Last month I was in San Diego on faculty at the ACPA Institute for Aspiring Senior Student Affairs Officers. I had the privilege of discussing Parker Palmer’s terrific work entitled, “Let Your Life Speak—Listening for the Voice of Vocation.” About a year ago or so I wrote a blog about vocation, and in light of my trip, I’d like to share it with you.

**Call Me, Maybe**

I like the word vocation. It’s not used so much anymore; I think the word got hijacked. Having a vocation at one time was a noble calling. Somewhere the word lost a bit of luster, and vocation or Vo-Tech became a synonym for a job, not a career, much less a calling. Vocational education reverberated with ideas of “shop” and “home economics” in high school. The word career resonates with seriousness of purpose and longevity. A watch and chair might be involved, and at the end of a career you retire. I don’t think you can retire from a vocation.

The word vocation is defined as our life work based on particular skills, talents and strengths. You know you are in the midst of career well-being when you are able to bring your gifts to work and back home again. You recognize the great responsibility of using and sharing your strengths daily to impact the lives of others, and it doesn’t happen just between 8 am – 5 pm; in our profession it’s called the 24/7.

This might be controversial but I am not a big fan of all the talk around “balance at work.” I am a fan of using strengths at work and at home so that you are continually engaged in a higher quality of living. You see, playing from the gifts you’ve been given, being grateful, reflective and having agency over the decisions and choices you make is spot on for career well-being; for nurturing the feeling of being called (vocation) for a purpose and uncovering your mission in life.

Call me, maybe…is “wishy-washy.” How about just “Call” me. Pick me to do the work, choose me to love! (No, I do not have significance or self-assurance in my top 10!) But I have found my calling, so I say “yes” to the morning, “yes” to the work at hand even when it’s challenging and painful. As Parker Palmer would say, I am “listening for the voice of vocation.” Exuding energy, engagement and enthusiasm for your life’s work is a clear signal you’ve been called! Have confidence about what you love doing and the curiosity to know your authentic self. Have the courage to live your strengths and have the agency to calibrate when necessary. Calibration of strengths is an act of compassion, an awareness of others and critical to your well-being and those around you.

Parker Palmer poses the hardest question we all have to answer, “Is the life I am living the same as the life that wants to live in me?” The answer is “before telling your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.” Trust your strengths. Finally, Fredrick Buechner wrote, “to find your mission is to discover the intersection between your heart’s deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger.” There’s no retirement plan for this kind of living out your strengths; vocation has no end date.
Loyola University New Orleans women’s basketball team was selected first in the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC) Women’s Basketball Coaches’ Preseason Poll released this afternoon. The Wolf Pack garnered six first place votes and received a total of 125 points in the rankings.

“We are honored to have been selected at the top of the conference for the upcoming season,” said Head Coach Kellie Kennedy. “We have a tough conference schedule this season, but with the leadership of our returners and the energy of our newcomers, we are confident in our abilities to capture a conference title and return to the NAIA National Tournament.”

The Wolf Pack also recorded a 14-6 conference record last season, claiming the West Division regular season title before losing to Mobile in the semifinals of the conference tournament. The Pack were one of four SSAC members to make the NAIA National tournament, advancing all the way to the quarterfinals with wins over No. 8 Georgetown (KY) and No. 9 Our Lady of the Lake (TX). The team finished the year with an overall record of 23-12.

The Pack returns nine members from last season, including SSAC All-Conference standout Janeicia Neely and SSAC All Divisional guard, Megan Whittaker. Loyola also returns SSAC All-Freshmen honorees Kylah Jones, Meghan Temple and Caroline Gonzalez and adds freshmen guards, Zoie Miller and Charlotte Sperling along with junior transfer, Adrianne Sloboh.

The Pack begin their regular season action on November 10, as they took on cross-town rival, Southern University of New Orleans (SUNO) at 6 p.m. in The Den.
Loyola University New Orleans women’s cross country runner, Haley Milsark, has been selected as the SSAC Women’s Cross Country Runner of the Week for the week of September 15-21, which was announced by the conference earlier today.

Milsark was chosen for the award for her performance at the LSU Invitational on Saturday, September 20. The senior from Northampton, Massachusetts was the top runner for the Wolf Pack women’s team in Baton Rouge. Milsark placed 12th overall out of 48 runners, and finished the 5-kilometer race in 19:51:16, a personal best.

Milsark recorded the third fastest time out of all non-NCAA Division I runners and was second among NAIA competitors. Four of the six teams that competed in the event are members of NCAA Division I. As a team, the Wolf Pack finished fifth in a six-team field with a combined time of 1:51:49, beating out NCAA Division I, University of New Orleans by more than four seconds.

This marks the first time in her career that Milsark has received this conference honor. Milsark was also named the Kentwood Springs Student Athlete of the Week, an award that is given to Loyola student athletes who exemplify Ignatian values through excellence in the classroom, in the community and in competition.

Milsark and the rest of the women’s and men’s cross country teams returned to action on Saturday, September 27, when they travelled to Lake Charles, Louisiana to compete in the McNeese Cowboy Stampede Invitational.
Employ the Pack is back! For the third year running, the Loyola University New Orleans Career Development Center is excited to announce that it will be hosting its 3rd Annual employment boot camp, Employ the Pack: A Conference for Young Professionals. Designed to provide up-to-the minute strategies and aid to students and alumni navigating the current job market, Employ the Pack has celebrated two straight years of sensational programming. This year, the Career Development Center is especially excited to announce Brian Bordainick—CEO at Dinner Lab, fundraising and innovation expert, founder of the 9th Ward Field of Dreams and director of entrepreneurial investments at 4.0 schools – will serve as keynote speaker for the Saturday, January 31 conference.

The half-day, professional-caliber employment strategies conference is available free of charge to current students and young Loyola alumni. Featuring innovative breakout sessions which address current job-market needs, as well as one-on-one face time with dynamic industry leaders and employment experts, the conference is set for Saturday, January 31, 2015, in the St. Charles Room in the Danna Student Center on Loyola’s main campus. EMPLOY the PACK: A Conference for Emerging Professionals will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Brian is the founder and CEO at Dinner Lab, a membership based social dining experiment founded in New Orleans that unites undiscovered chefs with adventurous diners in unique spaces – from helipads to vacant movie theaters. Dinner lab meals highlight up-and-coming chefs from around the country, and changing the location every meal serves to experiment with the concept of using food to build communities. In June 2014, Brian closed a round of seed funding worth $2.1 million, expanding its membership hub in New Orleans to 20 cities across the country and setting revenue predictions of $15 million by the end of the year. Lauded by foodies and investors alike, Brian and Dinner Lab have been featured everywhere from the New Yorker to Forbes to Business Insider, The New York Times, Entrepreneur, and more.

Brian’s experience as an entrepreneur and fundraiser expand beyond pop-up dinner parties and into education, disaster recovery and community building. In the summer of 2007, while working for Teach for America, Brian traveled to New Orleans expecting to join the faculty at a local high school. What he found on his first day of work was a parking lot full of FEMA trailers and the flooded skeleton of what was once the school. With trailers for classrooms, no money, no supplies, too few desks, and no experience, Brian rose to the occasion and became both a full time teacher and athletic director at G. W. Carver High School in the 9th Ward. With the support of the Carver community, Brian was able to resurrect Carver’s once-renowned athletic program. He also founded the 9th Ward Field of Dreams, in order to support the construction of a state of the art football field and track on Carver’s campus. In two years, the organization achieved the impossible and reached its goal of raising $1.85 million in funding for the facility, and broke ground in the fall of 2012. He will share the knowledge he has gained and teach EMPLOY the PACK conference attendees how to model his behaviors as a means to achieve and sustain success of their own.

The conference is open to all Loyola junior, senior, graduate students and young alumni, and will offer all participants dynamic solutions to conquering the professional world. More detailed information about conference sessions and panelists will be available closer to the date. This conference is co-sponsored by the Office of Alumni Relations. For more information, contact the Career Development Center at 504-865-3860.
Asia Wong, LMSW, is a licensed social worker. In her clinical practice, she has expertise working with clients from a wide variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, including first generation and non-traditional college students. Her work is informed by narrative therapy, and she utilizes an extensive range of techniques and approaches including compassion focused therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy and forgiveness therapy to best meet her clients’ needs.

Her areas of interest include grief counseling, anxiety and depression, and couple’s counseling. Ms. Wong also serves as a clinical supervisor for social work masters level students completing their internships at Loyola.

Gil Lerma, MA, is a Nationally Certified Counselor and has a Master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. He enjoys working with young adults and has a particular interest in couples therapy. He provides general counseling with an affinity for helping students through anxiety, depression, and grief.

Gil approaches counseling from a Gestalt theoretical orientation where thoughts and feelings and their influence on behavior are explored in order to better understand a clients’ concerns and to develop effective solutions.
Counseling Center
2014 National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week

Loyola University New Orleans hosted National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week October 20-26, 2014. Students were provided with information about skills needed to stay safe and healthy while having fun. A social media campaign was launched and safety messages were delivered via Facebook and Twitter on a daily basis through Halloween. Bystander interventions were highlighted and an online alcohol screening instrument was made available.

Magnets with safety information were also distributed to each residence hall room and every floor of every residence hall was visited by a counselor from the University Counseling Center (UCC) to promote healthy behaviors. Throughout the week, students were provided with the contact information and location of the UCC in the event that they or a friend were interested in making an appointment.

Take Back the Night

On Wednesday, October 29, 2014, students, faculty and staff from the campuses of Loyola, Tulane, Dillard, University of New Orleans and Xavier joined with the New Orleans community to participate in the 23rd Annual Take Back the Night march against sexual and gender based violence.

Over 750 participants were on hand at Loyola’s Marquette Horseshoe for the evening’s events. The week began with a Take Back the Night concert featuring the UNO Jazz All-Stars at the UNO outdoor amphitheater and a Spoken Word at the Dillard University Library.

All proceeds from fundraisers for Take Back the Night go toward supporting local survivor service agencies including Metropolitan Center for Women and Children, The New Orleans Family Justice Center and the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program.
Residential Life
Family Weekend

Family Weekend is an annual event hosted for all Loyola students and their families. This year the program was held September 26-28 and enjoyed many successes, including increased participants in bus tours and educational sessions and the addition of a dessert reception to highlight the annual Prism concert.

One family member said, “I would like to thank Loyola for providing such a wonderful and unique experience to its students and family. This is the fourth year that I have attended Family Weekend, and I have looked forward to it each year. I cannot begin to express my gratitude to Loyola for providing so many exceptional opportunities while she has been enrolled.”

Program Results

- 300 registered parents and students, consistent with registration in 2013
- Added parent dessert reception with Prism concert, complimentary tickets to theater performance and featured Grand Opening of Starbucks in the Danna Student Center
- 130 participants in faculty led bus tours, 30 more than 2013
- 130 participants in faculty educational sessions
Opening Doors is an annual program hosted by Residential Life coordinating staff and faculty across campus to visit first year students in their residence hall rooms as a check-in point for their transition to the university. This year, after receiving student feedback, the program was adapted to meet the need of peer-to-peer connections. On October 7, 2014, student leaders from various student organizations and athletic teams made individual student check-ins on first year residence hall floors to see how their semester was going thus far, to encourage student involvement, and to check on any concerns regarding the condition of their rooms. The check-in was followed by a bingo night and ice cream social.

First year student Justin Caldwell said, "I really enjoyed the Opening Doors program. It was a comforting experience. I felt embraced by my fellow classmates and the leaders of the upperclassmen."

Program results:
- 45 student leaders participated
- 250 FY students reached in door-to-door visits, 50% of our first year residential population
- 50 first year students attended the social following opening doors
Uptown Campus Dining
Farmer’s Market Lets Loyola Eat Local

Continuing a program that began last spring, Loyola Dining by Sodexo hosted the fourth Farmer’s Market on campus on October 17, and it was the most popular to date. Setting up a gorgeous display of fresh fruits and vegetables in the Peace Quad, a mix of local and seasonal produce was featured at budget-friendly prices.

“We have a ‘local first’ policy. We work with Capitol City Produce to source local, seasonal and fresh produce, receiving them nearly every day of the week. We have a map in the Orleans Room where we highlight the Louisiana and Mississippi farms we regularly receive fresh products from,” says Scott Goodstal, executive chef for Loyola Dining.

Fruits and vegetables for sale included Louisiana satsumas, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, kale, Swiss chard, bell peppers, zucchini, yellow squash, and a variety of apples.

Enhancing this market, Chef Scott set up a grill and offered free samples of local zucchini and yellow squash to attendees, as well as free samples of Louisiana sugarcane swizzle sticks as a sweet treat.

“HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF STOPPED BY, AND THE MARKET SOLD OUT AN HOUR EARLY. ONE STUDENT COMMENTED, “IT’S SO BEAUTIFUL I JUST WANT TO BUY ONE OF EVERYTHING!”

For those who couldn’t make it to the market, an assortment of fresh fruit that was offered at the market was featured the next week in the Orleans Room. Students were treated to blood oranges, satsumas, baby lady apples, and plums.

The next Farmer’s Market is scheduled for December 5.