

Center for Urban Research and Learning

Information on CURL University/Community Partnerships

LOYOLA
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Urban Semester: "Real World" Experience for Loyola Undergraduates

In the life-long educational journey, teachers are sometimes gratified when it all comes together for students, when the process brings out the "Aha's!" As expressed by the student quoted, some of the learning magic happened in the first Loyola Urban Semester which just concluded in May.

Finally, I could see what the point was to academics and its relation to the real world . . . feeling like you have the power to make a change is great."

This issue of CURL's newsletter highlights the Urban Semester, a joint effort of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and CURL. This new initiative, designed to give undergraduate students hands-on experience in community/university collaborative research, provides a framework for CURL's approach to actionable research in partnership with community leaders. Emphasis is placed on a mutual exchange of teaching and learning that leads to specific change in Chicago's low and moderate-income neighborhoods.

The Urban Semester structure supported six community-initiated projects in Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown. Each project, developed through dialogue with community-based organization activists, was led by a team composed of community, faculty, graduate fellows and Urban Semester undergraduate researchers. These teams produced significant research outcomes which are described briefly below and on page 3.

Research Arms the Community to Fight Welfare Cuts

The national debate on welfare "reform" becomes localized and very real for the estimated 7,000 elderly and disabled legal, non-citizen immigrants who live in Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown. Understanding the effects of the anticipated cuts on immigrants themselves, as well as on the community at large, was of great importance to the community-based organizations who serve those threatened with elimination of basic life-sustaining necessities. Last December, the Howard Area Community Center (HACC) and the Organization of the NorthEast (ONE) joined in partnership with CURL and the Policy Research Action Group (PRAG) to calculate the impact of the proposed cuts.

The resulting study, entitled "Unraveling the Safety Net: 1997 and Welfare Reform," has received considerable media notice and was instrumental in State Sen. Howard Carroll's success in attaching an additional \$10 million to the Illinois welfare bill.

As with other CURL projects, research was completed by a team of community leaders, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. Denise Rose, a sociology graduate

student, was the lead author. Below are some of the key findings of the study:

- ◆ Based on an average of \$484 received by legal immigrants monthly, the three communities could lose \$40 million annually in their local economies;
- ◆ The suggestion by President Clinton and other political leaders that religious congregations can pick up the slack resulting from cuts is unrealistic; to do so, each of the 220 area congregations would have to support 33 immigrants at an additional cost of \$15,900 per month, or \$190,000 annually;
- ◆ Of the estimated 21,800 Illinois elderly and disabled immigrants, 21,000 live in Chicago; 7,000 of the 21,000 reside in the three north lakefront communities.

The complete report is available at ONE, Howard Area, or CURL.

Other team members: Sarah Jane Knoy (ONE), Roberta Buchanan (HACC), Doug Dobmeyer (Poverty Issues... Illinois), Phil Nyden (CURL), Ed Gumz (Soc. Wk.), Hank Rose (Law), Christine Payne, Angela Baker, Erica Chung, Luis Sanchez, Emily Lee, Cindy Bernd

Director's Corner...

Channeling Resources to Strengthen Chicago's Communities

Since our last newsletter, there have been several pieces of good news that we want to share. As noted on the previous page, one of the projects coming out of the College of Arts and Science and CURL's new Urban Semester received considerable media coverage and was a key factor in the state legislation that provided an additional \$10 million to elderly immigrants in Chicago. It is no coincidence that this research had the quick impact that it did; the project was conceived of and completed in partnership with the Organization of the NorthEast and the Howard Area Community Center. Because immediate community needs guided the direction of the research, it had practical implications for improving the quality of life for Chicago's residents. This project will continue this fall with a focus on the impact of welfare "reform" legislation on women and children.

Another big news item is the receipt of a \$600,000 grant from the John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to further our work with community organizations, particularly in low-income communities. With MacArthur support, graduate students will be recruited from Chicago's neighborhoods to join the CURL research teams. In addition, "community fellowships" will be awarded to established and developing community leaders to strengthen the collaborative research process. Louis Delgado, a community activist who most recently taught a Loyola graduate course on philanthropy and social change, will assist in this work.

Just as we are preparing this newsletter, we received word of another grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority to examine the impact of physical improvements on crime reduction in and around low-income housing developments in Chicago. Dr. Richard Block (Sociology), Dr. Arthur Lurigio (Criminal Justice), and Dr. Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar (Psychology) will be involved with this project. Residents of four apartment buildings will be trained in interview techniques as well as in data collection and analysis with the expectation that they will participate in an expanded future research project.

The above are in keeping with CURL's efforts to not just "do" community research, but to increase community capacity to develop, guide, and participate in information gathering and policy development to positively change people's lives.

Phil Nyden, Director

Loyola, Lake Shore Religious Leaders Begin Dialogue and Action

By Kale Williams

How can local religious congregations and a religious-based university be mutually helpful?

This is the question explored in an initial December gathering of a dozen Loyola faculty and staff who joined 28 leaders of 22 congregations -- Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant -- in Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown to examine common elements of faith and common concerns about their communities.

The gathering illustrated one of the new facts about religion in these communities -- the growing diversity of faiths represented in these neighborhoods and within each faith.

A second reality was described by Dr. Lowell Livezey, director of the Religion in Urban American Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His research found that many congregations that once provided leadership and a staging area for efforts to maintain and strengthen their communities, now had fewer human and financial resources to bring to these tasks. The pace of urban life has left many with less time for participation in community-building efforts, and mobility has weakened ties to the local congregation and neighborhood.

A third reality was that congregations and Loyola had similar missions of teaching and service and similar concerns about the needs in surrounding neighborhoods.

Since December, some specific joint action has taken place. Hunger was identified as a common priority. A working group, consisting of congregational representatives and existing emergency food providers, has moved to map current services and gather relevant data from each site. The next step will be to invite all congregations to join in a concerted, confirming effort to eliminate hunger in their communities.

The work over the summer will be done by Jim Dippold, a graduate student assigned by the Considine Chair for Applied Ethics and supported by the Graduate School. In the fall, a CURL/community research team will participate in further research to assist in appropriate ways to further the work of the group.

Kale Williams, formerly director of the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities and Considine Chair for Applied Ethics at Loyola, is a Senior Scholar at CURL where he works on Loyola/congregational collaboration and pursues his interests in regionalism.

Project Summaries

Below are brief summaries of the status and outcomes of five additional Urban Semester projects:

EDGE/UP is a partnership of Uptown and Edgewater community organizations founded in 1994 to address career and training needs of community young people and to introduce students to career paths while demonstrating that their academic experience has valuable applications in the future. To evaluate EDGE/UP's impact, a capacity building model was selected. The evaluation team reviewed existing literature, interviewed program stakeholders, constructed a program impact model, developed key evaluation questions, conducted five student focus groups, and created surveys for students and teachers in the program. Summer evaluation activities include gathering data from business and community partners, analysis of data gathered, and preparation for the final report.

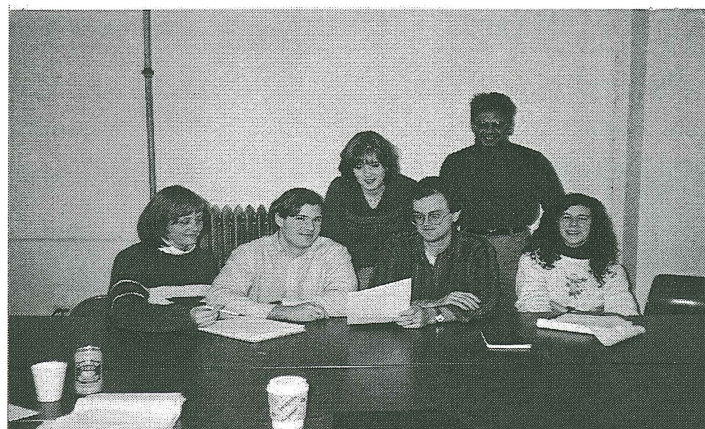
The **Rogers Park defensible space** project looked at ways in which architectural and environmental design can be used to deter crime. Four groups, composed of residents and Loyola students, video taped problematic areas that were selected based on actual and perceived amounts of criminal activity. After viewing and analyzing the tapes, each group developed recommendations, some of which can be easily implemented, while others will require discussions with public officials. The 24th Police District actively participated. The documented project produced a manual as a guide for future defensible space projects.

Team members: Cary Steinbeck and Michael Realmuto (Rogers Park Community Council), 25 community residents, Richard Block (Soc/Anthro), Laura Herrin, Craig Lund, Sanju Oommen, Drucilla Fordon, Michelle Anderson, Christine Rigas.

The **Kenmore/Winthrop corridor housing inventory** was proposed by the Edgewater Community Council (ECC). Although the area provides a mix of affordable and middle-income housing, Kenmore and Winthrop avenues from Devon to Foster have seen the successful economic diversity undermined by the presence of drug houses and disinterested absentee landlords. The inventory was designed to assist ECC in its efforts to document existing indices such as ownership, rent levels, and conversions. The data have been transferred to base maps, and work continues to identify resources within Loyola to computerize and update the data.

Team members: Ken Brucks, Roberta Schur, and Bob McKenna (ECC), Asif Raza, Mike Leachman (Soc/Anthro) and John Jurewicz.

A **continuum of care for the homeless in Uptown and Edgewater** is the concern of Lakefront Single Room Occupancy, Inc. which has 15 years' experience in housing the homeless. In the face of welfare cuts, Lakefront and other agencies are interested in 1) documenting the present service delivery to people who are homeless, 2) researching models of service delivery to enhance the current system of referrals and networking, and 3) learning if agencies servicing the homeless can provide better service if they coordinated service delivery among various agencies. Research produced numerous models for consideration and interviews were conducted with agency staffs and clients. Planning led to a conference on May 1 where 17 agencies gathered to consider developing a network. Ten agency executive directors



Edge/Up Team members seen above are Wendy Garrard, Dan Kruger, Betsy Mahler, Jon Schmidt, Asif Raza, and Lila Leff. Other members not pictured are Dr. Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar (Psychology), Tracy Mueller, Elizabeth Marquez, and the many teachers and students at Lakeview H.S., Senn Metropolitan Academy, and Learning Unlimited Alternative H.S.

committed to meet for six months to determine the form and purposes of an inter-agency relationship. CURL will continue support of the project by providing resources to produce an in-depth referral manual for participants. An intern from the School of Social Work will work at Lakefront during the next academic year and provide staff support for the working committee.

Team members: Jean Butzen and Marcia Knudson (Lakefront SRO), Debbie Kroopkin (Chicago Health Outreach - Access), Maria Vidal Haymes (Soc. Wk.), Talmadge Wright (Soc/Anthro), Jacqueline Beale del Vecchio, David Wold, staff of 17 agencies in Uptown and Edgewater.

Peer intervention in risk-taking among youth was a project developed between the principal and faculty of Peirce Elementary School and Dr. Elizabeth Vera (Counseling Psychology, School of Education) who has volunteered her services at Peirce over the past three years. As a McCormick Faculty Fellow at CURL, Dr. Vera and 15 graduate students interviewed 7th and 8th graders and made recommendations for intervention strategies. Dr. Vera will continue to work at Peirce School.

Team members: Elizabeth Vera, Suzette Speight, (Counseling Psych.) Peirce School faculty and students, Counseling Psychology graduate students

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CURL Links . . . Some recent news and happenings.



At the Birmingham, England, university/community collaboration symposium in early March, CURL members and their host explored city hall. From left are Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Psychology; Jill Graham, Management; Carlos DeJesus, Executive Director, Latinos United; Ken Spencer, University of Birmingham Professor and Dean of Commerce and Social Science Faculty; Phil Nyden, CURL Director; and Lin Von Dreele, CURL Associate Director. In September, CURL will host an exchange visit from University of Birmingham faculty and community organization representatives from Chicago's Sister City. Future directions for the Loyola/University of Birmingham connection will be discussed during this visit. If you are interested in meeting with the delegation and exploring community/university collaboration, please contact Phil or Lin.

Save the Date -- Thursday, November 6 University-Wide Conference on Collaborative Research

Loyola has substantial community-oriented and university/community collaborative projects in which a broad range of faculty and departments are involved; however, few of us know about other work. CURL is organizing a conference where we can learn about these projects and help faculty and students make valuable cross-disciplinary connections to strengthen existing projects. If you are interested in participating, please call Lin or Phil.

Another Save the Date -- Forum on the Urban Child -- "The Quality of Life of the Urban Child"

The Loyola-sponsored symposium on the well-being of the urban child is planned for October 13 - 14, 1997. Confirmed participants include Dr. Antonia Novello, Jonathan Kozol, Dr. Alvin Poussaint, and Dr. Felton Earls. For more information and registration brochure, phone 312/915-8567.

Congratulations! Michael Maly, a Loyola graduate student who has been involved in a cooperative Loyola/Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities' project on diversity, has just accepted a position as a tenure track faculty at Roosevelt University. We wish Mike the best and expect to continue to work with him.



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