Excellence Awards Ceremony 2022

The ceremony will begin in a few minutes
Welcome

Sarah Shaaban
Associate Dean of Student Success at
Arrupe College
Land Acknowledgement Statement

Sarah Shaaban
Associate Dean of Student Success at Arrupe College
The Loyola University Chicago community acknowledges its location on the ancestral homelands of the Council of the Three Fires (the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes) and a place of trade with other tribes, including the Ho-Chunk, Miami, Menominee, Sauk, and Meskwaki. We recognize that descendants of these and other North American tribes continue to live and work on this land with us. We recognize the tragic legacy of colonization, genocide, and oppression that still impacts Native American lives today. As a Jesuit university, we affirm our commitment to issues of social responsibility and justice. We further recognize our responsibility to understand, teach, and respect the past and present realities of local Native Americans and their continued connection to this land.
Opening Reflection

Jeff Peak
Assistant Director, Campus Ministry
Opening Remarks

Dr. Keith Champagne
Vice President,
Division of Student Development
Billy Hency

Missouri Valley Conference Player of the Year
Men's Soccer
Megan Nemec

Missouri Valley Conference
Player of the Year
Women's Soccer
Anneka Murrin

Missouri Valley Conference
Women's Cross Country
Athlete of the Year
Taylor Harrison

Missouri Valley Conference
Freshman of the Year
Women's Soccer
Parker Van Buren

Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association
Newcomer of the Year
Men's Volleyball
State Farm MVC Good Neighbor Award

Bri Clifton
Women’s Softball (2021)

Olivia Orr
Track and Field (2021)

Abby Swanson
Women’s Soccer

Chantz Visse
Track and Field
The “PNC Achiever Award” acknowledges deserving student-athletes who display well-rounded achievement through leadership in the classroom, in the community, and in competition.
Abby Swanson

PNC Achiever Award
Female Student Athlete
Abby Swanson

In 2018, Abby took home Missouri Valley Conference Freshman of the Year honors. She started in all 67 games of her collegiate career. A two-time first team All-Valley selection, Swanson, who was named the MVC Defensive Player of the Year during the 2021 Spring season, became the first player in program history to be selected as a United Soccer Coaches All-American. She further etched her name into the Rambler record book in the Maroon & Gold’s matchup with Denver in the first round of the NCAA tournament, tallying the first NCAA tournament goal in program history in the opening minute of play. In addition, Swanson was selected to the CoSIDA Academic All-District Team, the MVC Scholar-Athlete Team and was a candidate for the Senior CLASS Award.
Lucas Williamson

PNC Achiever Award
Male Student Athlete
Lucas Williamson

A key reserve on the 2018 Final Four team as a freshman, starter on the Sweet 16 team in 2021 and captain of this year’s March Madness team, Lucas Williamson has developed into one of the top defenders in the history of Loyola Basketball program and is a true leader, on and off the court. Williamson won 124 games, making him the winningest Rambler of all time, while helping the Ramblers to a pair of MVC regular-season and tournament titles, three NCAA tournament appearances and a NIT berth. A two-time MVC Defensive Player of the Year and two-time All-MVC selection, Williamson is one of only 23 players in program history with at least 1,000 points and 500 rebounds in his career. He was a member of the MVC Honor Roll, a finalist for the Senior CLASS Award, narrated and co-wrote the Loyola Project documentary, and helped found the Rambler Alliance for Equity.
Arrupe College 2015 Award

Fr. Thomas Neitzke, S. J.
Dean and Executive Director
Arrupe College
Arrupe College 2015 Award

Presented to a student who embodies the spirit of transformative education in our institution, who has used their gifts and talents to be successful, and who has contributed significantly to building and advancing the Arrupe College mission.
Damien Sewell

2015 Award Recipient
Damien Sewell

Damien is a second year Social and Behavioral Science student at Arrupe College with plans on continuing at Loyola to study Criminal Justice. Damien has developed substantive connections with his peers and faculty at Arrupe. He has been involved in the Arrupe Emerging Leaders program, was the Black Men for Success peer mentor, and served as a vaccine ambassador this academic year. Lastly, he serves as the Co-president for the Black Student Union at Arrupe College. These contributions have positively influenced our community and we are so grateful to him.
Spirit of Laudato si’
Sustainability Awards

Aaron N. Durnbaugh
Director of Sustainability
Spirit of Laudato si’ Sustainability Awards

*Sustainability in Service* – This recognition rewards students for their efforts to implement sustainability on campus or in community.

*Sustainability in Learning* – This recognition rewards students for their efforts incorporating sustainability into their academic experience through research, publication, or coursework advancing sustainability knowledge.
Spirit of Laudato si' Nominees

Sophia Alvarado
Christina Bozio
Al Dines
Brennan McDonald

Emma Menebroker
Destiny Onyeise
Mereya Riopedre
Erika Werth

Not Pictured
Austin Hojdar
Hannah Yun
Sophia Alvarado

Undergraduate Sustainability in Service Award Recipient
Sophia Alvarado

Sophia is an Environmental Studies student at the School of Environmental Sustainability, and incorporated sustainability into her experience as an Urban Agriculture Intern researching nutrient recovery in aquaponic fish waste through coursework in her undergraduate Engaged Learning course. She recently participated in the dialogue for the Synodal Encounter with Pope Francis, representing Loyola, and she will be working with the US Bishops to continue this important advocacy for the environment and social justice, particularly as it pertains to human migration.
Brennan McDonald

Undergraduate Sustainability in Learning Award Recipient
Brennan is an engaged learner in the School of Environmental Sustainability including volunteering and interning in the Searle Biodiesel Lab, serving as a teaching assistant in lab courses, a LUROP fellowship, and participation in multiple sustainability-oriented clubs and volunteer opportunities. Brennan has sought out every opportunity to expand his knowledge of sustainability through his coursework, and has generously shared his time and knowledge with other undergraduates.
Erika Werth

Graduate Sustainability in Learning Award Recipient
Erika Werth

Erika is pursuing a Masters Degree in International Affairs focusing on how the social roles between men and women contribute to the level of impact experienced by the climate crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. She is also exploring the political participation of women and girls at the local level towards community climate resilience and more theoretical research connecting the intersections of gender and climate through existing literature.
Student Employment Awards

Omega Cruz
Assistant Director Employer Relations & Student Employment, Career Services
Arrupe Person for Others Award

This award goes to a student employee who clearly serves others with a passion.
Arrupe Award Finalists

Makenzie Creden

Meenakshi Dhamija

Japani Doan
Meenakshi Dhamija

Arrupe Person for Others Award Recipient
LUC's Tutoring Center
"Throughout the duration of my career, I have worked with countless students who are hardworking, dedicated, and passionate. Meenakshi is different. The ways in which she has advocated for her peers in a tumultuous year is an understatement to the impact she has made. As a seasoned tutor for both the Tutoring Center and the Achieving College Excellence Program, Meenakshi has supported so many students from disadvantaged backgrounds. She has expanded 1:1 Tutoring opportunities, course support materials, and guided dozens of ACE tutors adjusting to the new role. Meenakshi is someone who cares for others."
Cura Apostolica (Person for Institution) Award

This award goes to a student employee who has demonstrated considerable care in their work tasks, commitment, and attitude in promoting, developing, and supporting the organization or institution where they are employed.
Cura Apostolica Award Finalists

Katrina Mayo

Sohaib Mirza

Rebecca Skedros
Rebecca Skedros
Cura Apostolica Award Recipient
FORA: Forging Opportunities for Refugees in America
Rebecca Skedros

"Rebecca supervised and instructed our Early Readers Entry-to-Kindergarten Program; she developed and executed a creative curriculum to give them the tools they need to make their time at school effective. Rebecca's time and effort with our kindergarten students allowed them to form a trusting and strong relationship and to trust Rebecca. In this regard, not only did she act as a tutor, but she also acted as a mentor and a friend. The most lasting impression of Rebecca from my perspective is how authentic she is in every interaction, treating all people with the dignity that they deserve. She holds herself to a very high standard but does so in a way that is empowering to others."
Ignatian Spirit Award

The Ignation Spirit Award is given to the team or staff of employees who work with passion and dedication as if they live each day to “go forth and set the world on fire.”
Career Services Student Staff

Ignatian Spirit Award Recipients
Ignatian Spirit Award Recipients

Amanda Berry
Danny Blough
Dominique Dungca
Brooklyn Guntermann

Elyse Hall
Delaney Hayes
Aishat Iyiola
Angelina Jackson
"Day-in and day-out, our team does their absolute best to help the Loyola community. Career support can be life-changing for individuals and its impact can be exponential. Accordingly, our student workers are deeply invested in supporting their fellow Ramblers’ career development. They provide exceptional service to the students, alumni, and employers who engage with our office. Acting with compassion and empathy, the team recognizes that even small interactions can have a huge impact on someone’s trajectory. Our team does a great job relating to their fellow Ramblers, sharing reassurance, and offering solutions. It is clear that they genuinely care and want to help."
Core Element Award

The Core Element Award recognizes students for their service and contributions to the Loyola community. One Core Award winner has been selected as the Student Employee of the Year.
Taylor Hartman

Core Element Award Recipient
Lurie Children's Hospital
Taylor Hartman

"Taylor has shown incredible growth since she started working at Lurie Children's Hospital. She started out doing data entry but now that she has had a wealth of experience handling study data, she is now helping with presenting that data by helping on study manuscripts. She was included as an author on one study and has presented on others. She has also shown great skill in corresponding with research participants, especially as we have had to transition to remote data collection due to the pandemic. Taylor has been an invaluable member of our team and I want to recognize her accomplishments. While she gets recognition from our group, I think the Loyola community should be aware of her excellent efforts and representation of Loyola outside of the university."
Alec Lotus

Core Element Award Recipient
Fine and Performing Arts
"Alec has served the Department of Fine and Performing Arts in a variety of capacities during his four years of undergraduate study at Loyola University Chicago. He started as an Operations Support Assistant for the Department. After year of excellent work, he was asked to become an Ensemble Support Assistant for the LUC Choirs. Alec has served the LUC Choirs for the past three years. Alec is not only an outstanding student staff member, he is a great person. He has a strong sense of service, and endeavors to treat others with care and respect. He brings a positive attitude, intelligence, and a great sense of humor to everything he does. Alec has served the DFPA with great professionalism, dedication, and kindness."
Courtney Ramsey

Core Element Award Recipient
Campus Recreation
"Courtney has gone above and beyond her regular duties of scheduling and managing our student staff to truly deliver on the promise of student development. She has led new trainings, assisted in an overhaul of the facility's layout to make it more inclusive, helped student staff grasp constantly evolving COVID-19 cleaning protocols. She refined our student employee training & development, accommodated several pivots in our operations, and worked independently to coordinate and build an entire schedule for the spring semester. It is rare you get to work with a student employee who not only motivates other student employees to continue to develop, but also motivates the professional staff in the department to constantly learn and grow."
Nicholas Zellner

Core Element Award Recipient
Conference Services
"Nick was a huge asset to the COVID Collection Sites, always willing to do what was needed to make sure we had coverage so people could test, always went above and beyond. He became a supervisor and then Coordinator for Conference Services hotel while supervising the Collection Site. Nick was always on time and willing to jump in and cover shifts when needed. Nick was given projects and took ownership to get them done on time. He was trusted with a lot of responsibility. Nick is a true leader, he assigned tasks to staff based on their strengths, kept records organized, and accomplished a lot for conference services."
Student Employee of the Year Award

This award goes to one student employee to recognize their outstanding contributions, achievements, and their positive impact on the university.
Courtney Ramsey

Student Employee of the Year Award Recipient
Residence Life Awards

Colby Jones
Student Support Specialist
The Pursuit of Excellence Award

The Pursuit of Excellence Award is given to a first year Resident Assistant who, over the course of the school year, has served the University and residential community in and out of the RA position. The finalists demonstrate a well-rounded approach to the position, academics, and personal life. Finally, the recipient consistently portrays a positive, kind, and caring approach with others while excelling in programming and community development.
Nominees

Rylee Abaya
Regis Hall

David Binkley
Campion Hall

Eric Delgado
San Francisco Hall

Juanita Dillard
Simpson Hall

Selam Kahsay
Simpson Hall

Lily Kraus
Marquette Hall

Maggie Palider
Baumhart Hall

Erin Tien
Messina Hall
David Binkley

The Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipient
Currently a junior, David is majoring in both Secondary Education and History, and aims to become a High School history teacher. The nominator writes, “David has brought “vibrant enthusiasm” to the Campion community. As a first year RA, David serves the only all-male community in the building. The residents of 3rd North have kept David quite busy all year long, but David has built a strong community. At his first floor meeting, there was both chanting and cheering and the affectionate nickname, “Binks” was born. Throughout the year, David has pushed himself to be better with every resident connection, every program, and conversation. His energy, exuberance, and passion for this work have helped him maintain the best attitude in often uncharted territory. Consistently asking for feedback and advice on how to handle unfamiliar situations, David strives to make the best decisions for his community.”
The "Magis" Award

The Departmental “Magis” Award is awarded to a returning Resident Assistant who has consistently demonstrated a willingness to go above and beyond expectations throughout the year by serving as an RA, and a mentor in the spirit of the Jesuit concept of “Magis.” The finalists portray a positive attitude, exhibit the ability to be self-driven, and always show an eagerness to grow and learn in the RA position. Finalists serve as strong mentors for staff and residents and bring out the best in others.
Nominees

Hannah Cruz  
San Francisco Hall

Sarah Craig  
San Francisco Hall

Megan Japczyk  
Baumhart Hall
Megan Japczyk

Magis Award Recipient
Megan Japczyk

Beginning her journey as an RA in 2018 in de Nobili Hall, Megan went on to be an RA in Simpson, and Fordham. Megan graduated from Loyola, having pursued both Criminal Justice and Criminology, and Psychology programs. Now a graduate student with the School of Social Work, Megan continues her RA role at Baumhart. Megan serves as a graduate intern for a youth correction center, and for Sorority & Fraternity Life, in addition to serving as advisor to the Multicultural Greek Council. The nominator writes, “Megan uses her experience to help implement program ideas that are unique and exciting while also ensuring they are inclusive... She supports her coworkers by coming to our socials, covering duty shifts when needed, helping new RAs in duty situations, and by being there for us... Magis means more and Megan has always gone beyond to provide the best support, build the best community, and be the best RA she can be.”
Diversity Awards

James Thomas
Interim Director,
Student Diversity & Multicultural Affairs
Emerging Leader Award

This award recognizes a first or second-year undergraduate student who has motivated other members of the University to strive for excellence. This individual embraces diversity and serving humanity through learning, justice and faith. Not only is this individual constantly working to better themselves, but they are also dedicated to the growth of their peers.
Anton Jahn-Vavrus

Emerging Leader Award
Anton Jahn-Vavrus

"Anton is a freshman from the Southside of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is a 2 time published author who has written about his time in prison, masculinity, and gun violence. He is a personal trainer, has created a film for TPT about gentrification, a podcast for MPR about community policing, a mural about Minneapolis, and began a wellness business last semester. He also ran a tee shirt project designed to raise money for low income youth last semester in which he raised over 1,500 dollars. He is grateful to receive this award and will continue this work the next 4 years."
Social Justice in Action Award

This award recognizes a current LUC undergraduate, graduate/professional, or Arrupe College student who has demonstrated leadership in assisting the University in responding to its commitment to diversity. This student has worked to develop a university community that appreciates and respects all facets of diversity. This student’s leadership initiatives are in the forefront of exploring issues regarding diversity and they are actively working to expand their knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith.
Timothy Harris

Social Justice in Action Award
Timothy Harris

"Tim Harris is a junior from Kankakee, Illinois. He is deeply concerned about social justice and especially active in strengthening the voices and rights of Black people on and off campus. He has been a part of the Rambler Alliance for Equity and Our Streets LUC and has organized, lead, and spoken at many protests, rallies, and town hall meetings. Being a student-athlete on the track and field team, Tim acts as an advocate for minority youth in sports. Carried by his faith, he has become a leader and role model that fights for social justice on a daily basis."
Father Arrupe Award

This award recognizes a graduate or professional student that has made an outstanding contribution to their department, to students, and the LUC community. This individual has promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion and found an appropriate balance between their educational goals and the desires to help underrepresented population/community succeed.
Bridget Brodlo

Father Arrupe Award
"Bridget is from Lincoln Park, Illinois. She has a passion for social justice and for those who are in need as she works to become a Clinical Mental Health Professional. She was elected as a GPAC representative and strives to give a voice to her fellow graduate students. Through her work as a Success Coach, she supports students through advocating for their needs and giving them skills to succeed. She is proud of her work with Domestic Abuse Survivors and wants to make a difference in the world."

Bridget Brodlo
Transformative Educator Award

This award recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated a commitment to student development and has gone beyond their administrative role to address the needs and concerns of underrepresented students. This individual provides students with the opportunities to explore issues regarding diversity, identity development, multicultural education, social justice, and leadership initiatives. This ultimately enhances the retention, matriculation, and success of historically underrepresented students.
Omer Mozaffar

Transformative Educator Award
"Omer, who serves as the Muslim Chaplain in Campus Ministry, has shown consistently, that in his time as a mentor, teacher, and friend, he always is willing to help anyone, for any reason, from any background, and will tirelessly do his best to provide assistance in any way that he can. Mr. Mozaffar has a heart of gold, and I believe that Loyola Chicago has made quite possibly one of their best hires of all-time in him. One piece of his advice can unlock doors to solutions for the question or problem raised."
Lifelong Commitment to Social Justice Award

This award recognizes a professional staff member who has shown a strong commitment to student development and has gone beyond their administrative role to address the needs and concerns of underrepresented students.
Willie Gore

Lifelong Commitment to Social Justice Award
"Willie Gore is an LUC Alum and member of the OSCCR team who is the embodiment of this award. His compassion for others and uplifting messages are restorative and rooted in remembrance. The social justice movement has so many different types of players involved. Willie is seen as the encourager and cup filler as every Monday, he sends positive and motivational messages to students and staff of the Loyola Community. He does so in the spirit of committing to others and sharing his gifts with others. He is there, waiting to remind you of the strengths you possess and then quietly guiding you to who you are-- who we are. Let us thank him and return all he has poured out. Restore him with the thanks he is owed."
Graduate, Professional, & Adult Student Awards

Claire Bergman and Lisett Zamora
Graduate, Professional, & Adult Council
Outstanding Student Leader Award

The Outstanding Student Leader Award is given to a graduate, professional, or adult student who has demonstrated a commitment to engagement with their fellow students through leadership.
Outstanding Student Leader Award

Finalists

TJ DiPuma

Krislyn Zhorne
Thomas (TJ) DiPuma

Outstanding Student Leader Award Recipient
Thomas (TJ) DiPuma is from Lima, Peru and Pingree Grove, Illinois. He has a passion for teaching and is working toward a Master's Degree in Chemistry with the goal of becoming a professor. TJ works as a Teaching Assistant in Organic Chemistry Labs and loves giving back to the community through tutoring or hiring college students to help him with his businesses. Currently, aside from being a Teaching Assistant, TJ is a graduate student in Dr. Daniel Becker's Medicinal Chemistry Research Lab and is working on the design and synthesis of novel antibiotics to combat the rising bacterial drug resistance.
1870 Award

Amanda Martinez Zielinski
Senior Academic Advisor,
First and Second Year Advising
1870 Award

The 1870 Award recognizes a first-year undergraduate student who has exemplified the core values of the university while actively engaging in both challenging academic work, and co-curricular activities. The recipient of this award has also demonstrated an ability to build relationships with other students, staff, and faculty mentors.
1870 Awards

Finalists

Kathryn Cantrell  Swetha Chandrasekar  Nia Daniels  Madison DeLaRosa

Kendall Moore  Sophia Rankin  Mira Riley  Nana Sam-Brew
Kendall Moore

1870 Award Recipient
Kendall Moore

Kendall is majoring in Criminal Justice & Criminology, and Political Science, and is also part of the Interdisciplinary Honors Program. Her interests inspired her to join Student Government of Loyola Chicago’s Safety and Wellness Committee. This group works with Campus Safety and the Wellness Center to focus on issues related to policing and mental health. Kendall is also the Treasurer for the Women's Softball Club, a member of Kappa Delta Theta Upsilon, and a dancer in the Dance Company. Her nominator wrote that "she demonstrates care for others and works to make them feel comfortable, appreciated, and loved.”
Unity of Heart & Mind Award

Dr. Danielle Pulliam
Assistant Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Academic Services
The Unity of Heart & Mind Award recognizes current second-year students who have demonstrated the ability to articulate personal values, and discern how they inform personal, academic, and professional goals and decisions. The recipient has also illustrated a commitment to deepening their understanding of their own and others’ faith and worldviews, shown a dedication to academic excellence, and built mentoring relationships.
Unity of Heart & Mind

Finalists

Madilyn McLain

Madeline Palmquist
Madeline Palmquist
Unity of Heart & Mind Award Recipient
Madeline Palmquist

Madi is an Honor's Student who is pursuing a degree in Environmental Policy. She participated in the First Year Research Experience program, and is part of a project in partnership between LUC and a school in Northeast India. In addition to her involvements with the Christian Life Community, and Student Activities & Greek Affairs, Madi is an Intern in the Office of Sustainability. Madi’s nominator wrote that she is “a leader among the sustainability community and engages all Ramblers through a variety of initiatives including Sustainable Food Week, the Climate Change Conference, and a project on green roofs.” Madi hopes to travel, do research, and lead environmental justice initiatives.
Maroon & Gold Society

Jamie Glas
Maroon & Gold Society Member
The Maroon & Gold Society recognizes rising seniors who have demonstrated a commitment to leadership, academic excellence, and service to others. These student leaders exemplify holistic development – the fusion of the academic, the personal, the spiritual, and the character dimensions of student development.
Maroon & Gold Society Finalists

David Binkley
Samantha Galanopoulos
Andrew Mitchell
Mary Mulcahey
Emma Murray
Maroon & Gold Society

Cameron Arkesteyn
Jocelyn Arroyo
Eli Au Buchon
Anna Bryant
Kathryn Caputo
Maroon & Gold Society

Nolan Doherty

Aidan Doyle

Ella Doyle

Grace Droessler

Farah Elhoumaidi
Maroon & Gold Society

Theresa Fister
Chloe Gordon
Megan Grizzle
Timothy Harris
Victor Karwacinski
Maroon & Gold Society

Teresa Kraft

Katie Mather

Valeria Monreal

Nabhan Rafiq

Soumith Sanka
Maroon & Gold Society

Sarah Solver

Gabby Tewodros

Abigail (Abby) Thielbar

Amelia Thomas

Brian Voight
Damen Award

Keith Champagne, PhD
Vice President,
Division of Student Development

Jo Ann Rooney, JD, LLM, EdD
President,
Loyola University Chicago
The Damen Award honors individuals who have been a source of inspiration to the Loyola community in the ways they have committed themselves to our Jesuit ideals. Our recipients exemplify leadership in the community, live their lives in the spirit of Loyola, and light the way for other students to follow.
Sophia Barnard

Damen Award Recipient
Sophia Barnard

Sophia is a Parkinson Scholar, and member of the Alpha Sigma Nu and Upsilon Phi Delta honors societies. Sophia has served on the Healthcare Administration Student Council, and was Team Captain for a national Health Administration Case Competition in which the group came in second place. As the network and advocacy intern for the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, Sophia communicated with global Jesuit leaders, and advanced vaccine equity internationally. She was an intern at the Erie Family Health Centers. Sophia has been a member of the Christian Life Community, and participated in an Alternative Break Immersion. She is passionate about healthcare equity.
Brooke Boxrud

Damen Award Recipient
Brooke Boxrud

Having studied music before transferring to Loyola, Brooke is now a major in Cellular/Molecular Neuroscience. While working in Dr. Cavanaugh’s research lab and receiving the Mulcahy Fellowship, Brooke was a member of LUC’s Jazz ensemble. She won the Beauty in Biology art competition with an embroidery piece depicting the use of technology to detect multiple sclerosis. Brooke volunteers at shelters, and tutors students. Her nominator wrote that “Brooke is a leader on-campus as a woman in STEM and hopes to pursue a career in speech pathology”. Brooke looks forward to incorporating her passion for the arts into therapeutic techniques.
Alexandra Brist
Damen Award Recipient
Alexandra Brist

Alexandra is a major in Bilingual/Bicultural Elementary Education, with a minor in Psychology. As a member of SGLC, she helped to write legislation focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Alexandra volunteers at Misericordia, and as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician with Loyola and Chicago Hospitals. Alexandra is Regional Coordinator for the MedSupplyDrive Coalition, and a Research Assistant in the Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience Lab. Her nominator said she is a “truly inspirational leader” who excels in “her academic endeavors and serving the community.” Alexandra is a chronic illness advocate, and bilingual educator who is passionate about social justice.
Carrington Cottrell

Damen Award Recipient
Carrington Cottrell

Majoring in Political Science and Spanish, Carrington is a member of multiple honor societies: Alpha Sigma Nu, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and the World Language Honor Society. Carrington is a tutor, manager, and chair of the Writing Center’s Community Outreach Subcommittee. She also works at a podiatrist's office. Carrington attends Mass on campus, and Taize prayer. One of Carrington’s four peer nominators stated that she is an “ambitious and diligent person” who “upholds Loyola's core values and puts her heart into everything she does.” Carrington hopes to become a malpractice attorney.
Gelyn Anne Divinagracia

Damen Award Recipient
Gelyn Anne Divinagracia

As a nursing student and member of Sigma Theta Tau (the International Honor Society of Nursing), Gelyn aims to practice care for the whole person, the Jesuit value of Cura Personalis. Her nominator wrote that Gelyn “goes above and beyond” as a Resident Assistant who is “committed to the growth and wellbeing of her residents.” Gelyn is also Vice President of Standards for Kappa Delta Sorority, and the Academics Chair for Kapwa (a Filipinx-American Student Organization). Sensing a need for members of Loyola’s Asian-American community to embrace their faith and cultural identities, Gelyn founded a small faith group for Asian-American students.
Jamie Glas

Damen Award Recipient
Jamie Glas

A Social Work major, Jamie has played many roles. Her connections with the Christian Life Community involve being a Student Worker, Council Captain, and Small Group Leader. Jamie has been a student leader for the 360 Retreat, and Search retreat. Within the Alpha Phi Omega national service fraternity, Jamie has been Inter-fraternal Chair, VP of Standards, and is now President. Jamie helped to coordinate events such as a food drive that donated over two tons of food for St. Thomas of Canterbury’s Food Pantry. Jamie has also been an intern for the Alternatives Youth Shaping Positive Change program, and is currently a member of the Maroon & Gold Society. Jamie’s nominator wrote that “her Faith in God leads her to see God in all things”.
Ava Jennings

Damen Award Recipient
Ava Jennings

Ava is a Neuroscience Major, President of the Neuroscience Society, and a Research Assistant in Feinberg School of Medicine. Ava has worked with Free Time for Parents, a program within Holy Family's Disability Ministry. She has been delivering PPE with the organization Get-Me-PPE Chicago. She also helped train new employees and test patients for COVID-19 as a Medical Assistant at the American Family Medical Center. Her co-curricular involvements include being a Resident Assistant, and Vice President of Standards of Nu Rho Psi. Ava’s nominator wrote that “she exhibits passion and fervor, and her positive attitude inspires those around her”.

Madilyn McLain

Damen Award Recipient
Madilyn McLain

Madi is majoring in Exercise science, Pre-Occupational Therapy, and is a member of the Pre-Occupational Therapy club. Her nominator commended Madi because “even though she is a student-athlete with a challenging major, she takes time for projects she cares about.” Those activities involve volunteering with Labre Homeless Outreach, and Sarah's Circle, a Women's shelter. Madi also represents the Women's track and field team on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and is a member of Cru Athletes. Madi said “I love that Loyola has the resources for me to contribute back to the community I now call home, especially in Loyola Athletics.”
Sohaib Mirza

Damen Award Recipient
Sohaib Mirza

As a Biology major, Sohaib participated in the First-Year Research Experience, and became Co-President of the American Medical Student Association. Sohaib is an Achieving College Excellence program Tutor, and works in Loyola’s Tutoring Center. Sohaib wrote that his “faith in Islam” keeps him “grounded and humble” as he continues to “work on improving [him]self and finding meaning in everything [he does].” A member of the Muslim Student Association, Sohaib has also been a Faith in the Vaccine Ambassador with the Interfaith Youth Core. His nominator noted that “Sohaib’s decision to pursue medical school speaks to his awareness that social injustice and inequity needs to change systematically.”
Mary Mulcahey

Damen Award Recipient
Mary Mulcahey

A Major in Advocacy & Social Change, Mary is fluent in three languages, and is a member of Lambda Pi Eta, the Communications Honor Society. Mary works off-campus, and is involved with her church. On-campus, Mary is a member of the Wind Ensemble, the Vice President of PR and Recruitment for Alpha Sigma Alpha, and a co-leader for a Christian Life Community small group. Mary is a student assistant in the Office of Student Development. Her nominators commended Mary for her “professionalism, leadership... capacity to be a productive team player, and her empathy and care for students in need of support.”
Rhea Prag

Damen Award Recipient
Rhea Prag

Rhea is majoring in Bioinformatics, and is an undergraduate Research Assistant in the Bioinformatics Lab. Her work involves an equity-centered project aimed to reduce health disparities. Rhea has worked at a free health clinic providing medical care in her hometown. She has also worked as an Administrative Assistant at the Kenosha Community Health Center, and a Medical Scribe for Metro Milwaukee Medical, Inc. On-campus, Rhea has been involved with SGLC in various roles, such as the Chief Operations Officer, Chief Justice, and currently as the Vice President. In SGLC, Rhea has focused on initiatives related to wellness and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
Closing Remarks

Jo Ann Rooney, JD, LLM, EdD
President, Loyola University Chicago
Excellence Awards Committee

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Congratulations to all award nominees and recipients!

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