

SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE UPDATE  
**PROMISE: EVERY XAVIER STUDENT WILL PARTICIPATE  
IN A STRUCTURED IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE**

*We are Xavier Musketeers.  
We are unique individuals who come together in the spirit of St. Ignatius,  
to learn together, to serve together  
and we will succeed in changing the world together.*

The Signature Experience Committee recommended an engaged learning promise that would guarantee that “all students participate in one or more engaged learning activity or other high impact learning practice during the course of their undergraduate studies.” The report also recommended that students participate in at least one structured immersive experience that engaged important issues facing diverse populations.

Students who seek out and engage immersive opportunities routinely demonstrate a personal transformation and deeper connection to our mission and their academic experience sooner than their classmates who miss out on such opportunities. By engaging in an immersive experience during the second or third year, students will be able to leverage these experiences to connect to other immersive, high-impact and engaged learning opportunities, including discernment retreats, undergraduate research, internships, as well as community-engaged and service-learning experiences.

Structured immersion provides students with an applied, high impact learning opportunity that will inspire, prepare and connect students to deeper and ongoing service and learning opportunities. By engaging diverse experiences, exploring difference, and reflecting on one’s place in the world, immersive experiences teach students to see the world with new eyes, develop critical skills for social analysis, find solidarity with those living on the margins, and cultivates a lasting commitment to social justice. Introducing Xavier students to the community that surrounds them in deeper, meaningful ways will lead to a more contextualized understanding of social justice issues and enhance learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

**Recommendation: A Structured Immersive Experience for All Students, integrated into the Curriculum**

The Signature Experience Committee recommends that Xavier University commit itself to the promise that all students participate in a structured immersive experience by the end of their third year.

The committee believes that the promise of a Structured Immersive Experience for all students is best achieved by developing a curricular option (immersive flag or CORE 299) that captures existing opportunities as well as incorporates new immersive experiences. Beginning their second year, students would work with their advisor, faculty, and staff to

identify an appropriate Immersive Experience culled from options readily identified by a flag within the CORE. These experiences, discussed below, could include:

1. An existing curricular Education Abroad or domestic immersion program;
2. Embedding service-learning or community-engaged research courses within major;
3. Converted co-curricular immersive experiences;
4. New Engaging Communities Immersive Experiences;

### **Leveraging New and Existing Education Abroad Programs**

One path that students could follow for a structured immersion is from the existing array of customized, immersive international experiences. Existing Education Abroad programs offered at Xavier are in depth immersive, credit bearing experiences largely designed and curated by Xavier Faculty or other University approved programs. These programs are widely available to all Xavier students and offer short term, semester, and year-long time frames, as well as some customization within the immersive experience.

For an overview, during the 2015-16 Academic year, 402 Xavier students took advantage of the following opportunities (By class - Freshman: 13; Soph: 151; Junior: 142; Senior 35).

Australia*	Chile	Costa Rica*
Czech Republic	Cuba*	France*
Germany	Guatemala*	India
Ireland*	Israel*	Italy (FYS, PPP)*
Japan	Lithuania*	Netherlands*
New Zealand	Nicaragua	Peru*
Poland*	South Africa*	South Korea
Spain*	Thailand*	United Kingdom*
Vietnam*	<i>*Xavier Faculty Led Programs</i>	

While Education Abroad experiences are now more accessible to students, permitting them to carry scholarships and aid for their immersion, the average student still incurs approximately \$3,500 in related out of pocket costs. A signature immersion option will drive interest in these existing opportunities for the most committed students, requiring some resources to increase capacity (e.g., staffing) but also assistance in filling the financial gap that limits those in need. The Committee recommends that additional funding be devoted to travel grants or scholarships that will make it possible for a greater number of students, particularly students with financial need, to participate in these long term experiences. For example, a 15- 25% increase in participation could be incentivized with a \$500, \$750, or \$1,000 stipend that over four years would increase participation by 100 students (Cost: \$50,000 - \$100,000). The committee believes that growing capacity and making these opportunities accessible for all students should be a top priority if the University's immersive experiences are truly "signature" to our engaged promise.

In addition to traditional study abroad programs, other credit bearing curricular experiences such as Xavier Expeditions (Colorado), and department-driven course immersions (HOCS 405 Occupational Justice II in Guatemala) contain all the crucial elements of an authentic immersive experience and would also fulfill a student's immersive core experience. Consideration and support should be given to increasing and supporting additional domestic curricular opportunities that are built into curriculum and designed, developed, and curated by Xavier faculty.

### **Community-Engaged and Service-Learning Courses Increase Opportunities**

Service learning - a credit-bearing educational experience wherein Xavier students participate in an organized service experience that meets identified community needs - is a pedagogy utilized across all three colleges and by 20 different departments. Faculty design courses in collaboration with communities that provide engaged learning experiences for their students and benefits for their community partners. These courses also offer another opportunity to increase capacity and interest in immersive experiences. For example, currently Occupational Therapy has both a domestic and international service learning immersion built into their curriculum; Sociology has introduced a community engaged research component into its Methods' course for all majors that has partnered with communities in the West End and Over-the-Rhine. Several departments leverage research and internships with nonprofits as part of their coursework as well. As part of the Signature Experience, the Committee notes that if scaled supported appropriately so that every department has the opportunity to design and develop an engaged component into their courses, every Xavier student would have an engaged experience through their major.

Building the capacity for individual departments, schools, and colleges to design and implement their own engaged learning opportunities can begin with leveraging and increasing the capacity of existing resources like the annual Academy for Community Engaged Faculty (Eigel), and Faculty Learning Committees (CTE). The Committee recommends that additional funding be earmarked to support and incentivize faculty and departments interested in embedding these high impact, engaged learning experiences within their major:

- The Committee proposes funding for 1-2 FLC's (\$10,000 each) for interested faculty to explore together how to incorporate existing immersions into their courses, or for faculty and staff interested in designing and facilitating an existing immersion experience. In addition, various Centers should be resourced to offer additional workshops, panels, and programs that support faculty and student fulfillment of the immersion core.
- The Committee proposes funding departmental grants (\$1,000-2,500) for faculty who want to incorporate engaged learning experiences for their majors through service learning course development, connectivity to existing immersive experiences, internships, or community engaged research; Funding can cover workshops, conference participation, or stipends for faculty who lead immersions and engaged experiences for their department.

## **Building on Existing High-Impact Co-Curricular Experiences**

Previous experiences with other programs and the reaction of student focus groups suggests that an immersion experience embedded in the curriculum would ensure greater “buy-in” and participation from students, therefore an immersion core component will require that we ramp up opportunities to meet student demand and interest. The good news is there are a number of existing, robust co-curricular immersive experiences developed by faculty and staff that can be harnessed to meet demand and help us fulfill our immersion promise. In addition, building several new domestic experiences with a set of established criteria will increase capacity over the next five years to fully meet student demand. This “menu” of options will also enable advisors to support and guide students to the appropriate immersive experience, providing a truly “signature” experience for each student.

Under the proposed “CORE 299, the following co-curricular immersive experiences could be leveraged:

1. Alternative Breaks (various domestic and international) (current capacity 200);
2. Interfaith Medical Mission Trip to Guatemala (12);
3. Summer Service Internship (various Greater Cincinnati) (20);
4. Dorothy Day Immersions\* (DDI)(40).

Alternative Breaks, the Interfaith Medical Mission Trip and the Summer Service Internship are campus fixtures that offer co-curricular immersion and/or dense service learning. The Dorothy Day Immersions offer an opportunity to expand and support a newer model for immersion. In 2015, the CFJ began week long “Dorothy Day Immersions” (DDI)\* to Ferguson (MO), New York City, Washington D.C., and New Orleans that occur the week before Spring term has commenced. During these “Community Immersions,” participants spend five days engaging in constructive dialogue around issues of race, economic disparity, and religious difference, and have present their learnings and stories of personal growth at the Martin Luther King Jr. Week Kick-off event upon their return. These programs rely solely on CFJ staff for design, coordination, and implementation.

To build out capacity for CORE 299 immersive experiences, the Committee recommends incorporating and supporting four “Community Immersions” in Year 1, and funding the addition of two to three additional experiences in Year 2. Additional trips should be collaborative in designation and design, and include input from staff, faculty and community partners. In addition, these immersion trips create a potential opportunity to leverage our relationship with AJCU schools in designated cities for assistance with accommodations, identifying and connecting with community partners, and recruiting supportive faculty and student facilitators. Suggested cities that are synergistic with the intent and compatible with the logistics of DDI trips include: Chicago (Loyola), Cleveland (John Carroll), Detroit (Detroit Mercy), and Baltimore (Loyola Maryland).

## Engage Cincinnati

The Committee recommends an additional immersive opportunity be added that leverages our own assets and provides an opportunity for a large number of students to engage communities of difference in day long

“Xavier Engages Cincinnati” would be offered concurrently with existing Community Immersions as well as other strategic times before, after, and during the academic year as needed (e.g., Orientation week, Fall Break, DDI winter break trips or during the May intersession.) Similar to Community Immersions, this week long immersion would leverage Cincinnati’s neighborhoods, issues, and assets, offering an affordable, replicable option that would ramp up capacity (20 x 5 opportunities each year = 100) and be responsive to student feedback and interest. Because logistics and lodging would be more simplified, each XEC trip would cost \$150/student vs. \$400/student for external community immersions.

Here are some sample Engage Cincinnati immersion themes.

<b>THEME</b>	<b>COMMUNITY + PARTNER</b>	<b>POTENTIAL CAMPUS CONVENOR</b>
Health Inequality	West End, St. Vincent DePaul	HSA, Nursing, Education, Center for Faith and Justice
Environmental Justice	Equinox Farm, Meigs County, Ohio	Sustainability Faculty/Fellow, Office of Sustainability
Food Insecurity/Poverty	Avondale, Urban League + ACDC, Gabriel’s Place	College of Business/Economics/Human Resources/Sedler Center
Examination of Race in Cincinnati	Walnut Hills, Downtown NURFC/ Beecher Stowe House	History, Center for Diversity & Inclusion
Affordable Housing	Evanston/Over the Rhine, OTRCH, ECC	PPP, Eigel Center/CBI
Immigration/Migrant Populations	Carthage, Su Casa	Theology/Modern Languages, Center for International Education
Social Entrepreneurship	Over the Rhine, Cincinnati Cooks/Centrifuse	Management/Entrepreneurship, CFI
Youth Homelessness	GLSEN, Lighthouse, Human Rights Campaign	GDST, Social Worker, Center for Innovation, Center for Diversity & Inclusion

## **Credit or Non-Credit Options**

While the Committee recommends that all immersive experiences be identified by a Flag, and catalogued and incorporated into the Core, there are two opportunities to convert noncredit-bearing experiences to credit bearing with interest and support from faculty.

1. Departments could allow students to add one credit hour to an existing course for participation in a qualified immersion (for example, a political science course globalization might participate in the Engage Cincinnati One-Day Immersion on religious tolerance and immigration). Students who select any of the referenced existing or new co-curricular trips would register for CORE 299, and blend their classroom reading, research, and written reflection with their chosen immersive experience. Each immersion should offer a critical examination of social justice issues introduced through the course and offer an opportunity to reflect on how the course relates to issues explored and the population or communities identified in the immersion.
2. Recruit and incentivize faculty across diverse disciplines to develop 1-3 versions of CORE 299 that would provide content particular to specific immersive current co-curricular experiences (Alternative Breaks, Community Immersions, Interfaith Medical Mission Trip, etc. ). Students who register for these immersive experiences would earn credit for 299 by completing the faculty designed module. This module would have readings both before and after, as well as reflection.

## ***Enhance the Road Through Xavier Dashboard to Customize Immersive Opportunities***

Students will learn about and identify which immersive experience best fits their passions, schedules, and vocational interests by leveraging The Road Through Xavier dashboard. Data collected from the student's preferences (and potentially course schedules) will allow enhanced advising and facilitate earlier discussions pointing toward immersive experiences that complement the student's preferences, major/minor requirements, and schedule.

## **Outcomes**

Through immersion students will encounter discomfort when confronted with difference but provided a positive method for moving through discomfort, to recognize their own bias, and be able to respond to difficult critical questions about the social justice issues involved. Qualitatively, each experience will refine students' critical reflection and communication skills, and provide a heightened sense of social responsibility and togetherness tied to our University mission through a series of interactive and relational experiences. By contemplating the world around them students will learn to see the community in solidarity and as a teacher with a valuable voice and expertise that complements their Xavier education.

<b>Structured Immersion Outcomes</b>	<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Outcomes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodate 90% participation or approximately 1,000 students each year.</li> <li>• Qualitatively, each experience will refine critical reflection and communication skills, and provide a heightened sense of social responsibility and togetherness tied to our mission through a series of interactive and relational experiences.</li> <li>• Each participant will be offered multiple perspectives on the issue in focus and at the conclusion will view the community as teacher with a valuable voice and expertise that complements their Xavier education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to recognize discomfort when confronted with difference.</li> <li>• Students will be able to identify a positive method of moving through this discomfort.</li> <li>• Students will be able to apply the concept of personal bias to a particular social justice issue.</li> <li>• Students will be able to respond to difficult critical questions about social problems.</li> </ul>

<b>Student Participation in Immersion, 2017-2023 (6 Years)</b>						
	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
Current DDI Immersions	30	30	30	30	30	30
Education Abroad	400	400	400	400	400	400
Xavier Expeditions or other Short term Immersion Course	20	20	20	20	20	20
Co-Curricular Immersion (Guatemala Medical Mission)	15	15	15	15	15	15
Alternative Breaks	200	200	200	200	200	200
Engaged Learning Courses	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>STUDENTS IN EXISTING PROGAMS</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>665</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL STUDENTS SERVED</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
Additional Students Served in Week Long Structured City Immersions	0	60	75	90	90	90
Additional Education Abroad Students	0	50	100	100	150	150
New Engage Cincinnati Week-Long Immersion	0	15	30	30	30	30
New Engage Cincinnati One-Day Immersions (25 students/per)	25	100	100	100	100	100
New Xavier Expeditions & domestic short-term immersion courses	0	20	40	40	40	40
Engaged-Learning Courses	0	75	150	225	300	300
<b>ADDITIONAL STUDENTS</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>710</b>
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>1375</b>	<b>1375</b>



### Projected Budget, 2017-2023 (6 Years)

ANTICIPATED EXPENSES	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
<b>ENGAGE CINCINNATI – Week Long</b>						
Engage Cincinnati Week Long: Cost Per Student \$200 Cincinnati/\$400 various communities	\$0	\$27,000	\$42,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000
Faculty/Staff/Community Partner Stipends for Community Immersion (\$2,000/immersion)	\$0	\$10,000	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Engage Cincinnati Wk. Long Immersions Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$58,000</b>	<b>\$74,000</b>	<b>\$74,000</b>	<b>\$74,000</b>
<b>ENGAGE CININNATI – 1-Day</b>						
Programming Expenses, \$500/immersion	\$500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Faculty, Staff & Partner Stipends	\$1,125	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500
Meals	\$900	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
Bus and Van Transportation	\$440	\$1,760	\$1,760	\$1,760	\$1,760	\$1,760
Student Engagement Grants	\$1,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
<b>Engage Cincinnati 1-Day Immersions Total</b>	<b>\$3,965</b>	<b>\$15,860</b>	<b>\$15,860</b>	<b>\$15,860</b>	<b>\$15,860</b>	<b>\$15,860</b>
<b>STUDENT SUPPORT</b>						
Funding Support for Low Income Students	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Education Abroad Schol./Grants for Students	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
<b>Student Support Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>
<b>ENGAGED LEARNING</b>						
Faculty Engaged Learning Development Grants	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Programming Support for Immersive Courses	\$0	\$2500	\$5000	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$15,000
FLC: Immersion	\$10,000	\$10,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Engaged Learning Courses Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Professional Staff Member Salary + Benefits	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
<b>IMMERSION TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$112,930</b>	<b>\$271,720</b>	<b>\$288,720</b>	<b>\$325,720</b>	<b>\$340,720</b>	<b>\$330,720</b>