DePaul professor explores cost of youth violence in play, book

by Melissa Smith

As the list of names rolled at the end of the play, Halle Gordon watched as young people silently ticked off the names of those they knew who have been felled by gun violence. “It was so unbelievably disheartening and so inspiring at the same time that we were able to give young people the opportunity to finally talk about this experience,” says Gordon, director of Steppenwolf for Young Adults at Steppenwolf Theatre Co.

“How Long Will I Cry?: Voices of Youth Violence,” which premiered at Steppenwolf, is playwright Miles Harvey’s chronicle of the effects of youth violence in Chicago. Over the course of two years, Harvey, assistant professor of English at DePaul University, and about 60 of his students conducted 70 interviews with residents from neighborhoods across the city. The play and its forthcoming companion book were crafted from as many as 4,000 pages of transcripts. “There was a lot of heartache in people telling true stories about their own involvement with violence or how violence has left an impact on their lives or their loved ones,” says Megan Shuchman, education manager of Steppenwolf for Young Adults, who served as dramaturge on the production. “But in every single interview, there was also a lot of hope.”

“How Long Will I Cry?” follows a cast of characters, each irrevocably altered by youth violence. The audience meets Frankie Valencia, a DePaul honors student who was gunned down outside a party in Logan Square, and his mother, Joy McCormack. They witness McCormack’s grief as she comes to terms with the senseless murder of her son. They meet his murderers, who are caught in a cycle of violence that came to an inevitable, yet tragic, end. “We just wanted to explore the real cost, the human cost, of violence,” Harvey says. “This is what it costs. That is what happens when you pull the trigger. These are the ripple effects.”

The play also hints at a life beyond youth violence. Expressing the hope Harvey and his students found in these stories, the narrator introduces Diane Latiker, who founded Kids Off the Block Inc., an organization that offers youth alternatives to gang violence. The audience hears from Pastor Corey Brooks, who staged a protest on his church roof to raise funds for a neighborhood community center. Lastly, they watch a young woman named Ora escape the bounds of her neighborhood as a student at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Ill., where she finally feels safe. “[These young people] see violence on a day-to-day basis,” Harvey says. “For them to imagine their way out of that situation and to imagine their way into another world is nothing short of astounding. It’s hard not to be inspired.”

“How Long Will I Cry?” was part of Now Is The Time, a citywide initiative to stop youth violence, and ran Feb. 26 to March 23 at Steppenwolf, 1650 N. Halsted St. It also toured seven neighborhood Chicago Public Libraries and the Gary Comer Youth Center from March 11 to 16. For more information on the forthcoming “How Long Will I Cry?” companion book, contact Miles Harvey at mharvey7@depaul.edu.
College planning and looking to the future for LAS

DePaul’s 2012-13 academic year has come to a close, and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences can look back on a year of very significant work accomplished by the largest group of faculty, staff, alumni and students to have ever participated in wide-ranging college strategic planning. More than 135 members of the LAS community were engaged in year-long work on one of six strategic planning task forces to discuss ideas, opportunities and possibilities. Additionally, these task forces made recommendations regarding the means of promoting student success, supporting faculty, engaging the city of Chicago, internationalizing the curriculum and student experience, and furthering our interests in mission-related and social justice engagement, as well as leveraging technology for the sake of teaching, scholarship and the everyday business needs of the college, its constituent units and its members. These areas of interest link the college with some of the most important goals and objectives in the university’s Vision 2018 Strategic Plan.

The six task forces have each finished their respective work and have issued white papers that are now being readied for community review, discussion and, eventually, implementation during the next academic year and into the future. My preliminary examination of these white papers and, particularly, their leading recommendations give me great hope and satisfaction for what they promise for the college’s future.

In a number of instances, the task forces have provided baseline, inventory information that is already useful for the college’s knowledge concerning such topics as what we already do or have done in engaging the city of Chicago, activities related to mission-specific interests, and curricular coverage of international and global issues, for example. All of the task force white papers have recommended very concrete steps that the college can take to advance such vital interests as not only making students successful in their studies (and in that service, also aiding faculty to be as effective as possible), but also enabling students to take advantage of resources at DePaul and elsewhere. In addition, recommendations exist to aid students in applying their education to “life after DePaul” and in the service of broader interests and audiences. Finally, the need for the college to assist students in advancing their skills as citizens of a vastly shrinking world due to technological, economic and social forces by providing them with the intellectual preparation that fulfills the great promise of a liberal education is at the core of these recommendations.

I have always found it incredibly stimulating and exciting to be on the cusp of opportunities and initiatives that hold the promise for improving what we do in the college, as well as doing new things, innovating and taking on the challenges presented to us by the engaged, committed and highly motivated members of our own community who have invested their time and energy all year long in this very considerable effort. To one and all participants in this process and on behalf of the college and university, I wish to express my profound gratitude for providing us with the working ideas that will carry the college into the future in service to our students. You will hear more about these recommendations and ideas in the months to come.

“More than 135 members of the LAS community were engaged in year-long work on one of six strategic planning task forces to discuss ideas, opportunities and possibilities.”

URAP promotes hands-on learning

by Kelsey Rotwein

Like a missing tooth, the vacant lot gaped between two houses on a tree-lined street in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood. Only six years earlier, a three-story house with white curtains at the windows stood there. Mike Jersha (LAS’13) dutifully took note of the absent structure one day last summer, snapping a photo and jotting down the address for his records, just as he had done for many other blocks throughout Pilsen. Later, Jersha transferred his photo inventory to geographic information systems (GIS), a sophisticated mapping program that allows users to create advanced statistical models.

Jersha undertook this major mapping project as part of the Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP), which gives LAS students the opportunity to conduct special projects in tandem with a faculty advisor. The competitive program, which is operated through the dean’s office, typically funds 30 students per year, and projects often entail some combination of research, writing, analysis and data collection that supplements faculty work. “We’re looking at the way gentrification is changing Pilsen,” shares Winfred Curran, associate professor of geography, who was Jersha’s faculty partner. “I quite literally would not be able to do this work without students, because I don’t have the GIS skills that they do.”

Other faculty echo Curran’s sentiments. Elizabeth Millan, professor of philosophy, utilized Damiris Alvarado’s (LAS’14) talents as they collaborated on a bibliography for Oxford University Press. “Although Latin American philosophy is one of my areas of specialization, I don’t pretend to know everything that’s coming out right away,” says Millan. “[Alvarado’s] much better than I am with the technology and databases available.” The pair met when Alvarado was a freshman in Millan’s Explore Chicago class. “I like mentoring students,” Millan adds, “The URAP is a great program. It gives students a sense of feeling respected and empowered.”

For Kevin Doherty (LAS’13), the URAP experience influenced his academic goals. “It has definitely put graduate school on the table,” he says. Doherty spent hours combing through old newspapers and magazines, tracking numerical data and trends associated with the history of dog fighting. “Eventually, I will have had my hand in a fair number of historical footnotes,” he says, referring to an upcoming book on the humanization of animals by Heidi Nast, professor of philosophy. “It was a really great way to be in the real world in terms of data collection and database creation,” shares Jersha. “I’m so much more confident in my GIS skills and feel much more fine-tuned with the literature surrounding gentrification.” Alvarado describes her experience as “meaningful and challenging.” And Doherty encourages current students to apply. “It was a hugely beneficial experience. If anybody ever has the chance to be an undergraduate research assistant in LAS, I fully support it!”

URAP promotes hands-on learning | INSIGHTS
Two new master’s programs bring new meaning to interdisciplinary work
by Minna An

This fall, DePaul welcomes the inaugural class of master’s candidates in sustainable urban development and modern languages. Both programs are unique in size and breadth of study, offering graduate students the opportunity to further explore their interests at an academically rigorous graduate level.

Applications for both programs are being accepted through August.

Master of Arts in Sustainable Urban Development

Believed to be the first of its kind in the nation, the new sustainable urban development master’s program will provide students with the skills needed to help urban areas adapt to economic, environmental and social policies. “Sustainable development is often seen as simply about being ‘green,’ but the concept goes beyond the environmental, and addresses how to make communities more sustainable on economic and social levels,” says Euan Hague, geography department chair and co-director of sustainable urban development. This multidisciplinary program draws from urban planning, public policy, sociology, geography, public service management, environmental studies and real estate. Students will receive training in digital mapping and spatial analysis using geographic information systems, brownfield remediation and development, community analysis, environmental policy and urban design.

Master of Arts in Modern Languages

The modern languages department now offers master’s degrees in all seven of its core languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. “Modern languages are becoming increasingly more important in our global environment,” explains Clara Orban, modern languages department chair. “To truly understand other cultures, you need to meet them on their terms and in their cultural universe, and the way to do that is through language. It’s akin to the ‘Vincentian way,’ meeting people on their terms.” The new master’s program goes beyond perfecting a language by incorporating a much broader skill set to prepare students for various professional settings. This interdisciplinary program allows students to choose from various concentrations, including literature, translation, cinema, linguistics and more.
Robert Romo’s advice for public affairs job seekers

**Try to obtain as much work experience as possible, even through unpaid internships.**

“The experience of being part of a team that develops ideas and maybe gets them knocked down and criticized—that’s invaluable.”

**In philanthropy, program officers need to have good judgment.**

“A foundation uses its financial resources to make societal investments, so you’re almost acting like an investment manager. Just as an investment manager is evaluated on his investment returns, program officers need to have the skills to judge the worthiness of particular projects.”

**Learn to say no.**

“Have the ability to walk away from ideas or projects that may take away from resources that could be used on more worthwhile projects.”

**Become a good listener and enter projects without preconceived notions.**

“That ability to take in different information and different views makes for a fuller understanding of a particular issue.”

In “Kant and the Subject of Critique: On the Regulative Role of the Psychological Idea,” Avery Goldman, associate professor of philosophy, builds on Immanuel Kant’s metaphysics (which uses the soul, the world and God as regulative principles) to open doors to reflection, analysis, language, sensibility and understanding. By establishing a regulative self, Goldman offers a way to bring unity to the subject through Kant’s seemingly circular reasoning.

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For Robert Romo (LAS ’82), his involvement with DePaul has come full circle. He grew up in his parents’ Logan Square home four miles from the university. The close proximity, mixed with the growing popularity of the Blue Demons basketball team and recommendations from his priest advisors at Weber High School, made DePaul the only university to which he applied. Today, more than 25 years after graduating, Romo has found his way back to his alma mater.

“I’m the typical first-generation college student at DePaul,” says Romo, senior program officer for the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. “I was super excited to be in college but had my share of challenges, insecurities and fears. I have been blessed with opportunities, financial and otherwise, so I can be supportive of kids who remind me of me.”

Romo’s path in life has centered on helping others. He once imagined a career in federal law enforcement but easily transitioned into public service. After his undergraduate years at DePaul, he did his graduate work at the University of Illinois. “I thought the political science degree and the master’s of public administration, which is sort of a hands-on public sector management degree, would be a good combination,” he says.

His first job was in city planning for the City of Chicago. “I began my city career the Monday after graduating, and I decided that I would transition into public service. After his undergraduate years at DePaul, he did his graduate work at the University of Illinois. “I thought the political science degree and the master’s of public administration, which is sort of a hands-on public sector management degree, would be a good combination,” he says.

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With its vibrant mix of cultures, Chicago certainly isn’t lacking for ethnic food options. Each neighborhood has its own unique blend of restaurants, but less apparent is what each offers in terms of ethnic grocery stores. “The Store Next Door,” a new study published by the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul, seeks to examine the role that ethnic grocery stores play in communities by cataloging inventories, ethnicities and locations.

“I think we take them for granted,” says Joseph Schwieterman, director of the Chaddick Institute and co-author of the study. “There is a false impression that ethnic grocery stores only serve first-generation immigrants that aren’t assimilated into U.S. society. That’s just not true.” The study found that while these stores provide food to certain ethnic groups, they also promote cross-cultural food consumption and encourage appreciation of different cultures.

“Everybody remembers walking into an ethnic grocery store and feeling overwhelmed by all the unusual food,” Schwieterman says. “I think many people have personal experiences that relate to the study’s major themes.”

Among the findings was an unexpected type of store that Paige Largent (LAS MPA ’12), program and research manager of the Chaddick Institute and co-author of the study, deemed the “hybrid ethnic store” for selling both American and ethnic foods. “You see people from that ethnic population shopping, but you can also find people from all different backgrounds shopping,” Largent says. “When we asked people why they shopped at ethnic and hybrid grocery stores, they said that they could find the foods they want, the cost was good, they liked to support local businesses and they liked to try new things.”

The study shows that many ethnic stores offer competitive pricing on dietary staples, including bread, produce and milk, to attract and retain customers. In addition, many ethnic grocery stores offer larger selections of fresh produce, particularly many hard-to-find fruits and vegetables. “The quality and the abundance of the produce in the ethnic and hybrid grocery stores [shocked me],” Largent notes. “We all know that for healthy eating, it is all about fresh produce. You can definitely go to the ethnic or hybrid grocery store and be successful.”

“The Store Next Door” suggests that ethnic grocery stores are important, not just because of the food selection, but also because of their contributions to the complex cultural dynamics of the neighborhood. “Chicago has nearly everything, especially when it comes to food,” Largent says. “I think it’s important to know your community, to explore your community and to try something new and different. If you want to do it through food, Chicago is the perfect place.”

For more information on “The Store Next Door” and other studies, visit las.depaul.edu/chaddick.

Following the release of the study, Schwieterman takes ABC7’s Hungry Hound Steve Dolinsky on a tour of Broadway Supermarket, 4879 N. Broadway St.
Conferences provide opportunities for scholars and students alike
by Melissa Smith

From encouraging students to share their work with their peers to challenging the canon, here’s a look at just a few ways in which DePaul is at the forefront of scholarly discussions.

1 The American Conference for Irish Studies (April 10-13)
The American Conference for Irish Studies, co-sponsored by DePaul and Northern Illinois University, provided a forum for more than 300 papers that allowed participants to examine Ireland past and present. James H. Murphy, professor of English, celebrated the organization and the work it is trying to accomplish. “The people who founded it many years ago had a very inclusive view so that people from all kinds of academic backgrounds are welcome,” says Murphy. “It is a wonderful and very DePaul sort of thing.”

2 Remapping the Black Atlantic Conference (April 12-14)
Remapping the Black Atlantic: Diaspora (Re)Writings of Race, Identity and Space drew participants from 10 countries and 30 states to deepen comparative discussions on the African Diaspora. As people continue to move, adapt to new cultures and perform their identities in different ways, new questions emerge, says Sandra Jackson, professor of women’s and gender studies and director of the Center for Black Diaspora. “The conference was a way to see what we are doing in the field, what some of the most important issues are now, and how they are similar to and different from those [questions] around the time Paul Gilroy and others put forth what are being called the seminal canonical texts.” (Photo by Farrad Deberry (MUS MM ’06))

3 Death Penalties Conference (April 19-20)
Drawing on DePaul’s mission of social justice, the Death Penalties Conference engaged both theoretical scholars and community activists in a discussion about the death penalty. Elizabeth Rottenberg, associate professor of philosophy and director of the comparative literature program, assembled a well-rounded panel of journalists, literary critics, philosophers and lawyers for the event. “The conference was really trying to bring together practical and theoretical discussions, these two ways of addressing the issue,” she says. “I think these kinds of exchanges need to take place more regularly.”

4 Student History Conference (April 26)
The ninth annual Student History Conference highlighted the work of DePaul’s undergraduate and graduate students, forming an important “dry run” at life as a historian. “One of the things we wanted to do was to give students a taste of what it was like to be a professional historian,” says Colleen Doody, associate professor of history and director of undergraduate advising. “We present our work, we get comments back and we listen to what our peers are doing. So, it’s a taste of what it is like to be a historian, what it’s like to be an academic.”

5 Association of Graduate and Liberal Studies Programs Annual Conference Oct. 10-12 at the Renaissance Blackstone Hotel
The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) and Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) programs will host the Association of Graduate and Liberal Studies Programs Annual Conference, which will focus on urban immigrant cultures. “Chicago has always been a city of immigrants,” says David Gitomer, associate professor of religious studies and director of MALS. “We especially want to look at urban immigrant cultures now compared to earlier periods, when many of Chicago’s more established communities arrived.” With author Stuart Dybek as opening speaker, academic papers on immigrant cultures and a walking tour of Pilsen, this conference aims to be interdisciplinary and multimodal. Susan Jacobs, associate director of MALS, says, “Our title is ‘Urban Gateways: Immigration and the Global City,’ so we’re looking at immigration and assimilation in terms of economics, sociology, politics, education, the arts, gender studies and more.” For more information on the conference, visit agslp.org.

6 The Midwest Conference on British Studies Oct. 11-13 at the DePaul Center
DePaul will host the 60th annual meeting of the Midwest Conference on British Studies. The Midwest Conference is the oldest regional organization on British studies in North America, and this meeting will discuss emerging research in the field and explore all areas of British Studies. “We are trying to build a collaborative conference where, regardless of your area, if you work in British studies, you are welcome,” says Lisa Sigel, associate professor and director of the History undergraduate program. “Great Britain is a significant country, and it offers much for us, as Americans, to study—to understand not only where our country came from, but also the role our country can play in a global world where we are relatively new to the game,” adds Eugene Beiriger, associate professor of history. For more information on the conference, visit mwcbs.edublogs.org.

Join DePaul in the fall for these upcoming events.

1. The American Conference for Irish Studies (April 10-13)
2. Remapping the Black Atlantic Conference (April 12-14)
3. Death Penalties Conference (April 19-20)
4. Student History Conference (April 26)
5. Association of Graduate and Liberal Studies Programs Annual Conference Oct. 10-12
6. The Midwest Conference on British Studies Oct. 11-13 at the DePaul Center
DePaul Humanities Center names new director

H. Peter Steeves, professor of philosophy, has been appointed director of the DePaul Humanities Center. Steeves previously served on the executive committee before assuming the role of director. Building upon the legacy of Jonathan Gross, outgoing director and professor of English, Steeves wants to bring even more interdisciplinary work to the center. “We are hoping to continue involving people who have never been involved before in the center from all across the college, the university and the Chicago community,” Steeves says. “We want to make the center a jewel for the city of Chicago.” Programming slated for next year includes the inaugural Conversations with Great Minds event featuring Crispin Glover, a multimedia Halloween event with keynote speaker Kathe Koja and a new event entitled “Humanities Vaudeville,” with additional multidisciplinary events to come. “I think it’s going to be a great year,” Steeves notes. “I’m really honored by the trust that LAS has in me.” For more information on upcoming events at the DePaul Humanities Center, visit las.depaul.edu/humanitiescenter.

DePaul Art Museum exhibits

In June, the DePaul Art Museum (DPAM) hosted the senior capstone exhibition, showcasing the work of new art, media and design (AMD) graduates. Zachary Ostrowski, assistant professor of AMD, believes this event is critical for students because it “bridges the gap between student and professional.” Matthew Girson, associate professor of AMD, sees the senior capstone exhibition as the culmination of these students’ undergraduate studies. “The works showcased are informed by our students’ experiences at DePaul as art majors, but also from a breadth of experiences in the liberal studies program,” Girson says. “It’s a great example of liberal arts education channeled into creative visual work.” Also featured at DPAM was “War Baby/Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art,” an exhibition that explored the construction of mixed-heritage Asian American identity in the United States, which ran from April 25 to June 30.

Commencement

Approximately 800 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students crossed the stage at DePaul’s 115th Commencement ceremony on June 16. Robert Carfang (LAS ‘13) delivered the student address, while Eboo Patel offered remarks at the ceremony. Patel, author and interfaith leader, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree for his work as founder of the Interfaith Youth Core and advisor for the White House Office of Faith-based Neighborhood Partnerships. The Rev. Stafford Poole, C.M., Vincentian scholar and historian, was also presented with an honorary degree. Poole is a leading expert on colonial Latin America, the foremost voice on the role of the Catholic Church in 16th-century Mexico, and a pioneer in expanding and preserving Vincentian history.

“Few gifts are as satisfying as a gift to support scholarships.”

Thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends, the Many Dreams, One Mission Campaign is steadily approaching its $300 million overall goal. Campaign and university leaders continue to focus on the $100 million goal for scholarships.

It is unusual among major university campaigns to devote such a large proportion of a campaign goal to scholarship support, yet it is indicative of DePaul’s steadfast commitment to serve a broad economic cross-section of students. “This Campaign has accomplished a lot for DePaul and LAS,” says LAS campaign co-chair Jim Barnash (LAS ’77). “Few gifts are as satisfying as a gift to support scholarships, which help provide students, regardless of economic background, the opportunity for an excellent, well-rounded education that prepares them for a range of professional achievements.”

Scholarships are a particularly important objective for LAS, where the excellence of faculty and academic programs is enriched by the diverse backgrounds of talented students. The Many Dreams, One Mission Campaign has successfully driven investments in new faculty positions and optimal learning facilities, enhancements that draw prospective students to DePaul. Of the $40 million goal for the arts and science portion of the Campaign, $35.7 million has been achieved, and the remaining $4.3 million is being raised to build scholarship resources for students in the arts and sciences.

For more information on the Campaign, please contact Paula Starkey, director of development, at pstarkey@depaul.edu or (312) 362-6341.
We welcome your story ideas, questions and comments. Please contact Melissa Smith at (312) 362-5266 or msmit134@depaul.edu.

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