



President's Newsletter

Road to 1717

March 15, 2019

Dear Friends of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School,

The secret sauce that makes Cristo Rey "the school that works" really isn't a secret at all. Most think the Work-Study Program is an important ingredient, and they are right, but it's not the first or even the most critical ingredient.

The not-so-secret sauce starts with a heaping dose of a very unique culture. The Cristo Rey culture is rooted in our mission, and our mission is to love the students. The most important hiring criteria for anyone joining our team are all cultural: Everyone on the Cristo Rey team is committed to the mission. Everyone is super talented. And everyone is so boldly ambitious that they genuinely believe they can change the world.

This week, we announced an important leadership transition in the school that illustrates the power of our culture.

Our Founding Principal, Dr. Michael Gomez, has accepted the position of President at St. Peter's Preparatory High School in Jersey City, NJ. Michael began his career in education at St. Peters as a teacher and his dream has always been to return as the President. As our first academic leader, Michael hired and trained our founding faculty, developed the curriculum, and helped to establish the Cristo Rey culture. We are very proud of Michael, and we are most grateful for his leadership and extraordinary commitment to the mission of Cristo Rey. We know that Michael will continue his part of changing the world in his new role at St. Peters.

I am pleased to announce that Flannery O'Connor will be our next Principal. Flannery became the very first employee of Cristo Rey Philadelphia when she gave up a paying job to volunteer to help start the school in 2011. She led the feasibility study, created the launch plan for the new school, and then served as our first Director of Admissions from 2012 to 2014. In 2015, Flannery earned her dream job - Theology teacher. A few years later, she added the role of lead instructional coach for the faculty.

Flannery is a graduate of Boston College (B.A. Theology, Minor in Philosophy), University of Notre Dame (M.Ed.) and Villanova University (M.S. Counseling with a concentration in clinical mental health). She is currently working toward her Doctorate in Educational Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania. She is married to Rufino deSantos and the mother of their 15 month-old son, Ignacio.

Flannery is highly respected by the entire Cristo Rey community



because of her genuine love of the students, the school, and the culture. She is gentle and firm and thoroughly professional. Flannery was an architect of the original culture and strategy of the school and is now a living model of our secret sauce.

All of us at Cristo Rey are excited for our future and the future of the world under Flannery's leadership.

Sincerely,

John McConnell
Founder and President

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Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School

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