

## Private university sets high goals for Goodyear campus

By **Elias C. Arnold** - Aug. 26, 2008 09:52 AM  
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University of the Incarnate Word aims to have nearly 2,000 students in Goodyear's satellite branch in 2012.

University President Louis Agnese Jr. laid out the goal for the Goodyear campus during a recent retreat with the school's leadership team at the Wigwam Golf Resort & Spa in Litchfield Park.

The private university signed a 99-year lease with Goodyear in May for land north of the City Center, which is planned northwest of Estrella Parkway and Yuma Road. A red and white sign in an open field marks the school's future home. The school hopes to raise nearly \$25 million and break ground in early 2010. The first phase, projected to cost \$55 million, will boast an 80,000-square-foot classroom building, a 50,000-square-foot administration building and a chapel. At build-out, the campus will span 30 acres.

Cyndi Wilson Porter, vice president for extended academic programs, said the enrollment goal is doable because of a pent-up demand for a Catholic education and private higher education in Arizona. Eventually, the university expects to have 3,000 students in Goodyear.

The school, based in San Antonio, started classes at Desert Edge High School in Goodyear nearly a year ago.

The university also plans to bring its adult-education classes this fall to downtown Phoenix, at St. Mary's High School, as part of a branding effort, Porter said.

"People have to understand who we are, and the only way to do that is to come out and start teaching classes," Porter said.

Once the Goodyear campus is up and running, "We're going to be the first comprehensive Catholic university on ground in Arizona with full programs," said Wilson Porter, vice president for extended academic programs.

Illinois-based University of St. Francis and New Hampshire-based Franklin Pierce University also intend to establish campuses in the Southwest Valley city.

Like Incarnate Word, Franklin Pierce has signed a 99-year lease with Goodyear to build and run a campus on 20 acres in the City Center development. In the meantime, Franklin Pierce's classes in accounting, nursing and other subjects are offered at Goodyear [Financial](#) Center, southwest of Litchfield Road and Van Buren Street.