Fourth Year in Review 2015–2016

DePaul has completed the first four years of its six-year strategic plan, Vision 2018: Dedication to Excellence, Commitment to Community, and continues to develop academic programs that are recognized nationally and internationally. Among those recently acknowledged were theatre, cinematic arts, computer game design and development, entrepreneurship and family law, while the university overall was named a “Most Innovative School” by U.S. News & World Report, recognizing our distinctive academic offerings and innovative program delivery. Four- and six-year graduation rates for students entering as traditional freshmen have trended upward overall and across all racial and ethnic groups over the last 12 years. As technology is leveraged to address changing student learning needs, students at all levels are increasingly taking online courses to reach graduation.

NEW MUSIC FACILITY TO ENHANCE TEACHING AND PERFORMANCE

DePaul broke ground on a new School of Music building that will elevate the university’s teaching of music and performance. The facility will deliver new teaching studios and rehearsal spaces as well as a concert hall, two recital halls and a jazz hall. It is scheduled to open in fall 2018. School of Music graduates have gone on to win the Pulitzer Prize, MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships, and the Thelonious Monk Competition. In 2015 alone, students and alumni performed around the world, including the International Chopin Piano Competition, Berlin Philharmonic and the Royal Opera House London.

CORPORATE EMPLOYER OUTREACH PROGRAM DELIVERS MBAS AND MASTER’S PROGRAMS AT WORK

DePaul’s Corporate Employer Outreach program has forged 17 new corporate partnership contracts with health care, banking and other Chicago companies since it began in 2014. Nearly 300 employees at organizations ranging from Walgreens to Lurie Children’s Hospital are enrolled in DePaul’s business, technology and health care programs, conveniently delivered at their work sites to support Chicago’s business community and the area’s many corporate headquarters.
EXPANDED PROFESSIONAL FILM STUDIO SPACE

Responding to tremendous growth in the digital cinema program, DePaul increased by 60 percent the footprint the university occupies at Cinespace Chicago Film Studios. The addition of 12,250 square feet of professional space offers students two new soundstages, two classrooms, two editing studios, and an equipment cage where students can borrow sophisticated cameras and stage lighting. DePaul’s new film studio space enables more on-site classes, capacity for larger-scale productions and use of one of the largest green screens in the Midwest.

NEW ACADEMIC CENTER FOR JOURNALISM INTEGRITY AND EXCELLENCE

Headed by local investigative political reporter Carol Marin and producer Don Moseley, the newly established Center for Journalism Integrity and Excellence teaches students investigative reporting techniques and offers opportunities to contribute to investigative projects for a variety of media platforms. Marin and Moseley joined DePaul as faculty in the College of Communication and are co-directors of the new center that serves as a bridge between the academic and professional worlds at a time when journalism is undergoing a significant transformation.

STUDENTS LAUNCHING CAREERS

DePaul has improved the effectiveness of career advising with new efforts to aid students in their career development. For example, the Transferable Skills Initiative helps students articulate the skills they learned in the liberal studies curriculum to prospective employers. Results are already evident. The post-graduate outcomes survey for bachelor’s degree recipients in 2015 reported that 93 percent of graduates were employed, in graduate school or not seeking employment six months after graduation. Separately, College of Communication bachelor’s degree recipients were employed at a rate 12 percent higher than the national average. On-campus employment is increasing as well, with 6,418 on-campus positions filled during 2015-16, helping students develop professional work skills to prepare for successful internships and full-time jobs.

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES

Intercultural competencies are vital to preparing students for success in a global world. This notion applies to American students traveling internationally as well as students visiting DePaul from abroad. To support international students enrolling at DePaul, the university has consolidated disparate orientation programs into modules students complete in advance of their arrival to help them become acquainted with basic immigration and academic integrity issues. It also launched conference-style sessions on campus that students complete in groups to hone problem-solving skills, connect classmates through a common shared experience and get our international students off to a solid start.

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NEW PATHS TO HEALTH CAREERS OPENED

DePaul’s reputation for health care education is growing, due in large part to the Alliance for Health Sciences with Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS). Some programs connect DePaul undergraduates directly to graduate programs at RFUMS, including accelerated pathways into medicine, pharmacy, podiatry, physical therapy, physician assistant practice and pathologists’ assistant practice. The new Master’s Entry to Nursing Practice program is in high demand now that it is available both in Lincoln Park and North Chicago on the Rosalind Franklin campus. Beyond creating a pipeline into professional programs at RFUMS, the alliance has enabled new faculty collaborations and faculty/student research opportunities, fostering a close relationship between the universities.
EMBRACING ADJUNCTS

DePaul instituted new initiatives to engage adjunct faculty more deeply in the university community and recognize their contributions. Several improvements are already in place, such as multicourse contracts, and an increase in the course cancellation fee. New benefits, easily accessible teaching support resources and grants to improve teaching and learning, are now available to term and adjunct faculty. Meanwhile, a task force completed a report on new ways to give part-time faculty more of a voice in enhancing their experience at DePaul.

SHARING CHICAGO’S CULTURAL HERITAGE

As a member of the Chicago Collections consortium—a collaboration among 20-plus universities and cultural heritage organizations—DePaul’s library is helping to expand access to Chicago’s arts, culture and history resources. The new consortium launched a slate of public events, including exhibitions, speakers, professional development programs and teaching resources. DePaul library staff provided leadership on a digital portal link to a record-location tool called Explore Chicago Connections. The tool helps users find archival materials like maps, photos and letters held by consortium member institutions. DePaul librarians also helped develop a digital pathway that connects web searchers with relevant experts at member organizations participating in the new Cooperative Reference Network.

DISTINCTIVE NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

DePaul is regularly introducing distinctive new academic programs that engage students in problem-based applied research and advocacy, such as the new refugee and forced migration studies program, which accepted its first cohort last year and was the first graduate program of its kind in the United States. Another example is the master’s degree in sustainable development, which just graduated its first cohort and is flexible enough to offer an expanded option for students to pursue certificates in global or public health, and community or metro planning development. DePaul also launched a new School of Design, neuroscience major and commercial Chinese minor, among others.

ONLINE CLASSES EXPAND AND ENROLLMENTS SOAR

Increased flexibility in DePaul’s course delivery modes is meeting the needs of the modern student. The university now adheres to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, enabling DePaul to deliver online programs in all 50 states. For example, any qualified student anywhere in the country can enroll in the College of Business’ fully online Master of Science in accountancy or Master in Taxation programs. Such versatility also is helping students make rapid progress. Overall online credit hours have increased more than 70 percent between 2012 and 2016 and now constitute 15 percent of the university’s credit hours.

FUNDING FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

The distinctive type of research, scholarship and creativity activities that DePaul faculty engage in set the university apart from others. The Quality of Instruction Council and University Research Council are important ways DePaul supports its faculty in this work. With attention to fostering collaboration, these programs made grants of more than $180,000 to 48 projects last year. The grants funded a needs assessment of immigration legal services in Illinois, an initiative called “Doing Good Through Data,” and creation of a new course on science writing and communication, among many others. Projects span all 10 colleges and offer opportunities for non-tenure-track faculty as well.
SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTIC INNOVATIONS

The College of Communication’s Innovation Lab (iLab) is a fresh example of how introducing students to software and hardware that future employers use gives DePaul graduates a head start in their careers. The iLab is a social media platform that capitalizes on Crimson Hexagon ForSight, the same software featured in many professional data command centers, and provides students with hands-on experience in social media listening, tracking, and analytics. These tools enable students to better understand online consumer behavior, target a specific audience and determine the effectiveness of a campaign—all skills that give them a competitive advantage as job candidates.

STUDENT ATHLETES SCORE BIG IN THE CLASSROOM

The BIG EAST All-Academic Team for the 2015-16 academic year includes 159 DePaul student-athletes, the third largest class of honorees in the past decade, following 166 student-athletes recognized in 2009-10 and 163 in 2014-15. The softball team led the way with 18 players making the list. To be eligible, students must have competed in a BIG EAST-sponsored sport, attained a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 for the preceding academic year, and completed a minimum of two consecutive semesters or three consecutive quarters of academic work, with a total of 18 semester or 27 quarter credits. DePaul’s Athletic Academic Advising program is key to this success by supporting student-athletes with supervised study time, weekly advising meetings, tutoring and career development services, among others.

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS FIND SUCCESS AND GRADUATE

DePaul’s low-income students graduate at higher rates than national competitors and on par with students from higher-income families. At most universities, there is a significant difference in graduation rates between students who receive Pell grants and those who do not. At DePaul, that difference is only 2 percentage points, while the average institutional completion gap nationally is 6 percentage points. Students who received MAP financial aid graduate at virtually the same rate (74.1 percent over six years) as Illinois students with higher family incomes (74.4 percent), despite research that low-income students, on average, often graduate at lower rates than students from wealthier families.

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PUTTING RESOURCES IN TEACHERS' HANDS

The College of Education (COE) has a strong reputation for supporting K-12 teachers. It houses the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources program, which gives teachers everywhere web access to lesson plans that introduce students to the raw materials of history. COE has taken a leading role in developing these resources by hosting workshops for teachers serving schools across Chicago and its suburbs in which teachers build plans using historical documents. COE is collaborating with DePaul’s library to develop teaching materials using the papers of anti-death-penalty crusader Sr. Helen Prejean and, separately, original materials related to the history of labor in Chicago.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Members of the DePaul community now have access to the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity’s (NCFDD) career-enhancing programming through DePaul’s institutional membership. This has proven to be a popular way to empower faculty to realize their potential as teacher-scholars. Delivered primarily online, NCFDD’s academic writing boot camp helps faculty focus on scholarship and research, while other resources support a range of skills, from how to win a federal grant to balancing parenting and productivity. Nearly 200 faculty, staff and students have taken courses through the center since the partnership began.

FRESHMEN INTRODUCED TO RESEARCH METHODS

The Center for Access and Attainment piloted a research internship for DePaul freshmen who graduated from the Chicago Public Schools’ International Baccalaureate programs. The research internship was designed to increase students’ awareness of basic research methodologies and hone their data analysis and interpretation skills, among others. This opportunity was created to strengthen the pathway for students with exemplary academic preparation from under-represented groups and/or lower-income families into programs that prepare students for graduate school and doctoral programs. Giving students early high-impact academic training through supervised scholarly activities builds a culture of academic engagement and collaboration that boosts student confidence and supports a successful transition between high school and college.

HOW TO THINK VERSUS WHERE TO CLICK

A redesign of the first-year information literacy program promotes higher-level thinking skills by introducing students to the basics of researching topics in an academic environment. Working collaboratively with Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse faculty, a team of librarians revised the curriculum that provides most students with their first experience using university library resources. Students now watch videos, complete pre-class work, finish a topic development exercise and locate an article using Academic Search Complete before participating in a library instruction session. The librarian can then emphasize metacognitive concepts through active learning exercises and de-emphasize task-oriented processes during in-person sessions.

MOST DIVERSE EVER

DePaul’s student body was more diverse than ever in fall 2015. Thirty-five percent, or 8,229 of the 23,539 students enrolled, were students of color—the highest number of students of color and the highest proportion in DePaul’s history. Students of color accounted for 38 percent of undergraduate enrollment, 29 percent of graduate enrollment and 25 percent of law enrollment.
LIFELONG LEARNING FOR EXECS

The Kellstadt Graduate School of Business launched a doctoral degree for executives seeking to enhance their professional education and skills beyond an MBA. The new Doctorate in Business Administration provides business leaders with evidence-based management methods to gain new perspectives in decision-making and problem-solving through rigorous scientific research techniques. The program enables students to develop personal working relationships with business faculty who have deep research experience. Students participate in 10 three-day faculty-led residencies in year one and join a small research team that analyzes a real-world business problem in the second year. Students complete dissertation research with guidance from a faculty mentor in their final year.

DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Racism became a topic of national conversation this year, and this dialogue was reflected at DePaul as students, faculty, and staff wrestled with issues of race and speech. In response, the President’s Diversity Council developed an initial action plan to address concerns about racism, micro-aggression and other issues that African-American students and others presented to administrators. The plan challenges the university community to live up to its highest ideals of social and restorative justice. New education and awareness training is under development. Policy and processes are under review. Campus climate survey results are being examined, and new student, faculty and staff resources are being considered. Full implementation of the plan is set to begin in fall 2016.

ELIMINATING HOMELESSNESS IN 150 CITIES

The Institute of Global Homelessness pledged to assist 150 cities worldwide to end street homelessness by 2030. The initiative has been shaped by experts in the field. In 2015 at a gathering of researchers and experts from 30 countries, the first common language to standardize the evaluation of homelessness across the world was adopted. The institute has already trained leaders from eight countries with new tools to alleviate homelessness in their communities.

LEARNING SUPPORT PROVES EFFECTIVE

The First Year Academic Success Program implemented as part of the Vision 2018 strategic plan is returning positive results. We know that freshmen who hit key benchmarks in their initial three quarters at DePaul are more likely to succeed, and learning support options are helping them reach these benchmarks. The program enables incoming freshmen to take prerequisite math and writing courses during the summer and winter break—tuition-free for no credit. Its first cohort, which enrolled in summer 2009, reached the six-year graduation mark and achieved a graduation rate of 72 percent, higher than the comparison group at 69 percent, and just below that of the general student population at 73 percent.

PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION AND BIAS

DePaul is at the forefront of universities stepping up measures to prevent gender discrimination. The university has hired a full-time Title IX coordinator and investigator and is offering more training, prevention, and outreach related to sex discrimination, harassment, and sexual and relationship violence. This includes training on explicit and implicit bias and conflict resolution. The university also revised its related policies to encourage reporting and highlight help resources. Meanwhile, the President’s Signature Series celebrated diversity through cultural events that addressed the Black Lives Matter movement, Americans with Disabilities Act anniversary and mental health topics, among others.
EDUCATING FOR EXCELLENCE

A partnership between the College of Education and the Academy of Urban School Leadership is working to improve schools in two ways: 1) prepare principals for leadership through DePaul’s Educational Leadership Program, and 2) prepare highly effective teachers through the special and early childhood education programs. Twenty-eight educators have already completed their programs and are now equipped to become transformative forces in their schools this fall. The success of the program has led to its expansion, and COE was selected to deliver an early childhood education program for educators who are preparing to help reinvigorate some of Chicago’s lowest-performing schools.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE CERTIFICATION

DePaul’s College of Education (COE) is the only one in Illinois offering International Baccalaureate (IB) educator certificates for both the Middle Year Program and Diploma Program. Authorization to begin the specialized training came after an international team of officials from the IB organization evaluated DePaul’s curriculum and gave COE an overwhelming endorsement. IB is an academically rigorous high school curriculum that fosters a global perspective using an inquiry-based pedagogy. Teachers pursue this post-graduate certification at DePaul in four courses delivered completely online. They also visit IB schools to experience and engage in IB education.

BRINGING DISCIPLINES TOGETHER

Interdisciplinary perspectives are growing in importance as higher education recognizes that the issues confronting faculty in their research and teaching—and students in their careers—cross many fields. That’s why DePaul seeds the development of new multidisciplinary academic coursework and programs by encouraging collaboration among faculty. The results of this interaction have included development of new courses, such as Phenomenology and Painting; Communication, Coding and Entrepreneurship; and Business Applications of Cognitive Computing.

VINCENTIAN TRIBUTE

To commemorate the Vincentians who established DePaul University more than a century ago and those who continued that legacy into the 21st century, a memorial site has been established on the Lincoln Park Campus. An installation of four 11-foot-tall red granite panels inscribed with the names of every Vincentian who served at DePaul is the centerpiece of this area, which offers limestone benches, a timepiece, complementary landscaping and special lighting. Located outside Arts and Letters Hall, this is the latest addition to DePaul’s extensive collection of Vincentian-oriented art around campus and also marks the 200th anniversary of the Vincentians’ arrival in the United States.
DEPAUL BASKETBALL IS RETURNING TO CHICAGO

Bringing DePaul basketball back into the city is moving closer to reality as construction for the new 10,000-seat arena is well underway. The arena will serve as the new home for DePaul men’s and women’s basketball, as well as a venue for commencement ceremonies and other city events. The facility’s distinctive curved roof atop transparent walls designed by internationally renowned architectural firm Pelli Clarke Pelli is already taking shape. Marketing and sales efforts for facility naming rights are well underway, as are the sale of 22 suites, club seats and other premium seating options. The space will be ready for the start of the 2017-18 basketball season.

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES LEARNING

E-portfolios, which enable students to integrate their learning from inside and outside the classroom and across disciplines, saw increased usage of 28 percent in the past year. The growth was largely fueled by the College of Education, which began using the system for two key teacher licensing assessments. Meanwhile, the CEO of Digication—the company that developed DePaul’s e-portfolio system—recognized the university as “one of the most successful implementations of portfolios (and) one of the fastest-growing portfolio implementations” among the more than 5,000 schools that use the system.

SUPPORTING VINCENTIAN EDUCATION WORLDWIDE

Seeking to share the values of St. Vincent de Paul broadly, the university established the Vincentian Summer Program—a collaboration with Global Initiatives, the English Language Academy, University Ministry, several colleges and Academic Affairs. Students from Vincentian high schools around the world visit DePaul for a three-week program that combines education on Catholic Vincentian identity with English classes, community service, cultural activities and digital media projects to prepare students to thrive in a global environment. DePaul students mentor the high-schoolers—helping the visitors develop their English speaking skills—and gain a fresh perspective on DePaul and its patron’s values in the process.

TELLING CONTEMPORARY VINCENTIAN STORIES THROUGH DOCUMENTARY

Online video consumption is soaring, especially among millennials. Mission and Values is capitalizing on this trend to deepen popular understanding of the Vincentian tradition with videos highlighting contemporary Vincentian works by the Daughters of Charity in Los Angeles. Three brief documentaries created by School of Cinematic Arts students showcase the largest privately funded Meals on Wheels program in the country, the story of a neonatal intensive-care unit serving poor and marginalized mothers, and a look into the Daughters’ gang intervention and family development program. Social justice is inherent in documentary filmmaking, and the new Master of Fine Arts in Documentary has a Vincentian emphasis on ethics that is central to its curriculum.

INTER-COLLEGE COLLABORATION ON HEALTH CARE DELIVERS BETTER PATIENT OUTCOMES

DePaul has dramatically expanded its footprint into health care education in recent years in both traditional and innovative ways. Computer science and the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business are teaching students how to apply big data to the health care industry, leading to better patient outcomes. Combining expertise in these disciplines led the university to offer a health care concentration within the master’s degree in predictive analytics program. Computer Science, Kellstadt and the College of Communication have a new focus on health informatics that teaches students how to use technology to improve health care access, quality, and outcomes for patients through better information management, enterprise management and information security.
The Center for Urban Education has developed hundreds of free educational materials for students, teachers, and parents that help students develop core competence and expand their learning in subjects across the curriculum. This content is accessible on a website for use in classrooms and supplemental learning at home. New content is added regularly in English and Spanish. Measures show the materials are accessed by 11,000 Chicago Public School teachers annually. Beyond local educators, districts and organizations in more than 30 states direct their teachers to the resources, and the materials were viewed by individuals in 124 countries during a recent month.

DePaul successfully refinanced its Series 2011A bonds in an advanced refunding transaction. The new Series 2016A bonds secured an all-in total interest cost of 3.18 percent, a substantial improvement over the 6.26 percent all-in interest cost on the Series 2011A bonds. This refinancing provided significant cash flow savings for the university.

DePaul has a long-standing and deep commitment to the Chicago Public Schools. Recently, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, DePaul created the Cities Project for 180 K-12 students in three Chicago Public Schools who experience high stress in their urban environment. DePaul students serve as mentors and community support staff for group activities in this effective intervention program. Its success as a pilot has garnered support for expansion to four more universities and additional public schools. Graduate students gain training in therapy and supervision, while undergrads learn to work with kids and earn service learning credit. Studies show that in these kinds of activities, givers gain as much as getters. So everyone wins.

African and Black Diaspora Studies appointed DePaul’s first Ida B. Wells Postdoctoral Scholar, Alyssa Garcia, whose research on the African Diaspora in the Caribbean, Latin America and United States is community-service oriented. The scholar’s role is a public one that includes teaching two courses, presenting research, organizing events, and participating in academic life with faculty and students. During her first year as the scholar, Garcia co-facilitated a workshop on the connections between Black and Latino/a students at DePaul and arranged a film event featuring a curator from Cuba and films from one of Cuba’s most prestigious film festivals, among other contributions.

DePaul is stepping up international recruitment of undergraduates in a variety of ways. In the past year four new transfer articulation agreements were signed with community colleges from across the world, bringing the total to 12 such agreements. The newest agreements signed in 2015 were with the Methodist College of Kuala Lumpur, Community College of Qatar, American College of Dubai and the University of Southern California’s International Academy. DePaul has similar agreements with institutions that attract students from across China, Nigeria, Mexico and Ecuador. In recent quarters, more than 200 students enrolled at DePaul through international community college pipelines.
GEOGRAPHY PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

DePaul’s Department of Geography earned the Award for Bachelor Program Excellence from the American Association of Geographers, which praised the program for developing a curriculum that advances urban social justice, community service and geotechnology. It also noted the department’s diverse faculty and student body, as well as its engagement in local, national, and international scholarly debates and research.

STUDENT SUCCESS TIED TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

Academic achievement, retention and graduation are key outcomes on which DePaul has focused its attention. To that end, every academic and co-curricular program assesses at least one learning outcome annually and uses the results to modify their programs and practices. Between 2012 and 2014, each department and program aligned their program-level learning outcomes with the University Learning Goals and Outcomes. Now, DePaul can use information from the annual assessment projects to document students’ achievement of the University Learning Outcomes. Two years of data have been collected so far. Over time, as more program-level learning outcomes are assessed, DePaul will have a more nuanced understanding of how students’ learning in different programs contributes to their fulfillment of the University Learning Goals and Outcomes.

FREE ACCESS TO ART, HISTORY MUSEUMS

Connecting students to the rich resources of the city is a hallmark of a DePaul education. New strategic partnerships strengthen DePaul’s connection to the city and students’ ability to experience Chicago as their extended classroom. Complementing free admission to the Chicago History Museum, undergraduates now have free admission to the world-class Art Institute of Chicago simply by showing their student IDs. This provides them entry to exhibits and access to the institute’s encyclopedia collection, archival materials, lectures and programs, all just steps away from the Loop Campus. In the first nine months of the program, more than 6,000 DePaul students took advantage of this opportunity, including more than 50 classes of students in the history of art and architecture department.

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF CARE ON CAMPUS

The Take Care DePaul campaign promotes a safe and healthy campus by inspiring students to make healthy choices for themselves, while looking out for others. The campaign highlighted alcohol and drug abuse prevention and bystander intervention, among other topics. Online education modules, posters and events enabled students to learn about topics ranging from HIV testing to depression. Ninety-two percent of first-year students completed the AlcoholEdu course, and 88 percent completed a course that addressed sexual and relationship violence.

STUDENT SUCCESS TIED TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

If you need assistance in deciding what you can help them with, please:
- Arm yourself with a strategy kit.
- Speak up if your friend looks lost or stuck in a rut.
- Call 211 or Public Safety if the situation is unsafe.

#TakeCareDePaul
www.takecare.depaul.edu/page
DePaul’s School of Hospitality Leadership is the top-rated, most recognized program in Illinois, according to a 2015 study by the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education. The study evaluated the status, challenges and opportunities of hospitality programs across the state and chose DePaul’s program as its benchmark. The journal cited the program’s significant growth over the past five years as a result of a well-structured curriculum and the program’s growing visibility.

DePaul is recognized for the state-of-the-art facilities it provides for its academic programs. The latest evidence of that is the United States Institute for Theatre Technology’s 2016 Architecture Honor Award, given to The Theatre School (TTS) for its new facility, which opened in 2013. TTS joins distinguished theatres around the world that have received this recognition. TTS also earned the American Institute of Architects Distinguished Design Award. The building was designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, with consulting from Schuler Shook and Kirkegaard Associates.

The Steans Center, Department of Geography and Community Service Studies undertook a new international service learning program on geographic information and sustainable food systems at Centro Regional Estudios de Alternativas Rurales (CREAR) in Rio Limpio, Dominican Republic. Through a course called Community Food Systems, DePaul students learned methods of sustainable and organic agriculture, and in return, trained Dominican students and teachers on mapping technology. Community mapping empowers people to represent themselves in ways that can support more informed decision making about management of local resources and environmental planning, among other topics. Funded by the Vincentian Endowment Fund, DePaul donated GPS devices, a notebook computer and GIS software to CREAR.

The Explore Your Purpose program is a new approach to helping students understand their career choices in the context of a calling. It takes the mission-based concept of vocation and translates it to career-minded students by encouraging them to reflect on their purpose. Students are inspired to consider the social implications of their lives and jobs in a way that connects DePaul’s Vincentian mission with students’ natural interests and extends this thought process to students who are not religiously affiliated or engaged. Faculty and staff were trained to foster more reflection on purpose in student interactions and asked to share thoughts on their own sense of purpose with students. The Lilly Endowment-funded program with students kicked off in 2016-17 with New Student Service Day activities that encouraged students to explore their purpose at DePaul.