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## Loyola Chicago to open junior college

Tom Gallagher | May. 12, 2015

*A few years ago, Jesuit Fr. Michael Garanzini, president of Loyola University Chicago, had an idea to start a junior college at the university as a way to create access and affordability for Chicago-area high school students who might not otherwise find their way into college. In August 2015, Arrupe College will open its doors to a group of 100 students.*

*The college is named after the Jesuits' 28th superior general, Pedro Arrupe (1907-91), who challenged society to think of new ways to educate young people. NCR spoke with Jesuit Fr. Stephen Katsouros, Arrupe College's dean and executive director, about this new initiative.*

### **NCR: How did Arrupe College come about and what has been the response by the university's board of trustees and other important stakeholders?**

*Katsouros: Fr. Garanzini ... tested his idea [of a junior college] with leaders of Catholic, charter and public high schools in Chicago, and the answer was an overwhelming "Yes, this option is timely and necessary."*

Jesuit colleges and universities have achieved much success over the years, but with this success is the risk of becoming "elitist," at least from the cost perspective, and this leaves some potential students out. Fr. Garanzini and his leadership team came up with a financial model to make this junior college option viable, especially by deploying the resources of the university.

In June 2014, the board of trustees approved of the new college with great receptivity. They are very positive about this.

### **Where does Arrupe College fit within the university and how does the financial model work?**

I report to both the president and provost and serve on the Council of Deans and as a member of the president's cabinet. Unlike the other deans, the current thinking for now is that this initiative needs to be connected to both Fr. Garanzini and the provost, Dr. John Pelissero.

One of the key aspects of Arrupe College is that a building on campus has become available. The business school is going to be moving to a new facility, and this allowed Arrupe College to use three floors of an existing five-story building.

Our students will all be commuters, who also qualify for Pell Grants and state aid due to financial eligibility. Each student will receive a small scholarship from the university. The university will cover the overhead and the college will be able to get assistance from different parts of the university, like the admissions office, security, the health and wellness group, and so on.

We expect that the students will work at a job for 20-25 hours a week and they will contribute \$1,700-\$1,800 towards their tuition. In addition, we are seeking grants and gifts from foundations and individuals.

In 2015, we will have 100 students, and in five years we expect to have 400 students total, or 200 per academic year.

Arrupe College has a board of advisers and is receiving wonderful support from many people connected to the university.

**One of the key characteristics of Arrupe College is that it's going to be a very structured, holistic learning experience and with a very engaged faculty. Will you explain how the academic delivery methods will work in the college?**

Our first and foremost mission is to serve well and offer choices for students without many [higher education] choices. We've really relied on the expertise by experts like Paul Tough, who wrote the book *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*; Dr. David Yeager of the University of Texas at Austin; and others in developing our program.

We will be hiring an associate dean for academic affairs. This person will focus on, among other things, educational technology. It may turn out that we have a hybrid model of hard copy books and e-books. We have to be aware that some of our students may not have access to Wi-Fi.

We are recruiting faculty who will be outstanding in their academic competencies, content areas. But, in addition, they are going to have a desire to work with our student demographic. We need faculty members who are coaches of the students and really develop confidence in the students that they belong in college and can do the work.

Many students will be the first in their family to attend college. They have grade point averages around 2.5 and ACT scores in the 17-22 range. We begin on Aug. 17, 2015, and each student will take two classes during an eight-week session.

The faculty will be here every day and classes will take place two to four days a week. On Wednesdays, faculty, who will also serve as student advisers, will be available to meet with the students. In the first year, each student will be required to meet with his/her faculty adviser twice a month.

Unlike the traditional university environment where the faculty has nine-month contracts, our faculty will have full-year contracts. Students will be in classes for 40 weeks a year, including June and July. We believe that if we didn't have classes in June and July, the risk would increase for the students because life would get in the way. Even during the two-week semester breaks, we intend to offer seminars during the breaks. Our faculty pay is competitive, and so far we have had a huge number of faculty applications.

Another component to the services we will offer our students will be having the university's 100-year-old School of Social Work provide both social work students and other resources that will be available to help our Arrupe students. The social work school will occupy the top two floors of our building.

**Where is Arrupe College with the admissions process for the inaugural class of 100 students?**

We currently have 353 applicants and began interviewing the students in mid-March. Over 90 percent of the applicants are either African-Americans or Latinos and, as a result, we are having university faculty who are African-American or Latino undertaking the interviews. We are also having Jesuit collegians, or young men in their early studies to become Jesuits, who will be undertaking some interviews.

The interviews will not be long-winded affairs. Rather, we want to identify students who have grit, perseverance

and resiliency to undertake our rigorous academic program.

This is very important, as the graduation rate for community colleges nationwide is 5 percent, and 7 percent in Chicago and 9 percent in New York City. We are determined to accompany our students to achieve graduation with little to no debt as much as possible.

### **Has Arrupe College been approved from an accreditation standpoint?**

Yes. The accreditation visit took place on Jan. 15, 2015 [by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association]. It went well and the report highlighted the mission alignment of Arrupe College to the Jesuit mission of the university, especially with the focus on creating access and opportunity for the students.

### **After the first year of Arrupe College, how will you define success?**

We would define success as having 100 students all ready to start year two with an average 2.8 GPA, with no debt and that the students' families buy into their child's/sibling's commitment to completing the two-year program.

### **What happens in 2016 when the first class graduates with their associate's degrees?**

We have reached out to many stakeholders in our graduates -- for example, Dominican University, DePaul University, Xavier University, Lewis University and the state of Illinois. We believe that an associate's degree from Arrupe College of Loyola University of Chicago will provide our graduates real opportunity to go on to a four-year college. Some students may well enter the workforce with just their associate's degree.

### **How do you think about the creation of Arrupe College in the broader context of the Jesuits' commitment to education?**

The Jesuits have been developing new ways to provide access to education, especially to those who might not have access or options. In the 1970s and '80s, we developed NativityMiguel Network of Schools, and today we have 50-some Nativity middle schools around the United States.

In the 1990s, the Jesuits created the Cristo Rey high schools and soon the 28th Cristo Rey school will open in Milwaukee. Other religious orders and many laypeople now lead or help lead these schools. So Arrupe College continues in a rich history of Jesuit innovation in education. Our hope is that Arrupe College becomes a national movement in higher education, to have a major urban university, even non-faith-affiliated universities, leverage its resources to create a two-year degree program for students in this demographic.

### **What kind of response have you received from other Jesuit universities?**

We've been very heartened by the response we've received so far. Many Jesuit university presidents are very interested in this initiative and are waiting and seeing how this is going to work.

I feel like I have the best job in higher education, as this is exactly what we Jesuits do in higher education in making men and women for others. This is a very exciting initiative. We sure hope to make this a national movement in the years ahead.

[Tom Gallagher is a regular contributor to *NCR's* Mission Management column.]

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