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Transcription of Panel II: “The View from the Top”

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The Heights Room of Corcoran Commons, Boston College

featuring:

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President, University of Notre Dame

Philip G. Ryken
President, Wheaton College

Jane McAuliffe
President, Bryn Mawr College

Moderated by **Mark Massa, S.J.**,
Dean, Boston College School of
Theology and Ministry



MASSA: Good morning to all of you as we continue our conversation this morning. My name is Mark Massa. I’m the dean of the School of Theology and Ministry here at Boston College, and professor of church history, and I’m delighted to welcome our three discussants. We have a sort of embarrassment of riches here with us.

Jane McAuliffe is the president of Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. She has spearheaded initiatives there to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and conversations on the liberal arts. She is, as most of you already know, an internationally respected scholar of Islamic studies, and I think we last saw each other at the Visiting Committee to Harvard Divinity School last fall. At our sister Jesuit institution, Georgetown University, she was the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, where I understand from my Jesuit friends there that the faculty still wear little black armbands on Wednesday afternoons in your absence. So welcome, Jane.

John Jenkins, of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, is the president of the University of Notre Dame, where he initiated a university-wide process of examining the question of the meaning and the purpose of a Catholic university, and I think lots of other Catholic institutions—certainly those of us at BC—have watched that very carefully to find out where you’re going. Most recently, as you all know, four years ago he invited President

Barack Obama to president, where you had an interesting event—interesting in the Chinese sense, I think you'd say.

Phil Ryken is the president of Wheaton College in Illinois. He is a nationally respected theologian and former pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. If you are a scholar of Presbyterian history, like I am, you will know that the pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church is sort of like being the cardinal archbishop of New York. Maybe with some more power than the cardinal archbishop of New York. He is the author of more than 30 books, and most recently, a monograph calling *Liberal Arts for the Christian Life*. So, welcome, all three of you.

I'd like to start off our conversation by picking up a question that Mark Oppenheimer asked during the last session, and that's a question about how one balances a faith commitment, a moral vision of education, with being an elite, selective higher education institution that wants to attract the very best students and scholars, and how do you balance those sort of things? So I guess I would like to hear the three of you—you're all from very different kinds of elite institutions—how one balances faith commitments with the purported ends of liberal education, which are free inquiry, allowing people to ask questions from various parts of the field. Do you want to take this, Jane?

MCAULIFFE: All right, I'll be happy to start. Actually, this gives me the perfect question with which to do a little kickoff history on Bryn Mawr College, which is very much a secular institution, but was Quaker-founded. And these arguments were engaged well before the founding of the college, which was in 1885, a period in which two major forces were at work socially.

One was the whole question of women's education—could women be educated? Did they have the physical strength to endure? [laughter] Seriously. Seriously. Or was it going to harm their ability to bear children if they put their minds into the coursework of higher education? There were some real questions about the kind of education women were capable of, and the kind of education that was suitable for their presumed role in society. Remember, this is before women's suffrage. So that was a major issue in the last quarter of the 19th century. And the other was, of course, the emergence of the European model of research institutions.

So when this wonderful bachelor, actually, James Taylor, decided that he wanted to devote his fortune to the foundation of a Quaker women's college, for about 10 years before that college actually opened, there were very serious intra-Quaker conventions that dealt with the question of women's education, and whether it should be a Quaker college or whether it should be a college that simply focused solely on academic excellence and academic rigor.

And where those conversations actually came out, although the arguments continued for several decades, was that Bryn Mawr, rather than taking the direction of its brother school, Haverford College, which was a decidedly Quaker institution, for Quakers, where many of the faculty members were Quakers, really took the direction of Johns Hopkins, which was also a Quaker-founded institution, but was all about attracting the best faculty, having the most rigorous entrance requirements, instituting standards of excellence that would be nationally and internationally recognized. And so it's fascinating to see these questions with which the panel is engaged today, and to see how, more than 125 years

ago, they were the conversational fodder upon which the foundation of Bryn Mawr was established.

MASSA: Jane, would you say, because of that Quaker founding—and I have friends whose daughter just graduated from Swarthmore, another Quaker institution—are there instances of the Quaker founding still at Bryn Mawr, or is that passed over?

MCAULIFFE: Oh, the whole ethos of the place is steeped in Quaker values, in ways that we feel a little more comfortable talking about now than we did even 30 or 40 years ago. But the sense of the integrity, the importance of the individual, of reaching consensus as a mode of governance, of the focus on social justice and on social change, which animated the college in the very early years into several really important projects, one of which was to create the first college- or university-affiliated school of social work in the country. So those things continue to be a deep part of the culture of the college.

MASSA: John?

JENKINS: Yeah, Mark, it's a good question. I think there's two ways to take it. One is sort of at a shallow level. You know, it's about marketing. Can you hold your market position with students and faculty? And I think the answer to that question is an easy yes, because I think the great challenge in higher ed is the homogeneity of higher education institutions, because we're all competing, and we're all trying to be a little bit better, and we're 17th rather than 18th on *US News and World Report*. That's not a very compelling answer, though.

But I think, on a deeper level, I think it's a more emphatic yes. And I've been thinking here as I've listened to this. We talk about a liberal education, but the history of that concept was that the threats to liberty were not external. It's not that the government or somebody else is going to make me do what I don't want to do. They were internal. They were my own passions, my own acquisitiveness, my own pride, that prevent me from being the free person I want. If you look at Plato and Aristotle to the Middle Ages, it was that struggle that liberal education was around. And the very concept, then, of a liberal education is profoundly moral. It's about the shaping of a young person.

If—and I think it was said before—if you're in an institution—and I don't minimize the challenge as there are tremendous challenges—but if you're in an institution, that at least at an institutional level, buys into some vision of what a good human life is, you at least can talk about a liberal education in a way that's coherent, perhaps. So I guess I think there's a great opportunity here.

RYKEN: I found the prestige question to be very searching for us at Wheaton College. I definitely think it's possible to pursue excellence in liberal arts education and, at the same time, be faithful to a particular statement of faith, and pursue both of those goals, and possibly also to be well-regarded within higher education generally for academic excellence.

But I feel the weight of it partly because evangelicals sometimes wonder how we are regarded by the wider educational community. We want to be regarded as having a flourishing life of the mind, and wondering if we're really being regarded that way. And then, on the other hand, I think of the words of the apostle Paul, who gives warnings about the way that knowledge can lead to pride, and we want to be faithful, and we want

to be humble, but we also want to do excellent work. So it's a searching question that we definitely wrestle with.

MASSA: Phil and I were talking just before this session, and I asked him what the makeup of Wheaton was, and he said, so many of this, so many of that, and a number of Catholics. And I was kind of surprised, and you answered, Catholics come there because they felt the Catholic alternatives weren't religious enough. Is that my recollection?

RYKEN: I think that would be true for some of our Catholic students. I said the number of Catholic students we have on campus is quite small, but they would identify themselves with an evangelical statement of faith, and they would be looking for a particular kind of Christian community, and, I think in most cases, finding it at Wheaton College.

MASSA: Good. Now we come to the nitty-gritty, terrible questions, that is, there are different ways that an institution can hold onto a religious vision or moral vision. One of the ways is an institutional culture that Jane talked about. So there's an emphasis on consensus, upon individual respect, and search for knowledge, which is very much in the tradition of the Society of Friends.

But for Catholic and evangelical schools, I think there's a larger question about—and we've all been through this in the past 20 years—questions about statements of faith. Should the institution have a statement of faith that you expect all the faculty to buy into on some level, or should a certain percentage of the student body or professorate be members of the sponsoring religious institution? Before I came to BC, I was part of a conversation at another Jesuit school where that was a very interesting and heated question. Do you want to address that? Should there be statements of faith? Should institutions clearly say, this is a university about da-da-da-da-da?

JENKINS: A few things to be said. First, a university is the collection of its scholars, right? You have a building endowment, all this stuff, but it is the intellectuals that do the teaching. So if that group of people doesn't buy into some vision of what education is, you could put out all the glossy stuff you want. You don't have it. And so you have to—yes, the answer to that question is yes. And I think, as you know, Mark, with a Catholic institution, you have a robust ecclesial dimension, and that's complex, and it's often difficult, but it can't be ignored.

At the same time, I'm just tremendously proud of listening to someone like Nathan Hatch or Mark Noll, who were tremendous Notre Dame faculty members not in the Catholic tradition, but had a resonance with it, so that they contributed. Eboo Patel talked about Muslims, and we have some of those, and we'd like to have more. But there can be—I don't think you have to be—I think you can be embracive, but I think people have to see an overlapping consensus about the sort of conversation you want to have going on at the university, if you're going to have a distinctive view of it.

MASSA: If I'm hearing you correctly, are you in favor of the idea that there has to be some sort of explicit process at a place like Notre Dame or Boston College or wherever that says, when we're interviewing faculty, this is a Catholic place, how do you feel about that?

JENKINS: I think if any institution doesn't ask that question, they're not doing their job. What are we about here? We're about educating people; we're about discovery. If you don't ask, how are you going to contribute to that community? What do you ask? Is it only about

how many publications you've got, or where you got your degree—if there's a rich intellectual community, there's got to be some common vision. It doesn't have to be unanimity, and it doesn't have to be homogeneity, but, as I say, an overlapping consensus about what we're trying to do here.

So I certainly think so, but again, I think the danger is you kind of become too narrow, or there becomes a litmus test. That shouldn't be it. But there should be some common vision animating the institution. Otherwise, I don't know what you have.

RYKEN: Last night we heard Nathan Hatch commend Boston College for its middle ground, not in the direction of something highly relativized, also not something highly homogeneous, but appropriately pluralistic. And I would want to make a similar kind of argument for higher education as a whole, that there's something valuable about having a pluralistic context of different institutions with different missions, including some institutions like Wheaton College which are, to use Cullen Murphy's term, avowedly sectarian. We certainly are that, made up of many evangelical denominations, but having a clear and fairly robust statement of faith that gives us a strong sense of institutional identity. I think that's a source of strength for us. I also think, in various ways, and maybe we'll get into this, it fuels and nurtures a vision for liberal education.

I definitely do not think that every institution should be like Wheaton College. I think we have a variety of different kinds of institutions, each of which should have their own strong sense of mission, and that there's value in that wider pluralistic context. But we certainly have a statement of faith that we expect faculty not only to sign, but also that those are convictions that they, in various ways, will inculcate through their teaching.

MASSA: I guess my question, then, is where does that question of faculty hiring, what Jesuits call hiring for mission, is the famous thing. So I always say that if you have the faculty, it doesn't matter what the front page of your bulletin says, and if you don't have the faculty, it doesn't matter how many crucifixes are on the wall. People aren't engaged. It's just not what it says it is.

So where should that take place? Should that take place at the level of hiring? Should there be an institutional-wide officer? Jane, at Bryn Mawr, how do you assure that, when the faculty come on board, that they're on board this formally Quaker mission of respect for the individual, consensus—how do you enforce something like that?

MCAULIFFE: Well, I think that the piece of that that we would foreground in hiring, and then in mentoring and developing faculty at Bryn Mawr, is really the notion of an educational process that is focused on the formation of the whole person. I was really struck, moving from Georgetown to Bryn Mawr in 2008, how much of the rhetoric translated from the Jesuit Catholic university at Georgetown to Bryn Mawr and the undergraduate education of students in a very holistic way.

And although we don't evoke the name of the Society of Friends—we occasionally will talk about our Quaker heritage and that sort of thing—what we're looking for are faculty who are interested in more than simply the intellectual development of students, who are interested in more than simply students as kind of adjuncts to faculty members' own research trajectory—although we want a very research-intensive faculty person every time we hire.

So that the questions we're asking are more about the interest of those faculty members in being at the intentional learning community that a very small liberal arts constitutes, as opposed to what they would do at a large Research I university. And we raise that question quite overtly. We then, as faculty are coming in, mentor them around the mission of a college like Bryn Mawr, and at the point of tenuring, and then eventual post-tenure reviews, continue to press on that matter of fit for the mission of the institution as we conceive it.

MASSA: That's exactly the question, because I know the Jesuit lingo is *cura personalis*. It's that Jesuit institutions are committed to the care of the whole person. And you're talking about the Quaker sort of evanescent reality of Bryn Mawr as pretty much along the same line?

MCAULLIFEE: Very much. Very much along those lines.

MASSA: John?

JENKINS: Yeah, all I can say is, I think Jane talked about the character of her institution, and its traditions, and its aspirations, but unless you hire faculty who will be committed to that—and there was some self-selection. You wouldn't apply to Bryn Mawr if you weren't interested in being part of that. But unless there's some self-selection, you'll lose that quality.

MASSA: Well, what's been your experience? I know that you and your predecessor have led many faculty discussions in South Bend about percentages or quotas and that kind of thing, and I think, just being a former faculty person, that's pretty inimicable to have even committed Catholic faculty would feel toward that. How did you oversee those kinds of discussions?

JENKINS: We have percentage quotas for gender and minorities and Catholics. Again, it's not everybody's got to be Catholic, or everybody got to sign something. But I think people should understand, and either locate themselves in the tradition or relate to a tradition in such a way that they can make fruitful contributions and find it a nourishing community. And what we have found, quite honestly, is it's not a barrier to academic quality. It's, in many ways, an asset.

Nathan Hatch spoke—he was thinking about Illinois or Notre Dame, just coming out of Yale. Well, Notre Dame would be a place where religion could be discussed more openly. That was attractive to him. So that was a sort of recruiting advantage for Notre Dame. And we found that in others—because I do think, again, there's a challenge of just the homogeneity of institutions. Excellent institutions, great scholars, have to talk about what's distinctive. And if someone's going to come to Notre Dame who could go to whatever prestigious institution, there's got to be something different that we offer than those alternatives.

MASSA: You're almost saying that being Catholic helps define an important niche for getting the students you want.

JENKINS: Yes.

RYKEN: Just on the subject of hiring for mission, I can hardly think of something that's more important than that for us. And for us, that includes—I review the files of anybody that's coming to campus for an interview for a position, and we do not approve a full-time hire without actually our Trustees' Academic Affairs Committee also signing off on the final candidate.

They will see brief essays from faculty members about, what is your understanding of a liberal arts education, what is your own personal commitment to Jesus Christ, also questions about scholarship and things like that. And also, in philosophy of education, how you will model for students a Christian commitment. That's all part of our hiring process, and then also part of our sequence of faith and learning seminars that we take faculty through once they've been hired. So not just the hiring, but also the enculturation into our community is very important.

MASSA: What's your sense—I say this as a historian. Historians make lousy prognosticators for the future. But what's your sense of the chances of faith-related institutions in the future? For the past 30 years we've had very smart studies like D.G. Hart and Phil Gleason and folks like that about looking, at least initially, at the Protestant institutions.

Most of the great institutions in the country were started as Protestant institutions to train ministers. They are now avowedly secular. And I think there was a fear, at least in the Catholic academy, and certainly, I think, in the evangelical section of the academy, about going that same route. How do places like Wheaton, or Notre Dame, or Boston College, or Georgetown hold onto their identity and remain true to that while navigating the treacherous rapids of being elite institutions and looking for the very best students? What would you say about the future?

RYKEN: I'll just comment on that briefly. I've been interested in that question, actually, since I was a student. I'm an alumnus of Wheaton College. I was raised in that community, raised in Christian liberal arts tradition, and I was interested in that question even as a young person, just knowing a little bit about the history of higher education and the trajectory that many institutions have been on.

I think one of the things that helps distinctively Christian institutions now is an awareness of that history, and we are also much more distinct than we would have been even 50 years ago, certainly 100 years ago. And that's part of our distinctive identity, and so it's got certain strengths and weaknesses, but that's why students and faculty are coming to us for that distinctive kind of community.

JENKINS: It's tremendously challenging, as has been said previously, for all sorts of reasons. So you just have to navigate those. I guess I would like to say something else, just to echo, again, what's been said before. I do have serious worries about the commoditization of higher education. And I've given talks before—I've said to parents who have to shell out a quarter million dollars to go to Notre Dame.

Well, why is that? Well, you can earn so much more in the course of your career if you get a really fine higher education. If you start to talk that way, then the value of education becomes simply its economic benefit. It's extrinsic. And I fear that those pressures, those market pressures, are having a greater and greater effect on how we think about higher education, and how our students and their parents think about higher education. For all the challenges, the hope is that perhaps a kind of religious identity can give a balance to

those tremendous pressures to give some depth and richness to concept of education that goes beyond simply kind of talk about a return on investment.

MCAULIFFE: Let me do a take on this from the position of a secular liberal arts college—yes, religiously founded, but currently a secular liberal arts college. And I would echo something that Andrew Delbanco said in the first panel, which is, of course, religion is coming back to campus. As a scholar of Islam, I'm very well aware of the fact that often the resurgence of interest in departments other than the religious studies department, in political science, in sociology, is driven by a sense of religion as pathology. There's no question about that.

But on the other hand, there's a real upsurge in an effort on the part of students and faculty to get a stronger grasp about the way religions operate as cultural forces more generally. It just seems impossible in this day and age to imagine graduating students for, to use the current term, global citizenship, without their being well-informed and having reached a certain level of religious literacy. So these are forces that affect both the religiously-affiliated and the unaffiliated colleges and universities equally.

Adding to that is, I think, an upsurge in student personal interest in religion and spirituality. And, of course, you know, the commonplace here is, well, I'm spiritual but I'm not religious, and all that surrounds that. But certainly we're experiencing along with that at Bryn Mawr a much greater openness. I think it was always there, but students feel a little bit more empowered to speak about their own religious interests, however unformed and illiterate, in some ways, in terms of traditional senses those may be.

We have recently instituted an Office of Religious and Spiritual Life on campus in response to these student needs. And in fact, the director of that office is with me at this conference. He also happens to be my husband. [laughter]

MASSA: Full disclosure.

MCAULIFFE: In some ways, I would say that having a president of Bryn Mawr who is a Roman Catholic and is willing to be very explicit about that has also allowed some faculty voices to surface that had felt that they really had to keep that part of their lives very, very private within the secular ambience of the college.

MASSA: Let me ask a question based on your former institution, Georgetown. I was at the inauguration of the new president of Holy Cross. Jack DeGioia, the president of Georgetown, was there. And I asked him, in this year's current freshman class at Georgetown College, what percentage of the students are Catholic? He said, 37%, which is slightly more than a third. I think, depending on the blog site you read, Catholics make up somewhere between 24% and 27% of the American population generally. So 37% is slightly larger than the quarter to maybe a third of the population.

But my understanding—and we had a very interesting conversation about quotas. And so my question is, the last time I looked Harvard College was something like 24% Roman Catholic. So the question is, minus quotas, or minus some sort of explicit understanding that a certain percentage of the class is going to be Catholic, how do you stay Catholic? It's fun to even think that Harvard, where I went, is a Catholic institution. I mean, it's slightly less Catholic than Georgetown, but not by much. How do you do that?

MCAULIFFE: Mark, are you asking me? [laughter] I am five years from being dean at Georgetown, and at the time that I was there, I would have answered that question that you asked Jack as 55%. So there has been a real shift in those statistics in the intervening five years, if Jack's answer represents the current reality of the freshman class. I'm going to pass on the question of Georgetown quotas.

MASSA: Yeah, no, of course.

JENKINS: I do think among the challenges here is the weakening state of religious institutions in this country. I mean, the Catholic Church is a good example in its recent struggles, and young people feel less identified with it. At the same time, unless religious institutions are strong, it's hard to sustain a robust religious life individually, or with a kind of generic commitment to spirituality. And different institutions relate to this in different ways.

I do think Notre Dame explicitly feels committed to the institution of the Catholic Church, and to providing leaders for it. Not that it's exclusively Catholic, and not that others aren't welcome, but just as if Bryn Mawr says, look, we want to educate women and train them to be leaders in society, it would be silly if they didn't attend to the percentage of women at Bryn Mawr. That would be silly if 90% of your student body is men, and you're really committed to training women as leaders.

So similarly, at a place like Notre Dame—and I think Catholic institutions have different roles. I think it is important to try to find people who locate themselves in that tradition and can be the leaders for that tradition tomorrow, because it's important for the religious life of people in that institution.

MASSA: And do you often get questions from applicants who aren't Catholic, was the reason that Notre Dame said no to me is because I wasn't a Catholic?

JENKINS: We get that question, as well as legacy, as well as many other questions.

RYKEN: I'm not going to be able to help you on Catholic quotas for Catholic universities. I could go back, though, to something Jane mentioned which I think is definitely a challenge for us. And she was talking about how important it is for students to be literate religiously. That's more of a challenge, I think, for us, because we have, obviously, a homogeneous faculty in terms of their religious commitment. So for us to expose our students to world religions and the perspectives of different religions takes a lot more intentionality, something we have to be much more intentional about, than in a more pluralistic faculty, if you have that on campus.

MASSA: As all of you know, since I presume all of you are religious readers of the *Chronicle* like I am, do secular or public universities, do you think, do a better job of training people to live in a religiously pluralistic world than religiously-based institutions? There's an argument that you could make that going to a place like the University of Massachusetts just introduces you to the sheer spectrum of diversity, or a place that's an elite but secular place like Bryn Mawr, does a better job of training you how to navigate the rapids of religious diversity and pluralism.

MCAULIFFE: I'm not so sure. But maybe it does go back to the question of quotas, because certainly—and here I will reflect on the two institutions that I know well—Georgetown was very

intentional about educating students within a strong sense of religious pluralism and introducing them to other religious cultures. This was done both in the curriculum and well beyond the curriculum.

At Bryn Mawr it operates somewhat differently. And I think one of the things we haven't begun to talk about yet is the role of residential life in the undergraduate colleges, and just how formative that is for our students. These, if they're done right, and if they can be—and Bryn Mawr is very small, so we have the advantage of a very small size—but they are an extraordinary hothouse of almost utopian living, living and thinking very seriously about how one creates community, how one builds a sense of unity among all of the diversity.

We have a very diverse student body at Bryn Mawr. Well over 50% of our students are either American women of color or international students. Almost 25% of our students hold foreign passports. You don't just toss all of those young women into the room and say, now play nice with your toys. You think very seriously, and you work constantly at building community in a student body like that. And that includes all forms of diversity—ethnic, religious, cultural, across the spectrum. So I think that's an important way in which some of our institutions can have an impact.

MASSA: So is there a sense, then, that Bryn Mawr, and the residential life side of Bryn Mawr, might do that better than previous institutions you've been at?

MCAULIFFE: I don't know that I'd be judgmental about it in that fashion. I think it is one way in which we form students, and we create that kind of citizenship for the world that will be an important part of their lives going forward.

JENKINS: In some sense, yes. The first non-Catholic institution I attended, was Oxford University as a graduate student. And so I went through these Catholic institutions, and I learned things there and interacted with people, that is helpful. But I guess, at the same time, my worry is a bit that, in this country, religious identity is sort of becoming more and more like ethnic identity.

It's just something you're born with, and you acquire, and the sense of being formed within a religious tradition, and letting it shape your deepest moral convictions, letting it shape your religious convictions, letting it shape your aesthetic convictions, even—we're losing that a bit. And so if all we have is a bunch of people who kind of were born into a certain religion, and they get along, yeah, that would help. But do you have the intellectual, spiritual, moral formation in that tradition that would let that person articulate what that tradition means to those other people with whom they share a community? That would be my question.

RYKEN: Especially for our students, a little over 60% of students at Wheaton College attended public high school, and within five years, 70% of our students are in graduate school of one kind or another, so many of our students will have other opportunities to rub up against people from other religious traditions. And there's a value, I think, in having—for some students—I mean, each student should go to the school that's really right for them, I think. There are so many great opportunities in this country.

But there is value in being in that community which encourages a life of Christian discipleship for a season of your life, that then is preparation for the rest of life. But I say

that having already acknowledged the challenge for us, and the need for intentionality about exposing our students to other religious traditions, which I think is just part of being well liberally educated.

MASSA: The word here that's come out, that I think it's the important word, is intentionality. You're saying that Georgetown's very intentional about its Catholic nature. And, of course, as Julie mentioned in the previous panel, we're in a historical context. We're not creating things from the beginning, that we're in the middle of things.

How do you get faculty buy-in to a vision of moral leadership, or a certain vision of liberal arts education, or a certain vision of the importance of God in religion, in the formation of the individual and the individual conscience? How do you do that, given the fact that all three of your institutions have been around for a while, and there's been a long tradition, and you're trying to get—just to judge by the number of graduate schools in the United States, most people come from secular or public graduate schools when they come. Except, say, for a handful of graduate schools that are explicitly religious, most prospective faculty come from places that are avowedly secular, as did I—as did, I think, all of us. So how do you do that? How do you get faculty buy-in?

MCAULIFFE: Well, I would not get faculty buy-in, I think, about a particular religious view of the institution. But certainly where it does operate, and I think has long operated, is in the importance of basic humanistic values as shaped by the Quaker tradition. The importance of the examined life, of being self-reflective in one's educational journey, but then personal journey as well. Of doing good, of learning within the context of an intentional community like Bryn Mawr, that there is service to others that is an important part of how one lives in those four years, but then would also expect to live going forward.

Another important overlay of that for Bryn Mawr is simply our founding mission, which is about the advancement and the empowerment of women. And if there is anything in the 21st century that remains an enormous moral dilemma, it's the fact that, across the globe, women remain deeply disadvantaged, often oppressed, abused, and culturally subjugated in ways that are almost unthinkable for those of us who enjoy the advantages of the kinds of educations that the institutions represented here offer.

So this is something that, as a faculty, and as a student body, we are thinking a great deal about, and understanding how, because of our heritage, because of our history, we can be a pretty powerful voice in this arena, and we have to exercise some institutional agency to do that.

RYKEN: I think this is one of the areas where an institution like Wheaton has a huge advantage, because there's a lot of talk—we heard it in the earlier panel, and last night as well—about the need for moral formation as part of higher education, and as part of liberal education. That's a built-in advantage for us, because we already have shared convictions about what character looks like. It's Christ-like character. We have, on our campus, a community covenant, which is, in effect, an honor code that details some of the things that we're looking for in a virtuous life.

Most of the faculty that would apply for a position would already be moving in that direction, and then would have a chance to consider, is this really the community that is a full expression of who I am? And even in our tenure and promotion process, we consider the component of mentorship, and what we would call spiritual discipleship, as one

component of what the faculty responsibility is. So this is one area where I think we have an advantage in something that's very important in liberal education, and it's this character formation.

JENKINS: I would say, I think the Jesuits, here at Boston College and other institutions, are doing much better at this. I know you have done a lot working with faculty and helping them reflect on the institution, and Jesuit ideals, and I think we have a lot to learn from you.

For us, I think there are elements of a broad Catholic vision that people can relate to who aren't Catholic. I mean, service to people in need is something that our students embrace. The Center for Social Concerns—Bill Lies ran that—is something that directs students to service, and faculty are very excited about that. Ethics across the curriculum is something that faculty could buy into. I think there are elements of the vision. Faculty may not buy into the whole or be Catholic, but they can become enthusiastic about certain elements.

MASSA: I think of the Georgetown statement called centered pluralism, which is a very smart sort of thing, where the center is Jesuit and Catholic, but there's overlapping circles, and hopefully all faculty buy in on some level of that kind of thing. But how do you hold onto a religious and moral vision and not be perceived as sectarian?

The one and only college hockey game I've ever attended was last year, the Beanpot here in Boston, and Boston College was playing Boston University, and Boston University started chanting, Sunday school, Sunday school, and the BC students started chanting safety school, safety school. [laughter] How do you hold onto that—or, in a place like Bryn Mawr, is there a perception that places like BC or Notre Dame are in some way sectarian that's problematic, or unfaithful to the liberal ends of higher education? Or not? Or is that a dated view?

MCAULIFFE: No, I don't think there is that perception. These are very prominent and very research-driven institutions, and they're highly respected, and our graduates know graduates of these institutions. I don't think there's any sense in which they're perceived as somehow second-rate or second-class because they are religiously identified.

JENKINS: I have to say, I don't—I think there's a tinge of skepticism in the broad academic world that you can be genuinely religious and a serious academic institution and serious research institution. I think that's out there. But, well, that's OK. You just have to do it.

MASSA: And have you personally experienced that in dealing with other college presidents or university presidents?

JENKINS: Not my colleagues. They're very respectful. But I think the ratings game, it's sort of who's good and who's not, and I don't think it helps you to be religiously affiliated in the reputational game.

MASSA: You think there is a bias in the rankings?

JENKINS: I don't want to overemphasize that. There's loads of biases. I think being from a small Midwestern city is a black mark. [laughter] If we were in New York or Boston, I think we'd be in better shape. But that's just life. Again, if the quality of your faculty, its research, and its teaching is superb, that's going to be recognized eventually.

RYKEN: But to me, an important question would be, not just, are we a sectarian school, which of course we are. Are we charitable in our relationships with others? Do we value academic freedom? And are we interested in engaging a much wider world of ideas than simply what comes from the Christian tradition? Those are all important values for us in terms of curriculum, in terms of classroom, in terms of research, in terms of the connections that our faculty have in the wider scholarly community. So I think there's a right kind of sectarianism in a pluralistic context, and probably wrong kinds of sectarianism as well.

MCAULIFFE: I'll add one small point, and admittedly, it's a little bit controversial. But from the perspective of a women's college, the track record of religions around women is an issue. Certainly—and here I would put, in some ways, Islam and Roman Catholicism on an equal plane. There is some skepticism around why would an intelligent woman continue to be a Roman Catholic if she is really interested in women's leadership? If she's trying to train the next generation of women's leaders, then how could she possibly intellectually remain associated with, affiliated with a tradition that does not do that?

RYKEN: You don't need to leave evangelicalism out of your list either. [laughter]

MASSA: This is confession time.

RYKEN: Basically, I think some of the best principles in all of those traditions—certainly I think that of the Christian tradition—recognize the dignity of all persons, and desire women to flourish as much as men, and it's a matter of recovering and grasping onto those principles, sometimes in spite of the history.

JENKINS: I would only say—I agree with you, Jane, and it's a tremendous challenge. If institutions of higher education aren't there to provide a different voice, it's not going to get better. That's why I think the connection between an institution of higher education and ecclesial bodies is an important one.

The vitality that has come to the Catholic Church from having universities from the 13th century on is tremendous. Had it not had that, I think it wouldn't have been helped— but people like me and Bill Leahy have to deal with those tensions that, frankly, are extremely difficult to deal with. They're extremely difficult. But I don't think it would be helped, either the religious institution or the university, really, to break off that dialogue, as has happened in many ways.

MASSA: I want to prescind from questions about your three institutions or previous institutions. I guess I would like to hear your opinions about how well you think faith-based colleges and universities are doing in this country, in terms of balancing vibrancy of intellectual life and production of knowledge with loyalty to mission. I think all three of you are from, in a sense, privileged institutions that do it quite well, I think.

How well do you think—there's, what, how many Catholic colleges in the United States? That varies on a day-to-day basis. Let's say 230, something like that. And there's many, many more religiously-affiliated or faith-based institutions. How well do you think that, as a form of higher education, is doing in the United States amongst the 4,000 colleges and universities?

MCAULIFFE: I think the pressures on colleges and universities, and I keep reflecting on our title—

MASSA: Our ironically-titled –

MCAULIFFE: Religion and the Liberal Aims of Private, Elite Higher Education is really what we've been talking about all morning. All of the colleges represented here are just a tiny fraction of the overall spectrum of the 18 million undergraduates in the United States, most of whom are over the age of 25, most of whom are in public institutions. A great percentage are in two-year colleges, most of whom are going to college and working and raising families at the same time. So for a moment, I'd just like us to frame the larger environment of American higher education as we think about, then, the forces, the pressures on all of these institutions, which, of course, impact us differently in different sectors of this broad spectrum.

So I think faith-based or not, private, small liberal arts colleges are under enormous financial pressure, by virtue of the high cost of education and the understandable resistance and the financial pressures around the continuous raising of tuition, where the income averages of Americans and the tuitions of our institutions have really started to separate in a rather dramatic way. So I don't think the pressures are so much around their religious identification as they are around huge economic forces that are affecting the whole sector.

JENKINS: I would say, it's the best of times and the worst of times. I think there are tremendous challenges. But I continue to believe that, at least with regard to the religious institutions, it's to have a distinctive vision of education. It can be a great benefit, and can be a source of vitality, and can be a source of strength, and so it's just a matter of using that, taking advantage of that. But there are challenges, and some of those Jane mentioned, finance and other things.

RYKEN: Just to comment on things that we talk about in, say, the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. That would be 110 evangelical institutions from around the country. Embattled but thriving is probably the context. And to me, there is no doubt that the overall level of scholarship has been rising in recent decades in evangelical institutions. Mark Noll and others, Nick Wolterstorff, others have had a lot to do with that through their leadership. And Mark's book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, really led to a lot of soul-searching. But it's been productive, so I think things have moved in a good direction that way.

I also think that the economic pressures that many of those institutions face are acute, and so when we're in gatherings of—whether it's the provosts getting together, or the chief financial officers getting together, the presidents, there's a lot of concern at a lot of institutions about how well they will be able to survive. And you have all of the pressures of focus on professions and careers that's inimical, in some ways, to liberal education, all of those pressures are acutely felt at evangelical institutions.

And the other thing we talked about is, if you take all of the students in the United States of that age, your 18-year-old students, who identify as evangelical, 2% of those students end up in evangelical institutions. So there's a lot of students there to come to those institutions. A lot of them are going, obviously, to other institutions. So making sure that we're in the mix as one excellent option for education is something that's important to me and my colleagues.

MASSA: All three of you have touched on this, so I guess my last question—and then we'll turn to the audience—is, the religiously- or faith-based institutions that seem to be thriving are the ones that have the largest percentages of people who are disappointed applicants—which we'll set as sort of an inverse measurement of your success—seem to be ones that are quite elite, and take a small percentage of the applicants they receive.

Is it possible to have a network of religiously- or faith-based institutions that are successful at holding onto their religious vision and financially viable simultaneously? Is that possible, or, in a sense, is it a question of there can only be a very small percentage of faith-affiliated schools that do well across the board, and then the other ones are just fated not to, for all kinds of—not necessarily for religious reasons, but for market reasons. What do you think?

MCAULIFFE: I really do think it's the latter. I don't think it's, again, the religious identification. I think it's the pressures that are being exacerbated by the emergence of new forms of online education. In all of the professional associations that I frequent, all they are talking about right now is the rapidly changing economy of higher education, and the potential impact of new forms of content delivery. Now, there was a question after Nathan Hatch's wonderful address yesterday about MOOCs, massive open online courses. And there's so much buzz among the leadership of institutions—public, private, big, and small—about, what does that mean? Is that just a passing fad, or is that something that has the potential to really change the structure of undergraduate education and the finance of undergraduate education?

JENKINS: I agree with Jane. I think it's a general challenge. I find the limited resource for religious institutions to be intellectuals, faculty, academics, who are superb in their fields and want to be part of that, then—because the graduate schools don't tend to produce those people.

MASSA: Most graduate programs make you loyal to your discipline, not loyal to your faith.

JENKINS: And I do think there's a sort of suppression of expressions of religious commitment in higher education, in graduate programs. That may be overemphasized, but I think that's the real limiting factor.

MASSA: You would say that one of the great—maybe the great challenge, then, is for religious or faith-affiliated institutions to find the kind of faculty that would be committed to this.

JENKINS: And produce them. Yeah.

RYKEN: Overall, I find myself very encouraged by the faculty that we're able to hire. There's no doubt that some of those faculty, coming to a place like Wheaton is an oasis for them, because they have felt that they have not been able to have the full expression of their religious commitment in other academic contexts. So I think there is something to what Father Jenkins is saying about the context of secular institutions.

Going back to the question of which way are things going, and what are the pressures, if I could rephrase the question this way—20 years from now, will there be more institutions? Will they be bigger and healthier and stronger institutions—now just speaking in an evangelical context—like a Wheaton College? Or will there be fewer of them, not as large, not as distinctive in their evangelical identity? And I fear the latter of those two. I think it's going to be a big challenge for it to be the former.

MASSA: So do you have any questions? Yeah, why don't we start right in the front here.

PATEL: Eboo Patel, Interfaith Youth Core—Phil, you can't say the right kind of sectarian or the wrong kind of sectarian and not get asked about that. So I'm going to do the honors and ask about that. Just a couple of key characteristics of the right kind and the wrong kind. What pressures do you face from the broader community to be what you might consider the wrong kind, and what role do you think Wheaton and other faith-based institutions have been playing in leading their broader religious communities towards the right kind?

RYKEN: The wrong kind would be—and you can press me a little more on it, Eboo—wrong kind would be a sectarian institution that is not interested in engaging with the ideas that are outside of its religious tradition. So that would be the wrong kind. A wrong kind would be a sectarian institution that is very closely identified with political positions, and sort of has a partisan view, so that that becomes such a dominant part of religious identity that it inhibits a more capacious understanding of the world.

Those would be two of the main things that I would be thinking about. Now, what was the second part of your question, because I'm not sure I've answered it?

PATEL: What pressures do you feel from the broader community to [multiple conversations; inaudible] –

RYKEN: From the broader secular community, or the broader Christian community?

PATEL: The religious community.

RYKEN: Yeah. I mean, at Wheaton, we face pressures both from people that think we are too liberal and too conservative. I agreed, by the way, with everything that was said about Wheaton College in the former panel, including what Mark Noll said about people that disagree with Wheaton College or its positions among its alumni, whatever vantage point they're disagreeing with that, it's going to be with a strong sense of moral conviction, and often—and I would add this—a strong sense that the kind of free inquiry and pursuit of truth that they learned at Wheaton College is not being honored now in whatever. So there's a kind of open-mindedness that a liberal education at Wheaton produced that people want to see continued and maintained. So it's pressures from a couple of different directions.

MASSA: Jane and John, do you want to come in on that?

RYKEN: The ones that will be most volatile for me in my context will be political convictions, either liberal or conservative political convictions, that then are mixed in with how they're looking at Wheaton theologically.

JACOBY: Yes, I'm Susan Jacoby. I'm the village atheist for purposes of this conference. I've been struck by the panel this morning before you as well as your own. There are two issues here, obviously. One is your status as religious colleges providing a liberal arts education. The other is perhaps represented more by Bryn Mawr, the pressures that affect all liberal arts colleges, which affect also religiously-based liberal arts colleges.

I've been struck by the defensive tone of all of your comments, posing liberal arts education as opposed to the concerns of parents who don't want to spend \$50,000 a year for something that's not going to get their kid a job. I'd like to hear what the panel has to say about maybe just the advisability of saying, we are providing something very valuable. If you don't want to come, you don't have to. You all have many more applications than you can take in. Obviously there are people who think it's important.

And I'd also like further comment on something that Dr. Hatch alluded to briefly last night. You're all taking care to talk very respectfully of this digital education, which I personally consider a consumer fraud, both as somebody who's an atheist and somebody who's interested in liberal arts. (applause) So I'd like to hear more about what you can say, not in defense of yourself, but just for yourself, and to hell with all of those people who are giving you trouble.

MASSA: Now, to be clear, I didn't put her up to this. [laughter]

JACOBY: No! I don't even know you. [laughter]

MCAULIFFE: I think we do spend so much time speaking about what we deeply believe is the formative value of a liberal arts education. I mean, that's why we've dedicated ourselves to the presidencies of institutions that, in fact, do form not just intellects, but whole people in their undergraduate years, and in the cases of a number of our institutions, well beyond that. I have not heard the defensive tone that you've picked up, Susan, in today's panel.

But I have heard the concern, and in some ways it goes back to the statistics that I've often quoted, and Andrew Delbanco did this morning, that, in fact, liberal arts colleges, if you think of the selective liberal arts colleges, are a tiny, tiny spectrum of American higher education. Most undergraduates do major in business, and communications, and are on a job track, and it is extremely important that we continue to raise our voice about education as preparation for human flourishing, for a lifetime of human flourishing. And I think, as presidents of these institutions, we do that.

But I'm not the president of Arizona State, a huge, huge, huge university, and consequently, my voice, I think, does not get the same play. But I don't know any president of any institution that considers its undergraduate education to be a genuine liberal arts one who is not talking, and talking constantly, about the value, because they see the value. They see the value in the graduates, they see the value in the alumni who do, in fact, benefit from both the breadth and the depth that characterize liberal arts education.

I'm not going to dismiss new forms of online education quite as cavalierly as you have, because I think there's a great deal more sophistication that is being developed, and why should we just toss out the poor with the emerging better of this? And I have seen a big shift in presidential attitudes towards this in the last 18 months. When I would talk to presidents of other liberal arts colleges, really less than two years ago, about any form of online education, the answer was always, that's not us.

But now, with the emergence of some very good institutions who are experimenting around this—admittedly, they haven't got a business model that's going to support it into the future, but they are experimenting, and some very interesting courses are being developed. I think there are ways in which small colleges could benefit from some of

this. I'm certainly not going to ignore it. I'm going to look at it. I'm going to look at it critically and carefully, and I'm going to begin to wonder if there are forms in which certain parts of this could be an enhancement to what we currently do in our very intensive kind of education, where we have an eight-to-one faculty-student ratio, and where everything is around student-faculty engagement. So I'm keeping a pretty open mind on MOOCs and everything else.

JENKINS: I think digital technology is just a tool. How you're going to use it, what you're going to use it for, that's an interesting discussion. But it's not a panacea, and I think it's just—a lot of the rhetoric is about that. I say, yeah, about our defensiveness, I haven't heard it either. But I think we have to—this group has to—talk to parents who are making tremendous sacrifices to send their children to our institutions, benefactors whose generosity allows us to run those institutions, media who are very critical, and what may come across as defensive is a passion about the value of what we give young people who come to our institutions in the face of those questions. And so perhaps it is defensiveness, but it may also just be a recognition of the real questions and concerns, combined with a passion about—a commitment to the value of what we offer.

RYKEN: We're at least defensive about being called defensive.

JENKINS: Yeah, there you go. Me, defensive? [laughter]

RYKEN: We do liberal arts for the joy of it as much as anything else. And the other benefits of it are fairly incidental.

MASSA: That's a pretty good defense of the defensiveness, so I think that's good. There's a gentleman right there.

Q: I come from a Catholic chaplain to a state-sponsored institution with an enrollment of approximately 70% Catholic, and I wanted to ask this question with the previous panel with regard to institutional practices and the aims of higher education. The college applications asks for a declared major. That's an institutional practice, widespread. Knowing that the major could change during the course of the experience, maybe that's not the right question to ask right from the beginning of freshmen. Some entering freshmen declare undeclared.

I propose that a far better question to ask an entering freshman is, what is your purpose? What is your purpose? And that should have begun in the high school program, too. They bring baggage with them already. It's not just starting off in higher education. And the more colleges can help with the purpose, the human purpose for each individual, the more a student will select the right major for him or her to pursue.

At present, it's possible to graduate from college—and I know a number of graduates of various ages, families who are struggling or without a sense of purpose. Finally, I have a nephew graduating from a Catholic institution this June—\$200,000, and without a sense of purpose, but yet fulfilled a major. Thank you.

MASSA: If any of you want to address that?

MCAULIFFE: Well, I think you really have hit upon an area that much of the conversation is circling around—how do we infuse a sense of raising some of the big questions that guide all of

our lives into the educational journey of our undergraduates? Is that something that's just done in a sort of ancillary fashion, or is it woven into the entire fabric of the curricular and co-curricular journey that our students take?

In terms of the specifics of indicating an area of possible major interest or not on an application form, I think there's so much else within the way the applications are put together for our kinds of colleges and universities that do raise some of those larger questions. Why does this particular school interest you? What are the kinds of things you hope to secure as part of your educational journey in this site, at this place? So if they're not raised as explicitly as you would suggest, I do think they are embedded in much of the admissions work that we do.

RYKEN: I agree with that. I agree with the comment—we like to see our students move in the direction of having a clear purpose for life, and we want to encourage that both through the curriculum and also co-curricular. I resonate with the question also as a father of a college sophomore who came in as an undeclared major, and he was much more concerned about not knowing what his direction was than I was. I think college is a time to explore, particularly in a liberal arts context, give yourself a chance to fall in love with a discipline.

About a month ago, he called me into the dining room. We had a bunch of students in our house, and he said Dad, I've got it figured out. I'm going to be an international relations major. And I said, OK, great, that makes sense. He's really enjoying his IR class right now. And I'm going to study astronomy. I was like, OK, well, you know, sciences are great. And I'm going to be an alien diplomat. [laughter] So my excitement diminished at that point. But we need to give our students some space to find their way, and, Lord willing, your nephew will find his way too.

MASSA: We have one more question. One more question.

LINDSAY: Hi, I'm Michael Lindsay from Gordon College, and I have a question about agency. I wonder what the panelists think are the most significant agent for either preserving the religious tradition of the institution or changing it—alumni, donors, students, faculty? Jim Burtchaell in *The Dying of the Light* had said it was presidents and boards of trustees. As a new president, I'm finding that the agency of the presidency is far more constrained than I thought he gave credit to. I'd be curious what you all think.

JENKINS: I would say, I think it's all of the above, but probably faculty are the most important group. Not that they have to be 100% on board, but unless you have enough on board, you're just not going to do it. And the role of the president and the board is, they have a chance to kind of shape that, because they're the intellectual heart of the university.

MCAULIFFE: I would agree with that. Presidents come and go. As a new president, you won't believe that. [laughter] But the faculty are there, and they are genuinely the heart of the institution.

RYKEN: I would put a little more emphasis on the board, actually, and that may just be some of the unique dynamics of the Wheaton College board, where people serve 10-year terms. Many of those are renewed, and so we have long-standing trustees. They definitely have a passion for guarding the mission of the college, and then they work that out through

their involvement even with the faculty hiring process. So we're maybe a little more top-down in that regard than some institutions would be.

MASSA: Please join me in thanking Jane, John, and Phil for an excellent discussion. (applause)

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]