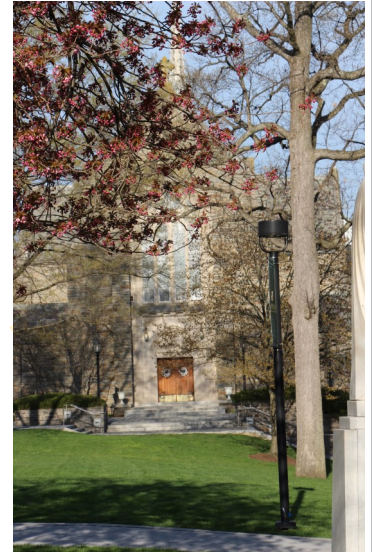


What Is a “Jesuit Education,” Anyway?

By Jason Ciarrocchi

As you prepare to come to Loyola, I can guarantee that you will hear about Jesuit values. I quite honestly lost track of the amount of times I heard the phrase *cura personalis* from students, alumni, faculty—almost everyone encouraging me to come to Loyola used this phrase in some way. What I knew was that Jesuit values, whatever those were, mattered at Loyola. What I was unsure about was what those values actually meant. I could

understand what “focus on the whole person” meant in the abstract, but I couldn’t seem to figure out how that would actually apply to the concrete realities of education at Loyola. Looking back, after nearly a semester into my time at Loyola, I have finally begun to understand the realities of Jesuit values, and the ways in which they can affect you as an incoming Loyola student.



A view of the Chapel.

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First of all, *cura personalis*: you absolutely will hear about this everywhere. From the Loyola website, to Father Linane, it is impossible to miss the importance of this motto in our community. But how will this actually affect your education here? How will Loyola care for you as a whole person? Myself and many others can attest to the way in which Loyola’s care for all aspects of its students will improve your education here. Loyola cares for your mind, body, and spirit, helping you grow into a well-rounded person. Campus Ministry is one useful resource that cares for students’ mental and spiritual health. It provides a place for students to better understand and express their faith and spirituality in

whatever way works for them. Starting with retreats and pre-fall programs for first-years, there are constantly messages of support and encouragement broadcasted to students all across campus, from any and all faith backgrounds. These resources allow students to receive support not simply as students who are here to learn, but as people with spiritual and emotional needs. Not only will Loyola’s attitude of *cura personalis* provide resources for your own mental, emotional and spiritual needs, but it allows you to be more empathetic to those same needs in others.

Another one of Loyola’s values is service. After *cura personalis*, this is the value that has had the

most profound impact on me. Coming into Loyola, I did not expect to find service particularly important. I assumed I would become involved with service at some point, but doubted service would be something I would intentionally seek out. However, in my first few weeks at Loyola, I took a chance and became involved in weekly service-learning through my writing class. Service-learning is a unique opportunity that Loyola provides, giving students a chance to become involved in regular community service as part of a class. I participate in service-learning at an elementary school located within walking distance from campus, where I spend two to three hours every Monday. I would be lying if

I said my Mondays weren't exhausting, or I didn't have to work harder to stay on top of my homework after losing much of my afternoon. What I can truthfully say, however, is all these sacrifices are completely worth it. Each late night, all the lost time, all of the stress is entirely worth the time I get to spend with an enthusiastic and energetic group of elementary schoolers once a week. Ostensibly, I am there to help with their homework, or help teachers keep students under control. But what I actually end up doing is simply spending time with them, getting to know them as people, and, I hope, helping enrich their afternoons in some small way. Whether through an intense game of tag with the preschoolers, or what I would call being "affectionately mobbed" by a group of first graders who saw my sketchbook and asked to draw with me, I always come home from service-learning feeling incredibly fulfilled, content, and grateful for my opportunity

to serve.

Loyola's value of service can be just as impactful on a smaller scale, as well. Service becomes something that Loyola makes relevant to students from a career perspective, as something

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more than just part of direct community service.

Service comes to be a value that will become integrated into your way of life and career choices, allowing you to better support and work with those around you. The opportunities you are afforded at Loyola can help you in your classes, yes, as well as acting as an extracurricu-

lar project, but can also be allow you to understand your place in our world by opening you up to experiences you would not have had otherwise. Service at Loyola exists as more than just an abstract value, instead becoming integrated into the everyday lives and conduct of everyone on campus.

Loyola stresses many values that may be difficult to understand before you arrive. However, I assure you that each of these values is an integral part of the Loyola community, and can have profound and positive impacts on your college experience. Everyone at Loyola wants you to become the best possible version of yourself in every aspect of your life. They want you to succeed, but, more than that, they want you to thrive. And if you have chosen Loyola, these are the opportunities you will have—a chance to become a person for and with others, to strive for more.



A view of the part of the Quad, with pink blooms in the trees.