Crossing the Stage

This time of year I begin thinking about graduation ceremonies. The ceremonies themselves are full of symbolism from medieval robes to a flip of tassel from right to left, I have the privilege of being on stage as our students cross. It is always poignant and significant that they “cross” and walk away from their mentors to begin a new chapter. Sitting on the front row you can see the nervous excitement on faces as the associate dean reads their names: “Lord, just get it right!” is the bubble above their heads. The exuberance to get to the “other side” as they head toward the President’s extended hand is palpable.

Every year the Office of Mission & Ministry invites me to share “words of wisdom” for our graduating seniors on retreat. The team thoughtfully puts together a booklet with letters from folks across campus. This is one small tradition that adds to making Loyola a very special place: I appreciate my Mission & Ministry colleagues for including me. I am pleased to share my letter to our seniors with you.

For Your Senior Retreat:
Happiness does not depend on weather,
Although it sometimes helps to see the sun.
Paradise remains well-tucked within,
Precisely where one’s labor is one’s joy.
Yearning finds its answer in compassion.
Given the uncertainties of weather,
Rain and night in league against the sun,
All must find their happiness within,
Depending on their love of life for joy,
United by the bonds of their compassion.
And all should value knowledge, regardless whether
Tentative or salient as the sun,
In which one sees the world without within,
Open window to the source of joy,
Nor more nor less than one’s sustained compassion.
~Nicholas Gordon

I wish for you a life well lived! I wish for you the ability to hold both the memories of sun-drenched moments and the thunderstorms of doubt equally. I wish for you companions throughout this amazing adventure called life. I wish for you passionate work that brings you joy.
You have given much to Loyola, and our hope is that in equal measure we have filled you to the brim!
Celebrate all that you’ve learned, all that you’ve experienced… hold fast to that which is good and true… for you. I am very proud to have been your vice president for student affairs,
My highest regards as you begin to leave us!
Athletics & Wellness
Loyola to add Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Competitive Cheer/Dance

Loyola University New Orleans Director of Athletics and Wellness Brett Simpson recently announced that the University will be adding men’s and women’s swimming as well as competitive cheer and dance as intercollegiate sports starting in 2016-17.

“The addition of swimming and competitive cheer and dance is part of our strategic plan to enhance intercollegiate athletics. The University Sports Complex gives us a competitive advantage when adding these sports. Our facility offers the space for our competitive cheer and dance teams to practice and compete. Our swimming pool will allow us to start an intercollegiate swimming program. We hope to grow the number of student athletes from the current level of 150 to 300 by 2020.”

Competitive cheer and dance is recognized as an invitational sport in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) with 63 institutions currently sponsoring the sport. The NAIA could sponsor competitive cheer and dance as a championship sport as early as 2016-17.

“Competitive cheer and dance has gained tremendous momentum nationally as an intercollegiate sport. The Southern States Athletic Conference has sponsored competitive cheer and dance exhibitions the past two years with hopes one day of hosting a true championship in the future. We look forward to competing for that conference championship,” stated Simpson.

Head coaches for the new sports are expected to be hired in the spring and will spend the 2015-16 year recruiting students to fill full squads the following year. The addition of three new intercollegiate teams will bring the total number of teams to 17 for the Wolf Pack in 2016-17.
While negative incidents related to Greek Life are prevalent in the media, Loyola Greeks continue to be selected to positively represent the fraternity and sorority experience nationwide and bring focus back to the ideals of leadership, service, scholarship and values. Since 2010, Loyola has had six students selected to serve the national headquarters of their respective fraternity or sorority professionally as leadership consultants.

These students are selected through a rigorous application and interview process and compete with hundreds of students nationwide for a few coveted positions within their national organization. A leadership consultant serves as a role model for college chapter members and alumni volunteers. As an official representative of the fraternity or sorority, leadership consultants must have thorough knowledge of the governing organization’s laws and procedures. They must enthusiastically support Greek ideals and foster the organization’s goals and objectives. These consultants travel across the country weekly providing guidance to college chapters in areas such as leadership, risk management, academics, values-based decision making and recruitment.

Loyola is proud that we have had our students chosen to represent Greek Life nationally and know that we stand out as a leader in refocusing the Greek experience both on our campus and nationwide.

**What Our Students Have Shared About Their Experiences:**

“My experiences on the road helped me to define my goals and aspirations for my future. It was hard to call it a job, because honestly, it never felt like a job. Each chapter was so unique and taught me something new and different about myself and about the organization. I knew I would be teaching and motivating chapter members to become stronger leaders and women, but I never anticipated just how much each chapter would teach me and motivate me. When I accepted the position, I was ready and willing to learn and be challenged in a new and exciting way and my role as a consultant allowed me to do that. Being a consultant allowed me to grow personally and professionally. This position continued my education of the whole person and allowed me to be a woman for others.” – Margaret Vienne

“At Loyola, I cultivated a strong passion for serving others, exploring new ideas, and building values-based communities. Working as a leadership consultant after graduation gave me the opportunity to continue to grow in these areas while sharing my experiences with women all over the country. I believe Loyola, specifically the Office of Co-Curricular Programs, provided me with the skills and support I needed to be successful on the road, and I am forever thankful for the opportunity to work for Delta Gamma.” – Kate Gremillion
Career Development Center
Hosts 2nd On-Campus Internship and Part – Time Job Fair

Loyola University New Orleans students were actively recruited for summer internships and part-time job opportunities on Thursday, April 9th. The Career Development Center hosted 60 local employers and approximately 260 students networked with employers in the St. Charles Room of the Danna Student Center. For the first time ever, the Career Development Center obtained event sponsorship from employers such as: B&B Event Staffing, ResolveIT, Raising Cane’s, State Farm, and The Composting Group. Students networked with employers such as:

- Audubon Nature Institute
- Catholic Charities
- First Line Schools
- Louisiana Small Business Development Center
- New Orleans Film Society
- New Orleans Museum of Art
- Pelican Publishing
- Smuckers
- State Farm
- Stern Wealth Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- World Trade Center of New Orleans

Opportunities included:

- Accounting intern
- Editorial intern
- Education intern
- Finance intern
- Fund development intern
- Health guardian intern
- Human resources intern
- Immigration & Refugee programs intern
- Journalism intern
- Research analyst
- Production intern

Favorable feedback from employers revealed that Loyola University is a preferred destination to recruit the most qualified and diverse students from a variety of academic backgrounds for internship positions. Popular demand from both students and employers alike ensures this successful and dynamic event to become a new Loyola tradition.
The University Counseling Center (UCC) at Loyola University New Orleans is a full-service psychological clinic that offers personal counseling and medication management appointments to students at no cost beyond tuition. In annual satisfaction surveys, the UCC staff have been described by students as “friendly, caring, professional, flexible, supportive, and positive,” and students cite “ease of scheduling and knowledgeable staff” as reasons that they continue to make return appointments. UCC staff support the larger mission of Loyola University to uphold the dignity and value of each person as created by God; to foster a commitment to wholeness of mind, body and spirit; and to maintain a compassionate response to the community.

The UCC is on trend with counseling center statistics from across the country that continue to report higher utilization rates and increased presentation of students with moderate to severe mental illness. A few indicators from Loyola’s UCC for 2013-2014 include:

- 784 individual students were seen by appointment and 2,833 hours were spent in counseling or medication management appointments with students.
- Staff counselors held 164 crisis intervention appointments with students both during and after hours to assist with concerns such as suicide assessment, sexual assault response, and inpatient hospitalizations for psychosis.
- A few of the more severe diagnoses treated at the UCC included Major Depressive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Psychotic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Substance Dependence, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Trichotillomania, Sexual Abuse, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Antisocial Personality Disorder.
- UCC launched the CORE Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Planning Committee which met bi-weekly for the duration of the fall and spring semesters and was comprised of staff from Co-Curricular Programs, Student Conduct, Residential Life, University Counseling, and Wellness to identify and implement university-wide risk reduction programming and training. UCC also increased counselor and wellness staff presence in the residence halls by presenting risk reduction and safety tips at all residential hall floor meetings at times of high risk, including Halloween and Mardi Gras.
- In any given year, the UCC meets with 15-20% of Loyola’s student population. This trend has been steady for the past decade.
- In addition to counseling services, UCC staff also offer exemplary and nationally-recognized outreach programs to the campus community including the Advocacy Initiative, a network of volunteer students, faculty and staff who are trained to help victims in the aftermath of sexual assault.

The Association of University and College Counseling Center Director Survey (2013) indicates that nationally, 69% of students who filled out satisfaction surveys said that counseling helped their academic performance. For 2013-2014, 89% of students who completed the UCC satisfaction survey at Loyola said that counseling helped their academic performance.
Lauren Juarez, senior marketing major and graphic design minor, recently received post-graduate employment offers from Amazon and a local branding company, SHOE. Unsure of her future career trajectory, Lauren applied for a graphic design internship with Residential Life in fall 2013 with some encouragement from her supervisor, after he discovered Lauren’s creative abilities in media and design. Lauren spent the next four semesters creating print publications for Residential Life, including the annual Mardi Gras safety newsletter, housing and room selection brochures, student staff selection guides, family weekend materials, and department logos for special programming. When asked about her experience, Lauren said, “My graphic design career began with my internship with Res Life. I hadn’t taken any classes on design and was surprised when I was given the opportunity to intern, so I self-taught myself the programs and began to learn about the world of design. I finally declared a minor in graphic design my junior year at Loyola. I put together a small portfolio of projects I designed for Loyola and landed a paid internship at SHOE: A Visual Communications Studio. Without Res Life, I don’t think I’d be where I am today with so many opportunities ahead.”

Lauren accepted the opportunity with SHOE following graduation to develop a wider range of skills and stronger portfolio for future career opportunities. She plans to move to Seattle in fall 2016 with a deferred opportunity in e-commerce design at Amazon.
As part of Phase II of the Loyola Master Dining Plan, we greatly enhanced programming this spring in the Orleans Room. The goal is to continuously add variety to the menu, promote healthy eating, and emphasize the importance of being a part of the Wolf Pack community.

In January guests enjoyed a visit from Chef Tom Beckmann, C.E.C., who treated patrons to an authentic German menu, which included apfelstrudel and paprikakspatzle. We featured corn beef and cabbage, and a special guest on St. Patrick’s Day: General Mill’s Lucky the Elf, entertained attendees during lunch on March 17. We also celebrated several national food days, from Hot Dogs to Oatmeal, Pizza, and Pretzels.

Speaking of oatmeal, we observed National Oatmeal Month in January. Our messaging urged students to start the day right with a whole grain, lean protein-filled breakfast. In March, we introduced Meatless Mondays and highlighted all of the meatless options on the menu. Not only does going meatless one day per week have many health benefits, it also helps to reduce our community’s carbon footprint.

In February, to promote community, we took a trip around the United States to enjoy American Regional Cuisine with our Staycation program. Each night for a week we built a menu inspired by “fun vacation” places including New York, Los Angeles, and Austin. Before midterms we gave students a study break with our Dinner and a Movie event with an interactive showing of “Frozen.”

Also in March, we launched “Find Your Way to Fitness.” Claire Bruch, an Ochsner Dietitian, answered students’ dietary questions, promoted an active lifestyle through a series of obstacle courses, and promoted mindful foods that can be found in the Orleans Room every day.

Finally, we kicked off our Farmer’s Market in the fall, and due to its popularity, we have offered one each month during the academic year. Students, faculty, and staff can buy fresh and local produce and learn about the origins of their food in resident dining.