HERE, WE BUILD THE FUTURE BY GIVING BACK
Welcome to the first issue of Insights for 2020. As I write this letter, all of our lives have been upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. If anything, this crisis has underscored the essential role we all play in establishing and maintaining our shared well-being and reminded us of the critical need to support one another and give back to our communities.

Last year, we chose, perhaps serendipitously, to dedicate this issue to the theme of giving back—especially the ways in which our alumni, friends, faculty and students give their time, talents and material gifts to support others.

The plans to take our culture of giving to the next level. The blueprint on the next page shows our vision for a robust partnership that allows our alumni to contribute dynamically to the success of LAS students and programs, while also allowing us to recognize and celebrate your achievements and commitment to making the world a better place.

**ALUMNI RECOGNITION**

Our new Honors Society, which is composed of leaders from our Advisory Board, looks forward to inaugurating our first alumni awards series for Distinguished and Outstanding Alumni as soon as we can come together again. Our goal is to celebrate the notable achievements by LAS alumni in their careers and service, and, by doing so, to identify them as role models for future generations.

**ALUMNI EVENTS**

The college is working to bring you LAS's first Alumni Symposium, where we will feature presentations and alumni roundtables.

**ALUMNI MENTORSHIP**

One of the most powerful ways that alumni can give back to the college is to mentor current students. Over the coming year, we will be expanding our current engagement through Alumni Connections, by which you can connect with students as mentors, work with faculty and contribute to projects nested in many of our classes.

**ALUMNI PHILANTHROPY**

Finally, we will be asking our alumni in a position to make a financial gift to LAS to become Alumni Supporters. Through these gifts, we can develop new programs aligned with pressing needs, support students in need of scholarships and enhance our commitment to the experiential liberal arts across the curriculum. I know that DePaul's Vincentian tradition of compassionate, active engagement will stand us all in good stead in the coming year. The liberal arts have empowered you, and we hope you will continue to help us deliver that gift of empowerment to our students.

Be safe and well, and, as always, may the liberal arts be with you.

Guillermo Vásquez de Velasco, Dean
Honors Program

HOMECOMING

Lance Pelletier comes back to the Honors Program as an honored guest

Having grown up in the small town of North Conway, N.H., Lance Pelletier (English ’06) knew he wanted to attend a university in a big city but with the intimacy of a smaller program.

DePaul’s Honors Program was the perfect fit. “I didn’t want to get lost in a class that was bigger than the town I grew up in,” he says. “The Honors Program offered leadership opportunities, small classroom sizes, individualized instruction and Chicago as the larger classroom. All of that really spoke to me, and it seemed like a really awesome opportunity.”

Nearly 15 years after graduating, Pelletier returned to DePaul as the featured speaker for the annual Honors Speaker Series on Oct. 25, 2019. An attorney based in Seattle, he recently argued and won a case before the U.S. Supreme Court on Native American treaty rights.

“This is an example of my highest hopes for the honors students—to use knowledge in the service of others in a way that changes the world,” says Martha Martinez-Firestone, associate professor of sociology and director of the Honors Program. “And he does all of this with humility and respect for the dignity of others.”

A Powerful Time

The sun suddenly poked out of the clouds the moment Pelletier arrived at DePaul for the new student open house. It was a good sign.

For the next four years, Pelletier lapped up everything: his studies, his relationship with students and faculty, and the chance to explore the city. As one of the first members of Honors Student Government, he served as vice president in 2004–05 and president in 2005–06. A Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) member, he was also recognized as a leader and outstanding graduate by the Chicago “Fire Training Corps.”

For Connor Druhan, a senior majoring in jazz studies and English who plans on attending law school, Pelletier’s talk was inspiring. “The thing that stood out for me as an English major and someone from the Honors Program is how his discussion of the case was grounded in what we already do here,” he explains. “A lot of the work in this case is historical work, such as using primary sources for evidence,” he says.

But Pelletier also went further, sharing what it felt like to argue before the Supreme Court, his deep appreciation for and interactions with the Yakama people and how his LAS degree has given him the foundation he needed to succeed.

“It was wonderful to come back to talk to and see this community again, and see how much the Honors Program has grown.”

The Power of the Liberal Arts

Pelletier acknowledges that his Army experience was difficult and often frustrating, but he appreciates how it offered him an opportunity for growth. “DePaul prepared us with problems, but taught us to solve them and put us in a position to succeed. The Army was a completely different experience. [In Afghanistan] we faced problems that were incredibly challenging, that had never been solved before. Add to this the fact that we were living far away from home and learning a culture and a language not our own,” he says.

After completing his service in 2011, Pelletier received his JD degree from the University of Washington in 2014. He clerked for Washington State Supreme Court Justice Charlie Wiggins and then joined the firm Stokes Lawrence, which represented a Yakama Nation elder in the 2018 case Washington State Dept. of Licensing v. Cougar Den, Inc.

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“Changing the culture doesn’t happen overnight. It happens very strategically.”
–Maria Arias

 credility and helping people understand that it’s not about just hitting a number. It’s about creating a culture of inclusion,” Arias says.

After years of living in a commuter marriage—her husband worked at AT&T and the couple, who have five children between them, lived in different cities and saw each other on weekends—the couple retired and settled in Denver.

Only Arias didn’t really retire. Instead, she launched her own consulting business specializing in diversity and inclusion. She also serves as the head of Law School... Yes We Can, a diversity pipeline program for low-income college students who want to attend law school.

For Arias, diversity and inclusion for diverse communities is her life’s work.

“My vision is that my daughters won’t have to go through what I went through. That my sons are more aware of the issues that working women face. That leaders are open, and that, most importantly, individuals in positions of power understand that sharing power and bringing people along isn’t going to diminish theirs, but only enhance theirs and their bottom line,” she says.

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What Must Be Done?

A unique Honors Program seminar tackles the wicked problem of homelessness from many perspectives

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Widmer says. But their administrative duties often prevent them from doing either. So, he thought, what if they all taught the same class?

Such was the seed that launched a novel Honors Program seminar that brought together the deans of all 10 colleges and schools to teach a single course, “Wicked Problems and Multidisciplinary Strategic Thinking: The Homelessness Issue.”

The 11-week course taught in the spring of 2019 drew students from six of DePaul’s colleges, 20 in all, with 18 different majors ranging from animation and accountancy to Art, Architecture, and Urban Planning. For their final projects, the students worked together to create case studies offering real-life solutions and suggestions for tackling homelessness in Chicago. In addition to its prevalence—8,324 people experienced homelessness in 2017, according to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless—the subject of homelessness was chosen because it qualifies as “a wicked problem.”

“Homelessness was described as a ‘wicked problem’ in the course description because its multidisciplinary complexity makes it not only systemic, but also fluid,” Vásquez de Velasco says. “Wicked problems are difficult to address and certainly not within the field of a specific discipline. There are problems and situations where we need to pool the knowledge base and expertise of many professionals with many areas of expertise.”

At the beginning of the course, staff from DePaul’s Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) and the Depaul USA Dax Program, the latter of which works to end homelessness among college students, helped frame the problem. They also showcased international cities that have created policy around the issue of homelessness for student groups to use as case studies. These cities were Medicine Hat, Canada; London; Johannesburg, South Africa; Delhi; and Helsinki.

Examining a multilayered problem such as homelessness from multiple perspectives enabled students to embrace its complexity.

“Courses like this help us promote both the model of project-based learning and collaboration between our different colleges,” says Vásquez de Velasco. “We talk about the importance of collaboration, but academic silos get in the way. We cannot address wicked problems from a disciplinary perspective; it has to be multidisciplinary. Having all the deans of a university teach together is unprecedented and is evidence that at DePaul we can bridge between our silos, we can collaborate and, most importantly, we can teach others to collaborate.”

The unique nature of the seminar also enabled each dean to approach the topic from his or her particular area of expertise. For Vásquez de Velasco, who has a doctoral degree in architecture, that meant looking at it through the lens of systems and design thinking, while John Culbert, dean of The Theatre School, developed his lesson around a play about homeless youth, “Polaroid Stories,” by Naomi Iizuka. Ronald Caltabiano, dean of the School of Music, started off his class by playing the Phil Collins song “Another Day in Paradise,” told from the point of view of someone who observes a man crossing the street to ignore a homeless woman.

Other projects proposed steps to prevent youth homelessness in Chicago, identifying and refurbishing vacant buildings owned by the city to incentivizing Chicago businesses to play a role in ending homelessness. The Dean’s seminar continued remotely during the shelter-at-home period with a new topic: urban violence.

Having all the deans of a university teach together is unprecedented and is evidence that at DePaul we can collaborate and teach others to collaborate.”

—Guillermo Vásquez de Velasco

To see some of the student projects, please visit bit.ly/LASHonors.
Rooted
DePaul’s Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies program celebrates its 10th anniversary

Yolibeth Sandoval came to DePaul University to study journalism, but she quickly realized she wanted to do more than just tell others’ stories. Her advisor guided Sandoval to a Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies (PJC) course after hearing about her passions for social justice and community service. The class, and ultimately the program, clicked for Sandoval, helping her chart her course in life.

“...the class opened my eyes to what more I can do,” says Sandoval, who will graduate from the PJC program, also called PAX, in 2020. “One of the main messages of the PAX program that got across to me is, ‘How are you going to be of service to people? It challenges us to think about what we can do with our own hands, at our own risk, for our own community.’”

Sandoval already takes these teachings to heart by working with the International Indigenous Youth Council and Semillas y Raíces, a North Lawndale organization that focuses on restorative justice and youth outreach. She aims to continue doing similar work after graduation.

The lessons Sandoval learned about human rights and social justice constitute the foundation of PJC’s mission. Launched 10 years ago, PJC explores the root causes of violence and ways to resolve diverse conflicts peacefully and justice. Its faculty strive to impart strategies of nonviolence and conflict resolution in interpersonal, intrapersonal, cultural, national and international matters, says Philosophy Professor Mary Jane Larabee, who helped develop the program and led it until 2019.

“It’s not just about peace and peacekeepers. It’s about the fundamental need for human beings to deal with their conflicts in ways that are creative and resolve them without harming each other,” Larabee says. “Peace building, creative intervention in conflict and social justice are part of our mission when there is violence from war, social discrimination and oppression.”

Students learn inside and outside the classroom, studying theoretical and historical perspectives and engaging in experiential learning through internships, volunteering and study abroad. After graduation, they apply PJC tenets in numerous fields, including law, social work, healthcare and global human rights. LAS began offering a Peace, Conflict Resolution, and Social Justice Studies minor in 2003, led by Religious Studies Associate Professor Tom O’Brien. It began with two courses—a community-based service learning course and a tools course—and about 10 students. Larabee took the helm in 2006, steering faculty through the process of creating the PIC major, which was finally approved in 2009.

Today, PJC students pick from a minor, major or combined program with several master’s degree options, including nonprofit leadership and refugee and forced migration studies. PJC is thriving, with more than 100 students working toward such degrees, says director Susana Martinez, an associate professor of Spanish and Latin American literature who has been affiliated with PJC for more than a decade.

The PAX program challenges us to think about what we can do with our own hands, at our own risk, for our own community.
—YOLIBETH SANDOVAL

Peace, Justice and Conflict

“...we have amazing faculty and adjunct instructors who are real practitioners,” Martinez says. “They are doing justice work in the community, and that sets up partnerships so that our students can take the courses’ content and see how it applies in the community. It helps students grow in awareness and see the activism they can participate in.”

Adjunct faculty like Jerica Arents, a proponent of nonviolence and social justice, and Thomas Ramirez, who advocates for indigenous cultures and communities, demonstrate how they turn theory into action. Senior Professional Lecturer Ken Butigan has spent decades participating in peace movements, including nonviolently protesting nuclear weapons and advocating at the Vatican with the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. The organization encourages the Catholic Church to actively promote the practices of nonviolence around the world and to create a culture of peace.

Teaching at DePaul since 2007, Butigan enjoys sharing perspectives on peace with the full spectrum of students. He introduces first-year students to PJC through the Discover Nonviolent Chicago course and later synthesizes the program’s teachings during the senior capstone, watching students develop into proponents of peaceful conflict resolution and agents of nonviolent change.

“This program equips us to deal peacefully with the conflicts in our lives, in our communities, in our nation and the world,” Butigan says. “My long-term goal is to see that students, faculty and administrators get the ability to transform conflict and create useful alternatives that will help with whatever they do in the future.”

Alexandria Boutros (PIC ’18) appreciated the freedom to study multidisciplinary subjects and get deeply involved in Chicago. While volunteering for organizations focused on human rights, voting rights and housing and education equality, Boutros applied the material she learned and made connections that led to her full-time job. She is a community organizer at Chicago Votes focusing on voting rights, especially in the criminal justice system.

“I think PAX, in so many ways, got me to where I am today,” says Boutros, adding that participating in the Inside-Out program of inmate education at Stateville Correctional Center was particularly meaningful. “Having access to that program catapulted me into this kind of work.”

Jake Wild Crea (PIC ’15) also benefited from PJC experiences like Inside-Out and studying abroad in Argentina. Having arrived at DePaul with a social justice orientation, Wild Crea says PJC gave him the language and skills to engage effectively in such work. Today, Wild Crea works for Arabella Advisors in Chicago, where he provides project and grant management to nonprofits.

“PAX taught me how to approach people, systems and justice in a way that fundamentally questions the systems that we have,” Wild Crea adds. Now that hundreds of PIC alumni are out in the larger world, the program’s influence is being felt in diverse arenas locally, nationally and globally. They are showing how to put nonviolent values into action, united by a love for peace, nonviolence and justice.
The Art School at LAS

LAS has added a new arts-forward school to its mix: The Art School (ART). ART, formerly LAS’s Department of Art, Media, and Design (AMD), has officially become a school, joining the School of Music, The Theatre School and the schools of Design, Cinematic Arts and Computing (the latter two in the College of Computing and Digital Media) as the latest addition to DePaul's college community.

“We are thrilled that our unique and distinctive AMD department has now been elevated to a school,” says Joanna Gardner-Hugette, LAS associate dean and associate chair of the Department of Art, Media and Design.

The Art School will enhance DePaul’s visibility as a studio art program. “As the Art School, we are being able to fulfill our open access for all students to a high-quality studio art program. We believe that we will be able to attract new students to DePaul on the local, regional, national and international levels,” says M. A. Papaneck-Miller, professor and chair of the Department of Art, Media and Design.

AMD offers five minors, two shared minors and three undergraduate degree programs: a BFA in art, and a BFA in art, media, and design. Students can concentrate their major in studio art, graphic art or photography and media art. The Art School will not undergo any curricular changes.

As a historically open-access studio art program, AMD has refrained from implementing any admissions portfolio requirements; all interested DePaul students can enroll in a studio art course. Portfolio requirements can be significant barriers for prospective students from under-resourced high schools where art programs have been eliminated and where talented students have no opportunity to build the kind of portfolio often required for admission at other institutions.

All 23 faculty members are practicing artists. Taking a tour of the department on the Lincoln Park Campus, one will find classrooms overflowing with students hard at work painting, sculpting, drawing, printmaking and making film and digital photographs. There are currently more than 130 AMD studio art courses offered annually.

Also unique to the department is a lending library where students enrolled in AMD courses can borrow audiovisual equipment and are provided with startup art supplies for every class. “This is just another way our department—and soon school—shows our commitment to an open-access environment,” adds Papaneck-Miller.

EUAN HAGUE RECEIVES SCHOLAR-ADMINISTRATOR AWARD

The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities has awarded Euan Hague, director of the School of Antiquities, a professor of cultural and urban geography, the 2019 Barbara A. Holland Scholar-Administrator Award. The award recognizes his accomplishments in research-informed leadership in higher education. Hague also serves as director of the collaborative Urban Studies cluster, an affiliation of multiple degree-granting programs, departments and research centers at LAS.

Euan Hague has a storied career in academic administration. A scholar himself, he has had a strong hand in the development of the school he now leads. Hague has been a key figure at DePaul University since 2007, and he has served as the School’s director since 2014.

“Professor Hague has carved out a unique identity for the school,” said John D. Carver, senior vice president for academic affairs. “He has demonstrated a capacity for leadership, scholarship and collaboration that has benefited DePaul and the larger academic community.”

Hague has more than 20 years of experience in academic administration, including a term as the founding dean of the Institute of International Education at American University.

His most recent role was as associate vice president for academic affairs at Michigan State University, where he led initiatives to increase the university’s international presence.

Hague has earned a reputation for his commitment to research and scholarship, which he has cultivated throughout his career. He has authored numerous books and articles on topics ranging from urban geography to cultural studies.

Hague has also been actively involved in the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, a network of institutions that work together to advance urban research and scholarship.

He has served as the chair of the Coalition’s board of directors, and he has helped to shape its strategic direction.

Hague’s contributions to the Coalition have been recognized with numerous awards, including a 2018 Outstanding Service Award from the American Association of University Professors.

He is a member of the American Studies Association, the Association for the Study of Nationalities and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Hague holds a Ph.D. in urban geography from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a master’s degree in urban planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

He is married to Elizabeth Hague, a professor of political science at Michigan State University.

SCOTT BUCKING EARN 2019 ANTIQUITIES ENDOWMENT FUND GRANT

Scott Bucking, an associate professor and director of DePaul’s graduate program in history, received a 2019 Antiquities Endowment Fund grant from the American Research Center in Egypt. The $19,000, one-year grant will aid the DePaul-sponsored Beni Hassan South Preservation Project. Directed by Bucking, the project aims to conserve and document artifacts found at the project’s archaeological site in Middle Egypt. The grant will enable urgent conservation work needed in light of recent agricultural threats and attempts at theft.

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THE TREE STUMP: AN ARABIC HISTORICAL NOVEL

Nesreen Alkhatarkhuwai, an associate professor in the Department of Modern Languages, and director of Arabic Studies, has translated into English “The Tree Stump” by award-winning Jordanian novelist and playwright Samihah Khatran. The well-regarded Arabic novel documents the intricate details of the 1916-18 Arab revolt against their Turkish overlords with the aid of British forces. (Michigan State University Press, 2019)

VIOLENT EXTREMISTS: UNDERSTANDING THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST THREAT

Thomas R. Mockaitis, a professor in the Department of History, has written a succinct but comprehensive work examining the hybrid nature of two violent extremist movements: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in the United States: radical Islamism and white nationalism. (ABC-CLIO, 2019)

Making Headlines

LAS faculty are in the news. The Public Voices Thought Leader Fellows at DePaul are taking scholarly expertise to a general audience, providing critical context for complex and significant issues facing society.

For instance, Fernando De Maio, a sociology professor and co-director of the Center for Community Health Equity, argued in Truthout that inequities in our health care system both reflect and perpetuate social inequalities. Shailja Kamuf, a professor in the Department of Modern Languages, has co-edited the French edition of Jacques Derrida’s richest and most provocative works, “La vie la mort” challenges and deconstructs one of the most deeply rooted dichotomies of Western thought: life and death. (Editions du Seuil, 2019)

“The Tree Stump” challenges and deconstructs one of the most deeply rooted dichotomies of Western thought: life and death. (Editions du Seuil, 2019)

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Human Rights Advocate and Entrepreneur
Credits His Success to DePaul

of Michigan—Zarazinski took it up a notch by joining the U.S. Air Force as a judge advocate. After two years as a federal prosecutor at Joint Base Andrews, he deployed to Afghanistan and worked as an operations and intelligence law attorney.

Since 2009, Zarazinski has been running his own financial technology company, Inca Digital, which he founded with a former Interpol colleague, Evgeny Dmitriev. The company develops cryptofinance technology for hedge funds, banks and governments.

Although based in Washington, D.C., where Zarazinski lives with his wife and daughter, the Inca Digital team of mathematicians, engineers and information security experts works remotely from around the globe.

The impetus of Inca Digital is Vincentian. “I want to help society in some way and to make the world a better place when I leave it than when I entered it. At its core, cryptography is an attempt to make the financial system more equal and inclusive,” he says.

Behind Zarazinski’s success, he says, is DePaul. “DePaul provided the intellectual foundation for everything I’ve done. It was by far the best educational experience I’ve had and it’s helped shaped who I am today.”

—Adam Zarazinski

GLOBAL CITIZEN
For Michaela Milligan, China is her home away from home

Michaela Milligan (Anthropology and Chinese Studies ’19) started taking Mandarin lessons by chance.

“She was in the eighth grade, and her carpool buddy, who was from China, was staying after school to take an independent study arranged by her parents. So Milligan joined in.”

“They hardly ever went to the class, but I did and I really took to it,” recalls the Ohio native, who graduated this past November with a double major in anthropology and Chinese studies, and a double minor in museum studies and history of art and architecture.

For Milligan, who was described affectionately by a DePaul faculty member as “living and breathing China,” those lessons paved the way for a lifetime of immersion into Chinese language and culture.

After figuring out how to spend time in China before starting college, Milligan spent her first year at a university in Vermont and then moved to Chicago to figure out her next steps.

While working at the Chicago Chinese Cultural Institute, she took her boss where she should apply for college. “She told me, ‘112% you should go to DePaul. All of the best people I’ve hired come from DePaul, and they have a really good Chinese program,’” recalls Milligan.

DePaul soon became Milligan’s home for the next three years. Academically gifted—she has a 3.9 GPA at DePaul—Milligan found that Chinese studies appealed to her intellectual curiosity. “Nothing in my life so far has challenged me mentally in the way that China has, both in terms of language and in terms of trying to see things from this other ontology,” she says.

In recognition of her outstanding achievements, Milligan has been awarded numerous scholarships and honors. She was selected as one of only 40 delegates from around the world to attend the FACES Summit on U.S.-China relations at Stanford University.

Milligan received a grant from LAS’s Undergraduate Research Fund to help mitigate the travel costs of attending the summit. “This was one of the highlights of my year. It was such a wonderful opportunity to have all these wonderful student delegates representing a real, broad, diverse set of experiences and knowledge base to talk U.S.-China relations. If it hadn’t been for the research fund, I would not have been able to attend,” she says.

Milligan also received LAS’s Community- and Project-Based Learning scholarship for an internship with the U.S. State Department’s Virtual Student Federal Service program. Her specific task was researching the destruction of cultural heritage around the world for the Smithsonian Institution.

But one of her most prestigious accomplishments is being selected as a 2019 Lincoln Laureate, an honor bestowed on outstanding seniors from institutions of higher learning in Illinois. Milligan attended a special ceremony at the Illinois State House in November where she and her fellow laureates were recognized by Gov. JB Pritzker.

“Michaela is the type of student you always want to have in a classroom,” says Li Jin, associate professor and director of the Chinese Studies Program. “Her interest in understanding Chinese culture and society is indefatigable. I can see her becoming a powerhouse contributing to positive U.S.-China relationships in the near future.”

As Milligan prepares for the year ahead as a Fulbright scholar and powerhouse contributing to positive U.S.-China relationships in the near future.

“DePaul has prepared me for the year ahead as a Fulbright scholar and powerhouse contributing to positive U.S.-China relationships in the near future.”

“My career at DePaul has been very rewarding. I bring a different perspective, and I feel like that is extremely important. I am also grateful for all of the support from so many amazing faculty and the opportunities to travel and pursue my interest in China.”

Visit give.depaul.edu/insights to make your gift now.

DePaul provided the intellectual foundation for everything I’ve done. It was by far the best educational experience I’ve had and it’s helped shaped who I am today.”