



**CHET JECHURA**

Rudis Fellow

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## Analyzing Social Justice in the Maghreb

A passion for social justice led Chet Jechura to research the constitutional guarantees of women in the Maghreb region of Africa.

**F**or Chet Jechura, exploring social justice issues isn't a choice; “it is intrinsically in who I am as a person.” That passion motivated him to embark on a three-week field-research trip to Tunisia. There, Jechura grew mentally, intellectually, and spiritually as he studied the constitutional guarantees of women living in the Maghreb region of Africa.

“Women need to be respected around the world,” says Jechura, who hopes his research will help Loyola and the Gannon Center for Women and Leadership draw attention to the significant injustices occurring in North Africa. Despite the prevalence of such injustice, there is reason for hope. “Tunisia is working hard to liberate itself through democratization,” he says. The most far-reaching gender-related reforms in the Maghreb have taken place in Tunisia.

A political science and philosophy double major, Jechura integrated his academic and research interests with Loyola's focus on social justice and service to humanity. “Academic rigor and service for and with others are two important components of St. Ignatius of Loyola's vision for what education ought to be,” says Jechura. “This experience has enabled me to engage in an academic pursuit that simultaneously allows me to remain true to the quest for social justice at home and abroad.”

Jechura found the research and travel

experience transformative as he gained a greater awareness of himself and of other cultures. “I grew as an entire person,” he says. Jechura was able to appreciate the “beauty of religion” in Tunisia and witness the Islamic call to prayer five times each day. “It was very important for me in growing in my awareness of universal humanity,” he says, adding that he would like to return to the region.

Through conducting his research project, Jechura also developed a close relationship with his faculty mentor, Dr. Peter J. Schraeder, a professor in the Department of Political Science, who helped guide the project while encouraging Jechura to take ownership of it. Schraeder adds that he gets real enjoyment from seeing the “fresh and unique perspective” that students like Jechura bring to his own research interests.

Every Loyola student should consider pursuing their personal interests through a research project, advises Jechura, who was the recipient of a Rudis Fellowship. Research enabled him to apply the skills he learned in the classroom to tackling larger social questions.

“Research can be an incredible, exhilarating experience, especially if you are researching topics that really interest you,” says Jechura. “The frontier of intellectual inquiry is vast and without end, and there is always more to seek and discover.”