



A quintessential Loyola day with people lounging on the Quad. It's hard not to skip classes on days like that!

Oh! The Things You Can Do!

By Sophia Graney

The quintessential Loyola day is when the sun shines, beaming down warm temperatures, and everyone lounges around the Quad on blankets and in hammocks hanging from trees.

Perhaps a good chunk of those people laughing languidly on the grass skip class to lie outside, but their joy is infectious and no one denies that sitting in the sun feels better than sticking to a chair in a classroom.

These quintessential Loyola days number the beginning of Fall Semester, before the winter whisks away the sun, and at the end of Spring Semester, when summer steals us students back home. Sitting with my friends—my people—on the Quad when the sun is shining down is my most favorite thing, but how did they come to be my friends? Where did I find them? Looking back, I can only guess that most of my friends and the connections I have made thus far

have come from joining organizations and participating in various elements on campus.

Getting involved has enabled me to gain insight into the differing areas of the student body, and I gained friends from there. I knew that within my first few weeks on campus I needed to join activities that I would enjoy and be able to form connections through. Months later, those connections have flourished.

The Fall Activities Fair

During one of those warm sunshiny days in the beginning of the Fall Semester will forever and always be the Fall Activities Fair: a four-hour time slot where tables line the entire Quad, with plenty of students waiting for you to walk up and give them an ounce of attention where they will then launch into a spiel about why their club is the best.

Student Government Association. Taylor Swift Society. American Politics Club. Club Lacrosse. Club Hockey. Loyola E-Sports. Anything you could name or want or dream to join exists as a club at Loyola, full of students waiting for you to join. The entire Activities Fair is not far from some cheesy movie depicting the first day of college, especially when the sun is hot and multiple tables are playing music from speakers.

When I stepped out onto the Quad that day for the Fair, the table for the Student Government Association pulled my attention immediately. The entire aspect of the Fair is to get as many students joining as possible, but as I stood there listening to one of the Vice Presidents speak, I could not help but feel that this could be something I would be interested in. I took some of the free giveaways they had at the table and continued on, milling around the table-lined sidewalks, still thinking about what it would be like to join SGA.

Still, I continued to sign up for other clubs: the Pre-Law society, Climbing Club,



Climbing the wall!!!

One Love, and more. Some clubs are obviously much more relaxed and flexible, and others have more regular meetings each week. Regardless of the level of dedication each club required, I signed up for the ones that I would be most interested in, and that would provide me with the ability to connect to people with similar interests.

The Result

Flash forward a full semester: I've been part of SGA for a while now as an elected assembly member and am participating on the Executive Board of the club next school year in a director role; I've been rock climbing practically every day, am well established within the climbing club community, and am looking to get a job through the Fitness and Aquatics Center for next year; I've been helping develop the One Love Loyola club as a workshop facilitator and helping others spread the message the club is trying to share about how to love better.

Overall, I've gotten involved in multiple aspects of campus, and because of that I have had amazing opportunities and have made tons of connections with other students.

Of course, finding friends is never an easy task. It takes vulnerability to go out and try to connect with people, and in college vulnerability is a part of everyday life. Personally, when looking at these clubs to join, I signed up for the ones that I knew I would be most happy participating in. However, there was, of course, the nerve-racking idea that I wouldn't find anyone to be friends with. So, yes, I was definitely uncomfortable stepping into that first SGA meeting or going rock climbing by myself for the first time and having to ask random strangers questions, but because I put myself in that vulnerable position, I am all the better for it. Friends don't just appear. They are made by a willingness to put yourself on the line, share a bit about yourself, and put in the effort to develop a relationship.

Because of joining the Student Government Association, I can't walk through the Student Center without waving to someone who is also an assembly member, or without stopping to talk to one of the class presidents from one of the grades. Because of the climbing club, I have found a new hobby full of welcoming people that gives me an outlet outside of my dorm room and something that isn't doing just homework on a weeknight. Because of One Love, I'm able to share knowledge with people about how to love better and when to know a relationship is healthy.

In each of these organizations, I have found people I could sit with on the Quad when the weather is warm and the people I would have a table with during the Activities Fair.

Of course, friendships develop outside of joining a club, but by getting involved—in clubs, in an intramural sport, in plenty of activities—you begin to develop relationships and connections that last all four years of college. This involvement gives you opportunities to grow within that club and even give you positions of authority after enough years of participation.

Getting involved gives you something to do and gives a purpose greater than



The Quad on a warm and sunny afternoon. The sun was baking my shoulders.

“Getting involved gives you something to do and gives you a purpose greater than just going to class.”



The gorgeous cherry blossoms by my dorm building.

just going to class. It enables connections outside the ones you may find in a dorm hall and I know I'm not the only one who thinks this way.

I'm Not the Only One!

Ask anyone on campus and it seems as though they are involved in at least one thing. Mel Silberger, a junior at Loyola who is involved in many activities and clubs of Loyola including Student Government Association, working at the Fitness Center, the Evergreen Program, and the Honors Council, stated that her beginning in getting involved happened by joining "like eight clubs freshman year wanting to make friends."

Aidan Paulman, a freshman who is involved in various intramural and club sports and Outdoor Adventure Experience stated, "I just did" when asked why he joined. Lili Liberman, a sophomore who is involved in similar activities to Aidan says that all of the activities she's joined in her time here have "taken over [her] life in the best way possible." With all of this being said, involvement in activities and in clubs is something that is campus wide. Everyone wants to find their people and to grow—you just have to jump in and do it.

Jack Leary, a senior who is the president of the robotics club, works at the rock wall at the Fitness center, is part of the Evergreen program, and is a member of Omicron Delta Kappa (a leadership honors society), states that it's important to "commit to a few things, putting all your effort into those few things and see where it goes. Spreading yourself thin doesn't go anywhere."

Each of these students recognizes the importance of getting involved and spending time doing what you enjoy.

A Final Piece of Advice

Activities and clubs are not just resume builders or activities to write in an email signature. They are areas of involvement that give purpose beyond classes. College is exactly what you make of it—joining clubs, playing on an intramural sports team, or starting an activity brings joy that a good grade on a test can't bring. Joining and participating provides connections that might never have happened otherwise.

I never would know the people I know today if I didn't stop at those tables during the Activities Fair. Of course I was uncomfortable at first, but as Mel Silberger also said, "It's okay to be uncomfortable at times or be out of your comfort zone. That is the only way to grow."

I grew by participating, and by growing, I created and allowed connections to flourish. From those connections I have my people who I can sit with on blankets on the Quad, on the Humanities porch, in the Student Center. Wherever. Because I joined in on a couple of activities and clubs, I have developed one of my favorite reasons to be at Loyola: my wonderful friends.



A climbing trip with OAE! The rocks were super slippery that day!

"Commit to a few things, putting all your effort into those few things and see where it goes."



Climbing club! We had a climbing competition where I got third place!