

PARKINSON SCHOOL

OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

IMPACT REPORT 2024



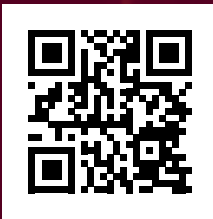
LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

The Parkinson School is driven by five core pillars:

-  Understanding the health continuum
-  Meeting the demands of allyship
-  Translating insight to impact
-  Learning by continually doing
-  Embodying The Loyola Way

Mission

The Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health advances knowledge through innovative research, educates students to become successful health professionals, and inspires a vigorous commitment to service. Students, faculty, and staff are immersed in a collaborative interdisciplinary environment committed to social justice in the Jesuit tradition.



TO LEARN MORE,
visit us at [LUC.edu/parkinson](https://luc.edu/parkinson)



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One School, Two Campuses

Lake Shore Campus

Located approximately eight miles north of downtown Chicago, the Lake Shore Campus sits alongside the banks of Lake Michigan on Chicago's North Side. One of the most picturesque college campuses in the Midwest, the Lake Shore Campus is the University's main residential undergraduate campus. The campus is a short train ride from downtown Chicago in Rogers Park, one of the city's 77 distinct communities that represent a diverse array of cultures, people, and experiences.



Health Sciences Campus

Located approximately 12 miles west of downtown Chicago, the Health Sciences Campus in Maywood, Illinois, houses **most** of Parkinson's graduate programs, along with various institutes and centers **that encourage** interprofessional education and research opportunities.

The Health Sciences Campus sits adjacent to the nationally-recognized Loyola University Health System. Parkinson faculty members often have appointments at Loyola University Medical Center and Edward J. Hines, Jr. VA Hospital. These strong partnerships provide our students with relevant and up-to-date techniques, practices, and methods to inform their education and their professional pursuits.

Message from the Dean

DEAR FRIENDS, The Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health seeks to prepare a rising generation of diverse health leaders to be “persons for, and with, others” in the Jesuit tradition. Opened in 2019—and forged during the COVID-19 global pandemic—we are proudly celebrating our 5-year anniversary.

Founded with purpose, we are united in our common commitment that access to good health is a fundamental human right.

Solving complex health problems challenges us to be **systems thinkers who understand the health continuum** and adopt whole health approaches. With an entrepreneurial energy, we are building an interdisciplinary school that applies broad-based expertise and develops partnerships with others to transform health in all of its dimensions—and to share this energy and knowledge with our students.

We collaborate in new ways with colleagues in Loyola's schools of medicine, nursing, social work, business, education, law, and environmental sustainability to help address the full range of social and commercial determinants of health.

Translating insight to impact is our passion. We take pride in cultivating students who value and prize community action toward a vision of greater health equity. In partnership with the University of Chicago and Rush University, we are among the elite clinical and translational science awardees funded by the National Institutes of Health to accelerate the translation of health innovation into practice.

As a Carnegie-recognized university for community engagement, **learning by continually doing**, is in our DNA. Service-based and experiential learning is integral to a Parkinson School education. We strive to be trusted allies with diverse communities locally across the Chicagoland area; nationally, with veterans through the Edward Hines, Jr. Veterans Administration Hospital; and globally, with longstanding collaborations throughout Africa.

Embodying The Loyola Way—the mission of Ignatian education is to develop students who are well-rounded, compassionate, and committed to serving others. In the Parkinson School, our education is grounded in understanding context and the lived experience, in reflection and evaluation for personal growth, and in action challenging us to apply what we learn.

In our 2024 Impact Report, we share with you some of the highlights from our first 5 years. We are excited about what our future holds – onward!

With Gratitude,

Elaine H. Morrato

Elaine H. Morrato, DrPH, MPH, FISPE, CPH
Professor and Founding Dean
Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health
Loyola University Chicago



Founded with purpose

The Parkinson School owes its existence to the vision, spirit, and support of two dedicated Loyola University Chicago alumni: the late Robert (Bob) L. Parkinson Jr. (BBA '73, MBA '75) and his wife, Elizabeth (Betty) Parkinson (BS '75).

The Parkinsons embraced Loyola's mission to seek God in all things and to work toward expanding knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith. The couple's significant support of Loyola transformed many areas of the University and their firm belief in access to quality health care as a fundamental human right spurred the launch of the Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health in 2019.

Through the harmonization of pre-existing programs from Loyola's Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing and the Stritch School of Medicine, we started with eight legacy programs in 2019. Over the last five years, we have doubled the number of programs offered and our enrollment has surged 55 percent. In that same time, we have expanded our research portfolio, created dynamic events, and established community partnerships to elevate our impact, enhance the education of our students, and honor the Jesuit commitment to social justice.

Over the last five years, we have doubled the number of programs offered and our enrollment has surged 55 percent.

1540

St. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus, whose mission is Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam—to the greater glory of God. Making education more accessible and the founding of colleges becomes a major expression of this idea.

1870

Loyola University Chicago is founded.

1920

The Loyola School of Medicine is established. Today's Parkinson programs in public health, medical laboratory sciences, and health informatics emerged from the School of Medicine.

1935

Loyola University Chicago launched the first collegiate nursing program in Illinois. Today's Parkinson programs in dietetics, exercise sciences, and healthcare administration emerged from the School of Nursing.

1973

Bob Parkinson receives his Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Loyola's Quinlan School of Business.

1975

Betty McCormack earns a Bachelor of Science degree from Loyola's

College of Arts and Sciences. Meanwhile, Bob Parkinson receives his second degree from the Quinlan School of Business—an MBA.

1976

Bob Parkinson and Betty McCormack marry. The couple later welcome four children: Matthew, Robert L. III, Erin, and Rebecca.

2002

Following a distinguished career in business, including stints as the chairman and CEO of Baxter as well as the president of Abbott Laboratories, Bob Parkinson is named dean of the Quinlan School of Business. He holds the role for two years.

2011

The Parkinsons pledge \$5 million to the Quinlan School of Business.

2013

Bob Parkinson is appointed chairman of the Loyola University Chicago Board of Trustees.

2017

Loyola launches the \$25 million endowed Center for Health Outcomes and Informatics Research (CHOIR) to educate and engage faculty, health care profession-

als, and students in the fundamentals of health outcomes research and data-driven health care delivery and outcomes.

2018

Loyola joins the Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM), a \$50 million National Institutes of Health-supported Clinical and Translational Science Award program designed to accelerate the translation of biomedical innovation to practice across the Chicago area. The ITM is a partnership between the University of Chicago and Rush in collaboration with Loyola, Advocate Aurora Health, the Illinois Institute of Technology, and Endeavor Health.

The Parkinsons commit \$20 million to scholarships, innovation, and strategic initiatives to establish the Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health at Loyola.

2019

The Parkinson School welcomes its first students—258 undergraduate majors and 130 graduate students—as the 2019-2020 academic year gets underway.

Bob Parkinson passes away on December 19 at the age of 68.



Betty and I are confident that others will support this school which is so vital to improving health care locally and throughout the world.”

—BOB PARKINSON

2020

Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence, an inter-departmental committee founded in 2017, hosts its inaugural Community Advocacy and Violence Prevention Summit to spotlight gun violence prevention efforts. The now University-wide summit has been hosted annually by the Parkinson School since 2021 as part of National Public Health Week.



Public health expert Dr. Elaine Morrato begins her tenure as founding dean of the Parkinson School just weeks before the World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 a pandemic.



The COVID Equity Response Collaborative: Loyola (CERCL) forms within a month of WHO's pandemic declaration. CERCL's immediate response to the pandemic includes providing testing and contact tracing to vulnerable communities across Cook County's near western suburbs.

The Parkinson School introduces the Center for Health Innovation and

Entrepreneurship (CHIE) as a central hub for purpose-driven research and education aimed at reducing health inequities and improving health care delivery for all.

2021

The Parkinson School recognizes its inaugural cohort of Robert and Betty Parkinson Social Justice Scholars.

Betty Parkinson is elected to the Loyola University Chicago Board of Trustees.

The Parkinson School launches its Master in Healthcare Administration degree program.

CHIE teams with MATTER, a Chicago-based health care incubator, to launch the Loyola Chicago Health Equity Quest. This annual national innovation forum seeks to spur entrepreneurial activity at the intersection of health equity and complex health problems. Topics have included addressing the societal effects of the pandemic, tackling the health effects of rapid climate change, and creating more sustainable health care delivery.

2022

The ITM is awarded \$53 million in renewed funding from the National Institutes of Health to promote multidisciplinary team science and engage institutional and community partners in the design and implementation of health research for advancing health equity in Chicagoland.

2023

CHOIR introduces *Salon: Data Science for Social Thinkers*, an annual event promoting informatics and data-driven research through a human-centered lens.



With 370 undergraduates and 152 graduate students, total enrollment at the Parkinson School crosses 500.¹

2024

The Parkinson School celebrates its five-year anniversary. The theme for the yearlong celebration is “Reimagining the future of health, today.”

¹Parkinson Family Stewardship Report pages 1-5.pdf

Cultivating the next generation of health care and public health leaders



We live and breathe an interdisciplinary approach at Parkinson because we understand the realities of today's world. As our students learn about these related fields and discover diverse perspectives, their minds expand and their ability to problem solve and care for others grows stronger."

— JENNY O'ROURKE, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS,
PARKINSON SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health at Loyola University Chicago prepares students to thrive in today's fast-paced, complex health care ecosystem. We prioritize collaborative, interdisciplinary learning, and systems thinking to transform health in all of its dimensions. Blending pragmatic, real world-informed coursework with hands-on learning, our students develop relevant skills for today's health care environments and are inspired to be action-oriented professionals for those they serve. Parkinson regularly collaborates with colleagues in Loyola's schools of medicine, nursing, social work, business, education, law, and environment and sustainability to help address the full range of the social determinants of health and the systems, practices, and pathways through which commercial actors drive human health and health equity.

- 3 undergraduate degree programs arming students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful health professionals
- 8 graduate degree programs designed to broaden students' knowledge and unlock professional opportunities
- 7 innovative dual-degree programs cutting across disciplines such as business, medicine, and social work

An Interdisciplinary Focus in the Student Experience

Loyola University Chicago is a Carnegie-recognized university for both community engagement and high research activity. As part of its mission, Parkinson immerses students in a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment committed to social justice in the Jesuit tradition.

When members of different health care and health sciences disciplines work collaboratively toward a common purpose, it drives improved coordination of care, strengthens the systems approach, bolsters the effectiveness of interventions, and fuels health equity.

Broadening Perspective through Coursework

For many Parkinson students, exposure to other disciplines first occurs through courses providing a broader understanding of the contemporary health care landscape, including the varied positions and perspectives contributing to individual and population health.

At the undergraduate level, for instance, Parkinson offers several introductory courses providing Parkinson students an overview of distinct fields such as public

health and nutrition. These courses also enroll non-Parkinson degree-seeking students as well, generating connections to students studying pre-med, biology, psychology, and other fields to further enliven Parkinson's interdisciplinary mission.

As Parkinson students progress toward their undergraduate degree, they often take courses in other programs to expand their knowledge base, while a core Parkinson course like Fundamentals of Health Equity brings students from multiple fields together to examine health disparities in the U.S. as well as strategies to advance health equity.

Collaborating with Community Partners

But the Parkinson School's focus on interdisciplinarity to fuel student growth extends far beyond the classroom doors.

Parkinson is intentional about finding community partners who share the school's interdisciplinary ethos. Within capstone experiences, students from healthcare administration, exercise science, and informatics are often placed together at partner hospital sites while MATTER, a Chicago-based health care incubator, also welcomes students from various disciplines into its innovation-focused culture.

At Loyola's Lake Shore Campus, meanwhile, dietetic interns and nutrition students work alongside students from the University's Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing to provide health and nutrition services to vulnerable local residents at the Loyola Community Nursing Center.

Expanding Research Opportunities

Parkinson also pulls students into interdisciplinary research projects. Associate dean for research and scholarship Dr. Pamela Xaverius recently spearheaded the launch of a micro-grant program enabling graduate students to work on research projects across disciplines.

One dietetic student, for example, worked with school leadership on a data analysis project for decision-making.

Convening Crucial Conversations

Finally, Parkinson hosts three signature events each year: Health Equity Quest, Salon: Data Science for Social Thinkers, and Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence. Each event welcomes attendees representing different disciplines, investigates entrenched problems in the health care landscape, and rallies multiple perspectives to forge potential solutions.

3

UNDERGRADUATE
DEGREE
PROGRAMS

8

GRADUATE
DEGREE
PROGRAMS

7

INNOVATIVE
DUAL-DEGREE
PROGRAMS

Events to inspire and empower

At the Parkinson School, one of our fundamental beliefs is that we cannot solve complex problems alone. Crafting sustainable solutions to systemic challenges requires open dialogue and earnest collaboration among people who touch an issue from various angles. At three annual events—Health Equity Quest, Salon: Data Science for Social Thinkers, and Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence—we bring together diverse stakeholders representing different disciplines, sectors, and life experiences. With open hearts and minds, we strengthen our collective resolve to address pressing issues related to health equity and quality of life.

Loyola Chicago Health Equity Quest

Hosted by the Parkinson School's Center for Health Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CHIE) in conjunction with MATTER, a Chicago-based incubator, Loyola Health Equity Quest is an annual challenge to catalyze innovation and jumpstart ventures committed to reducing long-standing health inequities and improving population health. The event includes a "Shark Tank"-styled pitch contest before an audience including venture capitalists and philanthropists.

Each year, Health Equity Quest focuses on a topic related to society's changing needs. In its debut year, 2021, the event looked at health equity and emerging infectious diseases. In following years, themes turned to topics such as the intersection of health and rapid climate change as well as justice within health care systems and the natural environment. In fall 2024, Health Equity Quest will explore mental health for early career professionals in partnership with Alight, a leading cloud-based human capital technology and services provider for employee benefits administration..



Keynote Speaker, 2023 Health Equity Quest

Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, *Federal Chief Environmental Justice Officer, White House Council on Environmental Quality*

Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence

Since 2020, the Community Advocacy and Violence Prevention Summit hosted by Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence has invited students, faculty, and community leaders to discuss ways to curtail gun violence—a national public health crisis that continues plaguing the Chicago area.

The annual summit promotes education, advocacy, and dialogue, blending keynote speeches with panel discussions highlighting strategies and methods to reduce violence. Previous keynote speakers have included Cook County States Attorney Kim Foxx, activist Fred Guttenberg, and Brady president Kris Brown.

In 2024, the summit shifted to Loyola's Lake Shore Campus and added an exhibitor hall showcasing local organizations working to combat gun violence.



Through these key events at the Parkinson School, we connect with the broader community and work toward solutions rooted in equity, innovation, and compassion.”

— MICHAEL BLOOM, FOUNDING DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR HEALTH INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Salon: Data Science for Social Thinkers

Seeking to advance health data science, improve health outcomes, and advance health equity, the Center for Health Outcomes and Informatics Research (CHOIR) introduced Salon: Data Science for Social Thinkers in 2023. Salon promotes informatics and data-driven research in an accessible way, leaning into first-person perspectives, impactful narratives, and energized personal conversations around data's role in health care decision-making and action.

Leaning into areas like social justice, diversity, global health, and community engagement, past Salon speakers have included professionals from the Parkinson School, Northwestern University, the Chicago Department of Public Health, the American Medical Association's Center for Health Equity, and nonprofit agencies like Guitars Over Guns.



An unrelenting focus on translation to community and practice



Whether you want to ‘move fast and break things’ or ‘think different,’ you can expect that Parkinson’s centers and institutes aim for disruptive change in health and health care.”

— NICHOLAS D. SOULAKIS, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR HEALTH OUTCOMES AND INFORMATICS RESEARCH



At the Parkinson School, our centers and institutes embody our mission to pursue innovative research, empower a new generation of health professionals for others, and inspire a vigorous commitment to service.

We embrace inquiry and cultivate partnerships to create impact. We apply our knowledge and skills to uplift our globe’s fellow citizens, particularly the most vulnerable among us. We bring our research into the world, developing novel solutions to advance health at both the individual and population levels. Through our centers and institutes, we strengthen our position as thought leaders, collaborators, and problem solvers building a more productive, efficient, and connected health care landscape.

Center for Health Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CHIE)

Launched in 2020, the Center for Health Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CHIE) continues assembling a community of enterprising stakeholders—faculty, students, community partners, and business leaders among them—interested in reducing health inequities and improving population health. Through interdisciplinary research, collaboration, and strategic partnerships, CHIE catalyzes innovation in teaching, research, and service to foster innovative, scalable, and sustainable health solutions.

In addition to providing entrepreneurial training through the I-Corps@NCATS (National Center for Advancing Translational Science) Program, CHIE hosts pitch competitions, seminars, and summits, including Health Equity Quest, its annual flagship event designed to jumpstart promising ventures and ignite valuable connections.

Center for Health Outcomes and Informatics Research (CHOIR)

Spurred by a \$25 million endowment, the Center for Health Outcomes and Informatics Research (CHOIR) educates and engages faculty, health care professionals, resident physicians, and students in the fundamentals of health outcomes research and data-driven health care delivery and outcomes.

Since its 2017 founding, CHOIR has worked to create a data-driven culture to improve health outcomes and health equity through various initiatives: bringing its big data expertise to improvement-minded health care organizations; devoting more than \$1 million to faculty projects leveraging CHOIR’s informatics infrastructure and data analytics capabilities; and hosting an annual event, Salon: Data Science for Social Thinkers, designed to democratize health data and launch partnerships.

Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM)

In 2018, Loyola joined the Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM), a \$50 million National Institutes of Health-supported Clinical and Translational Science Award program: Advancing Health toward Health Equity throughout Metropolitan Chicago. ITM is comprised of six leading Chicagoland academic medical and health care systems, including the University of Chicago and Rush University Medical Center.

To date, ITM has connected more than 1,800 researchers and Chicago area organizations, funded and trained scientists, and worked to make clinical trials more accessible to local patients. By promoting interdisciplinary team science and fully engaging institutional and community stakeholders in health research, ITM unlocks innovative approaches to advance the science and practice of clinical and translational research. In the process, it is reducing traditional barriers to health care and mitigating disease risk, morbidity, and mortality to improve health and health equity in the Chicago area and beyond.

Enhancing Health Equity: 2023 CHOIR Grantee Projects

In fall 2023, CHOIR awarded funding to four early-stage, Loyola-based projects aiming to reduce health inequalities in the Chicago area.

■ Community Equity Response Collaborative: Loyola (CERCL)—Addressing Structural Barriers to Health Equity through Interprofessional Education and Community Engagement

PI: Amy Luke, Professor and Chair, Public Health Sciences, Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health

CERCL fellows received training on the principles of academic-community partnerships and community engagement while engaging in both service delivery and workforce development in under-resourced communities of color near Loyola’s Health Sciences Campus.

■ Advocacy Matters: Community Engagement to Address Gun Violence

PI: Amy Luke, Professor and Chair, Public Health Sciences, Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health

Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence provided bi-monthly grassroots organizing and advocacy workshops, hosted “Community Conversations” around multiple aspects of gun violence, including legislative reform and criminal justice approaches, and developed the coalition’s annual Community Advocacy and Violence Prevention Summit.



■ A Community-Based Innovation to Promote Black Women’s Mental Wellness in Chicago

PI: Marion Malcome, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work

The Malcome-led project supported a preliminary community-informed feasibility study of the Friendship Bench intervention and approach to reduce mental health inequities at Sista Afya Community Care, a Chicago-based nonprofit mental wellness organization serving Black women experiencing financial insecurity.

■ Opportunities for Reducing Community Health Inequities for Depression (ORCHID)

PI: Sandi Tenfelde, Associate Professor and Director of the Women’s Health/Gender Related Nurse Practitioner Program, Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing

The community partnership with Near North Health aimed to reduce health inequities related to mental health services. It included addressing the needs of behavioral health patients—from assessing their social determinants of health to reviewing primary health care needs—as well as training nurses, case managers, and clinicians working in obstetrics to support patients struggling with postpartum depression.

In allyship with communities



1,500+

COMMUNITY RESIDENTS
PROVIDED FREE AND
ACCESSIBLE COVID TESTING

5,000+

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE
EQUIPMENT (PPE)/
RESOURCE BAGS
DISTRIBUTED

20

VIRTUAL, LIVE-STREAMED,
AND INTERACTIVE
SESSIONS ON COVID-
19-RELATED TOPICS
IMPLEMENTED

19

VACCINE CLINICS AT
VARIOUS COMMUNITY
EVENTS CO-HOSTED

As a Carnegie-designated Community-Engaged University, Loyola University Chicago is committed to fostering mutually beneficial relationships with communities across the Chicago area, Illinois, the Midwest, the U.S., and even the globe.

We eagerly accept opportunities to drive human health. Community engagement enables us to enhance our students' learning and citizenship, sharpen our scholarship and creative activity, and address pressing societal issues in the name of the common good. We work to establish trust with community members and build long-term, productive, and collaborative relationships that deliver sustainable impact together.

The Rise of CERCL: Champions of Health Equity in Local Communities

In the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Parkinson School community prioritized action amid tumultuous times.

Alongside partners from Loyola University Chicago's Stritch School of Medicine, the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, and the schools of law and social work, Parkinson students and faculty spearheaded the launch of COVID Equity Response Collaborative: Loyola (CERCL)—a multi-layered effort to mitigate the effects of the outbreak and respond to the community's most pressing needs.

CERCL immediately became an all-encompassing source for empowerment, advocacy, and action. The up-start effort:

- Provided free and accessible COVID testing to more than 1,500 community residents
- Trained over 80 students and community residents on contact tracing, including soft-skills training, to improve communication and optimize effectiveness of outreach efforts in diverse communities
- Screened approximately 1,100 people for social and legal influencers of health and provided tailored support where needed
- Distributed more than 5,000 personal protective equipment (PPE)/resource bags containing face masks, sanitation wipes, general community resource sheets, and COVID-19 FAQs

- Implemented 20 virtual, live-streamed, and interactive sessions—in both English and Spanish—on COVID-19-related topics in partnership with experts and a local media outlet

- Co-hosted at least 19 vaccine clinics at various community events

- Conducted multiple cohorts of the Community Engagement Fellowship empowering students to plan and execute community projects alongside local partners

As the pandemic slowed, CERCL transitioned from testing, contact tracing, and vaccinations to a general community health equity collaborative model. Today, the "C" in CERCL stands for "Community." The interdisciplinary coalition advocates for structural and health equity by teaming with Chicago area partners to address community concerns and address broad health initiatives ranging from gun violence prevention to mental health.

Collaborating with residents and community-based organizations wishing to create—and realize—sustainable visions for a healthy and prosperous community, CERCL's current programming includes:

- Semester-long community engagement fellowships allow students to develop skills in critical thinking, intercultural and interprofessional collaborations, and effective communication, as well as civic, social, and environmental responsibility. In addition to didactic work, fellows are assigned to community partners in Maywood to co-manage a community-based project.
- CERCL partners with local organizations to lead regular discussions with community members about identified health, social, and economic needs.
- CERCL's interdisciplinary team shares its knowledge and skills with community partners to elevate their work, from developing and evaluating programs to building increased capacity.



Learning by doing

1,000+

HOURS OF SUPERVISED PRACTICE DURING MULTIPLE ROTATIONS TACKLED BY DIETETIC STUDENTS

210

HOURS WITH A FIELD PARTNER COMPLETED BY MPH STUDENTS

Experiential Learning is central to curriculum at the Parkinson School, a vital ingredient to how our students gain confidence and develop the requisite knowledge and skills to serve others.

We believe in the power of learning by doing—and then reflecting on experiences to prompt understanding and personal growth. By bringing students into real-world settings, our students can actively apply course content, improve their problem-solving skills, and prepare for their careers. Engaged Learning opportunities encourage our students to think with creativity and purpose about different ways they can positively impact people as well as health care systems and positions them to have energized careers.

Engaged Learning to Empower

Whether it's completing a patient intake project for a hospital administrator, crafting nutritional plans for nursing home residents, or working one-on-one with clients at a start-up fitness center, the Parkinson School incorporates Engaged Learning opportunities into its curriculum. These experiences, which happen outside of the classroom and in real-world environments, enhance student learning, strengthen their skillset, and inform their next steps. Simultaneously, Engaged Learning allows the Parkinson School to connect with the community and pursue health equity.

Engaged Learning is a requirement for undergraduate students majoring in healthcare administration and exercise science. In addition to completing a service-learning course, students in those two majors must also finish a full semester academic internship during their senior year. In 2022, the Parkinson School also began piloting an elective internship course for students enrolled in the school's third undergraduate major, public health.

Meanwhile, master's degree-seeking students in four different academic programs—public health, laboratory science, dietetics, and exercise science—all complete practicum hours en route to earning their graduate degrees or certificates. MPH students, for example, must complete 210 hours with a field partner while dietetic students tackle multiple rotations totaling more than 1,000 hours of supervised practice.

Through Engaged Learning, students work on tangible projects while receiving mentorship from a site supervisor or preceptor, gaining transferable skills they can apply in the workforce, if not parlay into full-time employment.

Since its founding, the Parkinson School has compiled an impressive list of more than 200 community partners to facilitate Engaged Learning, ranging from established entities like the American Medical Association and Blue Cross Blue Shield to public agencies like the Chicago Department of Public Health and Chicago Public Schools to nonprofits, nursing homes, startup operations, and hospitals across the Chicago metropolitan area.

“

Engaged Learning experiences allow students to see what life is like in a professional work setting and help them understand how they can be a change agent in their field.”

— CYNTHIA STEWART, DIRECTOR OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, PARKINSON SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

“

It's been so enlightening to expand my horizons, learn new things about the health care sector, and work to unlock ways to do things better.”

—MELISSA RODRIGUEZ, '24



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Spotlight on Engaged Learning

Melissa Rodriguez '24

MAJOR: HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION

Rodriguez's service-learning courses included crafting an improvement plan for a rural Illinois hospital and creating a marketing plan to help the Alzheimer's Association promote its services. In her final semester, Rodriguez completed an academic internship with the Neuroscience Service Line at University of Chicago Medicine. There, she worked on a data analytics project to increase patient satisfaction and also supported the introduction of a new patient check-in device.

Grace Tylutki '24

MAJOR: EXERCISE SCIENCE

During her freshman year Exercise Science 101 service-learning course, Tylutki and her peers developed programs on physical health and nutrition for a local high school's virtual health fair. Her four-month academic internship, meanwhile, brought her to Cardiopulmonary at Northwest Community Hospital in suburban Arlington Heights, where she supported patient recovery and well-being by leading rehabilitation classes and delivering presentations on topics such as coping with chronic illnesses and managing stress.

"It's been amazing to apply lessons from the classroom into real-world environments and bridge the gap between theory and practice, which is exactly the goal of Engaged Learning."



Enhancing access for enterprising minds

85%
OF PARKINSON SCHOOL GRADUATE STUDENTS RECEIVED FINANCIAL AID IN 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

74%
OF PARKINSON SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVED INTERNAL GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY THE PARKINSON SCHOOL OR LOYOLA IN 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Parkinson School was built on the belief that quality health care and access to good health is a fundamental human right. As such, we are earnest in our work to educate, develop, and inspire young minds to engage in that vital work. Education is a key social determinant of health and social mobility catalyst for individuals and their communities. We recognize the costs of higher education can be prohibitive for some and affordability is top of mind for students and families. Through various merit and need-based scholarships, including our hallmark Parkinson Scholars award, we create access to a Parkinson education and the potential it unlocks. We want every hungry mind to be able to pursue the transformative power of education and enjoy the necessary support to pursue their ambitions and change lives for the better.

- 85% of Parkinson School graduate students received financial aid in 2023-2024 academic year
- 74% of Parkinson School students received internal graduate scholarships awarded by the Parkinson School or Loyola in 2023-2024 academic year

The Robert and Betty Parkinson Scholars Award

The Parkinson Scholars Award supports exceptionally talented students with demonstrated financial need who are dedicated to being “persons for others” and using their Parkinson education to improve the health and health care of individuals, communities, and systems. Each year, up to 12 Parkinson undergraduate (juniors and seniors) and incoming graduate students receive an \$8,000 tuition-restricted scholarship for the academic year as well as access to additional funds to support scholarly activity. With this support, Parkinson Scholars

“As a Parkinson Scholar, I am presented with the opportunity to influence underprivileged and impoverished communities. I hope to expand my knowledge of health equity, diversify my skillset, and improve the lives of communities through active service.”

— LAIBA SUKHERA, BS IN PUBLIC HEALTH, CLASS OF 2025, 2023 PARKINSON SCHOLAR

can expand their social justice leadership skills through community service, scholarship, and the mentorship of future scholarship recipients. Since the Parkinson Scholars program launched in 2021, 47 students representing every Parkinson School program have received the distinguished award. Recipients are high-achieving individuals who embrace Jesuit ideals and hold ambitious plans to impact lives through service, outreach, and social justice advocacy.

Returning Rambler Scholarship

Launched in 2022, the Returning Rambler Scholarship represents Loyola University Chicago’s commitment to life-long learning. The scholarship covers 25 percent of a student’s tuition rate for undergraduate alumni enrolling in their first eligible credit-bearing post-baccalaureate certificate program, endorsement, an accelerated bachelor’s to master’s program, or master’s degree program within 10 years of completing their undergraduate degree.



“Being a Parkinson Scholar entails having numerous opportunities to employ our knowledge and resources in order to give back to the community through innovative approaches.”

— AKSHITA PONNURU, BS IN HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION, CLASS OF 2025, 2023 PARKINSON SCHOLAR



Parkinson excels at not only providing you with the education necessary to improve health issues but also offers numerous opportunities to apply that education in practice. My courses have prepared me to go off into the world and address any number of health issues.”

— ZACHARY WILDER, MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH '24

Prepared to serve

The Parkinson School of Health Sciences and Public Health seeks to prepare a rising generation of diverse health leaders to be “persons for others” in the Jesuit tradition – united in our common commitment that access to good health is a fundamental human right.

Our students embrace this mission with an uncommon spirit, challenging themselves to learn, grow, and serve the community. They reflect on ways they can become more well-rounded individuals and actively seek avenues to impact lives through research, service, and sharing knowledge. They are doers and agents of change, eager to uplift lives and improve systems. And we are willing allies to shepherd their development and power their futures.

Kareena Patel

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION '24

“My Parkinson experience has opened my eyes to the power of networking and not being afraid to connect with new people. Whether faculty or professionals in the field, they are a wonderful resource for knowledge and career opportunities.”

Mia Silvestros

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH/MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH '25

“My Parkinson experience has encouraged me to pursue my passion for health equity. The staff and peers I have met within this college are a huge reason I feel such a calling to make the world a better place through improving the nation's health care system.”

Gabriela Fuentes

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE/MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH '24

“The Parkinson School has offered an exceptional education, teaching me to translate ‘good intentions’ into deliberate actions. I aspire to leverage the knowledge and skills gained through my MPH to magnify the influence and authority I’ll possess as a physician, driving sustainable change in underserved communities.”

Zachary Wilder

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH '24

“Parkinson excels at not only providing you with the education necessary to improve health issues but also offers numerous opportunities to apply that education in practice. My courses have prepared me to go off into the world and address any number of health issues. Knowing this, I have felt motivated and excited to join initiatives attempting to improve the health of our Chicagoland communities of diverse backgrounds.”

Mercedes Muniz-Telleria

MASTER OF DIETETICS AND DIETETIC INTERNSHIP '24

“Loyola fosters an incredible culture of compassion, empathy, and service to others. My dietetic internship was truly eye-opening. It showed me how health care providers should consistently strive to deliver the best care while embodying these values.”

Ronit Goswami

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EXERCISE SCIENCE '24

“I feel like I have consistently stepped out of my comfort zone during my time at Loyola. I was inspired by those around me including Parkinson faculty, my classmates and the student-athletes, coaches, and staff I work with in Athletics to be a leader in all I do.”



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— RONIT GOSWAMI, MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EXERCISE SCIENCE '24



Leaders, doers, and global citizens

PARKINSON
FACULTY

95%

ARE PUBLISHED AUTHORS

90%

ARE INVOLVED IN
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED
RESEARCH

73%

ARE STUDYING AT LEAST
ONE SOCIAL DETERMINANT
OF HEALTH

Called to serve, we apply our knowledge and skills to uplift those around us and to shape the well-being of generations. We bring our research into the world, developing novel solutions to advance human health and address health equity. We collaborate with communities near and far, engaging partners to improve quality of life, particularly among vulnerable populations. We manage and extract data to gain insights and identify new approaches, treatments, and policies to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities. In the Jesuit tradition, we bring our heart, mind, and faith into the world to elevate health and propel lives.

A Leader in Drug Safety Research and Policy

Professor and founding dean of the Parkinson School, Elaine Morrato exemplifies the school's focus on thought leadership, research, and global impact. Board-certified in public health and an elected fellow in the International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology, she uses her background in global pharmaceutical drug development and commercialization to inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of drug risk mitigation. Morrato has advised the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on numerous issues of drug safety and benefit-risk assessment and served as a visiting scientist in its Center for Drug Evaluation and Research resulting in new guidance to industry and standards of evaluation globally. Locally, Morrato leads Loyola's participation in the Institute for

Translational Medicine, among the elite set of academic centers advancing the efficiency, quality, and impact of biomedical research for improving human health.

Highlighting Human Energy Needs

A professor of public health sciences at Parkinson, Amy Luke's National Institutes of Health-funded research has enabled her to travel the world, where she has worked alongside other researchers and community partners on meaningful projects related to issues such as nutrition, obesity, and hypertension. She was a member of a U.S. Institute of Medicine expert group that developed and published national guidelines for Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy in 2023. Her participation in that group sparked an invitation to attend and present at a June 2024 joint meeting to review human energy requirements co-hosted by the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Research with a Global Slant

Professor of non-communicable disease epidemiology Lara Dugas has been investigating non-communicable disease risk in Africa-origin populations for more than a decade, specifically focusing on cardiometabolic disease risk and the role of the gut microbiota. In 2021, she was named AXA Chair in Non-Communicable Disease Epidemiology at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa, where she is collaborating with the UCT Africa Climate and Development Initiative on potential housing modifications to reduce the negative health impact of excessive heat in sub-Saharan Africa. Dugas also recently released a three-part MasterScience course on the AXA ResearchFundLive YouTube channel focused on addressing the swelling impact of noncommunicable diseases, particularly in low-income countries around the globe.

Tackling Malaria in Urban Centers

From 2021-2024, Ifeoma Ozodiegwu led a \$1.4 million effort supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to generate data and evidence for appropriate interventions toward efficient malaria elimination efforts in Nigeria's urban areas. Now, Ozodiegwu, an assistant professor in the Department of Health Informatics and Data Science at the Parkinson School, directs the Urban Malaria Research Group, a Loyola-based team focused on developing the first model of malaria transmission for urban areas. She also serves as a principal investigator at the Urban Malaria Project, an international collective of researchers assessing the burdens and determinants of urban malaria transmission.

“

Whether it's providing resources to support research and scholarship or identifying new ways in which we can work with community partners to create sustainable impact, we don't just talk about what's important at the Parkinson School but do the necessary work to facilitate positive change and amplify impact.”

— PAMELA XAVERIUS, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP, PARKINSON SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH



Changemakers in and out of the classroom



Parkinson faculty are thought leaders and educators, collaborators and change makers. Their impact is felt at the Parkinson School but extends far beyond our campuses.

In promoting new knowledge, advocating for policy revisions or more effective protocols, and working in local communities to launch new health initiatives, our faculty translate insights into action to improve health outcomes and address longstanding health disparities. Their passion for entrepreneurial problem-solving makes them life-changing role models and mentors for our students. And their passionate devotion to be “persons for others” reflects Loyola’s Jesuit mission while helping to uplift lives and communities.

Frances Weaver

A research career scientist at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare, Weaver’s prolific research career includes well over 200 peer-reviewed publications and impactful research on neurological diseases such as Parkinson’s and spinal cord injuries. She is co-principal investigator for one of the VA’s national Evidence-Based Practice Centers, the Evaluation to Practice Evaluation Center for Veterans, which is examining exposure to toxins in the water at Camp Lejeune and assessing the impact of military toxins legislation on Veterans’ use of VA healthcare services. Weaver chairs the VA’s Scientific Merit Review Board panel on health care informatics research and directs educational efforts in the Institute for Translational Medicine on implementation science.

“My research has focused on persons with disabilities, an often-overlooked vulnerable population in research and health care.” me including Parkinson faculty, my classmates and the student-athletes, coaches, and staff I work with in Athletics to be a leader in all I do.”

Lucia Garcia

As director of student affairs and registration at Parkinson, Garcia works closely with faculty and students to create a supportive and engaging experience for the school’s undergraduate and graduate students. A native Chicagoan and Loyola alumna, Garcia’s scholarly interests include global health education, gun violence prevention, and community engagement. She has been an active member of the Loyola Stands Against Gun Violence committee since her days as an MPH graduate student in 2019, helping to lead the group’s annual Community Advocacy and Violence Prevention Summit and, more recently, steering the committee’s fellowship program as a Parkinson staff member.

“I integrate my lived experience, dedication to higher education access, and passion for public health into everything I do. My goal is to inspire the Parkinson community of students to learn from the communities they serve and become innovative change agents who collaboratively tackle challenging health inequities.”

Abigail Silva

A Loyola alumna and an associate professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences, Silva is director of the Master of Public Health (MPH) program’s Epidemiology Track and a research health scientist at the Hines VA Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare. In the earliest weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, Silva played a key role in the launch of the COVID Equity Response Collaborative: Loyola (CERCL), which provided wide-ranging supports to vulnerable communities in Chicago’s near western, including a free and publicly available contact tracing training program and free community-based testing.

“As a health equity researcher, I’m looking to engage with community partners in capacity-building initiatives and projects that help address the social determinants of health.”

Kristen Pesavento

With lab results driving much clinical decision-making, medical laboratory scientists like Pesavento play a critical, though often unseen role in health care. Pesavento has worked to elevate the field of laboratory medicine in numerous ways, through mentorship, partnerships with hospitals, advocacy, and volunteer outreach, including talks about laboratory science to elementary, high school, and college students. She has also worked with the American Society for Clinical Pathology and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on its On-eLab initiative, an effort to build capacity and training among the laboratory workforce so it can contribute to improved public health and patient outcomes.

“In the classroom and with my external advocacy efforts, I seek to increase awareness of the importance of equitable and timely access to accurate laboratory testing.”

Maggie Ozan-Rafferty

As an assistant professor in the healthcare administration program, Ozan-Rafferty leverages her diverse background as a senior-level health care executive and registered nurse to significantly enhance course development and student engagement. Passionate about personal connections, she emphasizes problem-based learning to prepare students for today’s dynamic health care environments. As a member of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Board of Examiners, she applies leading frameworks for organizational innovation and performance excellence to all of her courses, while she is also completing a Master’s in Instructional Design at Loyola to further enrich her teaching skills.

“I am dedicated to fostering a learning environment that emphasizes empathy, equity, and excellence and I aim to equip future leaders with the skills and compassion necessary to make a meaningful impact on healthcare.”



...I seek to increase awareness of the importance of equitable and timely access to accurate laboratory testing.”

— KRISTEN PESAVENTO,
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
GRADUATE PROGRAM
DIRECTOR, MEDICAL
LABORATORY SCIENCE



Partners with a shared purpose

Through varied community partnerships, the Parkinson School broadens its work to improve health outcomes and champion health equity. For both Parkinson students and faculty as well as our partners, these relationships are transformative, not transactional.

Students involved in service-learning courses and academic internships, for example, gain a firsthand glimpse into professional environments and tackle projects with a direct impact on a community partner's operations and effectiveness. Faculty can then help a local nonprofit organization institute new programming or redefine its advocacy strategies. Our partners, meanwhile, gain access to bright minds, passionate souls, and fresh eyes and become a part of our community, where they participate in events, deliver guest lectures in classrooms, and contribute to the growth of our students as mentors and allies.



We look for community partners who fall in alignment with Loyola University Chicago's values of social justice as well as organizations focused on social determinants of health and health equity.”

— CYNTHIA STEWART, DIRECTOR OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Exercise Science and the Power of Community

The Parkinson School's exercise science program continues broadening its list of community partnerships to enrich student learning and elevate its impact.

Over recent years, the exercise science program's list of community partners has swelled to include health clubs such as Lakeshore Sport & Fitness and the Maywood Fitness Center, public and private schools, local hospitals, and athletic performance centers such as TC Boost in Northbrook. In addition, the exercise science program teams with organizations devoted to serving special populations, such as individuals with autism (Exercise Connection), neurological conditions (Movement Revolution), and Down syndrome (Gigi's Playhouse).

Through service-learning courses and academic internships—both being graduation requirements of the undergraduate exercise science program—students bridge theory and practice and discover the applicability of their studies to the real world. Students also gain exposure to diverse environments and populations they might encounter as working professionals.

Partners, meanwhile, enjoy the presence of enthusiastic, knowledgeable students eager to advance organizational objectives. Partners also appreciate working with Loyola, an institution tied into the Jesuit belief system of service first.

In addition to the service-learning courses and internships, community partnerships also open the door to novel research projects. In one recent effort, students conducted a literature review on recovery and performance outcomes in professional rugby to guide athlete recovery efforts for the city's pro rugby team, the Chicago Hounds.

Along the way, students and partners can learn about each other. As the students spend time at community sites, partners gain a long look at prospective job candidates, while students discover the culture of specific organizations and gain exposure to volunteer opportunities as well as career opportunities to inform their next steps.



The most important thing is that we can help each other out. Students learn in a safe environment and with a partner who can become a third-party educator, while our partners have more hands and knowledge to pursue their goals.”

— KILEY TYLER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF EXERCISE SCIENCE AND DIRECTOR OF THE EXERCISE SCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM, PARKINSON SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH



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