



The University of Navarre, Spain

2009.6.3

«The [University of Navarre](#) was founded in 1952 by St Josemaria Escriva, who summed up the University's mission as follows: "We want this to be a place where people acquire a high level of learning and a Christian outlook on life. We want it to be a place which encourages deep thought and reflection, so that learning is soundly rooted in true principles, and shines its light along all the paths of knowledge.»

The project was initiated on October 17, 1952, when what was then called the *Estudio General de Navarra* started with eight lecturers giving courses in law to forty-two students. It attained university status in 1960. The Faculty of Medicine opened in 1954; the University Hospital followed in 1961. The Centre for Applied Medical Research ([CIMA](#)) was inaugurated in 2004. CIMA brings pure research closer to its clinical application, and collaborates with the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industry to develop products for diagnosis and treatment. Research is organized into four priority research divisions: Gene Therapy and Hepatology, Cardiovascular Sciences, Neurosciences and Oncology.

The University of Navarre has four campuses: in Pamplona, San Sebastián, Madrid and Barcelona. It currently offers 42 undergraduate programmes and 25 Master's programmes, and has around 1,900 professors and lecturers and 14,000 students.

The business school, [IESE](#) (Higher Institute of Business Studies) is one of the University's centres with strong international links. It opened in 1958 and is now located in Madrid and Barcelona. The San Sebastian campus is home to the Higher Institute of Secretarial and Business Administration ([ISSA](#)) and the School of Engineering.

Saint Josemaria recalled that a university must above all pursue "the goal of work done well, through proper intellectual training during the student's years at university. On that basis there are thousands of places in the world which need

people to work there, places which await personal, hard, self-sacrificing work. The University should not produce people who turn out to be so selfish that they themselves consume the benefits they have achieved through their studies. It should prepare people to help their neighbors, generously, in Christian fraternity.”

Over the years the faithful of the Opus Dei Prelature have worked with many other people to set up universities in Italy, the Philippines, and different countries of Latin America – Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Special features

One of the University of Navarre's special characteristics is the effort put into personalized education. In 2008 there was a ratio of one teacher to five students (828 lecturers and 876 assistants for 9,188 undergraduates). Another outstanding feature is the varied origin of the students: 65% of the students come from other parts of Spain or else from other countries.

From 1990 onwards over 3,000 volunteers, including many students, have taken part in “Universities for Social Help”, a scheme developed by students and supported by the University Rectorate. They undertake all sorts of activities such as prison visiting in Pamplona, or the “Kilo Campaign” at Christmas. Over the past few years they have collected around 11 tons of food to distribute to those in need. And the social help is not limited to the local area but is international as well: Peru, Kenya, Guatemala and India are some of the countries where students have gone to work on social projects.

Underlying the orientation of university life on the four campuses of the University of Navarre is the spirit of Opus Dei and its founder, Saint Josemaria Escrivá. Jose Maria Bastero, who was University Rector from 1996 to 2005, described the ideas the founder had of the University as follows: “There is a parallel between his message of the sanctification of ordinary work, and his vision of the University. Far from any kind of elitism (which is a permanent temptation in the world of universities), Josemaria Escriva proposed a university which was integrated into society, sharing its problems and goals, tackling them with scientific depth as a place of learning should, and forming citizens who, as he put it, are willing and able to build a more just society.”

See further: www.unav.es