

overall culture of an institution, they are not expressly applied. For other institutions, particularly for seminaries, these connections may be central to the life of the institution. In addition to academic goals, these institutions may have expectations, both stated and unstated, for students and faculty members to participate in the religious life of the community. Both students and faculty may also be rewarded for participating in religious activities in the broader community. It is important to be as clear as possible about these expectations when entering such an institution. For these institutions, questions of how to address religious diversity can be particularly difficult—whether diversity across religious traditions or diversity found within the particular religion or denomination of which the school is a part. In some more conservative establishments, the religious expectations are explicit and enforced. Buyer beware.

Independent centers or institutes

Centers often offer freedoms that are not found in traditional academic institutions, but they can also be less institutionally stable. There is a trend for some large institutions to handle innovative issues and/or issues they want to marginalize (such as those involving women and racial/ethnic minorities) through centers. In some cases, the center moves to the center; in other cases the center is really on the margin.

Setting up one's own center can require an entrepreneurial spirit and fund-raising capabilities (see **Entrepreneurs** and **Fundraising**). It can be done, both within large institutions and independently. It takes real vision and lots of sweat equity but can result in magnificent contributions to our field.

Institutional culture/politics (see also Institutional analysis)

Each institution has its own culture. It includes such intangibles as clothes and lifestyle, willingness to debate, and even whether faculty are addressed by first name by students. It is subtle and nuanced; it also varies according to who you are in the institu-