

Intercultural LEAD

Newsletter

2018

Welcoming the
Class of 2022!



Intercultural LEAD

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

Welcome

2018 Intercultural LEAD Newsletter

Thanks for reading the Intercultural LEAD newsletter! This newsletter is intended for Intercultural LEAD scholars, alumnae/i and friends of the program. This newsletter shares highlights from the year and keeps you up-to-date with Intercultural LEAD. It is produced annually and sent digitally.

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Black Satire

One-acts from the Black Arts Movement

In February, famed director Lou Bellamy came to CSB/SJU and produced *Black Satire: One-acts from the Black Arts Movement*. The plays featured casts made up entirely of students of color. In total, eight I-LEAD scholars participated.



Full cast with director, Lou Bellamy



I-LEAD Muqkadeen Poole '19



I-LEAD Kendyll Spells '18 (Left) and Precious Drew '18



Left to right: I-LEAD Emerita Palencia '19, I-LEAD Muqkadeen Poole '19, I-LEAD Isaias Morales '21



During the year, Theresa Anderson met up with some I-LEAD alums in Los Angeles.

Left to right: Tiffany DeLeon '10, Ashley Zartner '10, Theresa Anderson, Felipe Nieves-Jimenez '12 and Jovany Gaucin '12



Alex's Lemonade Stand

Haley Valencour '20



I-LEAD Haley Valencour '20 (Left)

I-LEAD Haley Valencour '20 led a service project through ENACTUS. Hailey was the project leader of Alex's Lemonade Stand, a project that goes into schools and teaches 4th and 5th graders basic business principles in order to empower them to be entrepreneurs and run their own lemonade stand after two teaching sessions. The money raised from the lemonade stands that the students run goes to funding childhood cancer research. In addition to teaching children, the project hosted a 5k fun run/walk on April 14, 2018, as well as multiple lemonade stands throughout CSB/SJU.



Haley with her entire class!

JUSTICE Mentoring

Daniel Yang '18



Senior I-LEAD Scholar Daniel Yang '18 created JUSTICE Mentoring for underrepresented SJU students, a program similar to Advocates for Inclusive Mentoring at CSB.

JUSTICE is a mentoring program to help students from underrepresented backgrounds to succeed at Saint John's University. The program is to help foster the development of students' identity and leadership skills. Through the JUSTICE program they will learn how to make meaningful contributions to their society with their brothers. JUSTICE is a community that will help students build a supportive foundation throughout their college journey and create a long line of networks and bonds that will last a lifetime.



Seven Intercultural LEAD graduates received Fulbright English Teaching Assistant awards in the last three years



Yemi Fadahunsi '18
Hometown: Maplewood, Minn.
Major: Political Science
Placement: Taiwan



Daniel Yang '18
Hometown: St. Paul, Minn.
Major: Communication
Placement: Thailand



Yariset Rodriguez '17
Hometown: Minneapolis, Minn.
Major: English
Placement: South Korea



Mai Ka Lia Vang '17
Hometown: St. Paul, Minn.
Major: Political Science
Offered a position in Thailand.



Paul Park '16
Hometown: Irving, Texas
Major: Asian Studies
Placement: Thailand



Melissa Vang '16
Hometown: St. Paul, Minn.
Major: Communication
Placement: Thailand



Mai Tong Yang '16
Hometown: St. Paul, Minn.
Major: Political Science
Placement: South Korea

Educators in the Field

By Abby Gonzalez, I-LEAD '18

Many of our I-LEAD graduates, whether directly after graduation or after a few steps taken in different directions, have found a passion for working with students in various capacities. Their desire to bring their experiences and knowledge in advising students has allowed them to build meaningful relationships with their students and within their field.

Finding the support from CSB/SJU staff and faculty, these young women have found meaning in their ability to support their students' dreams through an educational means. They saw the impact of what a support system from a mentor can have, and continue to have, not only in their careers but also in their lives. They wished and have achieved becoming such a guide to others.

Ana Belmonte '16



Communications Major

College Counselor, Uplift Education

What resources and connections in I-LEAD and at CSB/SJU helped your career success?

I was fortunate enough to have an amazing advisor that dealt with me changing my career every time we met. Jen Kramer would often ask me questions of what I aspired to do after college and every summer I did a different internship in a different field. I interned in the fields of education, public relations and retail. Every experience was different than the last and I would tell my advisor that I wanted to do that job. However, I was still drawn to college access. Brandyn Woodard always took the time to sit with me whenever I felt overwhelmed or stressed during my senior year. He would never tell me what to do (which is what I wished he would do) and through our conversations, I always ended up being passionate about helping first-generation college students.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy the relationship building aspect of being a college counselor. My primary role is to ensure every scholar goes through the college application process as smoothly as possible and has an option once they graduate from high school. However, I love to include parents in the process because they deserve to be in the conversation as to where their child is thinking of pursuing their higher education.

What challenges have you encountered?

A challenge I have encountered in my first year as a college counselor is gaining the trust from parents and scholars. I am young for a college counselor so I had to demonstrate my knowledge in the area to parents, scholars and colleagues. I am the youngest employee at my school, therefore, there is a lot of doubt of my capabilities and knowledge in general. However, I have been able to face this challenge with confidence because I have demonstrated through data that my scholars are going to institutions that best fit their needs financially and academically.

What is ONE MAJOR piece of advice for someone who is wishing to work in this field?

Document everything. Every interaction with a parent, any communication sent home, anything a student says or does. It seems like a hassle but it can definitely save you from unnecessary stress in the future.

Youa Yang '15



Elementary Education (K-8) Major
Math Endorsement Minor

Middle School Math Teacher, Community
School of Excellence

What resources and connections in I-LEAD and at CSB/SJU helped your career success?

The structure of the education program allowed me to get as much experience as I could in every type of grade room setting. Whether it was the practicum, courses geared in constructing lesson plans and assessments or the professors, each part of the course prepared me in providing a safe environment for my students to learn. I-LEAD gave me the opportunity to showcase myself as a Hmong American woman who strives to educate and motivate youths to become future leaders. Not only did I-LEAD make me into a leader in my classroom, it also made me into an advocate for my students. All the resources that I-LEAD and CSB/SJU provided which include resume critiquing, mock interviews, class trip to MN Education Fair, academic advising and four year program all contributed to success in my career.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The students are the individuals that keep my day going. There is not a day where my students are not making me laugh, teaching me something new or inspiring me to keep moving forward. I also believe this job allows me to inspire these youths to become great leaders in the future.

What challenges have you encountered?

Some of my greatest challenges as a teacher are learning to balance the home life and work life, knowing when to distinguish being a teacher versus being a mentor, and teaching to the test. All of these obstacles have allowed me to become an even better teacher for my future students.

What is ONE MAJOR piece of advice for someone who is wishing to work in this field?

Never let the fear of making mistakes stand in your way of changing the world.

Tiffany DeLeon '10



History Major/Latin American
and Sociology Minors
Masters in Post-Secondary Administration, USC

Residential College Coordinator, USC

What resources and connections in I-LEAD and at CSB/SJU helped your career success?

Mentorship from the steering committee and their commitment was the greatest support. They helped me prepare and were really there for me anytime I had questions. Any support needed, they found.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I enjoy most is seeing the growth in students and seeing the impact I have through their schooling.

What challenges have you encountered?

A lot of politics in the job. Also figuring out what's happening in situations and what's happening on campus and staying true to your morals at the same time.

What is ONE MAJOR piece of advice for someone who is wishing to work in this field?

You are at an amazing school and take advantage of everything they offer. Get out of your comfort zone. The great thing about small schools are the faculty and staff; it's helpful to pick their brain and ask questions.

Pa Kou Thao '15



Elementary Education (K-8) Major

English Teacher, MeySen Academy,
Japan

Tell us about your job.

I am an English teacher in Sendai, Japan. I teach 2nd and 8th grade (2nd grade in the morning and 8th grade in the evening). I am also an on-call substitute teacher for Pre-K & Kindergarten in the morning. I've been living in Sendai for two years! I enjoy the daily challenges my students bring to class. Recess is one of my favorite times with my students; it's a great time to build rapport and trust. I also love sharing a part of my culture and experiences in America, as an Asian/Hmong American woman, to my students and fellow teachers/co-workers.

How did you get connected with this job?

I found this job through Indeed.com!

What's your favorite part about living abroad?

Aside from the food and sceneries, my favorite part about living abroad is turning my childhood dreams into reality. I've always wanted to teach, make a difference in children's lives, and live in Japan. Now I'm here, doing both at the

same time. One of my other favorite parts about living abroad is being able to teach, when the opportunity arises, that being "American" doesn't mean "blonde hair," "blue eyes," or "white."

What challenges have you encountered?

Not being able to speak Japanese fluently is definitely my biggest challenge living and teaching here. Being away from family and friends for two years has also been hard.

What was your favorite part about I-LEAD or CSB/SJU?

My favorite part about I-LEAD were the support groups and seminars we had. Each seminar, whether it was a discussion or guest speaker, gave me more guidance, confidence, inspiration and motivation to pursue my dreams. My favorite part about CSB/SJU were the professors and education program. I honestly wouldn't have taken the risks and challenges I did after graduating if it wasn't for my ethic's professor, advisor, and the education department team. They trusted and brought me up when I had doubts about myself.



Ways *You* can support Intercultural LEAD:

- Direct a gift to the Intercultural LEAD Program through [Give CSB](#) or [Give SJU](#)
- Join our new [LinkedIn group](#) and connect with current & past scholars
- Attend CSB & SJU [alumnae/i events](#)
- Want to volunteer as a speaker or mentor? [Let us know!](#)

DC Interns 2018



I-LEAD Interns in D.C.

Lesly Gonzalez-Barragan '20



My experience has been unimaginable. I am an intern at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), for the Campaign for Human Development, a grants program meant to empower marginalized communities to close the poverty gap in our society. I believe this is important work, as a member of a marginalized community myself. I identify with the community of immigrants, a marginalized group. To see that an institution such as the Catholic Church is working to advocate for a community like mine reaffirms my commitment to my Catholic faith. Being in an office setting has allowed me to learn a lot about myself and secure my professional goals in the future. This internship experience helped me to realize that I want to and can continue working in a setting where my faith values are always present and viewed as professional. I have had the opportunity to meet people at the USCCB that work beyond my department, and that has allowed me to see how involved the Church is with various issues. I am grateful of the care and attention that the USCCB has for interns. As someone that is passionate about working with youth, I am glad to see the opportunities to learn that young people have here.

However, I have also faced many challenges. This has been my first experience out of state, for such a long period of time. I have had to learn how to navigate through a whole new city, while staying professional and dealing with being homesick. I am very family oriented, and all the opportunities that I take on I do it for the sake of my family's future. I never thought that working towards success would hurt this much, and pull me away from the people I love the most. I have felt alone, but I have seen how strong I have become in every way through this experience. My confidence grows each day as I solve any problem that arises.

I am able to say that the hard work of my parents is paying off and giving me this wonderful opportunity: a first-generation Latina, finding a place in D.C. I've enjoyed finding my own community in D.C. The east coast is a lot more diverse than I imagined. From the food to its people to the architecture of the city in general. Getting lost on the metro is not fun, walking through puddles of downpouring rain is not pleasant, and carrying your groceries for miles in 80% humidity and hot sunshine is not cute. But nothing is more fun than getting in my apartment at the end of the day and reflect on all the crazy experiences of the day, realizing that I am doing all of that and I can keep going for the sake of my future and the future that I want my community to have someday. That is life in D.C. and I love it.

I-LEAD Interns in D.C.

Sameera Sheikh '19 (Left)



This summer I am a part of the 2018 Washington DC Summer Program through the political science department. I intern at Jubilee USA Network, a non-partisan NGO, as their Development and Executive Associate. I am grateful for this opportunity to live in Washington DC and gain experiential learning through working and independent living. This is a fantastic opportunity that allows me to make connections, build my social network, and helps me better prepare for the working force after college. One of the best things is experiencing the city of DC and getting to visit many of the landmarks and museums that I would otherwise not think about. While homesickness is the biggest challenge I have encountered, this experience still helped my future. As an out of state student from Brooklyn, New York I don't get to go home for extended periods of time. The accessibility to New York City from DC helped me overcome this homesickness while still enjoy my experience in DC. I am proud of myself for accomplishing all that I have and for coming as far as I have through various obstacles as a first-generation college student. I have ILEAD and my professors who supported and believed in me to thank for that.

Working at Jubilee USA has greatly impacted and confirmed my passion for advocacy. The idea of Jubilee started out in the late 1990s, when the poorest countries in the world could not build or provide the basic foundations of education, healthcare, and food because of the economic debt they were in (Jubileusa.org). Jubilee was created when Pope John II called all people of different faiths to look at universal faith traditions and scriptures to combat the structural causes of poverty (Jubileusa.org). More tangibly, Jubilee USA is a collation of religious, development and advocacy groups that advocate for financial policies that will bring debt relief to the most vulnerable members of a nation. I think this is important work when considering the causes of how developing nations are stuck in a constant cycle of debt and borrowing from the western world. Also, I think this work attempts to change the structural, core foundation in financial institutions that cause monetary oppression and can even be considered an attempt to redress past injustices. In the United States, Jubilee USA advocates to keep student loan interests low and internationally advocates to stop predatory lending and austerity measures that oppress other nations from strengthening their economy. The most vulnerable in society deserve to have someone to speak up for them and I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to contribute to that mission of justice.



Thanks for reading!

Intercultural LEAD Steering Committee

Brandyn Woodard, Director of International
& Intercultural Student Services

Jody Terhaar, CSB Dean of Students

Mike Connolly, SJU Dean of Students

Matt Davis, Assistant Director of Admission

Malik Stewart, CSB Development Officer

Dana Drazenovich, Instructor

Jackie Elvehjem, Assistant Director of Career Services

Janna LaFountaine, Associate Professor

Hannah Salto, College Navigator

Madhu Mitra, Professor

Mayzong Lee, Diversity & Inclusion Program Coordinator