

[1977?]

University Governance

[1977?]

Introduction

First, a brief word about the University of Notre Dame itself. This institution of Catholic higher learning was founded in late November (tradition has it on or about the Feast of St. Andrew) of 1842 by a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C. The original land grant of several hundred acres had been bought by Rev. Stephen T. Badin, the first Catholic priest ordained in the United States, and left in trust to the Bishop of Vincennes, Ind., for anyone who would found a school here. Father Sorin and his companions called their school, in their mother tongue, *L'Universite de Notre Dame du Lac*. With the simple anglicizing of the word *Universite*, our official corporate title is still more French than English. The University was officially chartered by a special act of the legislature of the state of Indiana on Jan. 15, 1844. It is worthy of ecumenical note and gratitude that a Methodist senator was responsible for this action and the writing of the charter, one of the best in the land.

The first century of Notre Dame's history has been amply recorded in Arthur Hope's *Notre Dame: A Hundred Years* (Notre Dame Press, 1948).

The second century began in 1942. The post-World War II years have been productive of an enormous growth of the University that might well be termed explosive. Between the years 1945-67, the operating budget grew from four to thirty-five millions of dollars; the endowment from four to almost seventy million; and whereas 10 million had been spent on plant from Notre Dame's founding until 1945, in the years since over 60 million have been expended on permanent plant, and the landholding is now about 1,100 acres, of which more than half is in actual academic use.

Notable as these physical figures may be, the internal growth and the newly evolving governance of the University are even more important. This puts this Faculty Manual in a special context as another sign of Notre Dame's growth and maturity. The recently reorganized Board of Fellows and Board of Trustees of the University are further evidences of internal growth and modernization of Notre Dame as an institution of Catholic higher learning in the modern context.

The final result administratively is a pyramidal organization with a very wide base, encompassing

all the faculty, and a very small group at the ultimate apex of University governance, the Board of Trustees. Motion is initiated mainly upwards from the large base to the small apex, rather than downwards, although hopefully there will be leadership on all levels and fruitful motion in all directions.

It should be admitted in all frankness that this American pattern of university governance, involving faculty, administration, boards of trustees, and, to a lesser extent, students, all in a delicate and precarious balance, is not the best of man's political inventions. It may even be one of the worst, from a point of view of efficiency, but historically it is the best we have found, it has stood the test of time, and it has produced, when understood and operated with wisdom and humanity, our very best American universities. There is no reason to believe that Notre Dame's future history will be otherwise than that of the best, if we too are blessed with wisdom and humanity.

I should say a word here about Notre Dame as a Catholic university, especially since many of our faculty members and students are not Catholic, and many future members of the total University family are likely not to be Catholic — as has ever been true in the past.

rewriter

Especially prospective new members should know what kind of university community they are getting into. A casual or even careful reading of this Faculty Manual reveals little that would not be equally true of academic procedures in any university — which is as it should be, since we are a university before we are a Catholic university. The manual has a few words in one place about “Catholic character” and the “basic aims of the institution” are mentioned in another context. What does Notre Dame aim to be as a Catholic university? What in heaven’s name is its Catholic character? I cannot really say in any lengthy, precise, or definitive detail, but I do owe this community at least a few words on the subject. Hopefully, those following me will improve on this, but then, we’ve lived and grown here, as a Catholic university, for about 125 years with no words to date. These words are at least an attempt at self-identity. High time, one might say.

Briefly, a Catholic university should begin by being a great university, in the full richness of the modern university’s reality. Notre Dame should be, first and foremost, a community of scholars, learning and teaching together, and together dedicated to serve in our day mankind’s total development, spiritual, intellectual, cultural and material. The first two tasks, learning and teaching, are classical in the university, although learning is cloaked today in the term research. The third task of service to humanity is new to our generation as a specific university function.

Granting Notre Dame’s commitment as a university to this triple task, this should also be a place where all the great questions are asked, where an exciting conversation about the most important human concerns is continually in progress, where the mind constantly grows as the values of intelligence and wisdom are cherished and exercised in full freedom. Any great university must be thus generally characterized, or it is neither a university nor great.

Notre Dame, as a Catholic university, must be all of this and something more. The University, as *Catholic*, is universal in a double sense: first, its

concern touches the moral as well as the intellectual dimensions of all the questions it asks itself and its students, and, secondly, it must emphasize the rightful centrality of philosophy and theology among its intellectual concerns if there are to be real adequacy of knowledge in the university, universality in the mind’s quest for knowledge and meaning, rightness and relevance, understanding and wisdom.

This dual commitment is more personal than institutional, and can only be made by persons in that atmosphere of freedom which above all must characterize the Catholic university in our day. One might assume that our faculty and students, whatever their personal faith, are united in believing that intellectual virtues and moral values are important in life, that the good and wise man, as we are given to perceive him by our intelligence and conscience, is the truest personal measure of our ultimate success as educators and educated.

Notre Dame must give vital, living witness to the wholeness of truth from all sources, both human and divine, while recognizing the real sacredness of all truth from whatever source, and the validity and autonomy of all paths to truth. Notre Dame should reflect profoundly, and with full commitment, its belief in the existence of God and in God’s total revelation to man, especially the Christian message; the deep, age-long mystery of salvation in history; the inner, inalienable dignity and rights of every single human person, recognizing at the same time both man’s freedom and his fallibility, buttressing man’s every move toward a more profound perception of truth and a more humane achievement of justice in our time — and Notre Dame must try to do all of this

in the most ecumenical and open spirit. Somehow, all of this Judeo-Christian tradition should be reflected at Notre Dame in the very human atmosphere of this beautiful campus — in a spirit of civility as well as of love, in openness as well as in commitment, in our pilgrim search as well as in our enduring faith and hope. We may do all of this poorly — but we cannot, as a Catholic university in the modern context, attempt to do less. What is most important is that this endeavor must be the personal responsibility of each one of us.

It is the most sobering of thoughts that we, fallible human beings, must try to create this kind of institution, realizing full well that, in its total vision, such a Catholic university has never really existed and, even today, many think the very concept impossible. I think we can do it, clergy and laity, Catholics and non-Catholics, working together, each contributing something, each believing it is worth the try.

I have often tried to visualize the reality of the Catholic university, the ideal Notre Dame, if you will, in images, especially these three:

1) A *beacon*, shining with the great light of intelligence illumined by a faith which seeks an ever greater understanding and expression of what we believe, in words that really speak to modern

man, to his hopes and fears, to his aspirations and anguishes, to his frustrations and his generosity. The Christian university in America should be *the* place where enlightened conscience fearlessly confronts all the frightening manifestations of raw power of all kinds in our times.

2) A *bridge* across the chasm of misunderstandings that divide so profoundly so much of the modern world, the believers and unbelievers, the rich and the poor, the free and the slave, the developed and the underdeveloped nations, the North and the South, the East and the West, the knowing and the ignorant, the material and the spiritual, the scientist and the humanist, and all the rest. Notre Dame should be a bridge, touching and deeply concerned with both sides of every human chasm. Notre Dame can be a mediator, a bridge builder, a go-between, an honest intellectual broker promoting understanding and peace. Again, in this context, Notre Dame means each one of us.

3) A *crossroads*. Notre Dame can and must be a crossroads where all the vital intellectual currents of our times meet in dialogue, where the Church confronts the modern world with all its insights and all its anguishes, with all its possibilities and all its despairs, where the great issues of the Church in the world today are plumbed to their depths. Notre Dame should increasingly become a place where every sincere inquirer is welcome, listened to, and respected by a serious consideration of what he has to say about his belief or unbelief, his certainty and uncertainty. Notre Dame must be a place where difference of culture and religion and conviction can coexist with friendship, civility, hospitality, and especially love; where the polarity of a Catholic *Weltanschauung*

and belief can be a real catalyst for needed discussion, and the creator of an atmosphere of concern for the spiritual dimensions of man's nature and destiny; where the endless conversation is harbored, not foreclosed.

There is a vision of all of this in Vatican II's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. This document, which I commend to all faculty members, is the real base for a new charter for Catholic universities that merits further study from all who live and work in Catholic universities.

All of this has been sketchy, intuitive, imaginative, perhaps even rhetorical. But from one who has spent most of his adult life trying to reach greatness, whatever this means, for Catholic higher education, it is at least and at best an honest statement, a word of hope for all who might hear, understand, and respond. May they be many — and competent.

A large part of the honesty is that all who are really interested in the vision of a great Catholic university in our times are welcome to help make it come true at Notre Dame. I hope that this Faculty Manual, thus presented at some length, will create a context wherein all the faculty may be enabled to do this effectively, even enthusiastically. This is what I think this Faculty Manual is all about, the spirit that vivifies the letter.

Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
President

[1971]

On the Catholicity of Notre Dame

I am happy to endorse the following report of the provost, Father Burtchaell, on the Catholicity of Notre Dame today. He speaks of the situation as he lives it.

I have little to add to what he says. We may do better here because we attract great students from great families all over the country. Sharing parents' concerns for the spiritual, as well as the intellectual, growth of their sons, we also share most of the confusion that attends all growth in the modern world and in the Church. The old world of structures is becoming unglued. The black and white answers of yesteryear are less clear following Vatican Council II. The challenges and renewed opportunities for a purer and more dedicated Christian life are greater. Somehow we are feeling our way through troubled waters, not always with great success, always living with the danger of shipwreck, but ultimately depending on the Holy Spirit to guide us to the safe port.

In this difficult worldwide situation for our modern Church and world, we cannot create an absolutely safe and secure oasis without falsifying our basic efforts to educate young men — and soon young women, too — for the very real world in which they must live, survive, prevail, and, hopefully, obtain salvation with the grace of God. We can only try to open their souls to the action of the Spirit, to enlarge their vision of what it means to be a Christian, to surround them with teachers who live by faith and who cherish values in a world that is all too secular, valueless and uninspiring.

Young men and women

Maybe the most honest thing that can be said — as Father Jim has well said it — is that Notre Dame today is very imperfect, but, nonetheless, the best Catholic university on earth. As one who has seen all the others, I think this is a true statement of fact, desire and effort. We still have a long way to go — some new roads to find — but we are very much a part of the pilgrim Church that must ever grow in faith and love.

What we need most is understanding, rather than blind criticism, more openness to the Spirit, more dedication, holiness, generosity, even heroism, on the part of everyone who lives and learns here — students, faculty, administrators — as we move towards the ideal that has rarely, if ever, existed in the history of mankind — a place where everyone learns and grows in the Christian spirit, where wisdom and virtue flourish together, where young and old understand and edify and educate each other — a Catholic university not only as described in words by Cardinal Newman, but existing in reality as even Newman was not able to create.

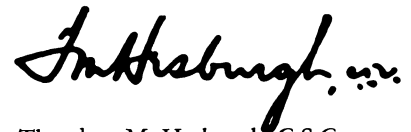
Is it worth the effort? Only those who live and learn here, or the parents who

send their sons, and soon their daughters, here will be able to answer.

Those of us who have spent decades and quarter centuries of our lives here think we know the answer — that it is worthwhile as long as we continue to ask the important questions and sweat out the Christian answers — ever more difficult — with successive generations of promising students who will make or undo the world of tomorrow.

None of this will be completely satisfying to those who want everything black and white, cut and dried. All one can say is that the world and the Church is not like this today, nor can the university be. One might add that, happily, we are on the road to a better world which, if less secure, is nonetheless more Christian, more saving, more honest, more authentic, in that the Holy Spirit strongly leads us to be Christian in the spirit of the Gospels in which Christ challenges us to dare, to be different, to believe and hope and love whatever the cost to security and transient peace, because eternal life is the only goal worth pursuing.

If somehow this message gets through to the majority of our students — what could be more worthwhile than what we are trying to do?



Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
President

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Between the years 1945
and 1977, the operating
budget grew from _____ millions
to _____ millions of dollars;
the endowment from _____ millions
to _____ millions; and whereas
10 million had been spent on
plant from Notre Dame's
funding until 1945, in the
years since, over 100
millions have been expended
on permanent plant and facilities.
Landholding is now about 1100
acres with half in ~~permanent~~
actual academic use.