

Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education

Volume 49 *Jesuit Higher Education in a Global Context*

Article 19

February 2016

At the Crossroads of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Cultures: A New University in Spain

Francisco de Borja Martin Garrido

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations>

Recommended Citation

Martin Garrido, Francisco de Borja (2016) "At the Crossroads of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Cultures: A New University in Spain," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*: Vol. 49, Article 19.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol49/iss1/19>

At the Crossroads of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Cultures

A New University in Spain

By Francisco de Borja Martín Garrido



Students participating
in a joint course,
bringing different
universities together.

The Universidad Loyola Andalucía is a new social initiative by the Society of Jesus. It has been integrated into the Andalusian and Spanish university system as the first private university in the region and the southernmost Catholic university in Europe. It was established in 2012, evolving from the ETEA – the Jesuit business school founded in 1963 – into a new university. Loyola Andalucía is part of UNIJES, the national association of Jesuit Universities in Spain (including Deusto, Comillas, ESADE, IQS... among others). We are one of the youngest Jesuit universities in the world, legally incorporated in 2011 and offering accredited programs starting only in 2013. Inspired and enlivened by the Jesuit educational tradition, the Universidad Loyola Andalucía wants to meet the demands of all those who believe in education as a guarantee for the future.

The Universidad Loyola Andalucía has two campuses. One is located in the city of Seville, the capital of the Andalusian region in southern Spain; the other is in Córdoba. At our Seville campus, Loyola is present in three of the seven buildings composing the headquarters of the Abengoa Company. The campus, designed by Richard Rogers (recipient of the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2007) has achieved a L.E.E.D. Platinum Certification for sustainability, the highest certification awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council. Soon, the university will build its own campus in a nearby technological park.

Why have we opened a new Jesuit university in this region of Spain? For one thing, it is one of the most important bridges between European and Latin American countries. Additionally, this region has a long tradition of understanding and coexistence between Muslim, Jewish, and Christian cultures. As President Obama remarked in his Cairo University speech in 2009, “The issue that we must address together is religious freedom. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba.” These ancient cities are connected via high-speed train with the capital of Spain, Madrid. Another important reason for this new Jesuit university is that southern Europe – and particularly the region of Andalucía in Spain – is plagued with many problems today: unemployment (especially among young people), political corruption, and a lack of resources for new entrepreneurship. The founders and trustees of the university are a combination of lay people and Jesuits led by Father Ildelfonso Camacho, S.J., as the president of the board. They come from leading companies and social institutions, and they want to make a difference in the community by training men and women for others in the Jesuit tradition, collaborating in applied research with corporate partners, creating employment opportunities, and encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit among our students.

The university has been actively participating in international Jesuit networks and meetings since its foundation. Its rector, Dr. Gabriel Pérez Alcalá, attended the Jesuit meeting on higher education in Melbourne in July 2015 and has been fully involved at shared meetings with international Jesuit initiatives.

From the very beginning, supported by the secretary for higher education of the Society of Jesus, Loyola Andalucía has made its international priority the call of Father General Adolfo Nicolás to create a global network of Jesuit institutions around the world. To this end, it has signed agreements with more than 30 Jesuit universities such as: Loyola Chicago, U.S.F., Marquette, Fairfield, Scranton, Santa Clara, Georgetown (all in the U.S.A.), Iberoamericana (Mexico), Puc-Rio (Brasil), Pacifico and Ruiz de Montoya (Perú), Javeriana Bogotá and Cali (Colombia), Católica de Córdoba (Argentina), Sogang (South Korea), Sophia (Japan), and Ateneo de Manila (Philippines).

The most far reaching of these collaborations is the Alliance and Double Degree Agreement signed with Loyola University Chicago in 2013. The aim of this agreement, besides an exchange summer and faculty lead programs, research collaboration, faculty exchange and other strategic shared initiatives, is to offer the possibility of completing a four-year program of study which will allow students of both institutions to obtain an undergraduate degree from both universities, one in the U.S. and one in Europe. This is a great asset for students and sets the groundwork for creating a strong, mutually beneficial connection between a U.S. Jesuit university and Universidad Loyola Andalucía in Europe. It is our hope that this tremendous opportunity can help create a new model of networking in Jesuit higher education – a “global university” with accredited programs that provide opportunities for students around the world.

Spain is one of the largest and a very popular study-abroad destination for international students. Around 30,000 (and growing) American students come to Spain every year and Loyola Andalucía welcomes as many as are interested in becoming involved in our programming, both in English and Spanish. Students get to experience the great collaboration between lay people and the Society of Jesus, become immersed in issues of environmental sustainability, and have many opportunities to engage with issues of social justice in the region. Come and see us, and if you are interested in collaborating with us in future ventures to enhance the global impact of Jesuit higher education, please contact me. ■

Francisco de Borja Martín Garrido is the director of international relations at the Universidad Loyola Andalucía in Spain. (For contact, write to bmartin@uloyola.es or click on www.uloyola.es)