

Loyola Blakefield \$27 million campaign will add academic hall, expand endowment

TOWSON – Loyola Blakefield is advancing a \$27 million fundraising project that will better integrate its middle-schoolers into the campus with a new academic hall, as well as increase its endowment and scholarship opportunities.

The all-boys school in Towson formally announced details of “Ignite: The Campaign for Loyola Blakefield” Oct. 8, including the news that it has already secured more than \$23 million in pledges, taking it more than 85 percent toward its goal.

The campaign is believed to be the most ambitious undertaken by a high school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore

“This is certainly an unprecedented campaign for Loyola,” Anthony Day, who came to the institution as principal in 2008 and became its president in 2013, told the Review. “It’s been a community-wide effort.

“More than 200 families have come through. We’ve been all over the country the last two years, from Baltimore to California, from Chicago to Florida, and people have been supportive.”

The current focus of the campaign is completing the funding for what, until a naming rights donor comes forward, is called the Innovative Learning Center. According to a news release, the 50,000-square-foot building will include classrooms for grades 6-8, a learning commons, art studio and laboratories for cyber science and robotics.

Since Loyola Blakefield added middle-schoolers in the 1980s, their classrooms have been in Sheridan Hall, which was built in 1955.

“Young people learn differently now than they did even 10 years ago,” Day said. Learning spaces need to adapt to the needs of (current) students, as well as trying to

anticipate their needs in the next 10-25 years. We haven't had a new academic building since 1996. We want to send a signal that academics remain our priority."

This year's enrollment is 971 boys, 734 in the upper school and 237 in the middle school.

"This will unite the campus in a way that allows faculty and staff to better move from building to building to collaborate," Day said. "It also gives the high school guys and the middle school students the opportunity to be a little bit closer.

"Our juniors and seniors are wonderful role models. We see that in the dining hall, which is a shared space. We'll see that play out a little differently in the Learning Commons."

The new academic hall will be built on the east side of campus along Chestnut Avenue, between Wheeler Hall and the tennis courts. Asked a tentative date for ground-breaking, Day said, "We want to raise all the money for the building first, before we put a shovel in the ground."

Day said that the endowment portion of the campaign has already been met, and stressed its importance in promoting racial and socioeconomic diversity at a Jesuit institution that opened in 1852 and moved to Towson in 1934.

Tuition and fees at Loyola Blakefield surpassed \$20,000 in 2017-18, and are \$20,825 this school year. Approximately 60 percent of its students are receiving a grant or scholarship award, totaling \$3.8 million, which breaks down to \$3.2 million in need-based aid and \$600 in merit-based aid.

"We're dedicated to providing access to a top-notch education for those who can't afford it, this is where the rubber hits the road," Day said. "We need to create a diverse environment here that that's reflective of the broader community."

The campaign is co-chaired by Bill Stromberg (class of 1978), the president and CEO of T. Rowe Price, and Joe Sullivan, chairman and CEO of Legg Mason Inc. Day also credited William J. McCarthy ('79), president of Catholic Charities of Baltimore, for extending his chairmanship of the school's Board of Trustees to complete the campaign.

Email Paul McMullen at pmcmullen@CatholicReview.org