1996) would agree on the factors leading to the lack of clarity regarding Catholic identity, however, Morey would place greater emphasis on the intricacy of the relationship between the founding order and the president. She would argue that the orders' understanding and support for the Catholic identity would be a critical factor and more of a determining aspect than previously understood.

Two other important studies on Catholic identity were published in 1996. In a study of lay faculty, Dwyer and Zech (1996) found that both Catholic and non-Catholic faculty believed that the presence of priests, brothers, and sisters on the campus played a critical part in inspiring a sense of the institution's Catholic identity and mission. Janosik (1996) conducted research on college presidents representing 176 Catholic institutions to develop a theoretical framework from which to explore institutional identity. Responses to an index of 130 items used to measure presidential perceptions concerning the relative importance to each of their institutions resulted in few uniquely Catholic characteristics among the presidents' top priorities. Though Janosik did not distinguish between lay and religious presidents, he did differentiate between institutional types and found that baccalaureate degree institutions were more influenced by Catholic tradition than those granting graduate degrees. He concluded: "Catholic higher education must re-energize itself around a set of core competencies which promotes internal stability—distinctive identity, as well as necessary openness to an ever-changing educational environment," (p. 180).

Though Introcaso (1996) found that the president made a significant difference in an institution's level of Catholic identity, she did not find a difference between religious and lay presidents. What is noteworthy when reviewing Introcaso's work alongside of Janosik's (1996) is that during this timeframe what appears to be the most important factor in determining a Catholic institution's identity was the "intentionality" and "priority" placed upon the Catholic culture by the president. Morey's (1995) study indicated that in addition to the role of the president, the relationship between the president and the SRC, and their mutual understandings of the Catholic mission and

congregation charism, must also be considered. Devlin (1998) concluded from a case study on one Catholic college founded by the Congregation of Christian Brothers that the presence of the SRC was still a major factor in the institution's history.

Together these studies reveal that in the ten years immediately following *Ex Corde* that the relationship between the SRC and the president was critical and that the leadership of the mission was in flux; but the most important factor in supporting and advancing an institution's Catholic mission was the intentionality and priority placed upon doing so by the president.

The Next Ten Years, 2000-2010

Ten years after *Ex Corde*, the leadership of Catholic identity and the role of he lay president becomes increasingly important in the literature (Cernara, 2005; Higgins, 2002; Lannon; 2000; Morey, 2002; Morey & Holtschneider, 2003; Morey & Piderit, 2006; Olin, 2005; Pastoor; 2002, Rittof, 2001). Lannon (2002) examined how the presidents at three different types of Jesuit institutions promoted the Catholic identity at their own institution in the midst of the changes of what it meant to be a Catholic in the United States. He found that all three of the presidents he interviewed attempted to make the Catholic identity of their institutions more prominent, while being sensitive to the academic climate in America. He noted:

> Presidents of Jesuit universities and colleges face the struggle of balancing institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and Catholic identity while in pursuit to become even more recognizable both as outstanding academic institutions and Catholic universities. This study suggests that their role is essential in promoting Catholic identity in the midst of these other competing values. (p. ix).

Pastoor (2002), in a interpretive multiple case study of five Jesuit-formed Catholic college presidents, noted that all of the presidents agreed that future presidents needed to "have a conviction about the mission of the Roman Catholic Church" (p. 131) and that they "must be able to understand and articulate the differences between being a president at a secular institution and at a Catholic institution" (p.132). These five presidents believed that their participation in the Jesuit formation process had prepared them to be at the helm of a Catholic institution. Four of the five were also called to be Jesuit priests. Higgins (2002) conducted an analytical multiple-case study on four religiously vowed presidents to understand their roles as transformation leaders based on the work of Bass (1985). She found that consistent with the current literature of this time, that Catholic university presidents utilized a different continuum of transformational leadership behaviors than leaders in non-educational settings. Results of her study suggested that the Catholic university is a unique organizational context which is manifested in the Catholic mission and that future presidents, who would most likely be lay leaders, must be trained in the Catholic tradition of the institution.

Rittof (2001) conducted a survey of the chief academic officers from 109 small Catholic colleges and determined that these campus leaders believed there was a significant positive relationship between having a "critical mass" of Catholics, including students, faculty, both lay and religious, as well as having a religious president and the strength of an institution's distinctive Catholic identity. Rittof concluded that having a religious president appeared to be a significant predictor of the strength of an institution's Catholic identity and that colleges and universities should fill the presidency role with religious presidents whenever possible. When not possible, "the findings of this study

should suggest a lay president would be deliberate and intentional in fostering the distinctive Catholic identity of her/his respective institution by implementing a variety of initiatives" (p.183). Noting that such a plan would also be congruent with the mandate set forth in *Ex Corde,* he suggested that a lay president should: promote community service for students, integrate service learning into the curriculum, offer a variety of Catholic religion and theology courses, and maintain a critical mass of Catholics on-campus.

With the publishing of their 2002 survey of presidents at 222 Catholic institutions, Morey and Holtschneider (2003) brought attention to not only the increasing number of lay presidents in CHE but also to their lack of Catholic formation. They discovered that the majority of Catholic institutions were now led by lay men or women and that their backgrounds were "virtually indistinguishable" from those of their peers at non-Catholic schools. They concluded that the lack of Catholic formation left lay presidents unprepared to perpetuate the distinctive missions and identities of the Catholic institutions they were leading. Also noteworthy to Morey and Holtschneider was the disappearance of the religiously vowed and formed members of the SRCs: "The most critical question for the future of the unique cultural identity of most Catholic colleges in the United States, therefore, is how to create witness without religious congregations" (p. 19). Also in 2002, Morey would point out the critical complication of an institution's canonical status, another distinguishing feature in Catholic higher education and that navigating canon law and the legal relationship of the institution to the SRC creates an additional layer of complexity to the CIHE's president's role (Morey, 2002).

Three years later, a much less intensive study provided a unique insight into the role of the lay leader. Olin (2005) in his case study on a Catholic college founded and led by lay people concluded that such an institution was at an advantage regarding adapting to modern-day forces in CHE. He indicated that the president of the institution had instituted a period of "deliberate, sustained reflection" on the identity of the institution and that *Ex Corde* was secondary to the president's intentionality.

In 2005, *Lay Leaders in CHE: An Emerging Paradigm for the Twenty-First Century* was edited by Anthony J. Cernera, himself a lay president. The first part of the book's four parts was a report by Morey and Holtschneider on their 2002 study. The next two parts are reflections on the theological and spiritual preparation for lay leaders and the fourth part an essay on a variety of issues, including the evolving role of trustees and strategies for promoting Catholic identity. It becomes clear at this point that the CHE community was aware of the changing dynamics that included a decrease in the number of religious, not only in the presidency, but in their presence on campus in other roles, and the concern about what the loss of those who had formal religious formation would mean to the Catholic identity of the institutions at a time when *Ex Corde* was calling them to be clearly Catholic. This is probably best articulated by Cunningham (2005) who questions the level of religious and spiritual formation of lay presidents asking if they will be able "to articulate and model the Catholic idea of education as an education in wisdom where faith and reason breathe as two lungs of a single body?" (p. 84). He added that the lay leaders of these institutions must be gifted, multifaceted individuals who are able to articulate the Catholic mission of the institution and that of

its founding order in relationship to the many different circumstances and programs that she or he will be confronted with on a daily basis.

Of critical importance is the research by Morey and Piderit (2006) that recognized that CHE was a "culture in crisis." They stated: "Catholic colleges and universities operate in an atmosphere of cultural antagonism and must compete successfully with all other higher education institutions in order to survive" and "many of these institutions feel they are trying to do business in the eye of a hurricane of competing demands. For them, the need to engage in an in depth analysis of their religious culture is often seen as a baroque exercise, not a strategic necessity" (p.11). Based on their research, they concluded: "Knowing how they are faring in terms of their religious mission, is not, however, a luxury Catholic colleges and universities can sidestep if they hope to survive as distinctive institutions" (p. 11). Morey and Piderit (2006) conducted an extensive research study of 33 institutions, including colleges and universities in all of the Carnegie classifications. At most sites, four administrators were interviewed including the president, the senior academic officer, the senior student life officer, and the executive vice president (or other officer designated by the president).

Two types of data emerged from their study: Emerging Trends in Leadership Study (ETL). One type of data included "purely factual and statistical" data while the other was more interpretive (p.13). Morey and Piderit (2006) reported the following as factual:

1. As a cohort, Catholic college and university presidents increasingly resembled their presidential peers in non-Catholic colleges.

2. Laypersons were increasing emerging as finalists in presidential searches that contain members of the founding congregation.
3. Women were disappearing from the presidency in Catholic institutions.
4. There was a significant lack of formal theological and spiritual preparation among presidents of Catholic institutions.
5. Forty-one percent of religious and 26 percent of lay presidents found the phrases "Catholic identity" and "Catholic intellectual tradition" to be fuzzy concepts that lack sufficient vitality on campus.
6. Presidents desired a more supportive working relationship with the hierarchical church but found such a relationship elusive and complex.
7. Presidents all acknowledged the central role faculty members play in their institutions but reported the faculty as being an obstacle to effective leadership of Catholic character, mission and identity. (p. 14)

They listed two interpretive findings: boards of trustees who hired the presidents had not yet identified the minimum standards of religious education and training they deemed essential for all Catholic college and university presidents and the increasing dominance of laypersons in leadership roles had had an ambiguous impact, at best, in terms of the ideological divides in CHE. Significantly, they concluded that many senior administrators lacked knowledge of Catholic culture in other Catholic institutions and thus were unable to even assess their own strengths and challenges in regards to how their institution might compare. For instance, presidents were able to identify the interaction between faculty and students as a pivotal relationship upon which Catholic identity and mission are nurtured, yet they understood faculty to be dubious of this role.

While the academic connection was the most prominent theme with the presidents, they also placed great emphasis on student culture as both an indicator of, and a contributor to, each institution's truly distinctive Catholic culture and identity (p. 155).

Additionally, Morey and Piderit (2006) presented two minimum conditions necessary for the existence and continuance of Catholic identity: *distinguishability* and *inheritability*. *Distinguishability* is described as the "apparent differences between a specific culture and other competing cultures," in other words, what makes it *distinct*. *Inheritability*, the second condition, is "the ways of acting in a specific culture that assure authentic cultural assimilation by new groups that enter the culture," in other words, how do new members *inherit* the culture (p. 31). Their research resulted in their being able to offer four models of Catholic institutions that exist today: the Catholic immersion goal, the Catholic persuasion goal, the Catholic diaspora goal, and the Catholic cohort goal (p. 55). These models will be further discussed in the next section.

Estanek, James and Norton (2006) made an important connection between CHE and higher education in general. Summarizing the trend in higher education towards greater accountability through assessment and outcomes and the expectations of Catholic identity and mission expressed in *Ex Corde,* they arrived at three fundamental realities: (1) assessment is an operational reality for higher education in the United States; (2) among the various approaches to and criteria for assessment, mission is consistently identified as a critical feature, and (3) a vision for the distinct mission of Catholic institutions has been articulated authoritatively in a variety of defining documents, most notably *Ex Corde*. Estanek, James and Norton conducted a review of 55 different Catholic institutional mission statements in order to identify and categorize Catholic

identity characteristics. They found that 52 of the institutions directly stated that they were Catholic, 42 of the 55 referred to the history and tradition of the SRC. They noted: "It is clear that these institutions understand their Catholic identity through the lens of this experience" (Estanek, James and Norton, p. 208) and:

> From our analysis of mission statements we posit that an institutional understanding of Catholic identity is culturally embedded in a number of factors including: foundational heritage and sponsorship; the groups of constituents it serves currently and historically and how the institution's defines its educational enterprise. (pp. 210-11)

Petriccione's (2009) research on lay presidents was intended to learn more about the personal characteristics of current lay leaders and if they felt professionally prepared and personally equipped to lead Catholic institutions at this time in their history. He related his research to the concerns expressed by Morey and Piderit's (2006) work that little is known about lay presidents. In a survey of 70 lay presidents he found: (1) there were more men than women, (2) most lay presidents were over the age of 50, (3) not all of them had doctoral degrees, (4) most were not alumna/alumnae of their colleges or universities, (5) three were not baptized and were not practicing Catholics, (6) six of the presidents were once members of a religious community, and (7) six were associates of a religious order. Conducting a series of four interviews with eleven presidents who were among those to be the first lay presidents of their institutions, he made seven conclusions:

1. These presidents felt they belonged in their positions.
2. They felt a great responsibility, as well as some pressure to live a very public, value-based life as a Catholic leader.
3. They did not have as much contact with members of the founding order as they thought they would have.

4. Their spouses and other members of their families played important roles in helping them with their leadership roles.
5. They had cordial relationships with the local bishop, but could not say the local Church played a major role in the life of the institution.
6. The Catholic identity of their schools was strong—but could always be stronger. There was a fine line between working with a community that lived its mission and "enforcing" mission on the community.
7. They were optimistic regarding the future of their institutions, and the Church as well.

Petriccione (2009) reported a healthy "Catholic ego" among the lay leaders and noted that they felt welcomed and accepted by the members of the SRC. Both the surveys and the interviews revealed that the lay presidents actually felt more tension and were less accepted by their own faculty. He concluded: "There is a confidence as authentic Catholic leaders among this group that has not been displayed in previous studies or literature on lay Catholic college and university leadership" (p. 168) yet, these presidents report having little or no formal religious training. Additionally, he found that the size of an institution, strong Catholic knowledge and a perception that the founder's charism was alive on campus significantly predicted a president's effectiveness (p. 170). Petriccione also noted the hectic schedule of these presidents:

> Simply attempting to schedule the interview helps one understand and appreciate how complex and consuming the job of president really is. The presidents often feel there is not enough time in the day to devote to key issues such as academic excellence, Catholic identity, enrollment management, fundraising, physical plant issues and external relations—as well as making sure the founder's charism is secure. As a result they simply attempt to live it. (p. 171)

When comparing Petriccione's finding to those of Morey and Piderit (2006) several items are worth noting. Petriccione indicated a healthy "Catholic ego" among the presidents and that they felt an obligation to be visible Catholic leaders, although there was no evidence to suggest that they had the formal theological or spiritual preparation Morey and Piderit found lacking. Similar to the presidents Morey and Piderit interviewed, the presidents in Petriccione's study described a vague relationship with the institutional Church. Significantly, Petriccione's presidents also reported less interaction with the founding order than they had expected, a criterion earlier researchers (Devlin, 1998; Intracaso, 1996; Lannon, 2000; Morey, 1995) would have considered critical for sustaining and advancing the Catholic identity of the institution.

In a qualitative study of 19 lay and religious presidents, Meeker (2008) focused on the preparation and skills needed for Catholic presidents to "preside over the organizational complexities while weaving the Catholic spiritual component within the culture of the institution" (p. 271). She found that there was no one path to the presidency but that most participants were familiar with CHE or the SRC prior to their appointment to the presidency. Her participants reported that many of them had mentors and career experiences that helped prepare them for the presidency, and they described the position of the president as "multifaceted, different at each institution, and changing over the life of any given institution" (p. 216). While participants noted that there were some similar skills, knowledge and competencies for presidents of secular institutions and those in CHE, that additional skills, competencies, and knowledge might be needed when leading a Catholic institution.

As with Petriccione's (2009) findings, Meeker (2008) found that the presidential role was extremely complicated, similar to running a "small city," and that presidents needed to handle the unexpected crisis, challenge, or dynamics of the unique culture and constituencies of higher education and be able to balance the unique Catholicity of their institutions with all the expectations of excellence, autonomy and freedom. Meeker concluded that Catholic college and university presidents needed skills, knowledge and competencies in the following five categories: (1) to lead and manage the institution; (2) to enhance the financial viability of the institution; (3) to enhance the academic life of the institution; (4) to effectively work with students and external constituencies in maintaining a campus life relevant to students, and (5) to make the Catholic mission and the charism relevant and alive on campus.

Wesley (2007) found that effectively conveying the mission of a Catholic institution could have an impact on financing, particularly fundraising. Wesley noted that of the six Catholic college presidents he surveyed that there was a general consensus among them that "effectively conveying the mission of the institution and being a visible presence on campus and at events were factors that the presidents noted as essential elements for successful fundraising" (p. 74) and that a certain amount of development background prior to becoming president would have been beneficial to them. Though Meeker (2008) studied both lay and religious presidents, her research is helpful in understanding what skills are necessary for these multifaceted positions. Wesley's work indicated that leadership of mission is related to the other roles of the president. What is noteworthy over time is the acknowledgement of the progressively complicated role of the president, the importance of the Catholic mission and the need for "Catholic

knowledge" yet, with the declining presence of SRCs, there is an absence of formal theological and spiritual formation for presidents in CIHE.

Sloma-Williams (2010) conducted case studies on five lay presidents. Consistent with Petriccione (2009), she found that there was no one path to the presidency of Catholic institutions and that some presidents find "their calling" by way of public institutions, while others work their way up the ranks of CHE. These presidents bring diverse training, education and formational experiences to their presidencies but:

> They are active in making it their business to learn about mission and also to educate others about the particular charism of the institution. While aware of their constituencies, they understand their role in working with their local ecclesiastical authority and do not spend much time worrying about critics. Leading the Catholic mission is the top priority on their long list of responsibilities, and they demonstrate enthusiasm about this aspect of their presidency. (pp. 602-603)

Her study focused on the ways in which the lay president articulated the Catholic mission of their institution. The research involved a set of two interviews with each of the five presidents and she analyzed a number of documents including: the institutional mission statement, presidential speeches, the presidents' vitae, board reports, the institutional website and letters and correspondence. Her first interview focused on questions related to mission and the second on leadership of mission based on the theoretical framework outlined in *Leadership That Matters* (Sashkin & Saskin, 2003). In three of the five cases, due to presidential time demands and constraints, she needed to conduct both interviews on the same day. Sloma-Williams (2010) concluded her research with a *Conceptual Model of Lay Presidential Leadership* (p. 592) that supports and extends the *Leadership That Matters* framework. She offered a visual model to suggest the eleven ways in which lay presidents could lead their Catholic missions. These were: (1) communication with senior leadership, (2) educating about mission, (3) telling the

story of founders, (4) enhancing/preserving religious symbols on campus (5) articulating unity of Church and university mission, (6) interaction with critics, (7) wider community involvement, (8) respect for institution members, (9) involvement in enhancing the academic mission, (10) integration of spirit and personal inspiration, and (11) reciprocity of knowledge, a commitment to excellence.

The model offered by Sloma-Williams (2010) is extensive and will be helpful in training future lay presidents, but it does not take into consideration the *distinguishability* and *inheritability* of the institution's mission and it focuses primarily on the lay president's role in advancing the mission, only one of their many responsibilities. Her model is also extremely elaborate and less likely to be adopted by a president with multifaceted responsibilities. Another model for leadership, one provided by Morey and Piderit (2006) is explained in the section on theoretical framework.

Beyond the Research: Current Climate of Catholic Higher Education

In the fall of 2009, Fr. James L. Heft, S.M., the Founding Director of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California, presented a lecture in Rome to the General Assembly of the IFCU. In his address he noted that in the twenty years since *Ex Corde* some progress has been made in articulating and reinvigorating the Catholic identity in these institutions in the United States, but stated that significant work remained to be done. His address focused on the academic components of mission and identity; and, he gives specific "defining activity" suggestions such as talking with chairs of departments and faculty search committees about why it is important to hire for mission, promoting faculty book discussions, and holding cross-disciplinary faculty seminars around Catholic identity issues.

While Morey and Piderit (2006) and Heft (2009) focused primarily on the declining understanding of a Catholic intellectual tradition, they took a sympathetic stance to presidents. They acknowledged that presidents alone cannot address the identity issues on their campuses and that lay presidents have inherited institutional understandings of mission defined previously by the founding congregation, particularly when the founding congregation is still actively involved at some level in the life of the institution.

Other critics of CHE are not as sympathetic. Though not major bodies of research, reports developed by the Cardinal Newman Society and Hendershott (2009) are critical to the discussion about Catholic identity and mission because they describe how some Catholics view the CHE crisis as a crisis for the Church and help the researcher to understand the complicated environment in which these institutions and their leaders must operate to define their mission.

The Cardinal Newman Society publishes *The Newman Guide*. Now in its second edition, the guide provides a list of colleges they believe meet the standards set forth in *Ex Corde.* In 2004, the Society released a report entitled: *The Culture of Death on Catholic Campuses: A Five Year Review* in which they documented almost two hundred incidents of speakers and honorees who had vocally opposed Catholic teachings (Hendershott, 2009, p. 169). One of the members of the Society, Patrick Reilly, noted in InsideCatholic.com, that the crisis in CHE is far from over and pointed to the University of Notre Dame's invitation to President Obama to be its commencement speaker as an example of the "scandals" that are happening on Catholic college campuses. His harsh commentary suggested that Catholic parents who choose a college for their sons and

daughters that is outside of *The Newman Guide* will "discover a sad state of affairs" in CHE. Recognizing the historical change in these colleges, he announced that most Catholic colleges and universities have been increasingly secularized over the last 40 years, but noted that half the colleges named in the guide were established after 1970, "most in reaction to the rapid decline of faithful Catholic education in this country" (Hendershott, 2009, p. 1). Reilly acknowledged that some institutions are making great strides but on most Catholic campuses one would find:

1. A significant number of faculty who may appreciate theology, philosophy and the arts as useful ways of presenting information but who reject any claim to truth outside of the natural sciences.
2. A curriculum featuring a broad course selection but no integrated core and little exposure to the Catholic intellectual tradition.
3. Religious studies or theology faculty who dissent from Catholic theology.
4. A faculty with a significant portion of non-Catholics and non-practicing Catholics.
5. Guest lecturers whose public actions and statement oppose Catholic moral teaching.
6. A campus ministry that is generally weak and understaffed and minimizes catechesis and spiritual formation.
7. Student clubs that oppose Catholic teaching, usually on abortion or homosexuality and few if any that provide opportunities for spiritual growth.
8. Coeducational residence halls with some restrictions that are generally ineffective in discouraging premarital sexual activity and alcohol abuse; and

9. Campus health and counseling services that are under no obligation to support Catholic moral teaching.

One of the most recent publications on the status of CHE in America is Anne Hendershott's, Status Envy (2009). Though for the majority of the book Hendershott provides lists of campus offensives, she added valuable insight in her final chapter, "Looking for Signs of Life." She noted here that the battle lines were drawn years ago and many of the necessary discussions remain hopelessly deadlocked (p. 213). She argued that most Catholic institutions compartmentalize their "Catholicity" by "relegating it to the margins of the campus in the offices of university ministry, social justice or community service" and when administrators and faculty are asked about how their Catholic colleges differ from their secular peers, they point to their strong commitment to social justice (p. 214). Thirteen years after Fr. Hesburgh's proclamation in 1996 that Catholic institutions must be defined by more than service, Hendershott would argue that for many Catholic institutions, this is still their primary way of attempting to be distinct.

In January of 2010, Mary E. Lyons, PhD, president of the University of San Diego, and then chair of the ACCU, provided a list of four things she believed presidents of Catholic Colleges should focus upon in order to "sustain and enhance what is distinctive and distinguished in American Higher Education" (p. 1). Her first suggestion was that attention needed to be paid to the "diminishing pool of talented, skilled, motivated leaders" for the institutions and she noted that many of those who might be interested in presidential positions did not have theological education, religious formation or ecclesiastical immersion to give the necessary public witness for institutions that

needed to integrate and communicate the mission of "faith and reason." Giving her own public witness to CHE, she suggested that presidents needed to articulate that the strength of these institutions, and their ability to struggle with real issues, is based on the hope and optimism that comes from a belief in the Incarnation.

Her third suggestion is that presidents take seriously what it meant to be part of a "global network of Catholic institutions" and to articulate this to all constituencies. She stated:

> Most of us take this for granted, particularly if we embellish our stump speeches with references to the great values and traditions that derive from being part of the family of Jesuit, Mercy, Dominican, Franciscan, Benedictine, and like institutions. As important and essential as these features of our institutional message may be, we really miss a significant opportunity if we do not educate our audiences about the sheer advantages of our *Catholic* character; that is what all of us on the planet have in common. We should claim often and publicly the universal legacy of the Church's intellectual, social, cultural, moral, and spiritual traditions and continuing contributions to the academy, our social justice outreach, and the formation of our students.

Her final challenge was for the presidents to find a common agenda that would be helpful in sustaining all of the Catholic institutions.

Current Status of Catholic Higher Education and the Lay President

In November of 2010, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops voted on a set of parameters to review institutional compliance with *Ex Corde* and in January of 2011, the Bishops released a statement explaining that the review would involve a conversation between a bishop and each university president within his diocese to discuss Catholic identity, mission, ecclesial communion, service rendered by the university and the continued cooperation between the bishop and the president.

Current issues facing institutions of higher education in 2011 include: the rising cost to provide higher education, low retention and completion rates for students, the extended time students are taking for degree completion, the need to provide post-secondary education for students from diverse backgrounds and non-traditional students, the un-preparedness of many students for a college education, the competition from for-profit institutions, the increasing interest in online education, and the education of undocumented immigrants (Shirvani, 2009). It is the president's role to lead his/her institution through the challenges presented in American society. In the midst of the increasingly complicated role of the president, Catholic presidents are faced with the additional challenge of supporting and advancing the distinctively Catholic mission of their institutions in this critical period for CHE. In addition to the challenges faced by secular presidents, they must be able to navigate the goals of their institution through an understanding of *Ex Corde*, the mission of their founding order, a relationship with the local bishop, Canon law, and the critics of CHE.

Research indicates an increasing confidence in the president's own ability to lead these distinctive missions (Petriccione, 2009; Sloma-Williams, 2010) but little is known about *how* they do this, especially in relationship to the increasing demands of the presidential position. Meeker (2009) and Sloma-Williams (2010) provided insight into the additional skills that lay presidents of Catholic institutions need and suggested preparation programs and models for developing these skills, but there is a need for an in depth understanding of *how* a current lay president supports and advances the distinct *Catholic* mission of his/her institution in relationship to his/her other responsibilities and how s/he relates that responsibility to his/her educational and religious formation.

Theoretical Framework

Morey and Piderit (2006) outlined four ways of "being a Catholic college or university" (p. 54). The first model is the *Catholic immersion* goal, which they describe as developing a culture "steeped in the Catholic tradition," one in which the institution attempts to attract a large majority of students who are already committed Catholics and they or their parents are interested in their becoming more knowledgeable and dedicated Catholics. These institutions attract a large number of students who are already Catholic and their goal is to not only educate these students to become leaders in society but also in the Church.

The other three models also focus on Catholic identity but do not focus on the students' pre-commitment to Catholicism. The second model is the *Catholic persuasion* goal, which is explained as seeking to give all students, whether they are Catholic or not upon their arrival, the knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic tradition. This model seeks "in a gentle fashion, to persuade" (p. 55). These institutions assume that the majority of the students are Catholic, even though many of them may not be familiar with the teachings of the Church.

The third model, the *Catholic diaspora* model, has two components. The first is that in a region or situation in which Catholic students are a minority, that all students will become more open and accepting of religious beliefs; the second part is that Catholic standards are observed in situations in which students engage. This model is most appealing to institutions that have religiously diverse populations.

The fourth and final model is the *Catholic cohort* goal, which seeks to influence two different groups of students. One group includes students who are focused on

preparation for business, the professions, or public service. In this case, the *cohort* institutions provide those students with an appreciation for religious diversity. The second group of students, a smaller number, is also seeking similar professional careers, but they have the Catholic knowledge and commitment to actively advance the Catholic tradition. In this case, "the goal is directed to inculcating in these students a sympathetic response to a widely perceived Catholic agenda in society" (p. 55). Morey and Piderit (2006) believe that Catholic institutions have already made a choice about which type of institution they are and that choice may have been made a hundred years ago by their sponsoring congregation.

Based on their extensive review of leadership theory, they also offer two models for presidential leadership of the Catholic institution. These models assume the president is an "informed, committed and practicing Catholic" (p. 67). They note:

> Presidents set the tone and determine the general direction of the institutions in which they serve. They are also highly visible standard-bearers who lead the colleges and universities in their most important activities. In order to fulfill these roles as a Catholic institution, a president must be clearly perceived as enthusiastically committed to the Catholic tradition. The commitment cannot merely be to the Catholic faith as an intellectual heritage. It must also extend to the practice of the faith, praising God by celebrating the life of Jesus, particularly in the sacraments and in the pursuit of the virtuous life. Being a figurehead does not simply suffice. (p. 67)

With that assumption, Morey and Piderit (2006) developed two composite types of presidents, the *connective* president and the *directive* president (p. 67) that are similar to those developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Their *connective* president resembles Burns' transactional leaders and make an impact in three ways: (1) they carefully assess who and what presently exists within the institution that could positively contribute to the institutional goals; (2) they assemble a senior leadership team that

reports directly to them and becomes the dominant catalyzing team, and (3) they put time and energy into mentoring this group and strategizing with them. The following descriptors are used to explain *connective* leaders: engaged, focused, intuitive, and persuasive. They are mentors and facilitators to their direct reports and develop "centers of influence," which they link together to move the institution forward.

Morey and Piderit's (2006) *directive* president closely resemble Burns' (1978) transformational leaders and are described as change agents who envision the change and take charge. They are charismatic leaders who demand great loyalty from their leadership team, have clear expectations of that team, and delegate responsibility to them in order to move institutional goals forward. Their impact is also made in three ways: (1) they refine the vision and goals for their institutions and craft a message that catalyzes action; (2) they assemble a leadership team that is on board with the new vision and are loyal to the president, and (3) they spend focused time with the new team in laying out the goals and assessment system.

Noting that a wide variety of qualities are necessary in determining which type of leader is best suited for a given context, Morey and Piderit (2006) stated that the impact of *connective* presidents is felt over time, in a six to ten year framework, because they need the time to assess their staff and to build coalitions and connections based on trust. Thus, any challenge to the institution that requires immediate and/or dramatic action will likely deter from the building of these necessary coalitions. *Directive* presidents have a future orientation and are committed to continuous improvement; thus, if they are able to quickly develop a new master plan, they can make their impact in a three to five year time frame.

In describing their leadership styles, Morey and Piderit (2006) elaborated that effective leadership depends not only on the leader's attributes, but also on the context in which these attributes are lived out. They stated: "In other words, the right religious leader for the Catholic college or university is the one whose talents match the college's needs" (p. 279). Other leadership theorists would agree that a style of leadership is more appropriate and successful depending on the situation (Blanchard and Hersey, 1972; Nidiffer, 2001).

Morey and Piderit (2006) noted that over the course of time, the religious culture of Catholic colleges, the *distinguishability* and *inheritability*, changes and that it is the responsibility of the president for reading the culture, analyzing it and acting on it (p. 281). They stated that Catholic colleges and universities either have a sitting president or are searching for a new president. Both situations, they argue, require careful assessment of where the institution stands in regard to its Catholic mission. Sitting presidents are in the position to assess the current status of their institution in accordance with one of the four models presented (immersion, persuasion, diaspora and cohort). They must evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural context and develop appropriate plans and goals for advancing the mission (p. 285). This diagnostic information, according to Morey and Piderit is critical for institutions to advance their mission but according to their research, few institutions are gathering it. Morey and Piderit focused on the Catholic culture of institutions and the role of the president, but they do not distinguish between lay and religiously vowed presidents, nor did they apply their models of leadership to their models for Catholic institutions.

It is with this historical context and theoretical framework of CHE that I formulated my exploration of the role of the lay president. In the next chapter, I detail the methodology I employed in this study.

Chapter Three
Methodology

Creswell (2003) and Crotty (1998) provide a framework for research that includes the questions of epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and data collection and analysis. This chapter addresses Creswell's three pertinent questions: (1) What knowledge claims are being made by the researcher? (2) What strategies of inquiry informed the procedures? and (3) What methods of data collection and analysis were used? (p. 5). The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the data will be presented to the reader.

Knowledge Claims

Creswell's first criterion in research design is: what knowledge claims are being made by the researcher? Berger and Luckmann (1996) understand knowledge to be socially constructed, thus "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, p. 8). They understand meaning to be subjective, varied and multiple and that participants develop meanings of certain objects and experiences. Thus, it is important for the researcher to look for "the complexity of views rather than narrow meanings" (Creswell, p. 8); and, to rely on the participant's views. This is the understanding of knowledge I assumed in this research project and I conducted the study utilizing a qualitative approach.

Strategy of Inquiry

Creswell's second criterion for research design is that the researcher identify a strategy of inquiry (p. 5). Believing knowledge to be socially constructed, I sought to

understand how the Catholic mission of an institution of higher education is supported and advanced by a lay president and how the president would describe the requisite background and training necessary to lead the institution in its Catholic mission.

Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984) noted that, "the meanings implicit in administrative behavior are beyond the reach of…objective measurements" (p. 278). Lincoln and Guba (1985) understand qualitative research to be trustworthy through credibility, transferability, dependency and confirmability, versus the validity, reliability and objectivity required by quantitative researchers. Qualitative work requires prolonged periods in the field and the triangulation of data through multiple sources and methods to establish credibility. To ensure that the data is transferable, rich descriptions are required. Because the researcher is seeking understanding, comfirmability is more important than objectivity. Thus, a qualitative approach in which I utilized a case study model to interview the president, conduct observations, and collect artifacts was the most meaningful way to conduct this research. The qualitative approach provided me with a rich, emic perspective of the president's understanding from social, cultural and historical views.

Case Study

Creswell (2003) and Stake (1995) explain that a case study strategy allows the researcher to explore in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. Stake states, "Case study is the study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi); and Yin (2003) adds: "How" and "why" questions are likely to favor the use of case studies" (p. 7). According to Yin, the case study as a research method "comprises an all

encompassing method" covering logic of design, data collection techniques and specific approaches to data analysis and relies on multiple sources of evidence for triangulation (p. 14). Thus, a case study was the most appropriate approach to answer my research questions.

Selection of the Case Study: The President

The selection of the president was the most important part of this study. Stake (1995) states that the first criterion in selecting a case "should be to maximize what we can learn" (p. 4). Three important components were earlier identified in the literature review. The first is the importance of the presidents in leading an institution's mission and legacy (Cohen, 1998; Mosey; 1998; Nelson, 2009; Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2004); the second is the relevance of the sponsoring religious community in understanding and advancing the mission of the Catholic institution (Bourque, 1990; Devlin, 1998; Introcaso, 1996; Morey 1995; Morey & Piderit, 2006); and the third is the history of the role of the president as being multifaceted (Cohen, 1998; Handlin & Handlin, 1970; Rudolph, 1962; Meeker, 2008). Additionally, the literature review revealed skills, competencies and knowledge necessary for lay and religious presidents (Meeker, 2008; Sloma-Williams, 2010) and four different models of Catholic institutions and two types of leadership that might be applied by a sitting president (Morey & Piderit, 2006). These components led to the importance of selecting a sitting president as the most critical informant in the case study.

According to Morey and Piderit (2006), a sitting president would need to have a minimum of three years as a *directive* president, and six as a *connective* president to advance the Catholic mission. In developing their models, Morey & Piderit also assumed

that the president would be a practicing and committed Catholic. The literature provided a framework for selecting the president who would be the informant for the case study.

Selection of the President Informant

An informant was selected utilizing four criteria. The informant had to (1) be a president of a Catholic institution of higher education founded by a sponsoring religious community (2) self-identify as Catholic (3) have served as a president for a minimum of six years at the same institution and (4) the institution was to be located within 300 miles of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

To identify an informant, I generated a list of all of the lay presidents of Catholic institutions founded by religious communities within 300 miles of Milwaukee, Wisconsin who have served in their role for six or more years. The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) publishes a list of Catholic institutions on their website. In March 2011, I compiled a list of the Catholic institutions that were within 300 miles of Milwaukee. From that list, I searched the website of each institution to determine whether or not the college was founded by a religious order, whether or not it had a lay president, and if so, how long the president had been in the position.

One of the criteria for selection, that the president self-identify as a Catholic, was not as easy to ascertain, but I made assumptions based on online biographies. From this selection process I was able to construct a list of five possible informants. Using the list of five, I prioritized the presidents according to who I believed would be available for interviews and observations during the three-month period and who might allow me the most access to direct observation over the time period I planned to be in the field.

Once the list of five presidents was prioritized, I began the process of contacting the presidents. Out of respect for their time, I made the decision to initiate contact with one president at a time. If the first president on my prioritized list was unable or unwilling to be an informant, I planned to subsequently contact the next one on the list and proceed accordingly thereafter, contacting the third, fourth or fifth president.

The first president on the list was contacted via email. I had met this president previously at the ACCU meeting in January 2011. In the email, I reintroduced myself, explained the research I was planning to conduct and asked him to consider being an informant. His response to me was: "I will give your request prayer consideration. Part of my discernment will be consulting with some of my colleagues. I will get back to you after March 15 with an answer" (Personal Correspondence, March, 2011).

After receiving his reply, I waited before contacting the next possible informant. On March 17, I received the following email message from the president:

> *Kate—I met with my Cabinet on Tuesday and shared your request with them. We all agreed that we would be pleased and honored to participate in your study of lay presidents at Catholic institutions. Please coordinate with my executive assistant (name and contact information). As you can imagine, my schedule is always challenging, so the sooner we can establish dates/times for our work together, the better. I will make myself available to you as much as possible, and will my leadership team, if there is any role you need them to play.*
> (Personal Correspondence, March 2011)

Thus I selected Mr. Daniel J. Elsener, who has been president of Marian University in Indianapolis, Indiana since 2001. Marian University was founded by the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana.

Methods of Data Collection

Creswell's third criterion for research design is to determine the methods of data collection. Creswell (2003), Stake (1998) and Yin (2003) all argue for utilizing multiple

methods of data collection appropriate for a qualitative study. Yin states for example that, "the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of *converging lines of inquiry* (italics his), a process of triangulation" (p.98). I had planned to utilize three sources of data collection for this study; informant interviews, observation and document/audiovisual review. Due to the richness of the location and the openness of the informant, I was able to add an additional data source, meetings with the members of the informant's leadership team. These discussions proved to be an additional source of confirmation of the interviews with the informant, the observation data and the document/audiovisual review. All four methods of data collection were conducted during my four visits to the president's campus. The visits and the data collection process are described in the sections that follow.

Visits to Campus

Once the informant was selected, I made arrangements for campus visits through his assistant. I visited the campus on four different occasions. In April of 2011, I conducted data collection over a two-day period. In May of 2001, I visited for three days and was able to attend the institution's Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement ceremonies as well as attend a board committee meeting and full board meeting. My third visit was in June of 2011 and I conducted research over another three-day period. As a part of this third visit, I attended a two-day administrative council retreat. During these visits, I conducted individual interviews with the president, observed the president in his various roles, collected artifacts and met with members of his administrative team. Between visits I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews with the president, and

reviewed the observation, artifacts, and staff meetings data that was collected during my previous visit. From this review, I prepared for the next visit.

At the end of my third visit, I was invited by a member of the president's cabinet, and then by the president, to return for a fourth visit in July. I accepted the offer and returned to campus for three days to observe the board orientation and retreat. As part of this scheduled activity, I attended a dinner at which the board recognized the president's ten years of service to the University. During this visit, I had conversations with several board members and met the president's wife.

Interviews

Yin (2003), Stake (1998) and Spradley (1979) all recognize informant interviews as one of the most important sources of information in a case study. According to Spradley (1979), effective interviews in ethnographic research should be conducted as a series of "friendly conversations" (p. 58). He explains:

> It is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. Exclusive use of these new ethnographic elements, or introducing them too quickly, will make interviews become like a formal interrogation. (p.58).

I had planned to conduct six one-hour, person-to-person interviews with the president over a three-month period. The interviews were intended to be audio recorded and then transcribed. Those six interviews were scheduled with the president in advance of my visits, but due to his schedule and some health issues, several of the interviews were adjusted accordingly. I was able to conduct two one-hour, person-to-person interviews with the president; one during each of my first two visits to campus and one one-hour-and-forty-minute interview on my third visit. These three interviews were

audio taped and transcribed. In addition to those three audio-recorded interviews, I was able to interview the president one-on-one in transit to other meetings on three occasions. Due to the circumstances of these interviews (we were driving in a car or walking across campus) those interviews were not audio-recorded, though I was able to take notes. Thus a total of six interviews were conducted with the informant, three of them were audio taped and transcribed and extensive notes were taken during the other three.

Spradley (1979) encourages the development of a rapport with the informant in order to interpret data from the informant's culture. He suggests that the ethnographic interview begin with a series of descriptive questions followed by more detail questions in subsequent interviews. I had an almost immediate rapport with the informant, as we had met before and had mutual colleagues whom we both respected and trusted. I began with this connection and his immediate response was: *"Well, I know you and trust you. We have mutual friends"* and then he began to tell me about himself and his journey to the institution and *"listening to God's call"* (Interview, May 6, 2011). I was able to ask one grand tour question in the first interview, which was "Can you talk to me about your own call?" The remainder of the interview he talked extensively about his journey to the institution, the institution's status when he arrived and what motivates him to serve as its president.

All of the interviews began with friendly conversation that guided the president to answering my research questions regarding how he supports and advances the Catholic mission of the institution and how he was prepared to do so. In all of the interviews, he spoke freely as to his own understanding. As the interviews progressed, I continued to ask clarifying questions but the depth and richness of the data collected is due to the

informant's willingness and openness to reflect on his own life and work. I concluded after the first recorded interview, and in each subsequent recorded interview, that valuable data was to be collected by asking him a grand tour question and then allowing him to speak openly while simultaneously reflecting, thus the transcripts are rich with his voice in response to grand tour questions.

According to Spradley (1979), mini tour questions are "identical to grand tour questions except they deal with a much smaller unit of experience" (p. 88). Several times during the audio-recorded interviews I was able to ask him mini tour questions, but for the most part, these interviews were free flowing due to the informant's personal style and candidness. He was genuine, frank, sincere and transparent in his reflection and his responses to my grand tour questions provided depth without my having to pursue mini tour questions during the recorded interviews. I did ask mini tour questions in the more informal, non-recorded interviews and used the answers to these questions to provide some of the detail needed to analyze the data collected from other sources.

Observations

I made four visits to the campus and was able to observe the president in his role several times during each visit. In my April visit I observed him in the following ways: in a meeting with architects to discuss the new medical college facility, in an administrative council meeting, addressing students and parents at an opening orientation session, meeting with a vice president, meeting with an outside visitor, attending a major event off-campus (attended by the United States Secretary of Education and the Governor of Indiana), and attending a faculty meeting. During this visit I was also able to observe him as he interacted with his assistant, vice presidents, students and staff members.

On my second visit in May I was able to observe the president at a major off-campus event (attended by the Governor of Indiana and many local business and education leaders), at the advancement committee of the board meeting, at lunch with the board and vice presidents, at the annual meeting of the full board of trustees, at the Baccalaureate Mass, the president's appreciation dinner for donors, and at the University's commencement. During this visit, I was also able to observe him interact with members of the board, donors, his cabinet and students. Additionally, the president drove me around the parameter of the University and through the campus, and during an unplanned visit to the University Chapel, I observed the president in prayer.

My third visit was in June, during the three-day visit I was able to observe the president in an administrative council retreat and as he interacted with his assistant.

I was invited back for a fourth visit to observe the board of trustees' new member orientation and attend the board's annual retreat. Over this three-day visit I was able to observe the president as he interacted with board members, including those who are members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg (SSFO), the current board chair, and the board chair emeritus, who had been the board chair when Elsener was hired. Members of the University's administrative council, and the student body president, were also in attendance at the retreat, as was the president's wife, so I was able to observe the president in additional capacities and speak to a number of his constituencies.

During these events, I made it clear to the president, to his vice presidents, and to the board members, chairs and Sisters, that I was there as a non-participant observer. The president acknowledged my presence and my purpose at all of the University events. During each of the opportunities to observe, I let the occasion or situation "tell the story"

as suggested by Stake. I took extensive records of the events and made field notes in a journal, these were reviewed between visits and prior to the scheduled interviews with the president. This data was used to confirm or disaffirm the president's understanding of his leadership role in advancing the mission and his leadership style.

Artifacts

Creswell (2000) recommends document analysis because it enables the researcher to collect data in a different manner and thus may produce additional sources of understanding. He states that documents allow the researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants and provide access at a time convenient to the researcher while also providing an additional source of information. Documents can represent informant understandings that are thoughtful, in that participants have given attention to compiling them (p. 187). Audiovisual materials are also an unobtrusive method of data collection; in that they provide an opportunity for participants to directly share their "reality," and that they are creative and capture visual attention (Creswell, p. 187).

Prior to, and during my visits, I collected a number of artifacts from the University. Artifacts collected included: the University By-Laws, the Sponsorship Agreement with the Sisters, admission material, *Our Franciscan Heritage* brochure, student handbook, student posters on campus, architect designs, press releases from the website, copies of the University magazine, biographical data from the president on the website, a list of questions for potential senior administrators, and handouts from the advancement committee meeting, board meeting and administrative council retreat. The artifacts have been used to confirm or disaffirm the president's understanding of his role,

his leadership style and his understanding of the Catholic identity and mission of the institution.

Meetings with Cabinet Members

Before agreeing to be my informant, the president consulted with his cabinet and when he affirmed that he and the institution would be participants in my study, he instructed his assistant to schedule my visits and to arrange appointments. Over my first three visits, his assistant was able to schedule meetings with me with ten members of the president's senior administrative staff. These positions included the vice president for administration and general counsel, the executive vice president and provost, the vice president and dean of the medical school, the vice president for mission and effectiveness, the vice president for marketing, the vice president for admissions, the vice president for advancement, the vice president for admissions, the associate vice president and chief information officer, and the associate vice president and dean of students. I met with all of these administrators for approximately one-hour each. At the beginning of each meeting, I explained my research, what I was interested in understanding and told the person I would be taking notes and would use their comments as part of the research. I explained that I was audio recording my interviews with the president and that these meetings, my observations, and artifacts would be used to confirm those interviews. I informed them that their words would not be attributed directly, but as a member of the administrative cabinet or council. All of the members were open to talking with me and expressed interest in hearing the results of my research.

I asked all of the administrators the same questions. The first was: how did they get to the University? In most cases, that led to an additional question about the selection

process for their position. The second question was about the president's commitment to the mission and identity of the University, and the third was about the president's leadership style. The third question led to additional questions about how often the president met with the individual and how decisions were made. During each of the meetings I took extensive notes. These interviews provided rich confirming data about how the president supported and advanced the Catholic mission of the institution and his leadership style.

Data Analysis

My data analysis was designed to answer my four research questions: (1) How does the lay president in an institution sponsored by a religious community understand his/her role as president? (2) How does the lay president understand his/her role specifically related to the supporting and advancing of the Catholic mission of the institutions (3) How was the lay president prepared for his/her role as the leader of the Catholic mission and (4) What type of preparation does the lay president wish he/she had before they took on the role of the president? I was also interested in the leadership style of the president as related to Morey & Piderit's work (2006).

Domain and Theme Analysis

After each visit, I utilized constant comparative analysis strategy (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, pp. 181-182) to review the transcripts from the interviews, field notes from the observations and meetings, and the artifacts collected to develop working assumptions and identify preliminary major themes related to my questions. As data collection progressed, I developed additional questions to clarify the president's

responses and contrasting questions to affirm or disconfirm the data. When I concluded the fourth visit, I reviewed the data from all four sources and from all the visits searching for reoccurring themes. Major themes were color-coded and minor themes were given letters. Following this process I created a table to organize the themes according to my research questions. The first question was the how does the lay president in an institution understand his role? The second was how does the president support and advance the Catholic identity and mission? When designing the table, I combined my third and fourth questions regarding the preparation the president received and what he wished he had received into one column, as the latter had become less relevant to me as the research progressed. The fourth column of the table was labeled leadership style. From my first day in the field, the president's leadership style had evolved into a prominent part of my study and was clearly linked to my other research questions. Major themes (domains) and minor themes were placed in the appropriate columns of the table. From the table I was able to understand the prominent domains and themes across all four questions and determine where they overlapped or were distinctive.

In addition, I created a second table with two columns, one entitled institution successes and the other presidential vision. I used this table to compare institutional achievement to the president's vision. This table enabled me to understand how the president's vision was related to institutional results.

Data Presentation

Wolcott (2001) recommends presenting qualitative research by beginning with description, then providing analysis and concluding with interpretation. He states:

> This is not to suggest that the lines between description, analysis, and interpretation are so clearly drawn, but only that you keep the focus on the descriptive task until you have provided a solid basis for analysis and for determining how and how much to draw on the work of others (p. 75).

Following his recommendation, the data from the case study is described first in a descriptive format.

A president's legacy can never be separated from the institution she or he leads, thus Chapter Four sets the scene by providing a brief history of Marian University and its founders, the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg. It provides a description of the College when Elsener arrived in 2001, and the University in 2011, ten years after he became president. Additionally, it places the institution within the context of higher education in the State of Indiana. Chapter Five is predominantly the descriptive voice of the president collected through interviews, observations and artifacts but includes the voice of others who have been a part of his ten-year journey as a lay present in Catholic higher education. Chapter Six is a discussion of the findings and an analysis of the themes based on work of Morey & Piderit and recent research on the lay president in CHE. Finally, Chapter Seven addresses implications and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four
Setting the Scene: Marian University Yesterday and Today

The future of any institution of higher education is influenced by its history including the story of its leadership. In the case of Catholic institutions of higher education founded by religious congregations, the history and the mission of the congregation and the institution, along with the stories of their respective leadership, are intricately intertwined.

What follows is not intended to be a thorough history of either the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, nor an extensive historical review of Marian University. What is provided is meant as a backdrop for understanding the intricacies inherent in the challenges its current president faced when he arrived in 2001 and where the University is today under his leadership. A brief explanation of the current relationship with the founding congregation and a description of the community environment are also presented. It is in this historical and cultural context that this study is situated. A president and his leadership cannot be separated from the institution he leads, this is especially so in Catholic higher education. Therefore, in order to understand how the lay president perceives his role in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission of the institution, and how he was prepared to do so, it is critical to provide the background of the institution he served, the history of its leadership and the past and current relationship of the institution to its founding congregation.

Joint Beginnings

The future of the mission of Marian University in Indianapolis, Indiana began, as did most of the institutions started by women's congregations in America, in Europe. In 1851, a young woman, 24-year old Sr. Theresa Hackelmeir, left her home convent in Vienna, Austria at the request of Fr. Francis Joseph Rodolf of Vincennes, to journey to America, with the goal of establishing a religious congregation that would teach the German-speaking children of the families that had immigrated to southeastern Indiana. Sr. Theresa, who would become known as Mother Theresa, moved forward with the vision even when her companion turned back. She was welcomed in America by three young women interested in religious life and by Fr. Francis Rudolph, pastor of a local parish. The young women joined her endeavor. Founding a congregation known as the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Oldenburg (SSFO), they began ministering to the youth in Southeastern Indiana. In a very short time, the women established a boarding school for six children and a village school for 20 in Oldenburg, a Catholic community (Artifacts, 2011).

The need for education in this section of the country was growing and the Sisters were asked by neighboring communities to establish and staff Catholic schools outside of Oldenburg. They responded to the call and by 1890 the SSFO had established schools in St. Louis, Missouri, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and in other locations in Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio and Kansas. In 1883 they founded St. Mary's Academy in Indianapolis and in1892, the Sisters opened a school for African America children in the then-segregated city of Indianapolis. Recognizing the need to educate their own Sisters, the SSFO established a training program for them in Oldenburg (*Franciscan Heritage* booklet).

Recognizing the significance of its founding and its foundresses, Marian University acknowledges this history in its current bylaws dated October, 2010. Article II is entitled **History of Marian University** and reads in its entirety, the following:

> Marian University traces it's beginning to a school for teacher training founded by the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana in 1851. The program was formalized in 1860 as the Academy of the Sisters of St. Francis. In 1864 it was renamed the Institute of the Immaculate Conception, and the following year it became the Academy of St. Francis. On April 8, 1885, the institution was chartered by the State of Indiana and called the Academy of the Immaculate Conception. In 1910, the Academy's teacher training program was approved by the Indiana State Board of Education and became known as St. Francis Normal School. Gradually liberal studies courses were offered and a two-year junior college emerged in 1924. By 1936 the normal school and junior college merged to form a four-year college in Oldenburg, Indiana. On March 25, 1937, this college was chartered by the State of Indiana as Marian College with a four-year liberal arts program for young women and a teacher training department. Marian College moved to Indianapolis for the fall semester of 1937 and classes began on September 15. In 1954 Marian became Indiana's first Catholic coeducational college, and on April 13, 1966, the charter was amended to reflect Marian's coeducational status. On July 1, 2009, Marian College became Marian University. On March 5, 2010, the Board of Trustees approved the development of the Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine. (Artifact, 2011)

According to the Marian University publication "Our Franciscan Heritage," Mother Clarissa Dillhoff, the congregational minister in 1937, moved the college to its present site in Indianapolis in order to begin providing a college education for lay women. The Sisters began living and teaching in Allison Mansion, former home to James Allison, and later acquired two estates neighboring the property. The present University acreage comprises the former estates of the Allison, Wheeler-Stokely and Fisher families, three of the four founders of the Indianapolis Speedway. The Sisters maintained their congregational headquarters and motherhouse in Oldenburg. The college in Indianapolis was accredited by the Indiana State Department of Education in 1944 (p. 5). The location of the congregational motherhouse means the SRCs main

community and leadership team is in a different city, thus the Sisters are not as present or visible on campus as they once were.

The Presidents

On one of my visits to Marian, I walked through the Mother Theresa Hackelmeirer Library. Here I found a historical display of photographs depicting some of the early days of the College. On one wall is a display of presidential portraits. The first two presidents of Marian College were SSFO. The first, Mother Clarissa Dillhoff, served from the year of the College's official founding in 1937, until 1948. Another SSFO, Sister Mary Kevin Kavanaugh, served from 1948 until 1954. In 1954, a priest, Monsignor Francis J. Reine, became president. He remained in that role until 1968 when Dr. Dominic Guzeta became the first lay president of the college. He served until 1971 when he was followed by Dr. Luis C. Gatto, who was president until 1989. Dr. Daniel A. Feliatti was the sixth president of the college and led the institution for ten years, from 1989 until 1999. Dr. Feliatti was followed by Dr. Robert Abene who served the shortest period, from 1999 until 2001 (Observation, May 7. 2011). His picture was not on the wall of presidents, but in a discussion with a current board member, Tony Watt, and during a presentation by the former board chair, Jack Snyder, I was informed that Watt served as "chief executive officer" (he did not take the title of president) in an interim capacity from November 2000 until August of 2001. Watt supervised the operations of the College and signed the diplomas. Daniel J. Elsener became president of Marian College in August of 2001 and remains in that role ten years later.

The review of the leadership of the University revealed that the Sisters relinquished the presidency of the institution in 1954 to first a priest, and then lay men.

There has never been a lay woman president and a member of the SSFO has not served as president for 57 years, the majority of the institution's life. At least in one incident, a lay member of the board of trustees stepped forward to lead the institution. Thus when Daniel Elsener was appointed as president of Marian College he was not the first lay president of the institution and the Sisters had much earlier relinquished the presidency of the institution.

Marian College in 2001

In August of 2001 when Elsener took over as the eighth official president of Marian College, he was the fifth layperson to do so. Elsener arrived at Marian with no experience in higher education administration and no doctorate, but he had an extensive background in Catholic education and fundraising and his daughter graduated from Marian in 2001. Details of his education, preparation, and journey to Marian will be discussed in the next chapter.

In 2001, the College, still sponsored by the SSFO, was in dire straights (Observations, Meetings, Artifacts, 2011). This study did not investigate the why or the how of the institution's fiscal state, but it was revealed to me during interviews with the president and discussions with SSFO and board members, and in a presentation made by the former board chair, that the Sisters had made a "significant loan" (more than $2 million) to the College to prevent the banks from calling in any of its debt. In her first year as congregational minister of the order, Sr. Jean Marie Cleveland, now the institution's vice president for mission effectiveness, made it possible that the Sisters would approve the loan. Snyder commented, "Without (the loan from the Sisters), we would not have been able to keep operating" (Observation, July 22, 2011).

Significant Change Since 2001

There is little doubt that there have been significant developments at Marian University since Elsener's arrival in 2001. The trustees marked the tenth anniversary of his tenure with a presentation and dinner as part of the board retreat in July of 2011. In his opening remarks chair emeritus, Jack Snyder, announced that the University had "enjoyed ten years of service by Dan and Beth Elsener" and noting the many contributions the president had made to the institution, commented, "some might refer to them as miracles" (Observations, July 22, 2011). Pronouncing the theme for the evening, Snyder stated that there are "three categories that get around most of the ten years" and delineated those as "leadership, reclaiming the Catholic and Franciscan identity and fundraising and financial security" (Observations, July 22, 2011). Though not an elaborate accounting of the changes, the significant accomplishments during Elsener's term as president are described below. These developments are chronicled not only in the words of the board leadership, and institutional documents, but in the local newspapers and stories of its people. For the purpose of this study, the changes are delineated into the following areas: strategic planning and fundraising, new programs and increased enrollment, facilities, leadership and Catholic identity.

Strategic Planning and Fundraising

Early in Elsener's tenure he gathered the board of trustees together at the Motherhouse in Oldenburg for a retreat and began changing the culture of the institution. Instead of discussing the possibility of closing, he led them to envisioning a much different, a more vibrant and more Catholic institution. It was a bold plan for an

institution that was in serious financial trouble, but the trustees and SSFO credit Elsener with initiating the vision that would set the course for Marian's future. Snyder, board chair emeritus, stated that the plan "started with a trustee retreat in Oldenburg, at his (Elsener's) urging" and "we restated our vision and mission statements; the trustees and Dan agreeing on where we were going was very important" (Observation, July 22, 2011). The 2002 strategic plan document was released after discussions with faculty, staff, students, and the community. The plan, *Remarkable Futures 2012* reads in part:

> The Marian College's Board of Trustees has approved a plan that will: elevate the college's academic stature to a superior level; create a more vibrant campus through expanded social, intellectual, cultural and recreational activities; enrich the Catholic and Franciscan dimension of the college; and provide the financial resources to advance the transformational mission of the college. (Artifact, 2007)

The intentionality of the mission had become clearer but the institution did not have the financial or staff resources to make the plan a reality. This was a campus with low enrollment, dilapidating buildings, a small endowment and limited funds to recruit quality faculty or staff. In order to support this new vision the College launched a major fundraising campaign in 2007, with a target goal of $68 million to be raised by 2012. The campaign entitled, *Make History: Advance the Mission of Marian College,* was designed to meet the goals stated in the *Remarkable Futures 2012* strategic plan first envisioned at the board retreat in 2001 and announced in 2002.

The *Make History: Advance the Mission of Marian College* executive summary provided an outline for the institution's future that included, "Advancing a Bold Vision, Building on Strong Foundations, Directions for the Future, and Building with Strong Leadership" and announced:

> Marian's College continued program is dependent on a number of strategies critical to its mission and vision. As the college's academic excellence, vibrant

> campus life, and Catholic dimensions continue to be strengthened, so too will its ability to play an increasingly influential role in improving the economic, cultural and social quality of life in central Indiana and wherever Marian College graduates find themselves. (Artifact, 2007)

The campaign, when announced, already had more than $25 million in gifts pledged and had seven goals, each with a financial target. The goals and financial targets were as follows: The Great Teaching and Learning Initiative (increased scholarships, endowed chairs, investing in academic programs) with a target of $16.7 million. Transforming Mathematics and Science Education (preparing new math and sciences teachers for Indiana schools, provide professional development for Indiana's science teachers, prepare a new generation of scientists and healthcare professionals for Indiana's economy) with a target of $8.5 million; Strengthening the "Rebuild My Church" Program (increase San Damiano scholarships, increase students seeking a degree in Catholic Studies, increase number of male students interested in the priesthood, encourage all students to reflect on their future vocation from a theological perspective, strengthen linkages between the college and faith-based institutions throughout the Midwest) with a target goal of $10 million; Expanding the Nursing Program (facilities, scholarships, placements, outreach to underserved populations) with a target of $10.5 million; Enriching the Performing and Visual Arts (expanding degree programs in arts, scholarships, improved facilities, create an additional theatre on-campus) with a target of $5 million; Investing in Athletics (scholarships, unrestricted support, new academic facilities and programs) with a target of $10 million and Enhancing Student Life and Improving Campus Facilities (redesign campus space and update infrastructure and update technology) with a target of $7.5 million.

In the last five years the University has averaged $18.6 million a year in fundraising and exceeded the $68 million goal set in 2007 three years early. Elsener secured the largest gift in the University's history, a $30 million dollar donation to build the Center for Health and Healing Arts. He is known throughout the campus and the community as a dynamic fundraiser. In his presentation at the trustee dinner that marked the tenth anniversary of Elsener's presidency, current board chair, Bill Eckmann, noted, "today the university president's job is to raise dollars. We were living off of a loan from the sisters and our annual gifts were $1 million, last year they were $27 million. Our endowment was $4.3 million and today it is $45 million" (Observation, July 22, 2011). Eckmann added that the institution is now receiving donations from foundations "that had never heard us before" (Observation, July 22, 2011).

On July 1, 2009, Marian College became Marian University. Elsener announced this change with the acknowledgement of a $1 million gift (Interviews, Artifacts, 2011). The *Indianapolis Star*, the city's major newspaper, recognized Elsener's fundraising in an article on January 15, 2010 noting, "In the years since he arrived, enrollment has doubled. Fundraising has soared. The school has already met its goals of raising $68 million by 2012 and has increased that to $100 million" (Artifact, 2010).

A "University": New Programs and Increased Enrollment

Elsener and his administration team are also credited with creating and expanding undergraduate and graduate programs, both academic and extracurricular. New programs since Elsener's arrival include the Academy for Teaching and Learning Leadership, the Marian University/St. Vincent online accelerated nursing partnership, Teach for America and The New Teacher Project, the EcoLab, the Marian Adult Program, the Advanced

Institute for Mathematics and Sciences, Green Chemistry, and Marian's University inaugural football program and marching band.

In 2010, the University reported more than 2,300 full and part-time students, 480 in the Marian Adult Program (MAP). In an intentional decision made by the administration, the number of female students at Marian in 2010 decreased, from 74 percent of the student body in 2005 to 60 percent. The increasing number of male students can be attributed to the adding of a football team with approximately 100 male members (Marian University Magazine, Fall 2010). Most of the students, 1,800 of them, attend the University on the main campus, nearly 50 percent of the traditional age students reside on campus in residence halls or campus houses. Fifty-four percent of full-time students who report a religious preference state that they are Roman Catholic. The overall Catholic population is reported to be 38 percent. (Artifact, Observation, 2011) The University reports that 98 percent of its first year students receive institutional aid (not state, federal or other loans) and 38 percent of their undergraduates received Pell Grants in 2009-10.

Average SAT scores of incoming freshmen have risen by 90 points in recent years, what the University reports as "a clear indicator that Marian's academic stature has elevated to a superior level" (Artifact, 2011). In 2011 the average SAT score was 1015. A current recruitment brochure reports that the University offers eleven varsity sports for men and twelve for women, including nationally recognized golf and cycling teams. Academically, the University consists of five colleges: business, education, liberal arts, mathematics and science, and nursing offering 36 majors, 37 minors, 27 concentrations and one certificate program. Marian boasts of seven "Centers of Learning" including an

honors program, prelaw studies, peace and justice studies and a "Rebuild My Church" center, and over 35 active student clubs and organizations (Artifact, 2011).

One of the most profound changes was announced on January 15, 2010 when Marian released its plans to open a College of Osteopathic Medicine. The board approved the development of the College in March of 2010 and preliminary accreditation for the medical school was granted in the spring of 2011. The college, referred to as MUCOM (Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine), will be only the second medical school in the state of Indiana. The COM is expected to enroll 150 students each year for four years, beginning in the fall of 2013.

Facilities

Marian has seen significant changes and additions to its physical plant since 2001. These changes included a renovation of the Bishop Chartand Memorial Chapel in Marian Hall and the addition of a large San Damiano crucifix over the altar. San Damiano crosses were also placed in the majority of classrooms on campus. Beginning in 2007, Marian has made major physical plant renovations or additions every year since. That year the Physical Education Center received a $3.2 million expansion and renovation including a new fitness center for students. The following year saw the completion of several facilities projects: a new $8 million residence hall opened for 189 students, the first new housing unit since 1967; a $50,000 renovation to an existing building created a Welcome and Alumni Center to greet prospective students and their families and display alumni memorabilia; and, a $400,000 walkway and green space for students.

On September 19, 2009, the first home football game was played at St. Vincent Field. St. Vincent's is a $6.8 million, 3000-seat stadium for the University's football,

soccer and track team events that is also used for May commencement ceremonies. The following year, 2010, campus additions included a $2.2 million expansion of the music center to add studio, practice and class rooms.

Having completed more than $20 million in additions or renovations since Elsener's arrival, 2011 included the plans for further expansion. Marian announced plans for the building of another residence hall and the $50 million Center for Health and Healing Arts. Groundbreaking for the two buildings will take place before the close of 2011. Moreover, in April of 2011, the University announced that they would be taking over the management of the Lake Sullivan Sports Complex, a city-owned park close to the campus. Marian will invest more than $2 million in capital improvements over the next several years and will assume all operational costs, approximately $70,000 a year.

Leadership

When Jack Snyder, the board chair emeritus, talked about Elsener's leadership he stated that the president was "a strong leader, he likes to be surrounded by other leaders" and emphasized that the entire leadership at Marian, including the board, cabinet and academic deans had changed significantly since 2001. Snyder commented that he had been associated with Marian for 20 years and in his history, "the current board is the strongest" and its' "dedication and support are unsurpassed" (Observation, July 22, 2011).

The University's biography of their president reads:

> In addition to serving on the Marian University Board of Trustees, Elsener has been asked to serve as a member- and in some cases as president—of many community boards and executive committee. Currently, he serves the Indiana State Board of Education, Governor Mitch Daniel's Educational Roundtable, Ascension Health Sponsors Council, Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Greater

> Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities, The Indiana Academy, Council of Presidents for the Mid-Central College Conference, Independent Colleges of Indiana Board and Executive Committee and School Choice Indiana. In all of these roles, Elsener has developed a reputation of being committed to improving education for all children, young adults, and adult learners. He is committed to raising funds for disadvantaged students, one of the highlights of his service. In addition, he is committed to programs that advance the academic achievement through better teacher and principal preparedness, and those that advance literacy. (Artifact, 2011)

Snyder noted that Elsener's appointments and service to other boards "reflect (his) outstanding leadership. The recognition he has achieved reflects on the high profile that Marian (now) occupies" (Observation, July 22, 2011).

The University's rendition of his biography also states: "Elsener has successfully recruited and retained several committed trustees, a dynamic cabinet, innovative deans and department heads, and other qualified staff" (Artifact, 2011). In his tenure, Elsener has created a cabinet that includes a vice president for mission effectiveness (this position is established by the SSFO and the appointment is approved by them; this will be further discussed in the section on Relationships with the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg), an executive vice president/provost who oversees all of the academic programs and services, technology services and student life; a vice president for administration and general counsel; a vice president for finance and business operations; a vice president for institutional advancement; a vice president for marketing and communications, a vice president for enrollment management and the most recent hire, a vice president/dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine. The president also has an executive assistant who reports directly to him and two associate vice presidents, who report to the provost but have regular contact with the president and serve on the administrative council, an expanded cabinet. With the exception of the Sister who serves in the capacity of vice

president for mission effectiveness, all of the cabinet members have been hired during the time Elsener has been president. The Sister is the former Congregational Minister who encouraged the SSFO to approve the loans to the College in 2000.

While hiring for senior leadership positions, Elsener developed a set of questions that have since become a part of the executive hiring process. Orchestrated through the human resources office, all serious candidates are asked to respond to a series of four questions before being invited for an on-campus interview. These questions are as follows: (1) What is the role of a Catholic University in the 21st Century? (2) What do you consider to be the greatest challenges in higher education at this time? (3) Describe how the talents and personal and professional background that you bring to this position have prepared you to be effective in maintaining and furthering the vision, mission and values of Marian University. (4) What metrics will you employ to evaluate success of the (insert specific department)? (Artifact, 2011)

Catholic Identity

One of the most significant changes Marian University has seen since Elsener's appointment to the presidency has been the revival of its Catholic identity. Speaking at the trustee retreat dinner, current board member and former interim president, Tony Watt commented that after Vatican II, "many colleges wandered from their roots. We de-emphasized our faith thinking we would attract more students." In doing so Catholic institutions, Watt stated, "lost their identity and purpose;" then he added, "Thankfully, under Dan's leadership and Beth's support, Marian University has seen a rebirth. In fact, one of the goals from the first retreat is Catholic identity" (Observation, July 22, 2011).

The Catholic identity of the campus is clear. Watt commented that Elsener insisted that religious symbols on campus be visible and they are. In a walk through campus a visitor will notice the "Building a Great Catholic University" banners, the San Damiano crucifixes in the classrooms, the statue of the Blessed Mother in the main entrance to Marian Hall (the main administration building), the statue of St. Francis of Assisi, and posters announcing prayer groups and faith opportunities for students. In addition to the visible signs, the Catholic identity and mission are evident in its curricular and co curricular programming. The institution received a substantial Lily Foundation grant to start the "Rebuild My Church" initiative, which led to the establishment of the San Damiano Scholars program. A selective program, its more than 100 undergraduates receive scholarship money to attend Marian and discover how to integrate their faith with their profession. The University also sponsors a house of discernment for women and working with the Archbishop of Indianapolis, founded a seminary on campus. The student affairs staff utilizes the document, "Principles of Good Practice in Student Affairs in Catholic Colleges" as a guiding document. The new medical building will have a chapel and the new residence hall will have prayer space. Throughout the campus there are visible signs of religious artwork, including a piece in the library designed by Elsener.

One of the president's personal goals is to build a proposed $300,000 rosary walk and garden, a tribute to the University's patroness. Watt commented about the rosary walk, "this is Dan's dream, when completed no one will ever doubt this is a Catholic campus" and added that the seminary "is the most visible sign of Dan's success" (Observation, July 22, 2011). Watt added that he believes that the "Rebuilding My Church" focus created an environment in which the "other academic disciplines took

note" and this increased focus on academic excellence had a major impact on curricular programs. "Without 'Rebuild My Church' we would not have the medical school," he added (Observations, July 22 & 23, 2011).

The Relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis Oldenburg

It is essential when studying the role of the CHE president to understand the current juridical relationship, both civil and canonical, between the institution they lead and its sponsoring congregation. Today, in 2011, Marian University and its founding congregation, are no longer one organization, but they continue to be intricately related. The 2010 revised *Amended and Restated Bylaws of Marian University, Inc.* lists the purpose of the University as:

> The purposes of Marian University, Inc. (The "Corporation" or the "University") shall be stated in its Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, as amended from time to time. The Corporation shall have such powers as now or may hereafter be granted by the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1991, (the "Act"), which subject to the terms of the Sponsorship Agreement with the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Inc., attached hereto as Exhibit A. (Artifact, 2011)

The opening statement of the *Sponsorship Agreement* between the SSFO and Marian University reads:

> Marian University, Indianapolis Indiana is a nonprofit corporation having Trustees who are morally and legally responsible for the operation of the University. The Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, are the owners of substantial assets of the University and are responsible for sponsorship and reserved powers, as defined in this Sponsorship Agreement. The Trustees, according to the amended Articles of Incorporation and amended By-Laws, are charged with the general management of the institution. (Artifact, 2011)

The official agreement outlines the relationship that exists between the SSFO to be represented by their governing board, known as the General Council, and the University, represented by the Board of Trustees. Both parties agree to identify and

promote the University as a Franciscan Catholic institution of higher education and to pursue its mission in accordance with the Mission Statement of the SSFO. The mission of the University is stated as follows: To be a Catholic University dedicated to excellent teaching and learning in the Franciscan and liberal arts traditions. The mission of the SSFO reads:

> We, the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, Oldenburg, are women of prayer, committed to the Gospel values as lived by Saint Francis and Mother Theresa. From our life in community we are sent to extend the mission of Jesus through our presence and service. Enlivened by a spirit of justice, reconciliation and peace, we collaborate with others in responding to the needs of the world. (Artifact, 2011)

The document states that the General Council and the board of trustees take mutual responsibility for the mission, for maintaining a positive relationship with the Archbishop and the Church in the Indianapolis Archdiocese and to address social justice concerns. The Sisters are responsible to the board for: bearing juridic responsibility, defining their mission (from which the University develops its own mission), for assisting in board orientation and for encouraging their Sisters to participate as trustees or faculty or staff, who will "contribute to the excellence of Marian University" (Artifact, 2011).

The board of trustees are responsible to the SSFO for: securing written approval prior to a merger, consolidation or dissolution of the Corporation, adopting the final slate of candidates to be interviewed for the presidency, consideration of any individual for selection as in interim president; and prior to leasing, purchasing, selling, abandoning or arranging for an encumbrance of property with a value of more than a million dollars. They are also to consult with the Sisters before a decision to dismiss or not to rehire the president and for reporting to them on a timely basis the following: annual state of the

University including how the mission is being lived out; annual audited statements, national accreditation reports and trustee and executive committee meeting minutes.

The Sponsorship Agreement is a five-year agreement and also outlines specific roles for members of the Congregation including: the Congregational Minister of the SSFO serves as the Vice President of the Board, the Congregational Treasurer serves as a member of the finance committee and the Chair of the Benefits Committee shall usually be a SSFO. The Agreement also clarifies the role of the SSFO in regards to mission effectiveness:

> The Vice President for Mission Effectiveness is either a member of the Congregation or another individual, appointed by the Congregation and employed by the University. She is responsible to the President of the University. She collaborates with the president in integrating the mission of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, with that of Marian University. (Artifact, 2011)

Though not designated in the Sponsorship Agreement, the current By-Laws require that "Not fewer than seven (7) trustees of the Board of Trustees shall be members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Inc. or shall be individuals selected by the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg" (Artifact, 2011).

The Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg Today

In July of 2011 there are 238 vowed members of the SSFO, approximately 100 of who are retired or semi-retired. Active members continue to serve as teachers, parish ministers, directors of religious education, social workers, missionaries, counselors, administrators, spiritual directors, farm workers, cooks, hospital and campus ministers in communities throughout the United States and in Papua New Guinea. The Congregation lists three corporate ministries: Oldenburg Academy, a co-educational Catholic college

preparatory high school located on the Motherhouse campus; Michaela Farm (named after one of the first three women to greet Sister Theresa Hackelmeir upon her arrival in Indiana), a 300-acre farm in Oldenburg; and Marian University. The Sisters also sponsor a Franciscan community for women in St. Louis, Missouri, a prayer lodge in Montana, and raise money for their missionary work in New Guinea. Referring to these endeavors, a brochure on the SSFO reads: "Along the way several places have been established that are sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis. They are institutions and programs but mostly they are places of Franciscanism" (Artifact, 2011).

Marian University recognizes its history and its foundresses in its By-Laws, on its website and in a brochure entitled, *Our Franciscan Heritage*. The brochure closes its section on the history of the SSFO with the following statement:

> For more than 150 years, in the spirit of the young Mother Theresa Hackelmeir, the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis have continued to venture courageously from Oldenburg to carry out the Catholic Church's vital mission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ (p. 6).

The SSFO defines the institution as Catholic and as Franciscan. The declining number of vowed members available to serve as leaders or role models on campus in Indianapolis suggests the need for institutional leaders to support and advance the Catholic mission and Franciscan heritage of the institution now and in the future.

The University's Surrounding Environment

All universities, including CIHE exist within the culture of education in their surrounding communities. Marian University is located ten minutes from downtown Indianapolis, which is the 14th largest city in America and the state capital of Indiana. It is the only Catholic institution of higher education in the city. There are seven Catholic

high schools in Indianapolis and 25 Catholic high schools in the state of Indiana. Other Catholic institutions of higher education in the state include: the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, St. Joseph University in Rensselaer, the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne, Holy Cross College in Notre Dame, St. Mary of the Woods College in St. Mary of the Woods, Saint Meinard, in St. Meindard, Ancilla College in Donaldson and Calumet College of St. Joseph in Whiting. Other institutions in Indianapolis include the University of Indianapolis, the University of Indianapolis Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Ivy Tech Community College and Butler University. Other in-state institutions Marian utilizes as benchmarks include the University of Evansville, Franklin College and DePauw University, all of which are private.

The University resides in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The diocese serves central and southern Indiana with 151 parishes and 72 schools and has been led by Archbishop Daniel Buechlin since 1992. Catholics are estimated to comprise about 13 percent of the population in Indiana.

Of note is the fact that Eli Lilly Corporation and its foundation are headquartered in the City of Indianapolis. In 2011 the University received a $1 million gift from the foundation to support the construction of the new Health and Healing Arts Center. In a University press release, the president of the foundation, Robert L. Smith is quoted:

> The university's college of osteopathic medicine, which is slated to open in the fall of 2013, will enroll 150 students each year, many of whom will become primary care physicians. Indiana will be short 5000 physicians by 2020, and will need 2000 new primary care physicians. In Indiana, 57 of the 92 counties are medically underserved. (Artifact, 2011)

In addition to the interest in healthcare needs in the state, there are some interesting things happening in education. Since 2006 an independent organization

known as *The Mind Trust* has invested more than $17 million to dramatically improve public education for underserved children by empowering education entrepreneurs to develop or expand transformative education initiatives in Indianapolis (Artifact, 2011). The organization partners with local and state officials to create the best environment for reform and supports research on critical issues, advancing innovative solutions and engaging policy makers. The Mind Trust's "Grow What Works" fundraising campaign's kickoff luncheon in May 2011 was sponsored in part by Marian University and was attended by local and state leaders in education.

The headline on the June 7, 2011 edition of the *Indianapolis Star* read: "Skip senior year, go right to college—or not?" and the article explains that in April the Indiana legislature launched a plan designed by Governor Mitch Daniels that allows for high school students who have completed their core requirements by the end of their junior year to skip their senior year and go directly to college. The article reports that the money the state plans to save when students finish high school early, will become scholarship money for those wishing to attend college. According to the article, Indiana's college completion rate ranked 23rd in the nation in 2007 with only slightly more than half of the students at public four-year schools graduating in six years and only 29 percent doing so in four years. The article notes: "The Indiana Commission on Higher Education is working toward having the state in the top 10 by 2015" (Artifact, 2011).

Summarizing the Setting

There have been significant changes at Marian College since Daniel J. Elsener arrived as its president in 2001. Many of them have been noted in the narrative above.

Jack Snyder, an Indianapolis attorney, who is credited with recruiting Elsener to lead Marian when he was board chair, probably best summarizes it. In the Fall 2009: *Marian Magazine*, Snyder is quoted as follows:

> Marian University has certainly hit its stride and is attracting recognition and compliments from many people, internally and externally. What is that about? What happened to stimulate this growth, achievement and attention? What was the foundation for this tremendous progress and development?
>
> Like most "turn around" situations, this story begins with changes in leadership. The leadership changes were profound and took several forms. First and most important was the arrival of young, dynamic, focused, talented, hard-working new president, Daniel J. Elsener. Additional significant leadership changes took place in the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff. In some cases this meant the arrival of new people. In others it meant seasoned veterans "rising to meet new challenges" set by the new leadership.
>
> A turning point occurred in 2001 at the Board of Trustees retreat at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, at the start of Elsener's employment. The board focused on something very important yet very fundamental; identifying and articulating the mission and vision of Marian College, now Marian University, an institution that traces its roots to 1851. The full significance of this focus on mission and vision became apparent in the following years, as the institution reclaimed its Catholic identity and made many decisions that fully reflect its Franciscan heritage. It was a move "back to the future" in many important ways.
>
> New mission and vision statements were adopted based on reflective and thoughtful discussion at and following the retreat. A conscious decision was made to embrace more empathetically and consistently the Catholic and Franciscan heritage of the institution. Instrumental parts of that were to strengthen the relationship with the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and to deepen the relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana. It was recognized that over time the institution had drifted from its original direction in ways that hindered its growth and success.
>
> Shortly after the retreat, the very successful "Rebuild My Church" program was started, with a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. The renovation of Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel in Marian Hall, including the addition of a large San Damiano cross, was an integral part of the "Rebuild my Church" program. The message was clear: the future growth of the university would be squarely based on its Catholic and Franciscan tradition and heritage. (Artifact, 2011).

Chapter Four has provided the necessary context for understanding the tenure of Daniel J. Elsener as a lay president in Catholic higher education and the success the institution has achieved under his leadership. Chapter Five utilizes the data collected in interviews, observations and meetings with the president's cabinet to address the research questions.

Chapter Five
The Lay President

President Daniel J. Elsener has completed ten years of service as the president of Marian University. Through interviews, observations, artifact and document review, and meetings with his cabinet over a four-month period there emerged an in depth understanding of how he understands his role as the lay president of this institution at this particular time in its history. This chapter utilizes the data collected to reveal (1) How this lay president of an institution sponsored by a religious congregation understands his role (2) How he was prepared to for his role as the leader of a Catholic institution (3) How he understands his role specifically related to supporting and advancing the mission and (4) What type of preparation does he believes he should have had.

The office of the president of Marian University is located in the former home of James Allison, one of the founder's of the Indianapolis Speedway. Known as Allison Mansion, the building is large and spacious. When the Sisters first purchased what was known as the Riverdale Estate and moved their junior college and normal school to Indianapolis from Oldenburg in 1937, Allison Mansion housed the library, administrative offices and classrooms for the new Marian College, and was the sleeping quarters for the Sisters who worked and taught there. The history of the University in Indianapolis has its roots in this building.

President Elsener's office is located on the second floor of the mansion and is adjoined by an office for his assistant and a conference room, on the wall of the conference room is a San Damiano crucifix, a symbol of the institution's Franciscan charism. On the wall in Elsener's office is a large picture of the Blessed Mother, the

patroness of the University. His understanding of leadership is clearly tied to his faith. In an official publication of the University the following is said about him:

> Throughout his leadership, Elsener has given a very generous effort, bold vision, commitment to transformational education, stewardship, and deep faith in God's call to be a transcendental influence in the world. President Daniel J. Elsener has made the integration of faith, values, ethics and character development a central priority in all aspects of the University's education, campus life, operations and vision. The ultimate goal that President has articulated is for Marian to become a great Catholic University. (Artifact, 2011)

The idea of a Great Catholic University, the current theme of Marian University's plan for the future, is a design of Elsener's. In a letter on the University's website, Elsener tells the story found in Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth*, in which Follet recounts the construction of a cathedral in England. Then Elsener adds:

> The bishops who commissioned the cathedrals, and the stone masons who build them, all had faith, a belief that what they were doing would make a difference, and the commitment to do it well. They expected and planned for a multi-generational project—in many cases, the man who began the cathedral by laying the first course of stone never lived to see its spires. Based on a profound vision, faith, and commitment, they took a long-term view and sustained the effort. Like those stone cutters, we must take a long-term approach and personal commitment to **envision, build and operate** a great Catholic university (his emphasis). (Artifact, 2011)

Following the board's recognition of him at the their trustee dinner in July, Elsener came forward to accept their gratitude. Speaking to his wife, his board and his cabinet he stated, *"This has been a tremendous experience. This has been a story of faith, big ideas, people and courage. You could sum this up, I wouldn't be here if it wasn't a calling"* (Observation, July 22, 2011). This is how Elsener understands his role as president of Marian University: as a vocational call to be a Catholic educator.

How Does the President of an Institution Sponsored by a Religious Congregation Understand His Role?

During personal interviews and observations, the president spoke many times about how he incorporated his faith and prayer life into his work; it is one of the first thing he tells me about himself and it led to a question about vocation and a "calling" to the presidency.

Faith and "The Call"

President Elsener told me about his journey to the Marian presidency in the first interview. I asked him, if he believed he had been "called" to the position. Elsener knew about Marian College because he was working and living in Indianapolis and his eldest daughter was attending college there when he was approached by the board chair to consider the presidency. He prefaced his response by telling me, *"I have only told five or six people this story, I used to not tell anybody, because I didn't want to sound like a wacko"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). Then he explained how the chair of the Board at the time, Jack Snyder, came to see him while he was working for the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation. Elsener knew the college was in financial trouble, he could tell by the buildings and the look of the campus, but he says of the visit:

> *When you work with someone that wealthy, everyone wants to come over, which is great, and I knew Mr. Snyder, he's a great guy, he is chairman emeritus now of Marian, he goes through the whole thing* (referring to the state of the College*).* (Interview, April 15, 2011)

Mr. Snyder laid out the circumstances of the College and that the board was looking for a new president. He indicated that a number of people had all said Elsener's name in unison. He was asking Elsener to enter the search. Elsener commented to me:

"I finally have a savings account, my wife and I have nine kids, all the kids in Catholic school, three kids in Catholic colleges," when the board chair left that day he told his assistant, *"he is a crazy guy"* but he went home and told his wife about the visit from the chair (Interview, April 15, 2011). They did not talk about it much at the time but the thought would come back to him several months later. In the middle of a snowstorm he drove his teenage son across town to play in a basketball game at a parish gymnasium. He arrived early and went into the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at the Church. He shared with me:

> *Now, I can't say I hadn't thought about Marian a little bit, because I didn't want to see that place close, I mean we were in trouble. The Sisters had lent us $2 million so that the bank wouldn't foreclose. This was 2000. We're in 2011. I didn't know the depths of it, but I knew.* (Interview, April 15, 2011)

At this point in the interview Elsener shared with me that while he was praying in the Chapel, *"The Blessed Sacrament was like screaming in my ear, 'Marian, Marian'"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). After his son finished with basketball, they drove home and he began preparing Sunday evening dinner with his wife, a regular family event in the Elsener home. He explained:

> *So I get home and there is this commotion, potatoes flying all over. Our kitchen's like this (he describes the layout of the kitchen). Beth's over here at the stove and I am over here at this counter, back to the sink here. Oh no, I think I was doing the gravy, she was doing the potatoes. So there's a commotion. I said, 'Beth, I can't get something out of my mind,' so I can't turn around, I didn't even turn around, and she said, 'I can't either.' I didn't say about Marian. And, she says, 'Marian'…so this is all kind of weird…so she said, 'it would be terrible if that placed closed.'* (Interview, April 15, 2011)

As with his first visit from the board member, he did not think about Marian immediately following that conversation, but Tuesday of that week he received another visit from a

Marian representative. He was once again asked to consider entering the presidential search. He responded:

> *I said, 'I'll make you a deal. I will get through a couple of stages with you folks.' I am 100 percent mission driven, but I am not an idiot. I will make decisions. (The institution) didn't get there by accident, so things are going to happen. 'I don't want everyone to say we are going to hold hands on this thing or that will get really ugly.' He's like, 'fine, we'll do all that.' So, I was thinking those guys aren't going to call.* (Interview, April 15, 2011)

The call did come, however and Elsener noted, *"The Holy Spirit was with me."* When he shared his decision with his former employer he told her, *"I think they are calling me"* and then he added: *"So they offered me less money, it's a stretch for them. What business do I have doing this? So, I decided to take the contract"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). He added:

> *I tell you that because I had a helluva job; I had a corner office overlooking the city, private planes or first class. I had nine kids, this lady is paying me more, she paid me like a corporate person, anyway, I knew Marian was struggling, but I finally had a savings account, my wife and I have nine kids.* (Interview, April 15, 2011)

Later on in the interview, after Elsener talked about his early days of leadership at Marian, he reflected back on the story of his calling to the institution and he remarked, *"now, we've studied things too by the way, this is not just from the heart. That story's crazy when God's talking to me, that's why I don't tell people that story, it chokes me up"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). But, he also remembers that on a visit to the Church of the Annunciation in Holy Land several years before receiving the call from Marian that he believed he would be called to something different. He told me, *"That night, writing in my journal, (I knew) it was time for me to lead something bigger. So, I didn't know what the plan was, but it (would be) something different"* (Interview, April 15, 2011).

One of the first things that one comes to know about Daniel Elsener is that he is a Catholic. This was evident in the interviews and observations and emerged from every observation and discussion. His understanding of his role as the lay president of a Catholic institution is that he himself is first and foremost a practicing Catholic. Being outwardly Catholic is at the core of who he is as a person and transcends into his role as president. One of the distinctively Catholic practices that Elsener demonstrates openly is his commitment to praying the rosary.

In our first interview, he proclaimed, "*I have a big devotion to the Blessed Mother, I have a little talk. I pray the rosary a lot. So, I have a little talk. I have written it out for myself"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). Throughout my visits and interviews, he referred often to his devotion to the Blessed Mother and to praying the rosary, something he stated he typically does several times a day. He would tell me this again in our interview in June:

> *The thing about it is, I think the example I told you, I pray the Joyful Mysteries a lot because of the leadership prayer. God called you to do it right? You do it with joy. Remember Elizabeth? The baby leapt in the womb, that scripture? The nativity thing is about humility, service; you don't come in glory, keep it simple. Presentation: whatever you do, present to God first. If you get lost, you know where you'll find me, in his house. I use that theme a lot, I think it was the sense of service and humility. The other thing, the Blessed Mother did when Peter, supposedly the rock, was denying Jesus, it seems like through thick and thin she was consistent, and administration is like that. It's a ministry. You're a minister, you're not there for yourself, take the lumps for the good, it would be easy to be popular, ignore it or go the other way, go ahead an make the tough call.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

His devotion to the Blessed Mother, to praying the rosary, and to the Catholic mission of the institution he leads is clearly evident in all that he is. He understands his role as president from a distinctly Catholic perspective and there is no separation between

his Catholicism and his leadership role. He accepted "the call" to become Marian University's president because it is a Catholic institution and he continues in the role because he believes in its Catholic mission. He would not be the president of Marian if it were not a Catholic institution. Though he is a lay president, his Catholicism is as integral as if he were a vowed member of a religious congregation, however, his identity is not as a Franciscan—the charism of the founding congregation of the institution. He refers to himself as a Catholic, but does not talk about being a Franciscan. This raises an interesting question for future lay presidents and the role of their understanding of not only the institution's Catholic identity but their additional understanding of an institution's heritage and historical connection to a specific charism. The theme of the lay president's personal Catholic identity and the connection to a charism will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

How Was the Lay President Prepared for His Role as Leader of the Catholic Mission?

The University has an official biography of Daniel J. Elsener and it lists his education, credentials and current leadership posts. His academic preparation includes a bachelor's degree in political science from Nebraska Wesleyan University, a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Nebraska and additional graduate level work from Kansas State University, Washburn University, Wichita State University, Kansas Newman University, St. Meinrad and other continuing education programs. Prior to his appointment to the Marian presidency, Elsener served as the Executive Director of the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation, whose headquarters is in Indianapolis. He has also served as a teacher, high school principal and superintendent of

Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Wichita in Kansas and the Secretary/Executive Director for Stewardship and Development and Secretary Executive Director, Office of Education for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He currently serves on a number of community and boards (described in detail in Chapter Four).

I was interested in Elsener's own perspective on his preparation to lead a Catholic institution of higher education and it became the focus of our interview in June. When asked about his Catholic and leadership formation, he started with the Catholic piece and began with his family's Catholic heritage:

> *(With nine children of his own) I think about that a lot. Well, you know, we grew up in a Catholic home. My dad's people came from the old country—Germany and Switzerland, so my grandmother, who lived to 99—was an exceptional human being—smart, came here in her later twenties, met a fella from Switzerland in Omaha, Nebraska. They were very committed to live the Catholic faith and to Catholic education.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

After talking about his father's family, he said, "*My mom's family, they were Irish Catholics—it was a big part of my parents' life."* In his typical story-telling fashion, he followed with a story about his own father and how his father had been an influence on his understanding of what it meant to be a Catholic:

> *He had to work pretty hard to make ends meet, but we had one car. The car was broken. We lived in Omaha, Nebraska and I still know the route, I know the neighborhood, because by the time we left there, we were the only white family on our block, but the car was broken. It was a tough winter. It was going to be a week or two before he could get the money together to fix it and it was a terrible tough winter. We had snow. Snow stacked up, seemed like to my eyeballs, and there's five boys and a little girl in my family. My dad, and all five boys, we walked and you know, this is not one of these stories where we walked up the hill both ways, but it really was up and down these hills in snow and ice. But you walked to MASS on Sunday. What would they do today? Well, the snow is bad, and the car is broken, we will take this Sunday off. But, my dad didn't do a lot—much preaching, but he was, he said his prayers before meals, we went to Mass, went to Mass, I mean we were out fishing Sunday morning, you go to Mass, damn snowstorm, no car, you WALK to Mass. You're a little boy, you get your boots*

> *on, you get your coat on, I mean it was a long walk, it wasn't easy and it was cold, you went to Mass. That's a simple thing you might say, the modern catechists might not be overly impressed, but his actions were*…(Interview, June 6, 2011).

President Elsener spoke about his own Catholic education as part of his Catholic formation. He attended Catholic schools from grade school to high school and then chose a non-Catholic institution for his undergraduate work. Speaking about his own experience in a Catholic grade school, he put it in the context of the time, the 1960s. He told me:

> *I loved my Catholic education in the sense that it was a time when I was in grade school, that the school was too small. They had split sessions. I think they started bringing in anybody that could teach. It was the sixties, and I think that, it probably wasn't the highest quality. I had a hearing problem when I was little, so I was learning…I was in a class of like 50 kids, so I could watch someone's lips.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

He continued to talk about his Catholic education and when he was speaking about his Catholic high school experience in Lincoln, Nebraska in the 1970s, I asked if he had had courses in theology. He responded that the high school had religion classes and added:

> *The religion courses—the bishop there—thought all his young priests should teach, so they just threw these guys in, young priests to teach. Frankly, I was, you know. Vatican II came in when I was in fifth grade, that's when they started doing a lot of feelings and all that. And the high school was kind of disjointed. That was still the bishop; he just threw those priests in there and they didn't always show up and they didn't really now how to teach, you know. It was pretty average.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

Elsener's official biography reports that after graduating from high school in Lincoln, Nebraska that he attended Nebraska Wesleyan as an undergraduate. I asked him how he found his way to Wesleyan. He spoke of his parents' influence, and how they

expected all of their children to go to college, but did not really help them with deciding where to go or how to pay for the experience. He shared with me:

> *Turned out I was a pretty good high school athlete, but not one of those superstars where like Notre Dame would come around to talk to you. And, that was pretty clear, that I was going to be a good high school athlete, but I wasn't going to be one of these people that becomes one after, so I could walk on at a big university, try to play football there, I could get scholarships to Division II universities, and Wesleyan's a Division III university. They just give out academic and leadership scholarships and need-based. I was eligible for some need-based based on my parent's income and they gave me some other scholarships, like based on leadership, whatever, because I had not great SATs. They were good enough, I had good enough grades, nothing great, I was just one of those kids, you know.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

Though I did not directly ask the president if there had been any particular mentors during his college years, he mentioned two particular people who had had an influence on him, neither was Catholic. One was his football coach, the man who had recruited him to Wesleyan, and the other a faculty member in political science. He said of his college football coach:

> *So this guy from Wesleyan had an influence on my decision. 'If you come here you will not be red-shirted, you would play every down unless you go lazy on me. Every down, every play, you get to play four years, you get a great education and we really want you here.'*

Elsener continued:

> *And I did. I started every down of every game, all four years. My last year I just played football so I ended up with quite a good opportunity and then I got around a bunch of good liberal arts professors and (the football coach) was a paragon of virtue, no cussing. You could cuss, but he didn't like it, a lot of coaches in college are pretty crass, unfortunately. I remember the decision. There were two groups of football players, there were football players who chewed tobacco and drank a lot of beer and raised hell. Then there was a group that was pre-med, pre-law; they were all good students and I latched in with that other group. Boy, was that a good decision. That was the first time in my life I really saw a fork in the road.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

Elsener continued to talk about where that fork in the road led him and he shared with me that he got more involved academically after making a decision to do so. Specifically, he connected with a political science instructor, who he noted was a Christian Scientist whom he worked for at the college. The president commented about this Wesleyan professor:

> *He really called me out, he said, 'you're an educator.' I went to the prison with him and taught. He was only there for two years. He was too busy. This guy was really nice to me, taught me that I could do anything. I don't know if this is what he said, but he saw things in me*. (Interview, June 6, 2011)

After graduating from Wesleyan with a bachelor's degree in political science, Elsener began looking for teaching positions. He explained:

> *I went to Wesleyan for football, but I had passion for my subject. I had interviews with a couple of schools, had two or three offers right away. One was a Catholic school for a $1000 less, which back then was a king's ransom. We were getting married, and, we took the one that had lesser pay and less insurance, in Omaha. I think a lot of my faith formation was teaching in a Catholic environment. We had Franciscan nuns, Marian priests and brothers, lay people too—but the school was well led.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

At this point in the interview, Elsener continued to share his journey with me, and it is clear that the Catholic high school he chose to teach at had a significant influence on him. He began by talking about the lead administrator at the school, placing the leader and the school in the culture of the time. He stated passionately:

> *The chief executive was quite an example to watch for the late 70s, early 80s. Catholic schools were diminishing and our school was expanding, packed to the gills. Shirt and tie, taught religious seriously, now it wasn't ultra conservative, crazy stuff, but it was clearly Catholic. Couldn't do without it because I watched the liberal Catholic school on the hill go from 1200 to closing and ours was 1300 and packed*. (Interview, June 6, 2011)

He elaborated, and began to describe for me what I understood to be what he would eventually bring to the collegiate setting at Marian:

> *We had identity. We had a commitment to excellent teaching, we had curriculum that was very tight, there wasn't a lot of bullshit. We didn't put up with bad behavior, we loved our students. There was a lot of institutional pride in the place and we took care of the facility. And we raised some money*. (Interview, June 6, 2011).

Clearly, the chief administrator's style and expectation for his school had made an impression on Elsener but Elsener had made an impression on him as well. The president continued with his story about his first teaching job at the Catholic high school in Omaha and the impact the administrator had on him:

> *So, he called me in November. We didn't talk too much, but he was like the superintendent of the whole school system. So, he said---so, I am only there a few months, I didn't know what he was calling me in for, and I was standing on tables, doing crazy stuff. I thought he was going to tell me to stop standing—so I didn't really know what the hell he wanted. He said: 'You know something, you are really an unbelievable teacher.' He said: 'You know what I think you should do? I want you to do something for me.' So, 'what's that?' 'I want you to start getting your education to become a principal.'*

Elsener paused for a moment and then added:

> *So, I am 22-23 looking at this guy. He said, 'You know, we've got to think about the talent and I am not going to be here forever, so who is going to take over? So we have to start getting guys ready.' So I started right away.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

At this point in the interview Elsener talked about how he was elected to the high school's administrative council, one of two faculty members from a faculty of 70 or more, and his experience fundraising with the faculty for the high school. He refers to finishing up his master's degree, but no specifics as to where, though we know from his biography that he completed a master's degree in education administration from the University of Nebraska. He talked next about how he contemplated a principalship when he was still in his twenties:

> *I am working for the football coach; he's advancing me. I am like his top assistant. I said 'coach, I can't'—you know, coaches are so narrow, they are*

> *so focused, you know. I was thinking coach in high school, maybe college. I watched big time athletics; that is also a leadership position. I loved helping young people. I loved seeming them grow up. I was imperfect sometimes, yelling too much because I was passionate to get to the top. But, I love it, I love the enterprise and so, I liked government. I liked leadership; I liked being around people who had bigger, broader concerns in the world.*

He continued:

> *So, I made a decision that I probably should go ahead and be a principal like I thought so many years ago and be a fulltime leader and I probably ought to get moving, my family was growing, I had the ability I thought, I saw myself in that position. I had no idea what it was frankly. I was totally naïve, but I knew that Catholic schools needed, I felt called again. I was agitated to watch what was going on*. (Interview, June 6, 2011)

Elsener reflected a bit on his decision to seek a principal's job versus pursue a different career path in leadership by continuing with coaching, something he enjoyed:

> *I started my search. I told the football coach I wasn't going to coach next year. They wanted me to sign a contract and I said, 'I gotta tell you, on conscious, I think I am supposed to go on.' There were positions there (in Omaha) I am sure they would have hired me as an assistant principal or something, but I remember thinking, I don't think I will be much of an assistant principal, doing a lot of details. I don't know that, I mean I want to lead the institution. I don't know why I thought I could do it.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

During that year, he was hired to be the principal of a Catholic high school in Topeka, Kansas. His experiences there increased his understanding of Catholic education, leadership and fundraising skills. Then, a short time later, in his early thirties he was hired to be the superintendent of Catholic schools in Wichita, Kansas where his leadership and fundraising abilities continued to evolve. While in Wichita, Elsener, and his wife, felt the call to move again. He elaborated:

> *Beth and I were saying in December, we are not going to be in Wichita forever. I am a young guy, 39, 40 next year. So, I make a phone call to the NCEA and said, so, look I have been a principal, a superintendent, I want to be the superintendent of one of the ten largest Catholic school systems. That would be places where I could make a big difference, and I thought maybe in the next one or two years something would come up. So, I started getting calls. We*

> *already had eight kids and I was looking at the cost of living in these big cities and it wasn't very attractive. And, I had continued graduate school by the way, I didn't have a dissertation, but I took a lot of courses at Kansas Sate, Wichita State, and Indianapolis called. I remember I walked out the front door that morning, I said I am not going there, we don't know anybody there*. (Interview, June 6, 2011).

Elsener did accept the position as the superintendent of Catholic schools in Indianapolis and later was asked by the Archbishop to work with the Archdiocese in a development role. It was during this time, while working for the Indianapolis Archdiocese that he made the trip to the Holy Land and wrote in his journal that he thought he was ready for *"something else"* (Interview, June 6, 2011). That something else would be to accept a position as executive director of a charitable foundation. Referring to the role he accepted prior to the Marian presidency, he stated, *"I was never committed to that. I enjoyed it. I got paid well"* (Interview, June 6, 2011); but, *"I knew almost from day one that it was an in-between"* (Interview, April 15, 2011).

Towards the end of the June 6th interview Elsener summed up his Catholic formation with these words:

> *All through this, working with Catholic teachers, stewardship, you get a chance for retreats, spiritual formation, read a lot of documents, work a lot with bishops. My adult life is where I got a substance of my faith, my faith was a feeling, and I don't want to belittle it, it was a feeling and a cultural thing and the Eucharist, I knew the value of that, but I didn't have intellectual substance. I took twelve hours of philosophy, even at a Methodist university, that helps you. I was interested in political philosophy and others.*

Elsener did not contribute his strong connection to the faith to any one person or experience. His leadership skills seem to be naturally inherent in his personality and he learned what he liked and disliked about successful organizations from working in ones that he admired or found to be lacking in leadership or mission. When referring to one position he held in Catholic education, he commented:

> *My high school principal (job) was really tough. I was 29 years old, the school didn't have any money, the staff didn't have any mission—sloppy, slovenly behavior—the curriculum was all over hell. The person who had been there before me was a iron-fisted nun, she'd run off about 2-300 kids. So, I really went totally on passion, prayer. I had no, well, I had God-given talent, but I didn't know what the hell I was doing, let's face it.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

What emerged from the interviews was President Elsener's vocation as a Catholic educator. This is the essential element of how he was prepared to be the president of a Catholic institution. Even though he had never previously worked in higher education, nor does he have extensive theological training or a terminal degree, he has been successful in the role of the presidency and in leading the institution's Catholic mission, as evidenced in the document and artifact review, because of his commitment to, and background in, Catholic education specifically. It is important to note that the two: *Catholic* and *educator* are integrated. Though Elsener did not intentionally prepare for the role of president of a Catholic institution of higher education, these integrated perspectives were essential in his obtaining the position and provide the critical viewpoint from which he conducts his presidency. This theme will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

How Does the President Understand His Role Specifically in Regards to the Catholic Mission?: Big Ideas, People and Courage

A review of University documents and the local press reports confirm that Marian has changed significantly under Elsener's leadership and that the institution is strong and vibrant in 2011 compared to when he began his tenure as president in 2001. At a time when many colleges are reporting their worst financial declines in decades Marian is flourishing. How does President Elsener understand his role in regards to supporting and advancing the Catholic mission? Elsener understands that leading the Catholic mission is

about "Building a Great Catholic University" – that Catholic education is "great" education and that achieving such means intentional leadership on his part. For him deliberate leadership of the institution's Catholic mission led to high expectations and the current success of the institution. In an observation in July of 2011, he made a speech to his board and cabinet that attributed the institution's success to big ideas, people and courage. Those big ideas, his understanding of the different constituents with whom Elsener works, and the courage he models as a leader are confirmed in the interview, observations and meetings with his cabinet.

Big Ideas: Faith and Prayer

Elsener was very realistic when he took on the challenge of becoming Marian's eighth president in 2001. In an interview in June, I asked about his arrival at Marian and how hard it was to lead the institution in those early days of his presidency. He replied:

> *I remember meeting with some board members who tried to talk me out of coming here. If this thing doesn't go well, we don't want you to be mad a year from now that we didn't tell you the whole story. They said: your job could very well be to close this place. When people know that (that the place might close), Why would they give you money? Why would they enroll? Why would quality people sign on, put their life on a sinking ship? So there wasn't one nook or cranny that didn't look like hell. You know, the roofs leak. Because you get to that position means you don't fix things. You don't pay people. You get there the hard way. You don't get out the easy way. But somehow we have had miracles. So, when you say harder, it was real hard just to get legitimate. And than we designed this campaign, got the lead gifts. That's hard. Then to take on a med school. That's hard.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

When Elsener accepted the position as president of Marian College in 2001, he knew that his role would be one of deliberate leadership. He led the Marian community in the "big ideas" discussion starting with the board retreat soon after his arrival. He provided the framework for what would become the new vision and strategic plan.

That would be followed by the capital campaign, a very bold initiative in its own right and later the move towards a medical school, an aggressive initiative. He is a visionary with bold ideas. In meetings and observations with his staff and the Board, they credit Elsener with providing the intentional leadership that Marian needed to not only survive in 2001, but thrive in 2011; however, Elsener would credit his faith to leading him to his vision for Marian.

As part of his own faith journey he periodically writes in a journal. Not often, maybe a couple of times a year, but he noted that he had written some things in his journal about *"this is what a great Catholic university does"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). In a June interview he reflected on this journal again: *"I only write two times a year, but you can kind of see where I have summations and synthesizing going on, so where I have gone off in a spark, the Holy Spirit prompts"* (Interview, June 6, 2011). He commented, "*So here you will see, I am a very simple person, I am not a theologian"* and he did not talk about curriculum, instead he talked about practice, what the teachers and physicians, the products of this "Great Catholic University" would be like (Interview, April 15, 2011).

He paused at this point to tell me a story about another college president he knew who had taken the easy way out on a situation and then he continued: *"So there is a lot about the Blessed Mother that puts it, it wasn't easy, but it was consistent, it was loyal, it was dependable"* (Interview, June 6, 2011). He is very open about the critical role prayer has played in his life and the rebirth of the institution. In observing him, I recorded a clear Catholic identity evidenced by visual commitment to prayer and a devotion to the Blessed Mother, patron of the University (Observations, 2011).

Consistently throughout my research I would see or hear Elsener connect the institution to prayer. He made such comments such as, *"this is a big event, so say prayers"* and made the sign-of-the-cross in an administrative council meeting; to parents at an orientation event he said, *"I know you pray every night, you can pay for it* (a Marian education)," in a meeting about the rosary walk he commented, *"this is divinely inspired"* and to a stranger before lunch he said, *"we have a custom of prayer here"* and led the table in a prayer of thanksgiving. Before he gave his opening remarks at a faculty meeting he said, *"God bless you all"* and again made the sign-of-the-cross, then he asked for prayers for the medical school. In trustee meetings he made such comments as *"as the good Lord would have it"* and to trustees and donors in regards to building the rosary walk and gardens, *"we pray the rosary a lot here, and it is working, I am not going to stop."* (Observations, 2011)

He made these comments to me about his prayer life:

> *I always have my rosary in my pocket and if I find myself, no one knows what I am doing, but sometimes in a meeting I will put my hand in my pocket and just let them blather on, I just pray a little. I would say it is not unusual, the rosary is kind of physical. I say the rosary a little different. I have prayers that are intermittent, but I have already said one rosary today. I say it in the car. Whenever I get to Mass, I really enjoy that, just sit and visit, when I go on my walk. I pray a lot, saying two or three rosaries a day is not unusual for me, but that's different, that's a structure thing, but a lot of reflection, no. I pray a lot.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

Members of Elsener's cabinet were also clear about his commitment to the Catholicity of the institution. In meetings with them, their insights and comments covered many aspects of his focus on the institution's Catholic identity and vision. As to the Catholic mission, I heard such remarks as, "he has a strong belief in Catholic higher education," "he is clear that this is a Catholic institution, he asks 'what does it mean?' on

a daily basis," and "he leads prayer a lot," (Meetings, 2011). Cabinet members noted that the Catholic identity is inherent in Elsener's own Catholicity, noting that he is often seeing "praying the rosary on campus," and "encouraging all to join in community celebrations of the Mass. As one vice president described it, "Dan is passionate about his faith." (Meetings/Observations, 2011).

Several noted that he has a commitment to creating sacred spaces on-campus and to developing visual signs of being a great Catholic institution by being intentional about the placement of religiously based art and symbols on campus. It was apparent in listening to his staff and the trustees, and in observing Elsener in his presentations to staff, trustee, students, faculty and strangers that he is a prayerful, Catholic man and that his vision, his "big idea" for this once struggling institution to become a great Catholic university, finds its foundation in his faith. He commented at the administrative council retreat that Catholic schools should be excellent schools because that is how you *"give glory to God"* (Observation, June, 2011).

Big Ideas: Doer and Fundraiser

He is not, however, just a visionary; he is in his own words, *"the quintessential practitioner. I am a doer. I don't spend a lot of time in the corner reflecting on it, although that is not 100 percent true"* (Interview, May 6, 2011) and *"I am not purely prayer. I look at numbers. I believe in numbers"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). Elsener prays and reflects, but he does move the vision and mission forward intentionally. This is evidenced in the results of that first board retreat and the creation of the strategic plan that has pushed the University to strive for significant achievements by 2012, and by the fundraising plan that accompanied it. The strategic plan would not have been successful

without the fundraising and Elsener is by all accounts an amazing fundraiser. However, that too is immersed in Elsener's faith. He commented in front of the trustees, *"There is a larger purpose, any time we receive a gift the good Lord gives them to us, we just respond"* (Observation, July 22, 2011). I never directly asked the president about his fundraising approach, but on numerous occasions, he would tell me stories about fundraising and comment, *"I am 100 percent mission-driven"* (Interviews, 2011). He did make this comment to me in reference to when he raised money for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis:

> *When I was looking back, I worked for a lot of leaders, it wasn't the bishop, it wasn't the development office, I was the superintendent and running the deal. I was really the fundraising force and that's when I realized that fundraising isn't fundraising, fundraising is leadership, its vision, mission, talking to leaders.* (Interview, June 2011).

He shared a story about a fundraising visit with a trustee who was so impressed with Elsener's success at soliciting funds, that he now comments to others, *"you have never been on a fundraising call unless you go with Dan Elsener,"* and states that this trustee, *"always tells me, it's your passion. That means to me, that translates, that I was called to do it"* (Interview, June, 2011). Reflecting back on his days fundraising for Catholic schools and the Archdiocese, he states:

> *I got pretty good at making the call. People would say, "well, you know, we don't give to religion, so I would say: 'I would never have you give to religion, you can give to the kids of the inner city, these kids need Catholic schools.' I would just about get on their desk, people who went with me would always get a kick, (and say) I have never been on a fundraising call like that*. (Interview, April 15, 2011).

In his interview with the Archdiocese for his tenth anniversary as Marian's president, he is asked about his successful fundraising campaign and his approach. He responded:

> *I take a different approach. To me it's an investment. It's not about money. And, it's not about schmoozing people or giving them expensive wine. You have to have a clear sense of your vision and purpose in the world. For me, its about being committed. The other thing is, if you went to a fundraising school, they typically tell you to ask someone for a certain amount of money. I don't ever do that. I talk to them about stewardship—what God has given you—and ask you to personally reflect on what God has called you to do. And whatever you come to a conclusion on, I'll gracefully receive it, and I'll make sure we're good stewards of it. It's amazing how much more money you can raise that way instead of asking someone for $100 or $100,000 or $100 million.* (Artifact, 2011)

In meetings with his staff, I heard the following about Elsener and fundraising, "fundraising is always first," "he came here as a fundraiser, he was 'Catholic man' in this city," "he was hired by the board because they knew him, he was a fundraiser for the archdiocese," "he has the ability to raise money, mission is his priority" and "mission is weaved into everything, he's a fundraiser, he's a leader too, but he is a fundraiser" (Meetings, 2011).

Elsener commented on the big ideas and their relationship to fundraising in his interview with the Archdiocese:

> *People want to be generous, and they want to do something big. Big ideas raise more money than small ideas. If you do it with joy and talk about human possibility, it's very easy for someone to say, 'You know, I can do with less.' Most of fundraising is about ideas and possibilities and what we can do together and what God is calling us to do."* (Artifact, 2011)

Big Ideas and Direction

Elsener has provided leadership for his cabinet and his board by providing not only the vision and the strategic plan but also a directional map to guide the process. He provided this guidance for them in a five-page document: "The Four Strategic Quadrants of Financial and Mission Success" opens with the following statement from Elsener:

> *Over the next five years, Marian University must be exceptional at following what I call 'the four strategic quadrants of financial and mission success' if we are to be successful in launching the MUCOM, advancing our mission, and meeting our expenses.* (Artifact, 2011)

The directional document includes comparison data with other institutions in the areas of full-time equivalent growth, tuition and fee increases, endowment growth, undergraduates receiving Pell grants, and institutional aid for first year students. Elsener has shared this document with his cabinet, the larger administrative council, and the board. It was a focus of both the administrative council and board retreats during my observation visits. The four quadrants of success are:

1. Quality Bonus: The quality premise is the belief that as the education offered by Marian University continue to improve in quality and distinctiveness, **the students and parents willing and able to pay an additional 5-10 percent ($2-5 million) to attend our fine institution will do so** (emphasis his).
2. Fundraising Excellence: While we have achieved remarkable success in fundraising, the next few years will bring even bigger challenges. As we raise funds for capital improvements, salary and position increases, new facilities and technology, **the top priority will be to increase annual and endowment funds for needs related to scholarships for low-income students, academic achievers, talented musicians/athletes, those interested in service work or ministry, San Damiano scholars, and seminary students** (emphasis his).
3. Efficiencies and Effectiveness: **If we can save $250,000 - $1 million in cost, we can invest in top priorities, salaries, academic excellence programs and new programs which drive MUCOM, etc.** (emphasis his).

4. New or Expansion of Programs: **How can we achieve $1-4 million of increased net income from expanding or creating mission-consistent new programs that will, with relatively small investment, bring more resources to our drive to build a great Catholic university?** (emphasis his)

In addition to the four quadrants his vision provided data on comparison schools. It is concise and easy to follow, though a map, not the specifics. (Artifact, 2011)

Interviews, artifact and document review, in addition to the observations and meetings with Elsener's cabinet, confirmed that the president understands that at the core of the institution is its Catholic identity and mission. He supports and advances the mission by outlining the big ideas, most specifically that of becoming a "Great Catholic University" and by providing the direction and fundraising to promote those ideas until they become reality. The ideas, direction and fundraising, as confirmed by the meetings with his cabinet, are derived and encouraged by his personal faith. He is very intentional about advancing his institution's mission and turns to his faith for guidance in doing so. Another critical element for Elsener in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission is his connection to the people of the University.

People and Courage

In my first interview Elsener spoke to how he began to change the course of the institution. He told me that on the recommendation of his previous employer, he had studied five or six universities that had been struggling and then managed to turn things around. He commented, *"I will tell you one of the things they all did sooner or later, they got a new board"* (Interview, April 15, 2011) and then he explained that they had followed suit at Marian. He explained that they wrote a job description for the board and

that *"they began to identify their mission and set goals. That's what successful organizations do"* (Interview, April 15, 2011). In an interview in May, he shared with me about the board, *"You can look at it, well, you probably know this, you've spent some time with us, my board might be the best board in the world. I mean they're engaged"* (Interview, May 6, 2011). During that same visit, I observed during the president's appreciation dinner how often Elsener thanked and recognized the board for contributing to Marian's success (Observation, May 7, 2011). On numerous occasions during my visits, board members sought me out to share their thoughts on Elsener's leadership and the success of the University. One board member who had been one of the team of five who had recruited Elsener to Marian was later asked by him to chair the trustee committee on mission effectiveness. I asked him why he decided to do so and he responded, "When Dan Elsener asks you, or the nuns ask you, you do it" (Observation, July 22, 2011).

It was clear to me from my first visit that Elsener was a strong Catholic and fundraiser, but presidents lead organizations of people. I was interested in understanding his approach to leading the people within his organization. He shared with me, that like the buildings and the financial situation, the staff was not in premiere condition when he took over the presidency. Speaking of his current leadership team he stated, *"My fellow travelers now in the cabinet. You know, they are so loyal and so hard working. By and large it is a lot of talent. Though, probably not totally tapped, I have to keep giving more power away"* (Interview, May, 2011).

When meeting with members of his leadership team, I heard the following about how Elsener leads, "I believe he is a strong role model," "he is a charismatic leader, very

intelligent, very driven," he is a "strong visionary" and a "change agent" that is "energized by the college environment." In regards to starting a football team, which moved the institution from a commuter model to a residential model, one cabinet member commented, "Dan loves football. It was a strategic thing, setting the stage to be more successful. It was controversial at the time" (Meetings, 2011).

I also heard, "We are now more Catholic; Dan had everything to do with it," Dan is bright, leading the vision, attentive to numbers and metrics," "being an educator is a core of who he is," "if there is ego there, I haven't seen it yet," and "in his mind he has crafted his vision, he's grinding it out, but he is not very organized." Some of his staff members refer to him simply as Dan, others call him "Mr. President." (Meetings, Observations, 2011)

What does Elsener do to mentor and develop his staff? The cabinet reports that he meets with them regularly, but will call them directly if he has a question about something in their area that he would like to understand. One commented to me, "he is hands-on, he had to trust me first." He has a certain style of giving feedback that starts with a compliment about how good the work or decision was with a comment such as "good, great work" but then asks a direct question about how things could improve or how the decision could have been different. He typically ends that discussion with another affirmation. Direct reports also stated that he regularly asks for feedback on what to do and does take time to reflect on other's thoughts, but as one person commented, "he is always in control" and another, it is *his* vision." (Meetings, 2011)

Several of his staff members mentioned that Elsener had them reading books. Last year the leadership team read Morey and Piderit's *Catholic Higher Education: A*

Culture in Crisis and Elsener brought the authors to campus. I asked Elsener to tell me about this. He told me they are currently reading a book about change and then will probably reading something from Cardinal Newman. He commented: *"Leadership, faith, we need to do something on quality teaching. Some of the reports on how to improve learning. I will have one of the professors coming to the retreat to talk about learning outcomes"* (Interview, May 6, 2011). When I asked him who chooses what they read, he told me that he makes suggestions but they typically follow his recommendation:

> *So they kind of choose. But we've read a lot of articles too. Since I find it gives a neutral platform. I probably--if I say, 'what do you want to read next?' and then I usually work with someone to suggest and they bring the suggestions, the suggestions I suggested to them. There are probably always ten things that you would like to read. They're leaders, but I find it gives us a common language, causes us to think together. It might be the most important time we spend together because it has put us on the same page.* (Interview, May 6, 2011)

In meetings with the president's staff, the readings came up. One vice president commented in regards to the Morey & Piderit book, "it got people thinking" about what it means to be a great Catholic university. Others believed that the readings were an important part of their time together as a staff and they all took the readings as a serious part of their work even though their days were very full and busy (Meetings, 2011).

Elsener and I talked about hiring for mission. He told me a story about a conversation he had recently had with his senior vice president. Marian is currently searching for a vice president for advancement, as the current person in that role will move into a newly created position that will fundraise specifically for the medical school. He shared:

> *So yesterday, she said, 'is there a hidden agenda here? Let's put this on the table here. Does the person have to be Catholic?' I said, 'no.' She said, 'are you sure?' I said, 'I am sure.' She said, 'well you always make it sound like all your*

> *senior people you want to be Catholic?' I said, 'I do.' She said, 'then you do want them to be Catholic.' I said, 'Yes. Do they HAVE to be Catholic, no.'*

He continued:

> *I think the president does, but here's how it goes. They have to be a person of faith and they will contribute to the faith community. If two people of the same talent and both are committed to faith and one brings a rich Catholic perspective that would make sense to pick that one. If one is Catholic in name only and the other brings a deep commitment to the faith, I will take that one. So it takes a a little nuancing and preferencing.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

People: The Sisters.

The board of yrustees recognized Elsener's ten years of service to Marian at the board dinner in June by presenting him with a proclamation from the mayor of Indianapolis that August 1, 2011 would be Daniel J. Elsener Day. Snyder, who had been board chair when Elsener was hired, Watt who had been the interim president, and Eckmann, the current board chair, also announced their commitment to raise the next $100,000 for the rosary walk and garden, starting with a $10,000 donation from the three of them. Elsener in turn recognized their leadership, thanked his family for their support and credited the Sisters, noting to Sister Jean Marie Cleveland, former Congregational Minister, *"Sister, could've just stopped answering the phone"* (Observation, 2011). He commented about the Sisters, *"Wonder where we get the courage, faith, the people? It's the Sisters. It is in the ground here. We have a perfect example in the Sisters"* (Observation, July 22, 2011).

In earlier interviews I asked him about his relationship with the Congregation. He responded:

> *I go at least once a year down there (Oldenburg) with the board chair and maybe one other guy and do a heart to heart when everyone is not around and check mission, how they're feeling, where we are taking it, make sure*

> *we are on the same page. You know, I call them about things occasionally—if they are important. Sr. Barbara is their congregational minister, so I keep (her informed), she is also vice chair and Sr. Margaret, now when she retires--she is a very active board member, chair of the finance committee, talented human being. Now, if she wasn't on the board their board participation wouldn't be as dynamic in leadership, it would be more passive—checking in, staying connected.* (Interview, May 6, 2011)

Elsener is well aware that the congregation has a dwindling and aging population. He commented, *"They don't have the talent, nobody coming up"* to fill the seven spots on the board required by the Sponsorship Agreement. He indicated that they were in discussions about this expectation and stated, *"I think this year we will get a more solidified plan, but it's a lot of work."* (Interview, May 6, 2011)

People: Students, faculty and "the ones who are absent."

Over the course of my visits I had the opportunity to observe Elsener as he interacted with students. I watched him connect with orientation leaders before his presentation to the incoming freshmen, interrelate with the student body president at the board retreat and talk to a football player who was parking cars at the hotel downtown Indianapolis where we went for the "Mind Trust" luncheon. In all cases he always expressed an excitement to see the student and he greeted them enthusiastically, asking about their lives and encouraging them. When presenting to the students at S.O.A.R. (Student Orientation and Registration) he did not stand behind the podium but stood center stage and talked to the new students and their parents. He commented:

> *Welcome to a transformational movement. What you are in the image of your creator is great today. We want you to be exceptional leaders, we will challenge you on the why. Why choose a calling? Why study humanities. Let's do something great for this world."* (Observation, April 14, 2011)

In his interview with the Archdiocesan reporter he was asked what he enjoyed most about being president at Marian and he replied:

> *There's a thing that God put in me that likes to do something. I love to see people grow. I know all the kids. I make calls a lot of times for senior to help them get jobs. I'll call a principal and say, 'I've been watching this kid the whole time he's been here, and you ought to hire him.' I call businesses, and they'll say, 'What's your position?' And I'll say, 'I'm the president.' I write a lot of letters for kids, too. I like all the work culminating to the benefit of the student. To be a part of that is a tremendous privilege.* (Artifact, 2011)

The vice president for recruitment also told me that Elsener will make personal phone calls to recruit students to attend Marian. And, in a meeting with the administrative council when it was announced that he was doing so, he wanted to know his personal success rate for admitting students. He said he will always make the call if someone believes it will make a difference in the student's decision to attend Marian (Observation, May 2011).

Elsener has engaged the faculty in the leadership of the University and has made a strong commitment to hiring strong academic leadership, specifically the provost and all of the college deans. He personally interviews all applicants for full-time faculty positions and believes strongly that the provost is the chief operating officer. He found this a very difficult role for which to hire and believes they are the key to a successful higher education organization. He told me:

> *When you look at the bucket of talent and the kind of dispositions you need to do these positions, to do the things the provost does, there are two things that are interesting. An academic that is on fire with knowledge, the transmitting of knowledge and growing knowledge and traits that are in that, and the administration and attention to detail to make things actually work, it's a different bucket than vision, and culture building, salesmanship and articulation of vision---that's what salesmanship is, just articulating the vision, very different. That doesn't mean they are two separate worlds, but they are just very different. So you really have to go and get yourself a bucket of talent that can really run your—provost—because the provost is the chief operating officer, they make*

> *things work, they are academic. If you go look for that bucket of talent, they are suddenly going to be interested in being president.* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

On my first visit the president attended a faculty senate meeting. On our walk over from his office he shared with me that he tries to get to as many of these at possible, but at least once a semester. He has been spending a great deal of time on the medical school pre-accreditation and has not been able to get to a faculty meeting yet this semester and it is important that he attends this meeting and would like to attend the faculty retreat in May but he has to be out of town for a major fundraising meeting. He speaks to the faculty about the budget and the importance of the Higher Learning Commission visit in 2016, noting that it will be a big visit because of the medical school and he asks for their prayers (Observation, April 2011).

At freshmen orientation, the dean of the college of liberal arts tells a story about the president: "The president is tall, (he) puts his arm around me and says, 'I'd like to do something for first-year students—something special'" and the dean explains how he suggested that they start a special academic program for first-year students and the president replied, "good idea, go forth and do that" (Observation, April 2011).

Elsener does attempt, at least publicly, to recognize the accomplishments of the people who have been with him on this ten-year journey. When asked by the Archdiocese what were the main factors that have contributed to the dramatic increase in enrollment since his arrival, he responded:

> *When you think about it, that's hard to do for an education community—in any situation. We had some makeup to do in terms of capital, fundraising, image and mission. Fundamentally, it was a lot of prayer, a lot of reconnecting with mission. Add some leadership, way beyond the president, by the way. Board leadership, Academic leadership, Student life leadership. Leadership among the students. Then add resources. When you connect those four dots—*

> *calling and mission, need, leadership and resources, things just seem to grow. They take off.* (Artifact, 2011).

Elsener clearly understands that supporting and advancing the mission of the University means connecting and being present with a variety of constituencies including the Sisters, board members, donors, faculty, staff and students. In our interview in May, he made another significant connection. He stated: *"There's a phrase I learned a long time ago, 'loyalty and commitment to the ones who are absent'"* and described how he believes it is important to be mindful of those constituencies who are a part, or will be a part, of the organization who are not in the room when the decisions are being made.

Having observed Elsener in various settings and reviewing what many others have said about him, it is evident that when Elsener explained to Marian University's board and his cabinet that the success of the institution was due to *"big ideas, people and courage"* that he was explaining his own intentional leadership style. He is very specific about leading this institution to fulfill its mission as "a great Catholic university" and the mission is inherent in all of his work.

What Type of Preparation Does the President Believe He Should Have Had?

Because Elsener believes that Catholic education, and the presidency of Marian is a calling for him, we did not talk at length about how he wished he had been prepared. He did talk about the institution's success and his role from a different perspective in our last interview. He remarked:

> *We learned a lot, but very, very, we've put a lot, it's calling and prayer and smarts and strategy, recruiting talent, it's been an interesting journey and its like so many things you read and I was looking for why, like who am I?* (Interview, June, 6, 2011)

There is some indication that the president might have wanted some preparation as to the culture of higher education before taking over the leadership of Marian. Elsener talked about entering higher education as a leader who had never worked in at that level of education before. He reported having to learn about the differences in culture early on in his career as a college president. He stated:

> *In some ways, I didn't really know the culture. You might think you know the culture, but you don't know. Higher ed people think of themselves as paragons of virtue and kindness, but they are really mean as hell. I mean if you don't get in their way, they get pretty self-absorbed. Not that I was always perfect.* (June 6, 2011)

Elsener faced a no-confidence vote from his faculty in his early years as president, he explains it only as: *"a few people went after me"* (Interview, April 15, 2011) and there has been a complete changeover at the cabinet level since he became president. Some of the former leaders left on their own, but the president did have to dismiss a few people. He shared, *"I fired three or four people here"* and talked about his struggle with those who had compromised the mission:

> *I don't make any judgments about where they are going to end up, they can reconcile with God, but you know, if we allow this* (referring to behaviors that undermined the mission) *we are basically saying our mission is, it's so shallow, it's really pathetic and we are not going to do it.* (Interview, May 6, 2011)

He further explained that he had dismissed people because they did not make decisions, had no follow-through or lacked a sense of accountability (Interview, May 6, 2011). The only other mention Elsener made about lack of preparation was to comment about not having had much theology because he had attended a non-Catholic institution. He recognized it as a deficiency in his academic background, but did not connect it to a lack of ability to lead a Catholic institution specifically.

The Toll of Leadership

Event though Elsener believes he was called to the presidency of Marian University and that he was for the most part prepared to lead its mission to a new level, the presidency has taken a toll on him. During my visits to campus, the president missed one of our scheduled interviews because he was not feeling well and in several others he was noticeably tired. He reflected on how he was feeling in our last interview:

> *Yeah, I would say, you know, if you do something you really love, you go through these understandings of what you're doing. And, I gotta tell you, the last couple of years, until the last four or five months, it's really become six months, it's become apparent to me that I've run down my battery. And just because you're called, and you see this in the lives of a lot of people that were thrown into a time of leadership—who would have thought, you know, I am reading a book by George Washington, it's actually a novel—it's historically based—but all these people, George Washington and much later on, Abe Lincoln, so I am not trying to draw a parallel other than the fact that we see results and we know the accomplishments—Mother Theresa, John Paul II—I like to read about people who are in leadership positions, the results are obvious and celebrated, but the journey had ups and downs and such. I have to recharge my batteries right now. It's not that I, its just volume. It isn't that, oh, there's difficult things, I woke up thinking about one last night, I got back to sleep, but more of a drive of mission and excellence that keeps you up, that makes you maybe burn the candle at both ends*. (Interview, June 6, 2011)

Elsener shares with me his plans to take a vacation that summer and that his contract states that he should take a 90-day break every five years. He tries to keep his life somewhat balanced, he stated in an earlier interview, "*I really reflect a lot. When I walk and when I run, I pray the rosary. I think a part of it, you know, I'm kind of mad because the Lord let's me be sick. I have too much to do"* (Interview, May 6, 2011). He continued *"Then I got to thinking maybe that's why the Good Lord is making me sick, who the hell do I think I am? I don't know if you know my history, but I go at things hard"* (Interview, May, 2011).

This is perhaps what people perceive as his courage, but he knows that he goes at things "hard" and that he does not take much time to rest. He explained to me:

> *I am not a hard person necessarily, I can be hard and I hate it when I have been but I go at it, like, bar the door, we will get this done by God, you know. That's part of my success. People around me, like one time Kate, around this table when I first took a serious stab at the med school, I've mentioned it over the years but When I said, 'guys I want to start a serious feasibility study and I want to put in a bid, the osteopathic association is taking bids from universities,' and I remember a couple, one of my dearest friends, he said, 'God damn it, Dan you can't do everything, it going to kill you' and he said 'I'm not voting for this until I know what the hell you are talking about. This is too big for us.' And, then one guy says, 'where the hell is your off switch?'* (Interview, May, 2011)

When I asked him in one of the earlier interviews on my first visit about how he prioritizes; he said to me, *"My litmus test is: does it make a difference? Can you send someone else? My work is with people who can change our lives"* (Interview, April 17, 2011) but in May he was struggling with how tired he was feeling:

> *You can't just keep pounding. Yeah, I don't think, I feel called to, what I am coming to is sometimes it is my approach, it is not being busy that is killing me. It's the way you go at it. You kind of have to have faith that someone else is going to guide it. You just have to keep working along with it here, so I just need to work on my approach. I think when I was younger it didn't matter, I could survive anything. Now it's probably, I want to work until I am 70 at least. Because I feel called. There's so many things we want to do. And, I know how long it takes, but I won't be able to do it the way I am doing it. So I will have to get smarter*. (Interview, May 6, 2011)

In our last interview I asked Elsener, "What happens when you leave? This place, you are clearly supporting and advancing it, do you ever think about how that might change when you leave? Will this institution have a Catholic mission when you leave?" Elsener responded quickly, *"I think so. I like Mother Theresa's comment. Someone asked Mother Theresa, 'Mother Theresa, you built this all up, what happens when you die? (She responded,) 'That's God's problem'"*(Interview, June 6, 2011).

Elsener is not the only one who is feeling the effects of the pace the University has been keeping. During my meetings with his staff I heard the following comments: "The medical program and building have taken on a life of its own," "he takes good and makes it better, but people are pushed to their max, now he needs to back off," "there is so much more to do now," "the complexity of things, harder for him to be with students now," "this was more of a family business, now you do it at capacity," "he's a maximizer, never satisfied, and he's not good at celebrating, he doesn't get that step," and "he's not good at taking vacation, combines it with work, makes it an alumni thing." (Meetings, 2011). One of the staff members noted, "we're past the crisis time now" and one said, "let me know how he does it, how does he put 30 hours into a day?" Most of these comments came from staff that has worked with Elsener for a number of years.

Elsener spoke briefly about not understanding the culture of the higher education when he arrived at Marian, but when talking about the level of activity and the multitude of his goals—though mission driven, he indicated that he likely did not understand the complexity of the role of today's university president before he took the position at Marian.

Having described the history of the University and the context of President's Elsener's tenure in Chapter Four, and taking into account the president's understanding of his own journey in Chapter Five, in Chapter Six I further discuss the major themes that evolved: the significance of the president's own Catholic identity, his vocation as a Catholic educator, and the intentionality of his leadership for mission specifically. In Chapter Seven I will explore the implications and limitations of the research.

Chapter Six
Discussion of Themes

What emerged from the literature review is that lay presidents in Catholic higher education have few models from which they can draw any understanding of their role, other than to develop a sense of its complexity. This study captured the intricacy of the role of one lay president who has been successful in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission of his institution and revealed how he was prepared to assume this complicated and consuming position. Chapter Four set the scene for understanding the informant's successful presidential legacy by explaining the history of the institution and its status upon his arrival and then detailing the University's growth under his leadership. The informant's voice in regards to how he understands his role and how he was prepared for his role as a lay president in CHE, and the confirmability of other institutional representatives, was the focus of Chapter Five. This chapter is designed to delineate the themes that emerged in the data collection and to discuss the president's leadership style. The three major themes that emerged are the significance of the president's own Catholic identity, his vocation as a Catholic educator, and the intentionality of his leadership for mission. These three prominent themes consistently overlap and are interrelated at many levels, but the theme of Daniel J. Elsener's personal commitment to his faith is the most eminent personal characteristic of this president and the one that permeates throughout the data, thus it is addressed first.

The Lay President's Personal Catholic Identity

Though Ex Corde Ecclesiae implicitly states that presidents of Catholic institutions should be Catholic and while Morey and Piderit (2006) and others assume

such in their studies of Catholic higher education culture, Elsener's outward expression of his own Catholicity is a consistent theme that surfaced in this study.

Elsener's Catholicity is evident, constant and unswerving in his role as president and is confirmed by his incorporation of the faith into his vision for the university he leads. Marian's goal to become a "Great Catholic University" is an image and vision designed by Elsener, and it is grounded not only in the Catholic mission of the institution, but in his own faith as evidenced in his personal commitment to Catholic practice. Elsener is a witness to the Catholic faith as revealed in his frequent practice of open prayer, daily recitation of the rosary and devotion to the Blessed Mother, regular Mass attendance, Eucharistic Adoration, and a personal commitment to visual representations of Catholicity in his own life and on the Marian campus. To observe Elsener is to witness a man of great faith and personal commitment to the Catholic Church, with a special affection for, and fidelity to, Mary, the mother of God, the patroness of the University. In my interviews with Elsener this was the first theme to emerge and it was confirmed again and again in observations, in artifacts and in discussions with board members, members of the congregation and his leadership team. The Catholic mission of the University, and Elsener's commitment to it are never in question. The president credits his prayer life, particularly his Marian devotion, to his personal and professional success and to the institution's dramatic fiscal turnaround. As reported by the board and his cabinet, the significant change in institutional direction and solvency can be directly attributed to Elsener's strong commitment to leadership and fundraising and he draws from his faith for guidance in both these areas.

Elsener's leadership style will be addressed in a later section of this chapter, but its connection to his faith is important to note. It is through his faith that the president identified leadership and administration as a ministry, a role that is to be done with joy, humility and service to others. It is faith and prayer life that give the president the insight and courage to make difficult decisions and lead with vision and passion (Interviews, 2011). Elsener also attributes his extraordinary ability to fundraise from both Catholic, and non-Catholic, donors to prayer and faith. He is direct, consistent and honest about the institution's Catholic mission and is confident when asking all donors to *"prayerfully consider"* contributions (Interviews/Meetings, 2011). His faith is supported by data, many hours of preparation, and action, in the promotion of his vision; however, his faith and leadership philosophy are integrated and inseparable.

The observations, meetings with his cabinet and discussions with board members revealed this successful president to be a Catholic lay man who outwardly, boldly, consistently and confidently proclaims his personal faith, not just a president who states that he is Catholic. Elsener understands his role as a the president of a Catholic institution of higher education to be one of a faithful, prayerful lay Catholic and this is how he supports and advances the Catholic identity and mission of the institution, as a Catholic first. The leadership of the University is a response to his call to live out what it means to him to be a Catholic. When asked if he would ever leave the institution, Elsener responded that it was unlikely, but if he did it would have to be for another Catholic cause (Interview, June 6, 2011). The president's preparation for the role also has a Catholic theme.

Elsener does not proclaim to be a theologian and stated that he had a limited background in theology. When asked about his preparation to be the president of a Catholic institution he began with his family's Catholic identity and heritage and spoke about both sets of his grandparents and how being Catholic was a part of both of his own parents' upbringings (Interview, June 6, 2011). Though he attended both Catholic grade school and high school, he attributed his own devotion to the faith not to any particular formation he received in school, but to his father's modeling of what it meant to be a Catholic in the 1950s and the 1960s—a personal commitment to praying before meals and to attending Sunday Mass, no matter the obstacles. Elsener's parents sent their six children to Catholic grade schools and high schools on a limited income. Elsener and his wife have done the same with their seven children. The president attended Catholic high school after Vatican II at a time when theology and religious courses were in major flux, as was religious life.

It did not appear that his own Catholic K-12 education had any particular or significant impact on his faith, but the modeling of a commitment to the faith he received from his father and his parents' commitment to sending their children to Catholic schools, were influential in his understanding of his own call to serve in Catholic education. He was later influenced by teaching and working in Catholic schools that he experienced to be either clearly Catholic and excellent; or, Catholic schools that were less Catholic (in his assessment) and less effective. In respect to his preparation for lay leadership of a CIHE, what appears to be of greater significance than his own Catholic education or theological formation, was the modeling he received from his parents, particularly his father, and the examples provided by strong educational leaders whether lay or religious.

His formation led him to equate quality education with leadership that demanded clear Catholic identity, excellent teaching, a tight curriculum, institutional pride and a love for students that included clear expectations and discipline. It also included fundraising to support student access to this type of education (Interview, June 6, 2011). Observations, artifacts and discussions with the different constituencies of Marian University confirmed that these are hallmarks of Elsener's vision for CHE. Being the lay president of a Catholic institution of higher education for this president means to be a faithful, prayerful, unapologetic and humble Catholic. He views administration as a ministry and it is consistent and pervasive throughout his many roles as president. He is first and foremost a Catholic.

The President's Vocation as a Catholic Educator

A review of artifacts reveals that Elsener's preparation for the presidency does not include a doctorate in any discipline, though he has a master's degree in education and has completed a number of doctoral courses in that discipline. His commitment to education is evidenced by the numerous boards of education, both K-12 and higher education, on which he serves and probably most evident by his personal commitment to be engaged in the discussion about the future of education in the state of Indiana. While president of Marian he has committed support for teaching and learning initiatives, including the transformation of math and science education, Teach for America and The New Teacher Project and the University founded its MAP (Marian Adult Program). The Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MUCOM) will be only the second medical college in the state of Indiana. MUCOM will teach students to become "healers" and Elsener is committed to hiring the most appropriate faculty members to teach

medicine in a Catholic environment. Though he spends most of his time as president developing and fundraising for "big ideas" in education, he tells story after story of interacting with individual students and the impact education, and particularly a Marian education, has had on the students' lives. The institution has produced a written document entitled *Marian University Student and Alumni Profiles* to verify this. It includes the testimonies of more than 30 students from diverse backgrounds and different age groups. At the board retreat in July Elsener stated, *"We've changed people's possibilities" and "That's what great educators do, you grow people. Great educators move people"* (Observation, July 22, 2011).

During several of my visits, I observed Elsener interacting with students, engaging them in conversation about their lives and their education. At the retreat Elsener and the board chair were in a small discussion group that included the president of the student body. The University president encouraged the student government president to be the spokesperson for their small group to the larger group of board members and administrators. Elsener understands that the undergraduate experience is shaped by a vibrant on-campus life and has successfully strengthened the athletic program, including the inaugural football team and a marching band, and added new residence halls and recreational facilities to support that belief. His support for the liberal arts comes from having attended a private liberal arts institution as an undergraduate, but he understands that he initially went to Wesleyan to play football. He is quick to point out how the football players at Marian have the potential to be strong students. As the University expands to include more graduate students, Elsener is conscious of the need to accommodate their particular needs into the institution's educational culture. The

president speaks often about the importance of building the academic reputation of the University and challenges the board and the cabinet that despite their success, there is still more work to do, *"how do we redefine what we are doing so it is (recognized as) academic excellence?"* (Observation, July 22, 2011).

In interviews he spoke often, and always with pride, about turning around schools and systems and providing quality education for everyone, including helping to fund private education for those who might not be able to afford it. He asks his current leadership team to read about higher education and leadership, continuously engaging them in ongoing education. A major part of being an educator for Elsener is setting a standard of high expectation for the faculty and the staff he leads. He believes strongly that people who choose not to meet that expectation should look for work elsewhere (Interviews/Observations, 2011). Education and excellence are synonymous for him.

As with being a Catholic, being an educator of excellence is part of the fabric of who Daniel Elsener is. Working as a Catholic educator is his vocation.

Intentionality of Leadership for Mission

President Elsener is not the type of person who is going to sit around and wait for something to happen, he is a change agent who is committed to moving the organization forward strategically. He was clear to the board when he accepted the position of president that he would not accept the role and maintain the College's status quo, which he believed would lead to closing the institution; he accepted the presidency with the intent of leading the institution through a major change process that included revitalizing the institution's Catholic mission (Interviews, Artifacts, 2011). Elsener had only been president a few months when he coordinated the retreat with the Marian board at the

motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg. It was at this gathering, and with Elsener's leadership, that the board developed a new vision for the institution, a bold plan for an institution that owed money to its founding congregation and was struggling with low enrollment and run-down facilities. It was Elsener's belief that *"it would be a shame if that place closed"* (Interview, April 15, 2011) that led the board to develop the *Remarkable Futures 2012* strategic plan. The plan and its corresponding capital campaign were courageous steps for an institution of Marian's status.

With the strategic plan approved by the board of trustees, Elsener went about the task of changing the board and his cabinet to move the plan forward. He mentioned on several occasions that early in his tenure he *"could not find talent"* but he continued to move forward on the vision and worked diligently at recruiting appropriate and capable (to his standards) staff (Interviews, 2011). Several of his staff members pointed out how closely he had assessed their decisions, their progress, and their interaction with others in the University community before he became comfortable with their work (Meetings, 2011). Elsener developed the questions that are utilized to screen senior leadership members and takes the time to interview all candidates for full-time faculty positions. He is committed to staffing the institution at all levels with people who will embrace both the mission and the vision.

He also holds his cabinet to the expectation that they will embrace his four quadrants for institutional success—quality bonus, fundraising excellence, efficiencies and effectiveness, and new or expansion of programs. These four quadrants represent Elsener's commitment to on-going progressive change and sends the message to the board and his cabinet that he is not resting, even after the capital campaign has far

exceeded its goal and the medical school has received pre-accreditation. For Elsener this is what "Building a Great Catholic University" entails: "building" is an active verb.

Progressive, intentional, bold, visionary change agent is the third approach this lay president utilizes in supporting and advancing the mission of this Catholic institution. Elsener had several role models for intentional change prior to his coming to Marian. One would appear to be the political science faculty member who took him to prisons and *"called him out"* as an educator, another was the lead administrator at the Catholic high school when he was a young teacher who moved the high school forward in turbulent times by keeping the school focused on its Catholic mission and high academic standards. Elsener noted being drawn to people with *"bigger, broader concerns in the world"* and chose to become a leader in education versus a football coach (Interview, June 6, 2011). A critical distinction between Elsener's being drawn to doing "big things" and his actual doing them, is the intentionally with which he does it. He somewhat reluctantly speaks to having been "called" to his role as president, but once he accepted the role he quickly approached it with a clear vision and deliberate plan that enabled him to articulate to the board, the Sisters, his staff and fundraisers what they were to accomplish together. It is clear that Elsener is the leader and has changed not only the message and the look of the campus, but its culture as well.

In explaining the importance of the role of senior leadership in changing in the culture of CIHE, Morey and Piderit (2006) stated:

> Institutional Catholic culture at Catholic colleges and universities is the context in which educational goals are defined and outcomes secured. When talking about institutional culture, senior administrators frequently did so in terms of ideal constructs that focused primarily on hopes and possibilities (p. 212).

Elsener started with hopes and possibilities, these are obvious in the University's strategic plan, but he did not stop there. He intentionally pushed those images into a strategic plan and then personally and purposely modeled a cultural change.

When talking about their own institution's Catholicity, Morey and Piderit (2006) found that most of the senior administrators in their research recognized the need to rearticulate their Catholic missions, but most they noted:

> Were still religiously timid, avoiding the use of rich evocative Catholic language, thereby abandoning one of the tradition's richest symbol sets. Administrators frequently used the term 'Catholic' and the name of the sponsoring religious congregation. They also comfortably referred to God's presence among us in all things, as well as to the 'Mass' or 'Eucharist.' No one spoke of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, or the Blessed Virgin (p. 220).

In contrast, Elsener's Catholicity expressed specifically in his outward dedication to the Blessed Mother, has been a vehicle for change at Marian. Even the non-Catholics in his cabinet, as well as the University's non-Catholic donors, recognize Elsener's vision to build a great Catholic University as the core of their work or their contribution (Observations /Meetings, 2011). That change has been a direct result of the president's personal and professional persona, he is not religiously timid and has intentionally evoked the Spirit and the Blessed Virgin into supporting and advancing the Catholic and educational mission of the institution.

Tension from Change

Changing culture does not come without creating tension and there have been some instances of friction on the Marian campus. Elsener spoke briefly about a faculty no-confidence vote when he tried to make change early in his tenure and some non-Catholics have questioned whether all the leadership has to be Catholic (Interviews

/Meetings, 2011). In regards specifically to mission, there has been the additional tension, interestingly implied by members of the SRC, as to whether the institution has lost some of its Franciscan focus as Catholic becomes the primary description. Several of the SSFOs, though complimentary of Elsener's accomplishments, commented to me that the institution had become more Catholic and less Franciscan in Elsener's tenure and that the president did not fully understand what it meant to be a Franciscan institution. Elsener did partake in the Franciscan Leadership pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi and he annually supports the participation of Marian faculty and staff members in the Pilgrimage as well as in workshops and conferences sponsored by the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU). He serves on the board of AFCU, has referred to Franciscans as role models in his previous roles in education and was personally responsible for the placement of San Damiano crucifixes (a Franciscan symbol) in classrooms (Meeting/Observations/Interviews, 2011). As a lay president, Elsener articulates to his numerous constituencies what Mary Lyons (2010) would refer to as the "Catholic character" of Marian University more so than he does the institutional values of the Franciscan tradition. This is not to suggest that he does not embrace the charism, but simply to recognize what is prominent in his words and his message about the University.

Another tension that was a result of the president's change agent approach is the amount of energy needed, particularly by his direct reports, but to some extent by the board of the trustees, to keep up with the pace of change. In my meetings with the cabinet members they reported being tired and of having a difficult time keeping up with the level of work needed to sustain the change. In the retreats for the administrative council and the board it was noted that there needed to be more discussion about building

an expanded infrastructure to support the new medical school and the demands it would place on the existing structure of the institution (Meetings/Observations, 2011). The president is tired too. In our interview in June he talked about the last six months as the institution was seeking accreditation for the medical school and continuing to raise money for the already successful, now expanded, capital campaign:

> *Over the last four or five months, it's really become—six months—it's become apparent to me that I've run down my battery. The results are obvious but the journey has ups and downs and such. I have to recharge my batteries now* (Interview, June 6, 2011)

As evident from the documents and artifacts, Marian University has changed significantly under Elsener's leadership and can proclaim many successes; but, there have also been resulting tensions, including the question of how important it is to identify with the charism of the SRC and the strain on the president and his administration. These tensions will be further explored in Chapter 7 as implications of the study.

Leadership Style: *Directive* or *Connective*?

The major themes that emerged from the data are that this lay president understands his role in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission of the institution as a ministry and it is clear that he is a Catholic, an educator and leads the mission with intentionality. The research also sought to understand the type of leader the president is based on a model suggested by Morey and Piderit (2006). It is important here to make two distinctions. One is the difference between the president's personality and his leadership style and the second is that Elsener *engages* most of his constituencies; he *leads* his cabinet.

Throughout numerous observations it was apparent that Elsener has a delightful, charming and engaging personality. In addition to being a Catholic and an educator, he is football fan, a family man and a great storyteller. He is also genuine, humble and enjoys a good laugh. He is an easy person to be with, a relationship builder who makes a consistent effort to include and thank others, involve them in discussion, and to be aware of those who are not present. People respect him and are drawn to him and these factors contribute to his ability to connect immediately with the Sisters, with students, and with donors, three of his many constituencies.

However, his relationship with his direct reports is clearly one of leadership, though his personality is consistent with them, they clearly know he is the leader, several of them refer to him as "Mr. President." His cabinet members acknowledge that he holds them to high expectations but they respect his leadership and recognize that he holds himself to extraordinary levels of institutional commitment and excellence (Meetings, 2011). Morey and Piderit (2006) assumed that the president of a CIHE was an "informed, committed and practicing Catholic" (p. 67) and offered two models for presidential leadership of Catholic institutions. The *connective* and *directive* presidential types were described in detail in Chapter 2, but are examined here.

In assessing President Elsener's leadership style, the research revealed that he most closely resembles a *directive* leader. Morey and Piderit (2006) describe these presidents as having a future orientation and are committed to continuous improvement, thus they are able to quickly develop a master plan. *Directive* presidents are charismatic leaders who demand great loyalty from their leadership team, have clear expectations of the players and delegate responsibility to them in order to move institutional goals

forward. Elsener is a charismatic leader who has earned the respect and loyalty of his cabinet. He has clear expectations of excellence and commitment from his cabinet though this study revealed that he was not likely to delegate responsibility to them until they had earned his respect and confidence. The president also had some of the traits of a *connective* leader as he displayed visible signs of being engaged, focused, intuitive and persuasive, however, these qualities are more prevalent in his interaction with constituencies other than his direct reports.

Morey and Piderit's (2006) *directive* leaders make their impact in three ways: (1) they refine the vision and goals for their institutions and craft a message that catalyzes action, (2) they assemble a leadership team that is on board with the new vision and are loyal to the president, and (3) they spend focused time with the new team in laying out the goals and assessment system. *Connective* presidents (1) take the time to carefully assess the institution and the leadership team in order to determine who will positively contribute to the institutional goals; then, (2) they assemble a senior leadership team that reports directly to them. This team becomes the dominant catalyzing group and (3) the president puts time and energy into mentoring this assembly and strategizing with them. Morey and Piderit propose that it takes *connective* presidents a longer time period than *directive* presidents, six to ten years versus three to five years, to make a significant impact on the institution.

Again, when utilizing these criteria, the president's approach to leading at Marian is more like a *directive* leader than a *connective* one. Elsener quickly refined the vision and goals, crafted a new message for the failing institution, and then strategically assembled a team that would be on board with that vision and loyal to him. His team is

clear about the goals—they are spelled out in the strategic plan and then again in his four quadrants. Though Elsener leads his staff from a primarily *directive* approach, he is more *connective* when interacting with other constituencies. This case study would indicate than that presidents are likely not to be distinctively *directive* or *connective* but may display elements of both models. *Directive* and *connective* leadership styles of presidents might be best reviewed on a continuum scale with most presidents falling somewhere in between.

It is also important to note that Morey and Piderit (2006) did not design their models specifically for lay presidents nor did they suggest which model would be most appropriate for any specific type of institution, noting only that the right leader for any institution is the one "whose talents match the college's needs" (p. 279).

Matching the University's Needs

The current success of Marian University's vision, strategic plan and fundraising efforts would suggest that Elsener's primarily *directive* style was the most appropriate for Marian's status when he assumed the presidential role in 2001. The institution did not have the six to ten years Morey and Piderit (2006) suggest a *connective* president would need to make an impact. However, in 2011 the University is in a much different place and has become a larger and more complex organization. Morey and Piderit noted that over the course of time, the religious culture of Catholic colleges, their *distinguishability* and *inheritability,* changes and that it is the responsibility of the president for reading the culture, analyzing it and acting on it. As Morey and Piderit argue, sitting presidents are in the position to assess the current status of their institution's Catholic identity, evaluate

the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural context, and develop appropriate plans and goals for advancing the mission.

This case study indicates that in his tenure this lay president has made a significant contribution to supporting and advancing the Catholic mission of the institution because of his own Catholic identity, his commitment to educational excellence and his change agent approach. It further suggests, however, that the institution is at another critical moment in its history and that it would benefit from a more current analysis of the mission in the context of the expanding vision. When assessing the present status of its Catholic mission, the leadership style of the institution's current president, and the appropriate fit of that style to the vision, could also be examined. It is possible that the president may want to adjust his style along the *directive/connective* continuum to match the University's current needs.

Distinguishability **and** ***Inheritability***

In addition to their two proposed leadership models, Morey and Piderit (2006) outlined two components important to sustaining the Catholic culture of any CIHE, *distinguishability* and *inheritability*. It is their belief that it is the responsibility of the president, whatever their leadership style, for reading, analyzing and then changing the culture of the institution to align with its Catholic mission. *Distinguishability* as described by Morey and Piderit is, "the ready apparent differences between a specific culture and other competing cultures, it is a necessary condition for a vibrant culture" (p. 31). It is evident from this case study that the *distinguishability* of Marian University as a Catholic institution has been more distinctive and apparent since Daniel J. Elsener became president in 2001. He has done this predominantly by being a strong Catholic

role model and by insisting that others in the institution support and advance the mission of the institution. In a series of surveys conducted by the vice president for marketing, it was typical for "Dan Elsener" to be connected with the identity of Marian University. In the survey distributed to incoming students, current students, the cabinet, the board, and even outside public relations professionals, people routinely connected the Elsener name with the institution. The data collected in this study suggest that the *distinguishability* of Marian University's Catholic mission and culture are fairly well-established, but it also reveals that the strength of Elsener's personality and his long-term personal connection to the mission make it somewhat difficult to delineate the president from this institution. Though at the present time, and for the foreseeable future, this appears to be to Marian's advantage, it does lead to the question of *inheritability*. Will the institutional culture inherit the Catholic culture that is clearly being led and inspired by its strong president? In other words, what will happen to the Catholic mission when President Elsener decides to accept another calling or when he decides to retire? Will the Catholic mission be embedded in the culture of the institution past the tenure of its current president?

Elsener has made some efforts to assure that this will happen. He has been very intentional about hiring for mission, including designing the four questions asked of all senior administrators and he participates in faculty interviews. He has also actively recruited Catholics for the board of trustees, led the institution in designing and offering the San Damiano Scholars program and established a seminary.

Morey and Piderit (2006) describe *inheritability* as, "the ways of acting in a specific culture that assure authentic cultural assimilation by new groups that enter the culture" (p. 31). The focus of this case study was not to assess how Marian University

integrates new members into the Catholic culture; however, it should be noted that the addition of a large number of graduate students who will be attending the medical college, as well as additional faculty members, will undoubtedly highlight the issue of *inheritability*. The president has taken some leadership in this area, requiring that the medical facility have a chapel and that the curriculum include medical ethics that reflect the Catholic mission, but it remains to be seen if the *inheritability* of the Catholic culture can transfer to this major change in type of student and a medical curriculum.

In summary, this chapter has provided further discussion around the three major themes that surfaced during this case study on the lay Catholic president: the significance of the president's own Catholic identity, his vocation as a Catholic educator, and the intentionality of his leadership for mission. The president's leadership style was identified as *directive* from the two styles described by Morey and Piderit (2006) and the *distinguishability* and *inheritability* of the institution's Catholic culture were also examined. Chapter 7 delineates the implications of this case study and makes key recommendations for future research.

Chapter Seven
Implications and Recommendations

Three major themes emerged in this qualitative case study of the lay president in Catholic higher education: the president's Catholic identity, his vocation as a Catholic educator, and the intentionality of his leadership for mission. While the previous chapter provided a detailed description of these themes and an examination of the president's style and the institution's culture, this chapter discusses the implications of this case study, the implications for future practice in Catholic higher education, and recommendations for future research.

The Case Study and the Informant

This is a case study of one president at a specific institution at a particular time in that institution's history. Therefore, the results of this study are limited to this leader and his presidency; however, the thoroughness of a case study provides additional insight into the significance of a lay president in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission and identity of a CIHE at this time in history. The informant had ten years of experience as a president and has been intentional about reestablishing the Catholic identity of the institution while successfully strengthening the institution's enrollment and financial stability. The findings add to CHE's understanding of the role of the lay president and inform boards of trustees, lay presidents and SRCs about the critical role the lay president can play in supporting, and advancing, the Catholic mission of the institution and how when done so purposefully, this emphasis can lead to overall institutional success.

A review of the current literature on Catholic higher education revealed a gap in recent research on lay presidents. Studies conducted on the lay presidency within the

last five years (Meeker, 2008; Morey & Piderit, 2006; Petriccione, 2009; Sloma-Williams, 2010) had begun to identify contemporary trends in lay leadership and the skills necessary for lay presidents to be successful. All of these studies were conducted with multiple presidents. Meeker concluded her work with a list of skills necessary for presidents of Catholic institutions but did not distinguish between lay and religious presidents. Morey & Piderit provided critical information on the status of the CHE president, but again, they did not delineate between lay or religious ones. Petriccione surveyed 70 lay presidents and interviewed eleven; and Sloma-Williams studied five lay presidents by conducting two interviews and reviewing documents; her work resulted in a recommended model for lay presidents to follow. These studies add to the knowledge of the role of the lay president in Catholic higher education but are limited to surveys and interviews.

The strength of this case study is the in-depth nature of the data. This qualitative study that included interviews, multiple observations, artifact review and meetings with the president's cabinet members provided an emic perspective of how one lay president in a CIHE, sponsored by a religious community, supports and advances the Catholic identity of his institution at this point in history. Based on information collected by Morey and Piderit (2006), this informant resembles current presidents in CIHE in that he is one of a growing number of male lay presidents, and that he lacks formal theological and spiritual preparation. However, he does not bear a resemblance to non-Catholic college presidents because he does not have a terminal degree. Nor does he have any prior experience in higher education, thus it is very unlikely that he would be considered for a presidency outside of a CHE. What makes this president unique, and perhaps even

an anomaly, is his outward and visible commitment and demonstration to the Catholic faith. It is in the distinctiveness of this president, which could only have been revealed through an in-depth case study, that these implications were revealed. The case study approach further illustrates the complexity of the role of the president and highlights the numerous constituencies to which the lay leader must interact and the importance of the consistency of the mission message. The methodology provided a means to affirm the dependability of the president's commitment to his faith and the institution's identity. While it is often assumed that presidents of institutions of higher education should have a terminal degree, or prior experience, the results of this study also suggest that this may not be as important for CIHE at this time in history.

Implications of the Research

The implications of this research indicate a continuing need for understanding the relationship between the lay president and the SRC, the prominence of the president's own Catholicity, and the importance of an understanding of Catholic education versus a terminal degree in the lay president's preparation. This research additionally indicates a need to understand the difference between the *distinguishability* and *inheritability* of a CIHE mission and raises the question of whose responsibility it is to distinguish not only the Catholic identity but also the identity of the SRCs charism.

The Lay President and the Sponsoring Religious Community: Catholic and Charism Identity

While *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States* (2000) clearly states that "The University president should be Catholic" (Article 4:3a) and that it is the

role of the administration to "inform faculty and staff at the time of their appointment regarding the Catholic identity, mission and religious practices of the university" (Article, 4:3b) it does not give an explanation of "Catholic" nor does it guide the administrators of Catholic institutions of higher education (CIHE) as to how to inform their constituents of the Catholic mission. Additionally, earlier research indicated that the presence of the sponsoring religious community (SRC) on the campuses of CIHE was critical to an institution's maintaining its Catholic mission and identity (Morey, 1995; Introcaso, 1996; Savaterra, 1990). Moreover, Introcaso's (1990) research revealed that there was very little difference between lay and religious presidents when it came to understanding the Catholic identity other than that lay presidents were more intentional about their need to do so.

This study suggests, however, that the president's personal Catholic identity is intricately linked to supporting and advancing the mission of the institution and would appear to be more critical at this point in time than the SRC's presence or relationship to the institution. Elsener does not wear a habit or a collar or a robe, but his verbal messages, his actions and his Catholic persona are visible signs to all of his constituencies of the Catholic identity of the institution. Petriccione (2009) reported a healthy "Catholic ego" among the lay leaders in his research but also found that the perception that the founder's charism was alive on campus significantly predicted a president's effectiveness (p. 170). This does not seem to be the case with Elsener and Marian University where the charism is seen as integrated with, or secondary to, the Catholic identity. Though President Elsener's personal and public commitment to the Catholic faith is known throughout the institution and the community, the identification

of the Franciscan charism is less evident, and appears secondary to the Catholic identity. Catholicism is expressed *through* the charism in art and other visible signs on campus such as the San Damiano crucifixes and Franciscan statues and program titles, but the Catholic identity is clear and expressed primarily as a result of the president's style and leadership.

Several points are worth noting here. One, Marian University has not had a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg (SSFOs) as president for more than two-thirds of its history and has had a lay president since 1968. This indicates an early openness on behalf of the SSFOs to having a non-congregational member as president and openness to lay leadership. Secondly, the institution was in a very difficult position when Elsener arrived in 2001 and he made it clear that he would lead the institution as a Catholic organization when he arrived. Thirdly, the SSFOs have attempted to delineate their relationship to the Catholic mission in the *Sponsorship Agreement* and in the University's *By Laws*. According to these documents, the SSFOs maintain a minimum of seven seats on the board of trustees, including the vice-president's position and a seat on the finance committee. They also appoint a member of the congregation to serve as vice president of mission for the institution, or approve the appointment; the latter appointment means the lay president of the institution has a member of the congregation reporting directly to him. At present that vice president is a former Congregational Minister.

The *Sponsorship Agreement* is a five-year commitment indicating that the Congregation understands that circumstances, most likely the availability of Sisters to serve on the board, will change in a five-year period. As the presence of the SSFOs, not

only on-campus, but on the board, will continue to diminish, the institution may now have to address how it will maintain its Franciscan identity. It is also inevitable that changes to both the *Bylaws* and the *Sponsorship Agreement* will need to be made. Elsener's premiere role in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission and identity of Marian University is unmistakable; he does it in a very obvious, personal and intentional manner.

The president's role in the changing dynamics of the relationship of the founding congregation to the University, in terms of maintaining its Franciscan charism, is unclear at this time. This case study implies that as lay presidents intentionally support and advance the Catholic mission of their institutions that tensions may arrive around the prominence of the charism. This president has been successful in supporting and advancing the Catholic mission, versus the charism identity, and utilizing the mission as a catalyst for institutional progress. If this approach had been less efficacious, questions about the role of the president in sustaining the institution's charism might be more prominent.

Catholicity is Prominent

As noted in the literature review, several recent studies have focused on components of lay leadership in Catholic higher education (Meeker, 2008; Petriccione, 2009; Sloma-Williams, 2010; Wesley, 2007). Petriccione and Meeker, for example, both found that the presidential role was extremely complicated; Petriccione noted the hectic schedule of the presidents he studied and reported that they often did not have enough time in the day to dedicate to institutional affairs, "as well as making sure the founder's charism is secure" (p. 171). Instead, he found, that "they simply try to live it" (p. 171).

Meeker (2008) provided a list of necessary management skills for the lay president. These included the skill sets to (1) lead and manage the institution, (2) enhance the financial viability of the institution, (3) enhance the academic life of the institution, (4) effectively work with students and external constituencies in maintaining a campus life relevant to students, and (5) make the Catholic mission and charism relevant and alive on campus. Her work would imply that the president needs to have the necessary skills and mindset to prioritize the mission and charism of the institution.

Wesley (2007) reported that effectively conveying the mission of a Catholic institution could have an impact on fundraising. This case study confirms Wesley's findings and provides additional insight into those of Petriccione (2009) and Meeker (2008). Elsener undoubtedly has the five skills sets Meeker found to be necessary— he can lead and manage the University, has enhanced its financial standing and academic life and effectively communicates with his numerous constituencies. What is distinctive about this president is that he lives out the Catholic identity as noted by Petriccione, and prioritized it, as suggested by Meeker; however, he has placed less of an emphasis on the SRC's charism. His living out of the faith is consistent, prevalent and integrated in all of his responsibilities. He leads the institution as a Catholic first and foremost and would not be at Marian if it were not a Catholic institution. In doing so, he closely resembles religiously vowed leaders who have been presidents of CIHE but he does not proclaim a specific charism.

Sloma-Williams (2010) provided a *Conceptual Model of Lay Presidential Leadership* (p. 592) following her research. The eleven components she stated were necessary for leading the institutional mission were (1) communication with senior

leadership, (2) educating about mission, (3) telling the story of founders, (4) enhancing/preserving religious symbols on campus, (5) articulating unity of Church and university mission, (6) interaction with critics, (7) wider community involvement, (8) respect for institution members, (9) involvement in enhancing the academic mission, (10) integration of spirit and personal inspiration, and (11) reciprocity of knowledge, a commitment of excellence. As noted earlier, the limitation of her research is that she built her model based on interviews and artifact review of five lay presidents, but she did not observe a lay president in his or her role.

Though this study was not designed with Sloma-Williams' model as a theoretical base, the data would confirm that these concepts are evident in President Elsener's tenure and are components of his success in supporting and advancing the mission of Marian University. The Elsener story though would suggest that his *Catholicity* is the primary concept, one that surpasses the other components. In other words, if the president's *Catholicity* was less evident or perceived or translated as less genuine, the other components might be nullified or less effective in advancing the mission. Perhaps this is what Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde* (2000) and Morey and Piderit (2006) expected when stating that the president of a CIHE should be Catholic and what Morey and Holtschneider (2002) highlight as the most critical question for the future of Catholic identity in these institutions, "how to create witness without religious congregations" (p. 19).

This case study suggests that the president of a CIHE supports and advances the Catholic mission and identity of the institution primarily by his revealing openly, authentically, unquestionably and unfailingly his own faith with all his

constituencies—much like the religiously-vowed presidents of the past—and though additional leadership skills are critical to the success of the institution, that without this component this institution would be both less Catholic and less successful in meeting its mission. This would confirm the research conducted by Lannon (2002) and Pastoor (2002) both of whom concluded that the role of the president is essential in promoting Catholic identity in the midst of other competing roles and that it was necessary for future presidents to have a conviction to the mission of the Church. The data also support Rittof's (2001) conclusion that a president's, whether lay or religious, *intentional* commitment to the Catholic mission was the most important factor in its advancement.

Distinct to this case study is the very prominent manner in which this president personally displays his commitment to the faith. This is most evident in his open devotion to the Blessed Mother, including his daily recitation of the rosary and his commitment to building a rosary walk for the institution. His dedication to this distinguishing Catholic practice is an integral part of his presidency and leadership approach—he views the Blessed Mother as model of leadership—and though this may be unique to this lay president, it provides insight into how the prominence of the lay leader's personal Catholic identity can be an asset in advancing and supporting the Catholic mission of the institution he or she serves.

Preparation of Catholic College and University Presidents

Earlier research deemed that there is a significant lack of formal theological and spiritual preparation for the presidents of CIHE as compared to the past. Previous presidents received this training as part of their formation for religious life resulting in one of the major differences between lay and religiously-vowed presidents and signifying

a critical juncture in the history and future of CHE (Higgins, 2002; Morey & Holtschneider, 2003; Morey & Piderit, 2006; Pastoor, 2002). This study indicated that the president had no formal theological or spiritual training, other than what he would have received as an elementary and high school student in Catholic schools. Moreover, even in his later K-12 experience, as the effects of Vatican II were evident in his high school, his Catholic formation was limited. He did not attend a CIHE for either his undergraduate or graduate education but did receive what he believed to be an excellent liberal arts education at a non-Catholic college, where it appears that he may have even heard his first "call" to be an educator from a non-Catholic mentor.

My research revealed that the informant credits much of his Catholic formation to the modeling of his father as a committed lay Catholic, and his preparation for leading a CIHE when he was a teacher, principal and fundraiser for Catholic school systems. He spoke of having the opportunity for some spiritual formation and exposure to Catholic documents while in these roles (Interviews, 2011). The preparation and formation for this lay president began at home where he experienced the outward showing of his father's faith and his parents' and grandparents' commitment to Catholic education. This implies that his commitment to the faith was a result of an early exposure to a lay Catholic model and a personal one, versus any necessarily formal academic formation. In short, his development as an educator committed to excellence was formulated by the recognition of his gifts by people he respected (a non-Catholic college professor and a Catholic school administrator). He learned leadership skills modeling football coaches and administrators he admired.

Since Elsener has been president of Marian University he has experienced the Franciscan Pilgrimage, a formation program for leaders of the charism, but much of his on-going education has been reading the personal stories of people, both religious and non, that he perceives as leaders. He admits that he is not a theologian but he is passionate about his faith, which drives him to conveying his Catholicism openly and to a standard of excellence in his work. Elsener sees his role as the president of a Catholic institution of higher education to be a passionate, faithful Catholic with a high standard of excellence for education. Additionally, his personal devotion to the patroness of the University, notably before he accepted the presidency, bestows meaning to his being the president of this particular institution. It gives credence to the concept of "the call" to the presidency of a CIHE.

As it is likely that many of the lay presidents of the near future will be similar to Elsener and not have had formal theological education, these differences are worth noting, they imply that personal role models to the Catholic faith, and a solid understanding of the mission of Catholic education in general, can be important parts of the necessary preparation for lay presidents.

Distinguishability and Inheritability

A major issue facing CHE today is the declining membership in the SRCs. As the number of active members of SRCs continue to diminish on the boards of trustees, the future of not only the Catholic identity of these institutions, but their specific charisms will become a challenge. It is likely that the lay presidents who will lead these institutions will not have had specific preparation or formation from, or to, the charism of the institution to which they will lead. Does this matter?

This research implies that the most critical aspect of this president's successful ten-year tenure is his personal commitment to the Catholic faith. It is evident in how he leads, manages, plans and fundraises for the institution. His personal dedication and outward expression of his own Catholicism motivate him and others to move the institution forward. The data establish that this was the most critical element to this institution's success at this point in time. However, the tension between the Catholic identity and the Franciscan identity though subtle, exists and may need to be addressed if the Franciscan identity, the one inherited from the founding congregation, is to survive past this generation. The *distinguishability* of the institution as Catholic is prominent; the *distinguishability* of the charism is evident, but less so. At this point in the history of CHE and this institution, this appears to be the right balance. Whether or not the charism will become even less discernable, or perhaps even disappear as the SRC becomes less visible, and the resulting impact of that on the success of the institution, remains to be seen.

***Inheritability*: The next step.**

This study implies the impact the lay president can have on supporting and advancing the mission and identity of the institution and the critical importance of his taking personal responsibility for it, however, it raises the question of the *inheritability* of the mission. Though this president will leave a legacy of Catholic practice and programs, including a seminary, it is difficult to assess whether or not these have been established within the culture of the institution. In other words, when Elsener leaves Marian University, and he will at some point, will the institution have inherited his dedication to excellent Catholic education? As the institution continues to grow and expand its

programs, resulting in a wider diversity of its student body and faculty, is it possible for the president's pledge to the mission to be transferred and inherited within these new populations? This case study suggests that lay presidents must continue to assess the Catholic identity and mission of their institutions even if they believe they have been sufficiently embraced and established by the constituents and particularly in times of major institutional change and development. Morey and Piderit (2006) recommend that both new and sitting presidents conduct such an assessment of their institution. This research would affirm that mission assessment should be an on-going process and priority.

Suggestions for Future Practice

This study was conducted as a single case study of a specific lay president at a particular institution at a given point in time; accordingly the results are limited to the findings of the present data. The results do provide an understanding of one lay president's successful leadership of the Catholic mission and in doing so, provides insight into future practice for lay presidents, boards of trustees and SRCs.

First of all the data indicate that supporting and advancing the mission is a continual process and once the mission is recognized and *distinguishable*, that *inheritability* should be considered, defined and become a part of the strategic plan of the institution. For lay presidents, it develops the critical importance of their own role in the leadership of the mission, specifically by their own witness and their personal commitment to intentional mission development. Established leaders, however, cannot

assume the mission will live on past their tenure and should strategically consider how it will be inherited into the culture of the institution.

For boards of trustees the data suggest that it is critical to establish what is needed in the presidency at this unique time in CHE as well as for the university. Boards may want to consider expanding their presidential searches to include candidates from outside higher education who have a background in Catholic education or experience in other Catholic organizations. It is likely that they will have to actively seek out these potential applicants rather than assume they will apply through traditional higher education search processes. This research indicates that candidates for the presidency of CIHE may be found within Catholic K-12 institutions or in other organizations where the Catholic mission is prominent.

Perhaps the most challenging recommendation for practice is for the SRCs. As they face dwindling membership, and thus the diminishing opportunity to transfer the unique characteristics and attributes of their charism to the institutions they founded, they must ask honest questions about their continuing roles in the life of the institutions they founded. SRCs will want to seriously consider how important it is for their charism to stay a visible and viable part of the institution, the amount of energy and time their membership can commit to assuring that will happen, and what are the most meaningful ways, other than sharing the SRCs history, that are likely to be successful. In doing so, institutions and their SRCs will need to ask the very difficult question about the balance between Catholicism and charism.

Catholic institutions of higher education need to continue to look closely at the preparation of leadership for Catholic educators and investigate further if there is

sufficient theological and spiritual formation for future leadership and, if so, where in Catholic education is that happening? They will want to ask who are the mentors of CHE leaders and how does CHE administration differ from secular higher education administration or Catholic K-12 administration. As the membership in the SRCs continues to shrink and the leadership for their institutions comes increasingly from outside their membership and influence, SRCs must begin to question who will step forward to fill in the leadership development roles once assumed by them. Who is training the future presidents of the institutions they sponsor and how will the leadership of those institutions need to be prepared for the next critical moment in CHE, when the physical presence of the SRCs may have disappeared in entirety.

Suggestions for Future Research

One of the tensions discovered in this case study is the delicate and intricate relationship between the SSFO and Marian University and its current president. The president who clearly models the Catholic identity of the University identifies in a lesser manner with the Franciscan charism. This is not to suggest that he does not recognize the founders, the Franciscan heritage or the Franciscan dimension of Catholicism, only that it is secondary, versus primary to his faith and practice. Estanek, James and Norton (2006) concluded from their research that the majority of institutions understood their Catholic identity through the lens of the SRC, while Morey (1995) argues that the president would need to lead the institutional mission in relationship to the founding order. There were few models for navigating this relationship when Morey conducted her study; in 2011 this case study of Daniel J. Elsener and Marian University provides one representation of this still existing dynamic. Future research, particularly qualitative case studies on the

relationship between the president and the founding order, in regards to the advancement of the mission in respect to the proliferation of the charism, would be helpful for lay presidents who will likely struggle with this balance in the years ahead.

An additional question worth researching might be to ask how important an institution's charism is to the future success of the institution. Though this was found to be a critical indicator of presidential success in the past, the identity may be less important at this time in the history of Catholic higher education. How important will it be for future lay presidents to understand the charism of the SRC? How important is it for CHE to have institutions with well-established, inheritable charisms in addition to their Catholic identity? If it is important, how will the charisms prepare future leaders for this understanding and what balance between Catholic and charism identity is healthy for the institution? Research as to the type of leadership or formation programs already being conducted by individual charisms, specifically qualitative studies of individual presidents who have received this training, and an understanding of the Catholicity of the programs, would also be helpful.

This study revealed how a lay president with little theological formation has had a significant impact on the Catholic identity of his institution. Further research on the preparation for lay presidents is needed. How critical is it that lay presidents have the theological and spiritual formation recommended by earlier research? There are currently a limited number of preparation program for future administrators in Catholic higher education. Additional research, particularly qualitative research on the presidents who have been participants in these programs, will be helpful in understanding the impact these programs have in the development of lay presidents who can support and advance

the mission of CIHE. The results of this type of research will help CHE in addressing whether or not preparation programs are necessary for lay leadership, or if it is sufficient enough for lay presidents to have a sincere commitment to the faith that is openly expressed in their personal and professional lives.

Conclusion

Twenty-one years after the proclamation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and eleven years after the Bishops application document, CHE finds itself at another critical juncture and the challenge and promise of its mission is in the hands of more lay presidents, a phenomenon that will continue into the foreseeable future. *Ex Corde* specifically called for institutions of CHE to be distinctively Catholic and for the presidents themselves to be Catholic, though the proclamation did not indicate how that was to be determined, nor suggest what preparation would be helpful to the presidents. One year ago, in the fall of 2010, the United States Conference of Bishops released a set of guidelines by which the Bishops would review institutional compliance with the document. Review procedures, which will involve a conversation between the local bishop and each university president, were released in January of 2011. Additionally, the literature on the history of the role of the college or university president indicates that the role itself has become increasingly complex. It is where these two concepts, the challenges facing Catholic identity in CIHE and the complicated and continuously changing role of the American college president, intersect, that this study began.

A review of the research on the role of the president of the CIHE in supporting and advancing the Catholic identity revealed that there had not been an in depth case study into how the current lay president understands his or her role in the current climate

of CHE and how he or she was prepared to do so. Thus, a qualitative case study, seeking the understanding of one lay president, with six or more years of experience was conducted. First, and foremost, the study of this president indicated that he understands and leads this institution's Catholic identity through the lens of his personal Catholic faith. This is most evident in his practice of devotion to the Blessed Mother. As a case study, this finding is not generalizable, however, it does indicate how one lay president has supported and advanced the Catholic mission through a purely Catholic custom.

Secondly, the case study revealed that this president had no prior experience working in higher education nor did he have a terminal degree, but he perceives himself as a Catholic educator and believes he was "called" to the position as a leader of Catholic mission. The study also pointed to the question of *inheritability* of the mission, once the mission was established as *distinguishable* by the president's leadership; and that the president utilized both *directive* and *connective* leadership styles versus being distinctively one type or another. These findings expand the understanding of the concepts developed by Morey and Piderit (2006), suggesting that the president styles are more likely to be found on a continuum than a consistently specific approach.

Finally, the case study indicated a subtle tension between the lay president's Catholic identity and the SRC's charism. As there will be an increasing number of lay presidents leading institutions founded by SRCs, and fewer members of SRCs on college and university campuses, this study points to the need for further examination of the possible tensions between the Catholic and the charism identity of the institution and the lay president's role in balancing the two.

In conclusion, while lay leadership shows momentous promise for leading the unique challenges of CHE at this time in history, presidents cannot be solely accountable for the *distinguishability* and *inheritability* of the Catholic mission, nor will the sponsoring religious community likely be exclusively responsible for providing the necessary theological and spiritual formation of future leaders. Those committed to continuing the distinctive mission of Catholic higher education institutions will want to further consider how its leaders have been, and will be, formed. The current challenge and promise of Catholic higher education is to provide the laity with the necessary formation to lead these distinct institutions in order that they remain a vital part of higher education in America and of service to the Catholic faith.

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