Center for Experiential Learning

LEARNING TOGETHER:
A Decade of Connecting Learning, Teaching, and Research to Community
Letter from the Director

I AM REALLY IN DISBELIEF – Loyola’s Center for Experiential Learning is celebrating 10 years during the 2017 – 2018 academic year! During this period of time, Loyola University Chicago has committed to embedding experiential learning into the curriculum and engaging students, faculty, and staff with community to work toward the common good. Thus, our theme for our 10-year anniversary celebration is “Learning Together in Community: A Decade of Connecting Learning, Teaching, and Research to Community.” Working as a team, collaborating with students, faculty, and community members, building this work together has truly been a labor of love.

Reflecting on this past decade, while visioning forward, I look to the words of Pope Francis in his address to the U.S. Congress: “Building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity.” From serving at schools and interning at social justice organizations, to conducting research in museums, medical centers, and community agencies, Loyola students learn in community and work toward the common good. They engage community deeply, embedded in organizations all over Chicago, and especially in the communities around Loyola’s campuses, such as Rogers Park and Edgewater. Loyola students put love into action.

In the 2016-2017 IMPACT annual report, you will find the narratives of students and alumni from the past 10 years sharing how their learning experiences impacted their journey. The Center for Experiential Learning, in working with faculty and community organizations, facilitates high-impact learning experiences connecting classroom content with real-world experience—a distinct element of the Jesuit education. As Fr. Kolvenbach stated in his famous speech The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Higher Education: “The real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become.” You will find in the stories of Loyola students past and present how their experiences led them down different pathways to find themselves—and how they continue to put love into action in their communities and throughout the world!

In service,

Patrick M. Green, Ed.D.
Director, Center for Experiential Learning
Clinical Instructor of Experiential Learning
As a senior, Kajal Chokshi engaged directly in the Rogers Park community, tutoring refugee children at Madonna Mission, a non-profit organization providing education and resettlement support programs for refugee families.

“Through experiential learning, I felt I was able to develop a better sense of my own identity and gain a new perspective on the Rogers Park community. Despite living in this neighborhood for four years, I never took it upon myself to truly explore the streets or to know the people. **Through my service-learning course, I was able to delve deep into the community and gain a better understanding of the education system in Rogers Park.**

“On my first day at Madonna Mission, I met Sandrina, a refugee. At the age of 5, she was forced to flee from her home in Africa because of a war. She is an artist, always coloring pictures of her family and making cards for everyone at the service site. Sandrina is smart and loves math and numbers and wants to work with kids one day. She is more than each of these identities, but each of these identities elaborate on her experiences. As her tutor, I reminded her the importance of each of these.

“I have had the privilege to mentor and tutor many young students at Madonna Mission. Through teaching, I hope to spark the interest of students for mathematics in the same way my professors have done for me, empower minority groups to consider STEM fields, and implement teaching strategies on how math education is taught. My Jesuit education at Loyola University has instilled in me a quest to better the world. With this degree, I can intermix my passion for research and the importance of social justice and contributing to society by working on datasets surrounding systematic oppression and demographics.”

Visit Kajal's Portfolio for her full reflections at kajalchokshi.info
Service-Learning

Service-Learning is a pedagogy and learning method that provides a community-based experience through which learning and critical reflection takes place integrated into traditional academic coursework. These experiences become an “integrated text” for the course and make learning the subject matter even more dynamic and relevant.

96% of students said they were able to better understand and apply academic course content to their service experience in meaningful ways.

THE ENGAGEMENT in my Experiential Learning course was the first time I truly felt able to practically apply my academic learning to my social justice engagement. By applying my economics background to the international human rights I was supporting at Heartland Alliance, I was left feeling not only as though I was participating in something that was extremely important, but also something that I was able to add value to. It is for this reason that I find myself still working at Heartland Alliance eight years later.

While my academic background allowed me to add value in bringing new perspectives to my team’s work, the topic areas of human rights and social justice were - as formal concepts - relatively new to me. Through the application of my skills, I worked with a wide range of colleagues and grantees spread all around the world; each and every one has, and continues to challenge my perspectives, broaden my horizons, and raise new issues that make the work I do all the better.

“| I took the plunge and shaped my volunteering experience into a career . . . I really cannot imagine what life would have been like were it not for this course.”

KAREN AGUIRRE

Service-Learning
CLASS OF 2015
MAJOR: Health Systems Management
MINOR: Spanish

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING taught me how to practice cultural humility, especially within communities that had a different ethnic background. As a Latina, I served Asians and African-Americans in their own communities, so I always had to make sure I was respectful as possible and took every opportunity to learn. This was important because my degree focused on non-clinical hospital roles; given that hospitals are very diverse settings, it was extremely important that I learn how to work with other individuals.

I learned about inequities in housing, healthcare, and education in Chicago. This was the most impactful because I grew up on the South Side of Chicago. It was not until I left my community and visited others that I was able to understand how the lack of social mobility and the lack of city funds kept our Black and Brown communities in poverty.

I decided to pursue a Master of Public Health in Health Policy and Administration where I am able to advocate for social justice issues at the state and federal level. This allowed me to stay within the healthcare field but continue to learn additional skills in research and community work so that I can continue to receive the same experience I got with service-learning at Loyola.
RELATING MY PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE with my educational framework proved to be an invaluable practice, as it required me to be cognizant of my career goals and my professional objectives. The experiential learning program pushed me to correlate the work that I was enjoying in the professional sector with the material that I was learning in the classroom; it encouraged me to process the sociological, philosophical, and political interactions between what I was learning and what I was doing. Connecting my professional experience with my education during my undergraduate studies has carried on through my work today in the legal field. As an attorney, I am proud to be a continuing student of the legal profession. Experiential learning during my undergraduate education trained me to value my profession, regularly set professional goals for myself, and to always connect life with learning.

“Each opportunity I had through experiential learning more deeply reflected my commitment to the inclusive, hard-working socially-minded values and ethics of Loyola.”

JULIE FONTANAROSA

Academic Internship
CLASS OF 2009
MAJORS: English, Women’s Studies & Gender Studies
MINORS: Business Administration, International Studies

EMMY CARRAGHER

Academic Internship, Learning Portfolio
CLASS OF 2013
MAJORS: International Studies, Advertising/Public Relations

THROUGH THE PLACEMENT INTO SEVERAL INTERNSHIP POSITIONS and the cultivation of real-world skills and experiences, experiential learning was a key component in my education at Loyola University. From the onset of my time at Loyola, I knew that the opportunity to attend this Jesuit city school coupled with the proximity to (and connection with) so many city companies, organizations, and associations would be pivotal in my development as a student and as a young professional. Because of the guidance I received from countless teachers, advisors, and staff members, I found myself aligned with experiences that not only helped bolster my resume, but that led me to graduate as a strong, well-rounded woman for others - personally and professionally.

Academic Internships

Academic internships foster experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. Students receiving academic credit for internships enroll in a course that grounds the experiential learning through the involvement of Loyola University Chicago. With community partner employers as co-educators, students in academic internship courses engage in real world professional experiences, allowing students to “learn by doing” and reflect upon that learning.

1,244 students enrolled in academic internship courses, offered in 35 different disciplines

605 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

25% of students were in non-profit or public service internships

70% of students received compensation for their internship work

93% of students stated their academic internship course enhanced their understanding of connections between academic knowledge and experiences in a professional setting.
Community Partnerships

At the core of our work in the Center for Experiential Learning are our reciprocal and mutually-beneficial relationships with community partners. Thanks to our community partners, students have the opportunity to take their learning outside the classroom and apply it in real-world situations while learning from the incredible staff of our partners. In 2016-2017, Loyola students worked with 840 different community partners for their service-learning, academic internships, and undergraduate research.

“Loyola students have consistently stood out for their commitment, diligence, and hard work from other students that I have supervised.”

“Loyola students are eager to learn, professional, and flexible.”

840 organizations hosted students in service-learning, academic internship, or research experiences.

97% of partners reported satisfaction with their Loyola students.

93% of partners said students built organizational capacity.

88% of partners had conversations with students about their learning.

50 site visits by CEL staff members to engage community partners in creating student opportunities.

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IN ADDITION TO HER PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES with service-learning, Shaniqua completed two academic internships during her senior year at Loyola. She presented at the 2017 Undergraduate Research & Engagement Symposium about her PSYC 390 internship with Children’s Research Triangle, a non-profit organization that supports healthy development for children and families.

“This experience will allow me to have a better understanding of options for a future career path as well as preparing me to utilize professional skills in related social service fields. I see myself growing as not only a student but as an upcoming professional with a newfound awareness and understanding of the needs of underserved communities.

“In my professional career, I hope to provide support to those from under-privileged societies by aiding them in their short-term goals and advocating for changes that will help them achieve their long-term goals. As an aspiring child and family therapist, I can do my part in creating the future by using my passion for equality and justice to support the neglected youth of our communities who need the understanding of their developmental needs.”

Shaniqua’s internship supervisor at Children’s Research Triangle shared that “she stood out among the team because of her warmth, extraordinary work ethic and inquisitive nature...It’s clear from her work products as well as her natural ability to network that she will be an asset to the field, and we’ve been proud to have her be a part of our team.”

Her professor, Dr. Maryse Richards, concurs, “Shaniqua has gone above and beyond in her work at the Children’s Research Triangle. She applies a social justice mindset to her work, as evidenced by her reflection journals.”

Visit Shaniqua’s Portfolio for her full reflections at: shaniquamitchell.info
Alice Thompson
CLASS OF 2017

Alice’s undergraduate career embraced multiple aspects of experiential learning. From her service-learning and academic internship experiences, to her research fellowship, Alice shares the connections she made on her journey.

“Throughout my time at Loyola, my experiential learning opportunities challenged and guided me beyond what I thought I understood about myself, my community, and our broader world. Thoughtful dialogue with my peers and professors made the classroom one of my favorite spaces to grow, but it was experiences outside of that space, such as research fellowships and internships, that encouraged me to reevaluate my own perceptions and approach problems differently. By applying the theoretical frameworks and historical contexts that I learned in the classroom to my experiential opportunities, I was able to negotiate the gray area between theory and practice.

“Beyond anything else, experiential learning teaches the importance of flexibility and adaptability. In real world settings, such as the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC), one must be ready and willing to adjust expectations and skill sets to best meet the needs of the organization—as part of a team that goes beyond the individual. In effect, actions have real consequences. It’s hard to recreate a situation like that in the classroom, which makes experiential opportunities all the more important.”

“... my future plans were shaped almost entirely by my experiential learning opportunities. Spanning my research areas to my most recent internship, I learned the most about what I wanted to do and how I wanted to affect change through engaging with people.”
Undergraduate Research

The Loyola Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (LUROP) includes funded fellowships for mentored research, guides to external research opportunities, workshops on research and presentation skills, and a symposium to showcase undergraduate research.

262 students in funded LUROP fellowships

LUROP FELLOWSHIPS BY PROGRAM

86 Faculty Mentors
12 Graduate Student Mentors
30 majors represented

86 Faculty Mentors
12 Graduate Student Mentors
30 majors represented

NICHOLAS FOGLEMAN

Undergraduate Research
CLASS OF 2009
MAJOR: Psychology
MINOR: Biology

THE LUROP FELLOWSHIP provided me an opportunity to conduct an independent research study for my senior honors thesis. My study aimed at identifying protective factors associated with healthy child development. Results from my study revealed that outside of immediate factors within a child’s home environment, teachers played the single most influential role in a child’s emotional and social development. This finding inspired me to pursue teaching following graduation. I joined Teach for America and taught sixth-grade science to hundreds of wonderful students in North Carolina for three years.

The LUROP fellowship was my first opportunity to conduct research. After teaching for three years, I decided to pursue a research career. I worked at the National Institute of Mental Health, exploring ways to improve human cognition. I then enrolled in a graduate program for clinical psychology and am a doctoral student at the University of Louisville. Much of my research stems from my initial work during my LUROP fellowship, and I now investigate how children’s emotions affect their social functioning.

“Loyola equipped me with critical thinking, leadership, teaching, writing, and public speaking skills, and most importantly made clear to me what my passion is...”

BRIAN M. SWIES

Service-Learning, Academic Internship, Undergraduate Research, Learning Portfolio
CLASS OF 2012
MAJORS: Biology, Psychology
MINORS: Neuroscience, Philosophy

MY INDEPENDENT RESEARCH projects with my mentors Dr. Lucas and Dr. Morrison were invaluable to my education at Loyola. I learned skills complementary to what I was learning in the classroom, to depths much deeper than what is found in a textbook, as well as skills that could never be taught in a classroom. Both contributed to my professional and personal growth.

Being involved in neuroscience research at Loyola equipped me with critical thinking, leadership, teaching, writing, and public speaking skills, and most importantly made clear to me what my passion is that I’ll be pursuing a research career. That is something I am forever grateful for and feel lucky to have discovered that early on in college...not everyone finds that!

I’m currently entering year six of eight in the dual degree MD/PhD program directly continuing my line of research from Loyola now at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. My career plan is to pursue medical residency training in neurology or psychiatry while actively building a research and teaching platform.
The importance of movement, especially dance, has been the unifying theme of Laura Prieto's experiential learning during her time at Loyola. As an intern, a researcher, and a dancer, she worked with a variety of populations—including people with Parkinson’s disease and people with developmental disabilities—promoting wellness and personal expression through the power of dance.

“I learned so much about different cultures and different lifestyles than my own. At Misericordia, I learned about different programs in which adults with disabilities have to build community. I learned about the importance of treating everyone with dignity regardless of any preconceived notions you may have when meeting other people. I learned of the ability of art to connect different cultures when I traveled to Vietnam to perform. Overall, I learned that I have a responsibility to build a better community with others, a community where we rejoice in each other’s uniqueness and strive to build a place for everyone.

“I will be attending a master’s degree program in the fall where I will work to research how to work with families that may have a disability to become healthier and more fit. I hope to one day ensure that physical education and dance are available to all and that policy makers continue to advocate for our health as a community.”

Laura Prieto
Class of 2017

Academic Internship, Learning Portfolio, Undergraduate Research

Major: Exercise Science

Minor: Dance

Undergraduate Research and Engagement Symposium

The Center for Experiential Learning organizes the annual Undergraduate Research and Engagement Symposium each year. Over 400 students showcased their research projects during Loyola’s 2017 Weekend of Excellence. In addition to research posters and oral presentations, students presented their learning portfolios, service-learning projects, academic internship experiences, and performance-based research.

435 Student Presenters
30 Oral Presentations
256 Poster Presentations
Learning Portfolios

A learning portfolio (ePortfolio) allows Loyola students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and values through a digital collection of their work over time. Loyola students begin building a learning portfolio in their first-year seminar course and continue documenting their learning and reflecting on their Loyola experience. Loyola students build learning portfolios in courses and reflect on their curricular and co-curricular experiences through the Loyola Experience roadmap.

2,626 first-year students started building their Learning Portfolios

6,404 learning portfolios created by students through academic and co-curricular courses/programs to facilitate intentional learning, reflection, assessment, and professional development

PATRICK GILSENNAN

Service-Learning, Learning Portfolio

CLASS OF 2014

MAJORS: Economics, History

MINORS: Business Administration, International Studies

I TOOK A SERVICE-LEARNING CLASS my sophomore year. I worked with Taller de Jose in the Little Village neighborhood on a community-based research project. The Seminar in Community-based Research and Leadership was very focused on not just doing community service, but doing effective and positively impactful service. There was also an ePortfolio created for this class. The class taught me how to engage the world not through my lens, but the lens of the community.

Chicago is a city with many different stories and experiences. Experiential learning provided me the opportunity to not only engage with the city, but learn how to approach communities that have vastly different experiences than my own. Loyola’s emphasis on social justice and engagement is so ingrained into me that it is impossible to discuss my ambitions without acknowledging my drive to work in the service of others. Experiential learning was at the heart of that social justice and engagement; it gave us the tools and challenged us to use them. I currently work in financial regulation, working to keep markets fair and the public safe from fraud, and I find value in it all the same.

“Experiential learning was at the heart of social justice and engagement.”

TRAVIS OLSON

Service-Learning, Undergraduate Research, Learning Portfolio

CLASS OF 2013

MAJORS: Sociology, Environmental Studies

AS A SOCIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJOR, I spent a lot of time in the classroom learning about social problems. Whether it was racism and homophobia or the many complications with the recycling stream, my coursework gave me a great appreciation for how complex the world is and how difficult it is to maintain sustainable change. It was my work in experiential learning programs that helped me develop the skills, patience, and agency necessary to go beyond problems and to begin participating in solutions.

Participating in service-learning courses and the Provost Fellows research program taught me the practical skills that are necessary to be successful in any career: how to research and support an idea, how to manage a team, and how to communicate complex information in accessible and engaging ways. Overall, experiential education taught me that it is not enough to simply know content. There is a whole other realm of practical skills that can be difficult to learn in a traditional classroom.

Visit Travis’ Portfolio for his full reflections at: travisolson.info

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS
The experiential learning courses I took helped me go from simply informing myself about major social justice issues or leadership development theories and actually see them play out in the real world. Some of the best advice I received while I was in college came from interviewing leaders at the organizations I worked with. One of the staff members at Centro Romero told me that she approached teamwork in the same way as the famous "Stone Soup" tale: everyone contributes their best "ingredients" (talents, skills) to make a delicious "soup" (community, service) that everyone can enjoy. Listening to advice like this from one of Centro Romero’s longest serving community leaders helped me take on the right attitude to be successful both during the service-learning experience and in the future.

My experiential learning classes went beyond the classroom, and I could study the world around me and reflect on the impact that my decisions have on the people around me. Since I graduated, I channeled the mission-based work from my experiential learning classes into a year of service as an English teaching fellow at a low-income public high school in Colombia.

SAMANTHA RIVERA

Academic Internship, Service-Learning, Learning Portfolio
CLASS OF 2016
MAJOR: Advocacy and Social Change
MINORS: Education Policy Studies, Spanish

As part of the Social Justice Internship Program, I interned with the Volunteer Relations department at Catholic Charities. I helped to organize volunteers and serve clients at the Tuesday Night Supper, a program that provides a hot meal to 130 men, women, and children.

As I engaged the Chicago community, I experienced firsthand social justice issues such as homelessness and hunger; the encounters with clients challenged me to develop my ministry style in response to social injustice. Seeing the diversity and scope of the clients that Catholic Charities serves forced me to think about my method of ministering and how I can be a presence or advocate for them. My experience at Catholic Charities gave me background in nonprofit administration as well as a push to be more civically engaged in combating the social injustices of society.

My experience with the Social Justice Internship was one reason I chose to do a year of service. I spent a year serving at Cristo Rey Boston High School as a teacher’s assistant and campus minister. I’m starting a graduate program in Theology and Ministry at Boston College beginning in the fall.

JUSTIN HOCH

Academic Internship, Service-Learning, Learning Portfolio
CLASS OF 2015
MAJOR: Theology
MINORS: Business Administration, Catholic Studies, Pastoral Leadership

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“As I engaged the Chicago community, I experienced firsthand social justice issues such as homelessness and hunger.”
“The opportunities I have been provided through the Center for Experiential Learning have allowed me to explore the issues, become acquainted with populations and people, and spend time in new work environments.”

Katey Lantto CLASS OF 2017

Academic Internship, Learning Portfolio, Undergraduate Research

MAJOR: Anthropology

MINOR: International Studies

KATEY LANTTO’S TIME at Loyola featured a strong involvement with some of society’s most vulnerable members. She completed three different academic internship courses with refugee service organizations, as well as a research course focused on homelessness and access to resources. These courses offered Katey an academic foundation for the experiences she was having out in the community.

“The opportunities I have been provided through the Center for Experiential Learning have allowed me to explore the issues, become acquainted with populations and people, and spend time in new work environments. I think the classroom component has been crucial to how much meaning I have been able to derive during my internships and research because critical reading, thinking, and discussing leads to enhanced learning and greater connections between academic theory, community impacts, and personal reflection.

In combination, these three features of the Loyola experiential learning curriculum truly engage students in high-level thinking and community participation that classroom learning alone cannot provide.”

As Katey graduates and moves on from Loyola, she remains drawn to service and the role it plays in making change. “This coming year, I will be serving with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in New Orleans, Louisiana at a day center for people experiencing homelessness. My draw to JVC is of course very influenced by the Ignatian values that permeate all aspects of the Loyola experience. Direct service providers are in close proximity to the people they serve, meaning that relationships are at the center of service and that systemic work begins in the local community.”
“I am so grateful for the tremendous support offered by the Center for Experiential Learning, both to my students and to me as an instructor.”

COLLEEN CONLEY, PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

New Initiatives

IN CELEBRATION OF THE GROWTH AND EVOLUTION of Loyola University Chicago’s Center for Experiential Learning, we will launch a number of new programs and activities for students, faculty and community partners during the 2017–2018 academic year. Some of our featured programs to celebrate include:

The Communities in Solidarity program is funded through Plan 2020: Building a More Just, Humane, and Sustainable World, Loyola’s strategic plan for 2015-2020. This program consists of new initiatives from the Center for Experiential Learning, focusing on immersing faculty and staff in Rogers Park and Edgewater more directly in order to deepen Engaged Learning opportunities for Loyola students. This program explicitly builds Loyola’s anchor institution identity into the curriculum through the Engaged Learning University Requirement. This proposal addresses many of Loyola’s anchor institution priorities, such as economic development, health, and education, rooting our work in our surrounding neighborhoods and communities through the variety of engaged learning courses that exist at Loyola University Chicago. The program consists of 1) faculty immersion opportunities in the Rogers Park and Edgewater communities, 2) funding for instructors of Engaged Learning courses to support student immersion in the Rogers Park and Edgewater communities, and 3) the launch of community courses co-facilitated by community partners through the Center for Experiential Learning.

A new faculty development program will be launched for Loyola’s faculty to build strategies for teaching experiential learning courses within the Certificate in Experiential Learning. In collaboration with Marquette University’s Center for Teaching and Learning, this educational development program includes 10 workshops focused on integrated course design, implementing experiential learning, and facilitating critical reflection. Faculty will engage in workshops, and, as a culminating project, share a course syllabus that includes the elements of building an experiential learning course.

Faculty Development

The Center for Experiential Learning provides faculty development programs to encourage teaching and learning strategies for high-impact learning courses. In collaboration with the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy, the CEL sponsors national speakers, facilitates lunch and learn workshops, and co-sponsors the bi-annual Focus on Teaching and Learning faculty development programs.

During Fall 2016, the CEL hosted Dr. Laura Rendon, researcher, educator, and author of Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy; Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice, and Liberation. Her study of sentipensante pedagogy emphasizes intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development of students designed to lead toward social activism. She presented social justice approaches to teaching and learning for Loyola faculty.

Facilitated 12 faculty development programs focused on high-impact teaching and learning strategies related to Loyola’s Ignatian Pedagogy tradition.