Welcome to the 2013-2014 IMPACT report from Loyola’s Center for Experiential Learning! This annual report features the many forms of experiential learning at Loyola University Chicago and their impact on student learning, faculty teaching, and community development.

Loyola’s Center for Experiential Learning, in working with faculty instructors and community organizations, facilitates the development of high-impact learning experiences connecting classroom content with real-world experience. In his essay *Higher Standards*, Fr. Dean Brackley, S.J. challenges Catholic Jesuit universities to live their mission of the promotion of justice by enhancing student learning experiences:

> “We need wholesome crises to help expand our horizons. Frequently, such experiences occur when students engage in activities, like service-learning, that draw them into close contact with poverty and suffering. There they are mugged by reality. The humanity of the people they encounter, some of them victims of injustice, crashes through students’ defenses, provoking a salutary disorientation, much like the experience of falling in love. When the anonymous masses take on three dimensions for students, their horizons open. Their world is reconfigured. Some things move from the margin to the center and others from the center to the edge.”

In this IMPACT report, we see how Loyola students’ world is “disoriented” and “reconfigured” through service-learning, academic internships, undergraduate research and electronic portfolios (ePortfolios). As students connect their learning from these experiences, they emerge with a renewed understanding of social justice, as well as new knowledge, skills, and values.

In service,

Patrick M. Green, Ed.D.
Director, Center for Experiential Learning
Clinical Instructor of Experiential Learning
IMPACT ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

Service-learning brings academic content to life as students participate in the work of our communities, striving to make authentic connections between classroom studies and community action. Service-learning at Loyola University Chicago is a credit-bearing academic experience that gets students off campus and into the world for meaningful and active engagement that contributes to the common good.

“By volunteering at the refugee center through this course and enduring all of its difficulties, I came to terms that I could, in fact, make a difference.”

Each semester more than 50 faculty facilitate in-depth service-learning experiences that enhance classroom learning, expose students to social justice issues, support the civic identity development of our students, and generate opportunities for students to make meaningful contributions. The Center for Experiential Learning supports faculty and students to help them get the most out of the service-learning experience.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CHICAGO

How do Loyola University business students learn essential business development practices, engage Chicago’s communities, and support the development of an emerging entrepreneur? MGMT 335/435 asks students to support emerging community-minded business people in Chicago as a core component of the class. Faculty instructor Mike Welch helps students apply principles learned in business school in a meaningful way to real-life projects that assist members of the community. His students prepare a business plan for a client who wants to start a business in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood. One student reported that “It was a lot of work, but it was all worth it when we presented the final business plan to our client, who was so grateful to receive it.” Another student noted that “this course provided me with a great opportunity to put what I had learned to use in a real-life setting working with someone who really wanted to start her own business. To be able to help someone at the same time in the process was very rewarding.” Through their work, Loyola’s students demonstrated a commitment to social justice and the intent to engage the world in meaningful ways toward the common good as they begin their careers – outcomes at the heart of a Loyola education.

Engagement in Service-Learning

- 23 Departments
- 108 Courses
- 415 Organizations
- 2,321 Students

Seventy-five percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that service-learning enhanced their understanding of course content.

Students served 104,569 hours in our communities through service-learning courses.

75% of students reported that it is likely or very likely they would continue to engage in community work as a result of their service-learning project.
Academic internships foster experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting. 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.

Alexandra Nine, Communication Networks and Security major, did her COMP 391 academic internship with News4kids.org. She shares her insights here:

"The [News4kids.org] business model is based on taking current news events and condensing them into two to three minute videos so children in the K-5 levels can understand them. In the beginning, I would only write scripts and create the video...that soon evolved into creating training material to walk future interns through the process of making a complete story. While some of our stories focus on the triumphs of others, still others focus on the unfairness and injustices in the world. It is important to highlight both kinds of stories, because it challenges misinformation and stereotypes about other people and countries, which allows for counteraction against intolerance and ignorance."

"My internship with Access Living has been an excellent jumping-off point for my future career in the human services field. While working as an Information and Referrals Intern, I have become more familiar with the various social services available to people with disabilities. ... As a result of this internship, I realize that I want to do advocacy work and help amplify the voice of people with disabilities."

Students engaged in academic internships with 534 community partner employers

92% of students surveyed report that their academic internship class enhanced connections between academic knowledge and their experience in a professional setting.

"Completing an academic internship in psychology was one of the best decisions I have made in terms of my education. My internship has provided invaluable knowledge and experience that I will carry with me far beyond Loyola."

92% of the internships were paid opportunities.

In 2014-2015, the CAS Community Engaged Academic Internship program will allow undergraduates in unpaid academic internships with demonstrated financial need to apply for a $1,500 award.

78% of the internships were unpaid opportunities.

22% of the internships were paid opportunities.

123 Academic internship classes were offered to students in 35 academic subject areas.

1,101 students enrolled in academic internship courses.

DURING THE 2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR:

"This experience was a valuable application of my education. My career in the computer science field has forced me to solve problems in many different ways...."
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Shaping tomorrow’s leaders

“The Loyola students are a valued treasure in so many ways. They bring a new sense of hope for the future of our world with their selfless giving and compassionate care that they offered in a variety of service opportunities.”

Relationships are at the core of the transformational learning Loyola students experience in the community. Meaningful interactions with agency professionals and clients provide students the opportunity to connect classroom content with the lived experiences of their neighbors. The organizations at which our students serve and intern provide a space for justice to happen because everyone is both student and teacher. Everyone contributes and is given a voice. In the spirit of Aboriginal elder, activist and educator, Lilla Watson, who said, “... if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together,” the Center for Experiential Learning seeks relationships with community partners so that we may all share in the task of building healthy, just communities.

Top skill areas students gained from community-based learning experiences:
- Development of caring relationships
- Empathy and sensitivity to the plight of others
- Understanding cultural and racial differences

In a recent survey, approximately 75% of partners indicated that students’ understanding of critical public issues improved as a result of their time at their intern agency. Over 735 organizations hosted Loyola students for internships and service-learning placements.

“The Loyola students brought a quality of compassion & exemplary character to their involvement which had a tremendous impact on the residents of Well of Mercy. They brought a new reality to the lives of the individuals whom they served.”

“The students from Loyola aren’t coming to us simply because they need experience—they’re coming to us because they care about our mission. It changes the work they do, and causes them to connect with our clients on a deeper level that makes an amazing impact on both them and the children we serve.”
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AROUND CHICAGO

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING 2013-2014

Internship Sites
- 40 or more students
- 1-2 students

Service-Learning Sites
- 40 or more students
- 10 or more students

Undergraduate Research Sites
- 1 student

Chicago Boundary

AmericanEagle.com
3 Internships

Misericordia Heart of Mercy
5 internships and 22 Service-Learning students

Gottlieb Center for Fitness
5 internships

Maryville Children's Healthcare Center
15 Internships

Have Dreams Foundation
1 Undergraduate Research student

Forest Preserve District of Cook County
14 Service-Learning students

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
3 Internships and 46 Service-Learning students

Loyola University Chicago Medical Center, Maywood
19 Internships and 24 Service-Learning students

Cook County Juvenile Justice
12 Internships and 1 Service-Learning student

LIFT Chicago
9 Internships and 12 Service-Learning students

United States Senators
4 Internships

Have Dreams Foundation
1 Undergraduate Research student

Chicago Boundary

1 in = 2 miles
Facilitating learning & reflection

“The process of creating an ePortfolio allowed me to look back and reflect on my medical brigade to Ghana. By reflecting on my experiences in a variety of creative ways, I was able to think more deeply about the volunteer work I performed while also brainstorming about the volunteer work I still have left to do!”

An ePortfolio allows Loyola students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and values through a digital collection of their work. Loyola students begin building an electronic portfolio in their first year seminar course, and then continue documenting their learning and reflecting on their Loyola experience. Students’ work culminates in a professional portfolio.

Kelly Cahalin, Nursing major, Peace Studies and Psychology minor.

Visit Kelly’s ePortfolio at: www.kellycahalin.com

2,573 first-year students started building a 4-year Loyola Experience ePortfolio

3,440 ePortfolios created by students outside of a course or program requirement

6,374 ePortfolios created by students through academic and co-curricular courses/programs to facilitate intentional learning, reflection, assessment, and professional development

33,470 academic artifacts* uploaded to course or program-based ePortfolios

An artifact is a piece of evidence included in an ePortfolio that demonstrates skills, abilities, values, competencies, or knowledge.
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Understanding the world through research

“My research experience helped me to be able to take all that I have learned through books and class and be able to actually practice it in a real world setting.”

The Loyola Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (LUROP) includes funded fellowships for mentored research, guides to external research opportunities, travel grants for conference presentations, workshops on research and presentation skills, and a symposium for students to present their research.

99% of LUROP fellow survey respondents claimed their LUROP research experience equipped them with skills needed to be successful in graduate school or a professional career.

The number of fellowships by program is as follows:

- Biology Research Fellowships: 15
- Biology Summer Research Fellowships: 14
- Carbon Undergraduate Research Fellowships: 8
- Carroll and Adelaide Johnson Scholarships: 9
- Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) Fellowships: 8
- Institute for Environmental Sustainability (IES) Undergraduate Research Fellowships: 4
- McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program: 2
- Molecular & Computational Biology Summer Research Fellowships: 5
- Mulcahy Fellowships: 53
- Provost Fellowships: 58
- Research Mentoring Program Fellowships: 7
- Ricci Scholarships: 2
- Rudis Fellowships: 2
- Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage (CCIH) Research Fellowships: 4
- Women in Science Enabling Research (WISER) Fellowships: 4

A total of 203 LUROP Fellowships were awarded, including 5 fellowship programs, adding a 16th, the Social Justice Research Fellowship, for 2014-15.

25 departments, schools, or centers represented by LUROP research.

105 LUROP mentors

92 faculty, 13 graduate students

12 LUROP Travel Grants awarded to students presenting their research at conferences nationally and internationally.

175 undergraduates conducted mentored research as LUROP Fellows, supported by 201 LUROP Fellowships (some students won two awards).
Enlighten & engage

“This has been one of the most enriching parts of my Loyola education and I am so grateful for it.”

The Center for Experiential Learning organizes an annual Undergraduate Research & Engagement Symposium. Over 300 Loyola students showcased their research and community engagement projects at this event during Loyola’s 2014 Weekend of Excellence.

99% of survey respondents agreed that participating in the symposium contributed positively to their learning experience at Loyola

“Preparing for the symposium and presenting helped me grow as a person and feel more connected to the Loyola community.”

awards granted for research, mentoring, and community engagement

253 evaluation forms completed and e-mailed to participants with constructive feedback

16 Community Engagement Forum Presentations

49 Oral Presentations (research and/or community engagement projects)

167 Research Poster Presentations

232 presentations

324 student presenters

58 faculty, staff/administrators, graduate students, and alumni served as official evaluators (42 faculty, 8 staff/administrators, 7 graduate students, and 1 alumnus), a 32% increase in the number of evaluators from 2013
The Social Justice Internship Grant Program is a premier year-long, paid internship opportunity for Loyola undergraduate students. Students engage in significant work at one of two Chicago non-profits: Catholic Charities and Misericordia Heart of Mercy. Through an intensive cohort model, they reflect upon their internship experiences and connect educational, professional, and personal development with issues of social justice and community development. At right are the stories of two interns, their work, and the impact it has had on their lives and their host organization.

**Flavio Bravo & Carlos Rinconeno**

**Catholic Charities’ Immigrant Survivor’s Project**

Chicago is home to nearly 600,000 immigrants, each with a unique story. Navigating a new culture can be difficult, even dangerous, but the Immigration and Naturalization Office at Catholic Charities is there to help. Immigration reform impacts us all, and many Loyola students are passionate about the issue. Flavio Bravo, an Arizona native, is one such student. As a Social Justice Intern, Flavio worked alongside his supervisor, Carlos Rinconeno, with the Immigrant Survivors Project at Catholic Charities. According to Rinconeno, it is the only program in Chicago that provides free legal representation to victims of crimes, regardless of immigration status.

Flavio’s internship with Catholic Charities helped him to meaningfully connect his educational and personal development. He stated, “With the hope of practicing law in order to advocate on behalf of the marginalized, serving as a Social Justice intern with Catholic Charities of Chicago has complemented my studies by helping me learn about the issue of comprehensive immigration reform from a legal standpoint. I have been able to grow this year not only professionally as a student but also in my faith while taking the time to understand the significance of each immigrant’s unique story.”

This work has real-life implications. When asked about the impact of this internship, Mr. Rinconeno reflected, “Students are able to get hands-on experience in real world situations. They have the opportunity of taking people out of potentially life-threatening situations and placing them in the right direction to a more stable environment. This allows students to make an actual difference in someone’s life.”

**Fatime Rexhepi & Tina Stendardo**

**Misericordia Heart of Mercy’s Developmental Training Program**

On a beautiful 31-acre residential campus on Chicago’s north side, Misericordia Heart of Mercy serves more than 600 children and adults with developmental and physical disabilities. Residents from a variety of backgrounds participate in a vibrant and engaged community. Dozens of Loyola students work with residents every year, including Fatime Rexhepi, a Social Justice Intern in the Developmental Training Program.

Fatime, an education major, worked closely with residents and her supervisor, Tina Stendardo, developing deep and lasting relationships over the course of the year. Her experience was transformative. In fact, she said, “…because of my experience at Misericordia, Special Education is something I am considering for graduate school.”

The internship experience had an impact on Misericordia residents and staff, too. Stendardo said that Loyola students like Fatime are committed to enhancing communities and impacting the lives of others and in doing so, Misericordia residents have “new and fresh experiences.” Through these relationships and interactions, staff and interns alike are able to carry the organization’s banner into the wider community. Fatime agreed with Stendardo’s focus on educating the public about individuals with disabilities. Fatime said, “Misericordia shines a light on the ability of individuals with disabilities and this promotes social justice in Chicago and beyond.”