Opinion: More Colleges Should be Like Arrupe

By Jacque Stefanic—2/6/19

My time at Arrupe College has been the highlight of my life so far. I remember the first time I came to Arrupe, our Dean, Father Steve Katsouros, said, “We want you to fall in love with being a college student.” And I have fallen in love with being an Arrupe student. My name is Jacque Stefanic and I’m the proud Student Body President of Arrupe.

Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago is a two-year associates program designed to have students graduate with little to no debt. We’re commuter students taking the CTA buses, trains and the Metra to campus. Class sizes are small which allow more one on one with the professors. Students can pre-major in arts and humanities, business administration and/or social and behavioral sciences. After our two years at Arrupe, we’re encouraged to apply to a four-year school.

I’ve had many encounters with fellow Ramblers who don’t know about us, or who think Arrupe isn’t part of Loyola. I get why some think Arrupe is separate from Loyola, but our mascot is the Rambler, our president is Dr. Jo Ann Rooney. Each Arrupe student is issued a Loyola ID and has access to most of the university’s resources. Arrupe students are at sports games, in clubs and campus ministry and working at the university.

I myself work at Loyola’s Quinlan School of Business and love to cheer “Ramblers!” at a basketball game. The Student Government of Arrupe College has put much effort into trying to get rid of that stereotype. We’ve reached out to other student organizations at Loyola to close the gap between the two. Arrupe is a school of Loyola and should be looked at as any other schools of the university because it is. It’s similar to Quinlan or the Stritch School of Medicine.

I believe there should be more institutions such as Arrupe within four-year universities. Arrupe’s student body is 97 percent students of color from Chicago, myself included. Students are from every corner of the city, and many of us come from dangerous areas. We travel from places such as Belmont, Back of the Yards and Morgan Park. I was raised on the South Side and can say from experiences that it’s dangerous and scary. Many Arrupe students are first generation, meaning the first in their family to go to college.

Without Arrupe, where would some of us go? Some of us wouldn’t be in college if it weren’t for Arrupe because of its affordable cost. Arrupe students aren’t wealthy, I come from a paycheck-to-paycheck single mother household and couldn’t afford to go to a four-year off the bat. I could have gone to community college, but I did research on Arrupe and knew this was the place I wanted to be.

I see Arrupe giving the underrepresented students of Chicago a chance to get higher education without dishing out thousands for college. I’m proud to be an Arrupe and Loyola student.