

AJCU Welcomes St. John's College as 28th Member Institution

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The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) is pleased to welcome St. John's College as its 28th member institution. St. John's, a Jesuit junior college located in Belize, had previously been an associate member, and is now the first institution outside of the United States to become a full member of the Association.

AJCU President, Rev. Michael J. Sheeran, S.J., said, "St. John's College is an extraordinary junior college. For decades, St. John's has been known for excellence, both in Belize and at colleges and universities across the United States, to which many St. John's graduates have transferred to complete a four-year degree. The 27 American members of AJCU are very happy to welcome St. John's to full membership."

Founded in Belize City by the Society of Jesus in 1887, St. John's began offering Associate Degrees in 1952. Today, more than 1,200 students attend St. John's, where they are enrolled in various programs in the sciences, liberal arts and humanities, including a music program that was recently developed with the assistance of Loyola University New Orleans. Additional students are enrolled in an accompanying high school program.

St. John's is led by Mrs. Mirtha Alicia Peralta, an alumna who was named the first female president of the College in 2015. Mrs. Peralta looks forward to increasing collaboration between St. John's and its sister Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. She said, "We believe that our integration into the AJCU is an opportunity for us to grow, as we seek new and innovative ways to achieve our shared Jesuit mission. But more important, we believe that both St. John's College and Belize have much to offer to the other members of AJCU. We have no doubt that the bounty of our resources, our heritage, our

environment, and our diverse people offer unique opportunities for collaboration among our institutions, which will ultimately enrich our students.”

For Mrs. Peralta, the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) of the Society of Jesus have been a motivation for St. John’s to strengthen its commitment and participation in the global Jesuit network. She said, “Last year, the Jesuit Superior General, Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J., challenged us with the UAPs, and I can see endless opportunities for us to collaborate in order to achieve our common objectives of walking with the excluded, journeying with the youth and caring for our common home.

“Full membership in AJCU will allow our institution and our students to belong to a larger network of colleges and universities that share the same rich Ignatian mission, and strive for excellence for the greater glory of God. Our administration, faculty and students will not only have the opportunity to collaborate and experience relationships that would have otherwise been limited to our own experiences here in Belize, but they will also be able to share how Jesuit education is enriching lives across the world.”

To learn more about St. John’s College, please visit sjc.edu.bz.