

New university inspires Jesuit colleges

Calcutta Xavier's is model for Mumbai

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New Town: Mumbai may have stolen a march over Calcutta on various counts but St Xavier's College Calcutta may have a lesson or two for St Xavier's College Mumbai.

St Xavier's Mumbai and at least six other Jesuit colleges offering undergraduate courses across the country plan to set up a university modelled on St Xavier's University Calcutta following its success.

The New Town institute turned one a few weeks ago.

A private undergraduate college has three options to upgrade its status. The college can be upgraded to a university under state legislation, or it can become a deemed to be university, or the management can set up a new university and bring the existing college under its fold — something which St Xavier's Cal-

cutta has done.

"St Xavier's Calcutta chose the third option and set up the St Xavier's University. Our next step is to bring St Xavier's College, now an autonomous college under Calcutta University, within our university's ambit in a year," Father Felix Raj, vice-chancellor, St Xavier's University, told **Metro**.

"St Xavier's Mumbai is in touch with me to guide them in their upgrade. They too want to follow the same path as ours for elevating their status."

The St Xavier's University, with its campus 3km off the Tata Medical Center in New Town, had all its 400 seats filled in the first year after screening 3,000 applicants.

"Many institutes feel this is a remarkable achievement for any new institution. And this is why many of Jesuit colleges want to follow our route for upgrade," Felix Raj said.

"We are proud to see the way St Xavier's Calcutta has progressed. Its achievement as a new university is commendable. We are inspired by its achievement," Father Roy Pereira of St Xavier's College Mumbai told **Metro**.

"We are constantly in touch with Father Felix Raj to seek his advice on our upgrade plans. But we can take the final decision only if the Maharashtra government approves our proposal on a new university."

A university status gives an institute absolute academic freedom, Felix Raj said.

St Xavier's College Patna, St Xavier's College Ranchi, St Xavier's College Jaipur, Loyola College Chennai, St Aloysius College Mangalore and St Joseph's College Bangalore are in "constant touch" with Felix Raj.

The Jesuits run 54-odd undergraduate colleges in India.