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Notre Dame flap could hurt Catholic higher ed

by Thomas C. Fox

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It's increasingly clear the Notre Dame/Obama controversy is going to have a lasting impression on public perception of Catholic colleges and universities - and quite possibly not for the good.

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, representing more than 200 U.S. schools, will assess the matter next month when it meets. Meanwhile, some prominent Catholic educators are worried.

Patricia McGuire, president of Trinity Washington University, which was started in the nation's capital more than a century ago by a women's religious order, condemned the "hostile" reaction to Notre Dame's decision to honor the president.

"The terrible danger of the siege at Notre Dame, and the ugly specter of Catholic vigilantism's efforts to intimidate Catholic academic leaders and politicians is that Catholics will be driven back to the edges of American life," she said. It "will affect the future of all Catholic colleges."

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