Call for Papers: The Idea of the Catholic University in the 21st Century
The Academy of Catholic Thought and Imagination
Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles
March 15-18, 2018

What is the “idea,” the essence, of the Catholic university today? And how might we envision it continuing to serve a vital institutional role in 21st century society? Our conference asks scholars from all corners of the university—the humanities, arts, social sciences, sciences, and professional schools—to think carefully, critically, and clearly about what makes Catholic colleges and universities distinctive. That is to say, in what respects should Catholic colleges and universities differ and in what respects should they not differ from other institutions, whether large state-sponsored schools or non-Catholic liberal arts colleges? And how should these distinctive characteristics shape the missions, goals, research, curricula, and programs of the Catholic university in the 21st century?

• How does the Catholic university embrace, support, and encourage the flourishing of students and faculty, including students and faculty from different faith traditions and those with no faith tradition (whether “spiritual but not religious,” agnostic, or atheist)?
• How do Catholic universities creatively serve their missions to “serve faith” and “promote justice” in a religiously pluralistic context?
• How should the Catholic university engage contemporary social issues such as inter-religious dialogue, globalization, immigration, the changing ethnic makeup of the Church, strained race relations, changing views on human gender and sexuality, economic inequality, and environmental justice?
• What is the nature of the commitment to the liberal arts and the humanities that has characterized Catholic universities, especially in an environment in which the humanities are under siege? Conversely, in what way do professional schools (e.g., education, business, etc.) contribute to the distinctiveness of Catholic colleges and universities?
• How should Catholic colleges and universities navigate the rising costs of undergraduate education, which often prices out or burdens with onerous debt the very poor and immigrant children these institutions were founded to serve?
• How should Catholic colleges and universities navigate the tension between their commitment to Catholicism and the ideal of universities as sites of free and open inquiry and discourse, especially in a larger society that is not Catholic and an environment in which many faculty, staff, and students are not themselves Catholic?
• What is distinctive about the community at a Catholic university? About the education it offers? The curriculum it requires? The research undertaken by its scholars?

We invite scholars from all disciplines, all perspectives, and all faiths (including those of no religious faith) to submit papers that address, interrogate, or question the role of the Catholic university in the 21st century. The organizers hope and intend to produce an edited volume drawing on the best contributions to the conference. Therefore we request that all submissions consist of original work suitable for inclusion, if selected, for the volume, and request the right of first refusal for publication.

Proposals formatted for blind review should be submitted to acti@lmu.edu by November 15, 2017. Include identifying details and contact information in the body of the email submission.