

# Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University

## Making the Future of Private Education Available Today

*Christopher Cussat*

Vincentian Academy, founded in 1932, stands as a leader in secondary, college preparatory education. Vincentian's strengths are attributable to an historic foundation of Catholic, educational tradition, coupled with an adaptive, open vision that allows the Academy and its students to simultaneously mature with an ever-changing academic arena and diversifying world.

In an effort to position itself as an academic leader, Vincentian formed an alliance with Duquesne University in 1995. When Vincentian affiliated with Duquesne, it opened an entire world of educational possibilities. Dr. Timothy Rusnak, President of Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University (which is how the school is officially known), contends that, "the University decided to respond to some of the daunting issues that beset many U.S. schools, not by merely writing esoteric suggestions about how to address these problems, but by developing a school that would attack the notion that American schools and students could not keep pace with other countries." This "University Dimension," when added to an already well-regarded private academy, provides outstanding academic opportunities for its students and helps Vincentian Academy serve as a model for other schools in the United States.

Another unique aspect of Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University is its emphasis on the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and diploma. Even though many students and parents may be unfamiliar with the IB, it is highly regarded by universities worldwide as a determinant of academic savvy and a symbol of educational excellence. Joseph DeCrosta, Coordinator of International Admissions at Duquesne, works closely with IB concerns at the University. He assures that, "International Baccalaureate courses are involved and challenging and can

be challenging and can greatly benefit students in their preparation for university studies. Students who have followed a complete IB program in the U.S. or abroad may be ahead of the game when they enter university at the freshman level." Those who successfully pass the IB examination may not only be admitted to most universities of their choice, but generally enter college with up to 30 advanced credits. In other words, students leaving high school can enter college as a sophomore.

Dr. Rusnak adds, "As a curricular platform, the IB program was selected as the Academy's program because it instantly placed Vincentian in a preeminent position world-wide." Because the International Baccalaureate maintains higher academic standards and demands that IB students adhere to these requirements thoroughly, one may wonder if every student has the ability to compete and be successful in this atmosphere. To guarantee that all of its students remain competitive and flourish, Vincentian provides special support to not only meet, but to exceed these standards. The Academy achieves this through enhanced academic programs, the exceptional commitment of a highly skilled teaching staff, an extended school year, and required work at Duquesne University.

The result is of this system is equally impressive. One hundred percent of Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University graduates go on to institutions of higher education. Vincentian is the only Catholic, IB school in the world that is fully part of a major university and it is one of the few schools where all students follow an IB-aimed program. Vincentian students achieve a 95 percent IB examination pass rate as compared to the worldwide pass rate of 60 percent. The Academy not only offers outstanding teachers, but a highly personalized classroom experience with a 9:1 student/teacher ratio. Indeed a rarity, Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University is part of an elite academic network of only 800 schools worldwide.

## VINCENTIAN ACADEMY- DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY



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Although many Vincentian students attend colleges and universities all over the country and world, the unique tie to Duquesne is evident in the 20 percent of graduates who attend the University, usually with one year already complete. These graduates are not only virtually guaranteed acceptance into Duquesne University, but they are also automatically eligible to receive an educational grant. Vincentian students also share Duquesne's recognized, state-of-the-art computer network, as well as its computer and science laboratories.

As a religiously affiliated academy, Dr. Rusnak feels that Vincentian exemplifies "a profound dedication to the traditions of Catholic values," and that this is embodied "through the entire student body's participation in religious studies." This Catholic aspect of Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University is apparent in the institution's commitment to spiritual growth and morality, but it does not exclude members of other faiths. In fact, Vincentian's ecumenical atmosphere welcomes all to grow and gain from its offerings. This inherent desire to help form well-rounded members of society through character development and value discernment is an ideal that translates into this place of caring and concern. Vincentian's sublime message speaks universally to all and represents the foremost experience in Catholic, private, or any educational venue.

Located in the North Hills area of Pittsburgh, Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University rests on a picturesque, 67 acres, which enhances the social component so important to any educational structure. As a result, Vincentian students are immersed in a total academic and living environment reminiscent of an extended family. For more information or to set up an appointment, call 412-364-1616. Vincentian Academy-Duquesne University, Peebles and McKnight Roads, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. ▲