

I remember four years ago when I was sitting in the exact same place as you, in this theater for the reception for the St. Francis Xavier Scholars. I also remember thinking about where I wanted to go to high school, and what made me realize that St. Xavier was the place for me. When I was in eighth grade I was offered a pretty significant scholarship to another Catholic high school. In addition, attending this other school would save my family at least 15 minutes of driving each way, which adds up to a lot of saved time and gas. Some of my uncles and my older brother came to St. X, so it seemed on the surface like I was a clear cut Bomber. But at the same time, in the back of my mind I felt a little bit uncomfortable turning down so much money and asking my parents to pay for St. X, as well as having to drive so much farther every day to get to school. Obviously, I chose to go with St. X. I eventually realized that the St. Xavier Advantage was too much to pass up, and my parents agreed that it was worth the extra tuition costs, gas, and time.

So what is this “St. Xavier Advantage?” Why did I decide this was the best place for me to come? At the core, it came down to the atmosphere, the community, the brotherhood. The academics played a role for sure, but even that was only a part of the bigger sense of community. After spending three and a half years at St. X, I have started to realize what makes this place such a great academic institution: the learning community here is unmatched anywhere else.

At St. X, there is an atmosphere of academic pride. Because there are so many bright minds at St. X, we are able to be challenged not only by our teachers but by each other. We are challenged to strive for our best, for the *magis*, for more, every single day both in the classroom and outside of it, and it pays dividends. In my experience, the major difference between my grade school and St. X is this: here, not only do we work towards academic achievement, but we

celebrate it amongst our peers. It is cool to be smart here, and we are surrounded by smart young men every day. That is part of the St. Xavier Advantage

Without a doubt, St. X has done a fantastic job preparing me academically for college. I have earned some college credits because of AP courses, and I have learned how to think critically, study and learn in a way that works for me. But St. X has done much more than prepare me for the college classrooms. St. X is more than a school, a place where we read books and crunch numbers. St. X is an environment of personal development in all areas. The Jesuits have a term called “Cura Personalis,” which is a Latin phrase that means “care for the whole person.” At St. X, our goal is to do more than just excel in school. We want to learn to develop our relationships and our passions. So whether you excel in athletics, music, theater, art (the list goes on), there is a place here that wants you and needs you. Everybody has a place at X, and all gifts and talents are welcome and celebrated.

St. X is a place where people grow and find new talents all the time. I have a friend that played rugby, football, and wrestling in grade school and was planning on spending his whole high school career playing those three sports. Now, although he still loves those sports, he is also a fantastic actor for Theater Xavier, part of the most select choir, and the president of the Marine Biology Club. He brought his gifts to St. X and allowed them to be developed into skills and passions that will last a lifetime. That is a part of the St. Xavier Advantage.

St. X is a spirit, a tradition, a Long Blue Line, a community unlike anything I have ever experienced before. You can see it wherever you look. I see it at football games when the student section goes crazy after a touchdown; I see it when those same football players are voluntarily attending the school’s play the next weekend. I see it when we sing the alma mater, with the whole school interlocking arms and belting out “we are Xavier men forever as we hail

the white and blue.” I see it in the hallways and the library, when there are groups studying together or somebody getting help from a classmate. I see it on the walls all over the school, when I see pictures of past graduates dating from the 1920s. But most of all, I see the St. X community.

Let me assure you of one thing: whatever your gifts and talents may be, this school will take them and help you shape them into even stronger passions. The St. Xavier Advantage is real.

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