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Arrupe College: Breaking New Ground

John Crowley-Buck

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"[T]o educate we need to step out of ourselves and stay among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth, placing ourselves at their side. ... Encourage each other to seek new non-conventional forms of education, according to 'the need of the places, times and people.'" Pope Francis, 2013

Arrupe College

Breaking New Ground

By John Crowley-Buck

In August 2015, just last month, Loyola University Chicago opened the world's first Jesuit community college – Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago. At a time when the gap between the rich and the poor is growing ever wider, Arrupe College offers students from low- and middle-income families the opportunity to attend and successfully complete a rigorous college degree program without incurring insurmountable levels of student debt. Arrupe College embodies the spirit of nonconventional education articulated by Pope Francis, coupled with the affordability and accessibility emphasized by President Obama. With the opening of Arrupe College, the Society of Jesus is once again pushing the boundaries of traditional education and working to bring about the dream of Pedro Arrupe, S.J., past Superior General of the Society of Jesus: namely, educating and forming men and women for others.

What makes Arrupe College unique is its stated goal of serving those "motivated students with limited financial resources" who demonstrate "an interest in transferring to a four-year institution after graduation." According to Stephen Katsouros, S.J., dean of Arrupe College, the drive behind and support for the opening of the college come from the vision and leadership of Loyola University

Chicago's president, Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.: "His vision is to make Jesuit education, particularly higher education, accessible to people who otherwise would be unable to afford it or unable to imagine themselves earning a college degree." Katsouros points to research indicating that "students who are first in their families to attempt

"I want to spread [this] idea all across America, so that two years of college becomes as free and universal in America as high school is today."

President Barack Obama,
2015 State of the Union Address

college, whose averages and scores are good but not good enough to garner scholarships, and who hail from low income backgrounds, feel that they don't belong in college, that their knowledge is fixed, and any academic setbacks they experience are permanent, pervasive, and personal. As we accompany and support Arrupe students, we want them to grow in their confidence as students ... to perceive themselves as college worthy ... [and to] discover that learning is lifelong."

Arrupe College will offer its stu-

dents a well-rounded educational experience. In addition to time in the classroom, Arrupe College will provide students and their families with financial counselors to help them navigate and minimize the costs of education. The faculty and staff will provide a comprehensive learning environment for each cohort of students, accompanying them through all aspects of their college experience. Students, upon successful completion of their coursework, will graduate from Arrupe College with an associate's degree in one of three areas: arts and humanities, business, or social and behavioral sciences.

With its fall 2015 opening, Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago stands ready to serve and mentor its incoming students. It is also the ardent hope of all those involved in the college that this initiative will serve as a model for other Jesuit universities looking for ways to more effectively and concretely heed the calls of President Obama, Pope Francis, and Pedro Arrupe. ■

John Crowley-Buck is Ph.D. candidate in theology at Loyola University Chicago.

See more at: Jeremy Langford. "Loyola University Chicago Opens World's First Jesuit Community College." Jesuit Midwest Partners, Spring 2015. <http://jesuitsmidwest.org/news-detail?TN=NEWS-20150407011516&Method=Active>