XAVIER UNIVERSITY
EIGEL CENTER



PROFILES IN ENGAGED LEARNING

CONNECTING CURRICULUM AND COMMUNITY





COMMUNITY
thrives with creative, interesting and innovative partnerships.

ENGAGED
faculty, students and staff provide real value to community partners.

LEARNING
is mutual and involves the contributions of faculty, students and our partners.

At Xavier, service is an embedded part of learning and is central to our mission. The Eigel Center collaborates with faculty and communities to create learning opportunities by integrating service and engagement with robust academic curricula.

Please enjoy our stories of tangible results and rewards—not just for faculty and students, but also for the community we live in and the university we support.

—Sean Rhiney, Director

CONNECTING CURRICULUM AND SERVICE WITH COMMUNITY

The Eigel Center supports collaborative community-based learning experiences that prepare our graduates for a world that is increasingly diverse, complex, and interdependent. Leveraging engaged faculty and community assets, the Center guides the development and integration of meaningful immersive and service learning courses that bridge classrooms to communities, providing a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources.

More than service simply accompanying the curriculum, engaged learning integrates service and academics. It creates a community-based experience, effective with virtually any field of study. For us, changing the world for the better is more than a wish: It's a course outcome.



STORY OF THEIR LIVES

ORGANIZATION: Cincinnati COOKS!
ACADEMIC COURSE: Writing for Media (COMM 206)
XAVIER FACULTY: Wendy Maxian, PhD
Associate Professor and Chair,
Department of Communication Arts

In our fragmented media landscape, communications strategy is increasingly turning to the idea of storytelling as a way to meaningfully connect with audiences. Cincinnati COOKS! is a free, 10-week culinary job-training program for under- and unemployed individuals that teaches the mechanics of working in a commercial kitchen, in addition to life skills.



Professor Maxian's students were provided an overview of the COOKS! program and their communication needs. After learning the basics of interviewing and conducting additional research, students then traveled downtown to meet COOKS! participants and conduct initial, on-site interviews. Information gathered during the secondary research stage and the initial interview served as a repository for classroom activities, as well as a platform for discussion.

While learning principles of story development and media writing, students dissected the information and they proposed narratives. Once they developed outlines, students returned to COOKS! for an in-depth interview with participants and created original content for COOKS!, including full-length feature stories, promotional video scripts and brochures to help promote the program.



"As much as we teach our students the purpose and power of writing, nothing enhances that learning better than working with a client. The students were eager to work with an organization that benefits not only its clients but also the greater Cincinnati community."

-WENDY MAXIAN





SIGN OF THE TIMES

ORGANIZATION: American Sign Museum
ACADEMIC COURSE: Early Childhood Education (EDC 335)
XAVIER FACULTY: Teresa Young, PhD, Director, School of Education

The American Sign Museum is a place for the community to explore the history and technology behind signage. But it also offered an opportunity for Teresa Young's early childhood education students to collaborate with museum staff to better leverage their extensive international collection and significant history.

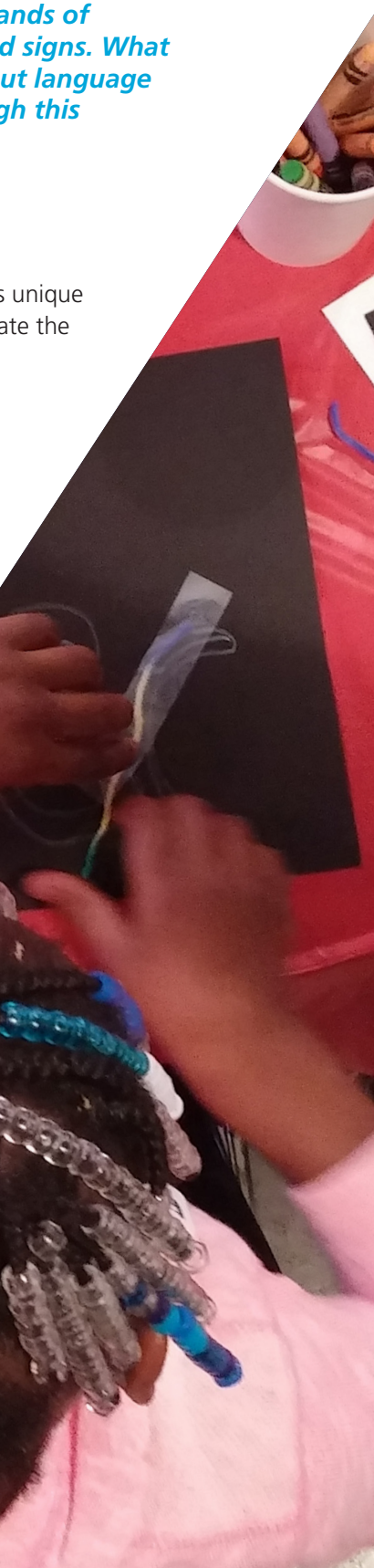
> ***The partnership with the American Sign Museum provided an opportunity for students to understand how they can use community resources to teach the curriculum in Early Childhood Education.***
>
> **-TERESA YOUNG**

> ***Imagine a place filled with thousands of brightly lit and intricately detailed signs. What could a child learn and apply about language and literacy while walking through this neon wonderland?***

Professor Young engaged students in exploring the museum's unique collection and uncovering opportunities to use signs to illustrate the objectives of the core early childhood education curriculum.

Over two semesters, students developed a collection of lesson plans that could be utilized by visiting teachers and classrooms to better explore the museum's historical and cultural contributions.

Leveraging a Greater Cincinnati Foundation Learning Link grant, Young's class brought 30 K-3 students from Evanston Academy to the museum to test out the specially designed curriculum. Young's students executed the lesson plans, read aloud with the children about signs, toured the museum and helped the students create their own signs.



WHAT THEY'RE MADE OF

ORGANIZATION: Crayons to Computers
ACADEMIC COURSE: Introduction to Making (MAKE 101)
XAVIER FACULTY: Gary Lewandowski, PhD, Professor, Department of Computer Science

Crayons to Computers (C2C) is about more than just supplies, be they analog or digital. Add in some creative thinking, and much can be accomplished. Working with the education nonprofit, Gary Lewendowski introduced students to human-centered design principles and design thinking—and provided them with experience in research, ideation, pitching ideas, developing prototypes, user testing and digital-fabrication techniques.

> ***"We could not achieve the course objectives without this semester-long project. Students have their ideas really tested: The prototypes are critiqued by staff at Crayons to Computers, and the usability testing occurs with actual students. When the product shows up on the shelves at Crayons, students have a portfolio item to show off to potential employers."***
>
> **-GARY LEWANDOWSKI**



Since 1997, Crayons to Computers has provided teachers with $145 million worth of free supplies for classrooms in underserved schools. In addition to pencils, paper and notebooks, C2C also develops learning activities from donations of excess materials that were destined for landfills—like ice cream tubs, cake-decorator rings, tennis ball containers and plastic trays.

The activities are produced through C2C's Crafts with Conviction program, a service program for those incarcerated in Ohio correctional facilities. Lewandowski's students are integrated right into this process, collaborating with C2C to design new activities and materials for classrooms utilizing recycled materials. Along the way, they learn about C2C's mission to bridge the gap between families in need and education.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

ORGANIZATION: Beacon of Hope Business Alliance, Nehemiah Manufacturing
ACADEMIC COURSE: First Year Seminar: Specters of Trauma (THEO)
XAVIER FACULTY: Hee-Kyu Heidi Park, PhD
Assistant Professor, Theology Department

Spectrality is about the history of trauma haunting the present. It's a theological concept, but it's also a societally tangible one. Just take the challenges of re-entry. Beacon of Hope is a coalition of business committed to hiring second-chance citizens—those who have been incarcerated, homeless, or out of the workforce for an extended time. Typically, if these workers can get hired at all, they're trapped in a minimum-wage cycle, never able to climb the ladder or find leadership opportunities. Beacon of Hope and its partners like Nehemiah Manufacturing, however, have seen that second-chance employees are very dedicated—all the more when they're out in a role where they can find meaning.



Park practices pastoral theology: building a theology from lived experience rather than starting with a dogma that is indiscriminately applied. And her students had the chance to first-hand understand how that works in their work with Nehemiah. Two employees, one in marketing and one in case management, came to visit her class. Then the class toured Nehemiah and interviewed several second-chance employees, ultimately compiling their stories into a narrative for their website about their background, finding Nehemiah, and how their lives have changed. And the spectrality part—how the trauma haunts the people? "That was clear for my students," says Park.

BONUS: CHECK OUT THE BEACON OF HOPE VIDEO CREATED BY XAVIER DIGITAL FILM MAJORS: **xavier.edu/beacon**

"I've always criticized education systems for not showing the practicality of the lessons given. However, because of the hands-on experience we were given, and being able to get the personal accounts of these second chance persons, I can vividly recall my experience."

-ERIC LANG, CLASS OF 2020

"I used the Korean War and the American criminal justice system as two case studies. I wanted them to have some concrete experience of encountering the people who had been in prison. To have those students hear their story, think about their story, construct a story that's communicating the essence of transformation—that in itself is a theological work. I think more than the books, that interaction itself was so much more powerful for them."

-HEIDI PARK



HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE

ORGANIZATION: Music Resource Center Cincinnati
ACADEMIC COURSE: Social Media Strategies (COMM 433)
XAVIER FACULTY: Leslie Rasmussen, PhD

Social media is a growing avenue, in most every field, for engaging and mobilizing the public. When it comes to communications and marketing, you'd be hard-pressed to find a job description that doesn't ask for fluency in using it. So it makes sense that Rasmussen would want to effectively prepare her students, and she knew that a client-based, hands-on project, rather than textbook regurgitation, was the way to do it. And she wanted to do something that fit with Xavier's Jesuit mission and benefited a community organization.

Evanston's Music Resource Center offers kids ages 7 to 12 private music lessons (and rehearsal space) and teaches them skills like digital production/recording, multi-track recording, and radio production—for $2 a month. The idea is to instill in the kids a sense of empowerment and accomplishment, and to help them connect with each other and with themselves. Rasmussen's students visited MRC several times and the staff came to them, much like an actual client relationship would work, and they developed a social media strategy for them.

> ***Social Media Strategies is a fun class. We can pretend our clients are Nike, Apple, etc. and do all sorts of things, but when we actually connect with a client, assess needs, target audiences and develop realistic plans, students actually learn more and in a realistic way. I hope students learn all of that in addition to what it means to create purposeful content, regardless of type, rooted in passion.***
>
> **-LESLIE RASMUSSEN**

> ***It allowed them to work with a client, understand their needs, make adjustments, create content and pitch work. But, aside from that, students were able to get a greater understanding of community issues outside of their world. They developed a passion for what MRC stands for and its initiatives, and that was reflected in the quality of work they created. It elevated the learning and motivated students tremendously.***
>
> **-LESLIE RASMUSSEN**

IMPACT ON LEARNING
STUDENT REFLECTIONS

" Our experience focused on Norwood, specifically, and illustrates how we, Xavier University, can build better and stronger relationships with Norwood residents and the Norwood community as a whole."

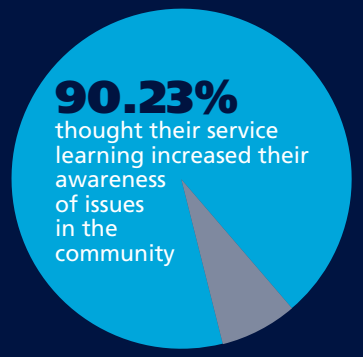
"My service-learning experience felt like a very hands-on, value-driven, experiential learning experience."

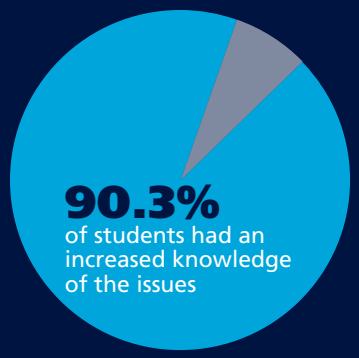
"I liked feeling like my work actually meant something and would be implemented."

"I really enjoyed volunteering and thought my service site, Academy of World Languages, offered a unique service-learning experience."

"It was great generating creative ideas for the main purpose of helping others."

"I liked that we were able to take a step into their lives and try to connect what we were learning in class and how we could apply it to their organization. That made the topics real and relevant to us and the community."







It made me realize how important it is to advocate for people whose lives are impacted by circumstances they did not choose."

"It really opened my eyes, gave good life experience and was extremely enjoyable."

"I also loved learning about a culture that was very different from my own and seeing how occupational therapy can be useful toward this population."

IMPACT ON LEARNING
FACULTY REFLECTIONS

"Doing research and using archives made the issues much clearer to the students. They were discovering the connections and injustices themselves, rather than simply reading about them. The interviews gave students a more nuanced and personal perspective on the issues, one textured by personal stories and histories. By reading interdisciplinary works on racial integration and urban sprawl, students connected their research on Cincinnati to larger patterns found throughout the U.S."



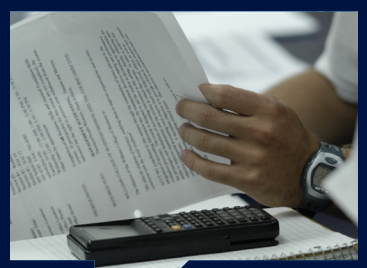
Gabriel Gottlieb, Philosophy

"By being able to apply what they have learned to the real world during the semester, I hope students who have come through my class are able to retain and use the information in their lives beyond Xavier. I want it to make them more understanding and more effective parents, teachers, therapists, or whatever they choose to do and be in the world!"



Jen Gibson, Psychology

"I believe that service learning is essential to an education and feel lucky to have had the opportunity to integrate it in this course. (My students) gained a deeper understanding of (non profit) accounting and gained an appreciation that they can use their accounting skills to go out and help nonprofits do better on the financial side right from the start."



Tim Miller, Accounting

IMPACT ON LEARNING
FROM OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

"The refugee resettlement agency is grateful for the engaged and interested group of students. They had a meaningful opportunity to meet with recently arrived refugee families to hear their stories and celebrate their trials and triumphs."

"**Crayons to Computers continually benefits because of the creativity, innovation, and connection via products designed by students now distributed in our Teacher Free Store. We've had at least 10 items developed by the students hit the shelves at Crayons, we value the distributed total close to $20,000 in activities!**"

"Our Academy of World Languages students loved having Xavier's international students in their classes helping them. They are welcome here anytime."



COMMUNITY PARTNER

EMBRACING EVANSTON ACADEMY

The history of Evanston reflects the dynamics of an urban community that for decades has been faced with daunting challenges—from the construction of I-71, which cut through and essentially eliminated Evanston's historic business district, to shifting demographics and economic and social stresses. Evanston today is a proud neighborhood of promise. It's also Xavier's neighbor, and it's become a vital partner in building a better community through engaged learning.

Evanston Academy, a neighborhood school, brings that same commitment to outstanding education and long-term community building. It's this collaborative spirit that has meant nearly all—90%—of the academy's students have had contact with, and support from, someone affiliated with Xavier:

Xavier faculty, in collaboration with the Eigel Center, have created a number of service-learning courses to address Evanston's needs and opportunities.

Occupational Therapy majors assist students in written and alternate forms of communication, controlling their behavior, organizational skills and working independently. As part of their service-learning requirement, OT students also assist primary and intermediate Autism Units at Evanston, working one-on-one with students who face challenges in and out of the classroom.

Psychology majors support Evanston's students through tutoring sessions, enrichment activities and facilitating group discussions that help children talk about emotional stressors. Ongoing communication between faculty, students and teachers sheds additional light on behaviors that affect the mental health or academic performance of students.

Each semester, education majors complete their field experience hours at Evanston, observing classroom culture and environments, tutoring individual students and assisting with make-up work. Volunteers engage in every aspect of school operation, providing classroom and health-room help, one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, and organizing special events and extracurricular activities.

THE RESULTS?

Last year, Evanston received a "A" rating from the State of Ohio, one of the only neighborhood schools to obtain this level of academic excellence.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

1,620

STUDENTS INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

AS REPORTED IN 2017-18

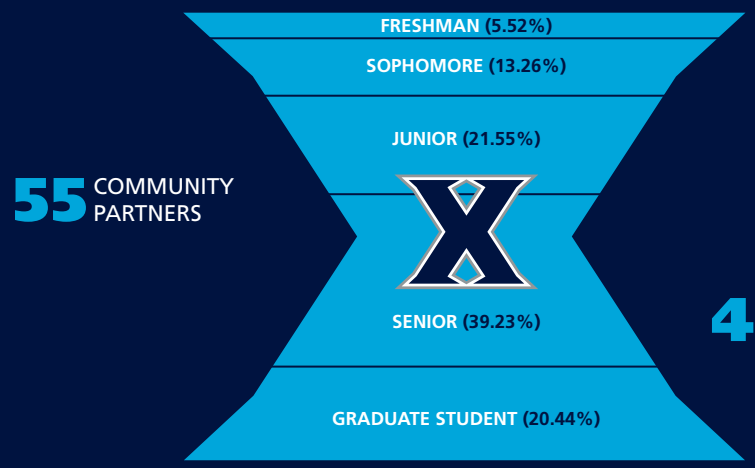


22 DEPARTMENTS OFFER SERVICE LEARNING

INCLUDING:

- Accounting
- Communication Arts
- Art
- Biology
- Computer Science
- History
- Marketing
- Mathematics
- Finance
- Health Services Admnistration
- Management and Entrepreneurship
- Occupational Therapy
- Philosophy, Politics and the Public
- Psychology
- School of Education
- Social Work
- Theology

PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE LEARNING BY CLASS



55 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

46 DIFFERENT MAJORS



198
Courses That Integrate Community Service



In 2017, US News invited University presidents, chief academic officers and deans of admissions to nominate "stellar examples" of eight academic programs offered by undergraduate institutions that experts agree are key to student success. Xavier University was recognized as one of 23 schools nationally for Excellence in Service Learning Course offerings. Other notable schools on this list include Cornell, Duke, Stanford, University of Michigan, Notre Dame, and Vanderbilt. Xavier was the only school in Ohio.

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