Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts
Initiatives, Programs, and Activities in Support of Inclusive Excellence

Recent Tenure-Track Hires

BCLA continues to hire dedicated and accomplished teacher-scholars who help advance the University’s mission and commitment to social justice and inclusive excellence. BCLA’s emphasis on an interdisciplinary hiring philosophy has been consequential for diversifying our applications for searches. Many departments have become increasingly proactive in cultivating a diverse applicant pool, which has yielded non-white hires. Not all the non-white hires have been in ethnic studies, though many have been. For 2016-17, BCLA hired several new tenure-track faculty members, including two Asian American women, a Latina woman, and a non-gender conforming person. For 2017-18, BCLA hired a Latina woman, two African American men, an African American woman, and an Asian American woman for tenure-track positions. For 2018-19 (in a cycle that is still unfolding), BCLA has so far hired a Latina woman and African American man.

Increases in Majors/Minors in Ethnic Studies/Interdisciplinary Departments

The number of students who major and minor in African American Studies, Asian and Asian American Studies, Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies, and Women and Gender Studies have increased substantively in the period from Spring, 2014 through Spring, 2018. These increases reflect a multiyear concerted effort to align faculty to those programs (one tenure-track and one visitor have been annually added to each so far). The increased number of courses, in turn, have generated more student interest in these programs. The departments, including the creation of a department of Asian and Asian American Studies (AAAS), have been successful in offering courses with broader appeal and in actively recruiting majors and minors.

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Leadership Retreat on Diversity

Building on previous leadership discussions focused on diversity issues, the BCLA Leadership Retreat in January, 2018, addressed the theme of “Engaging Diversity: Curriculum and Pedagogy, Student Resilience, and Faculty Hiring.” The retreat included a faculty panel on diversity, pedagogical challenges and opportunities, and student resilience. Faculty panelists discussed: the ways in which their courses address issues of diversity; the pedagogical
strategies they use to promote an inclusive classroom and mediate polemical classroom discussions about issues of diversity; and the spaces they make for students to talk about (and connect their classroom-based conceptual learning to) emergent national, local, or campus controversies in real time regardless of the discipline. The Dean also led a discussion on faculty hiring and diversity, including attention to best practices used by departments to promote diverse applicant pools for full-time positions. Retreat attendees, consisting of the faculty and staff of the BCLA College Council, BCLA Graduate Directors, BCLA Undergraduate Program Directors, and the BCLA Dean’s Office, engaged these issues through the lens of a well-educated solidarity encouraged within the Jesuit tradition. BCLA’s engagement with diversity issues was begun before the climate survey data was reported and then continued with more explicit connection to the data. The retreat provided another opportunity for sustained conversation on diversity.

BCLA Advising Center

A result of shared governance, the BCLA Advising Center was developed by the Student Engagement & Success Committee in collaboration with the Dean’s Office to provide more concerted support for student retention and persistence, coordinated student records management, connect to high impact learning practices and resources to support them, and augment faculty development for advising and mentoring. The Advising Center is comprised of the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Education, a Senior Program Manager, three Academic Advisors, and two English graduate work-study students. To meet as many students’ needs as possible, BCLA students can meet with an academic advisor Monday-Friday through walk-ins or appointments. In fall 2016-spring 2017, the Advising Center had over 2,300 visits, (1,291 unique students). This was 65% of the BCLA student body. In summer 2017, the Advising Center helped register 420 new BCLA freshman and 189 transfer students. In the first weeks of the fall 2017 semester, the Advising Center had 456 visits (388 unique students). Surveys administered to students after Advising Center visits show that students are 94-99% satisfied across all dimensions measured.

Diversity and Internationalization

BCLA is committed to internationalization and inclusive access to international experiences. Each year, BCLA offers several Global Immersion courses that address diversity and justice themes from a global perspective and seek to enhance students’ awareness of cultural, social, and political issues. Some examples of these courses include:

1. Trip to Havana and Santiago de Cuba, Cuba: AFAM/PSYC- Racial Identify and Socialization in the African Diaspora & African/Black Psychology
2. Trip to Northern Ireland: POLS/PSYC-Peace and Reconciliation
3. Trip to Germany: HIST- Nazi Germany
4. Trip to Pueblo, Mexico: SOCL-Sociology of Aging
5. Trip to Japan: SOCL- Gender and Society
6. Trip to Cuba: SOCL- Sociology of U.S. Immigration
For the ‘15–’16 and ‘16–’17 academic years, 34% of students who participate in the Global Immersion courses were Pell Grant eligible. Scholarships were provided to students based on their academic need in an effort to reduce the course lab fee associated with travel expenses. Each year, the BCLA has provided over $100,000 in scholarships to support students participating in Global Immersion courses. For the ‘15–’16 and ‘16–’17 academic years, 54% of students who participated in the Global Immersion courses identified as persons of color.

**Diversity and Ignatian Principles**

BCLA Dean Robbin Crabtree participated in a panel discussion on diversity at Fordham University in September, 2017. Sponsored by the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture, the event focused on the relationship between mission and diversity and the specific ways in which Jesuit mission and Ignatian humanism support and inform institutional practices of diversity. The BCLA Post-Doctorate Fellows program, which includes monthly seminar sessions for the BCLA Post-Doc Teaching Fellows in Philosophy, and Sociology, and Theology, has also regularly engaged issues of diversity in relation to common classroom interactions and with respect to the Ignatian pedagogical tradition.

**Youth Theology Institute**

In June, 2017, the Department of Theological Studies hosted 93 high students on campus for LMU’s second annual Youth Theology Institute (YTI), which is funded by a $600,000, four-year Lilly Endowment grant. The program focuses on big spiritual questions, ethical leadership skills, intercultural and social justice awareness, and vocational discernment. Participants came from high schools and parishes across the Southern California community, and many participants represented a broad range of diversities and underrepresented groups. Activities included faculty and student panels, group discussions, site-visits (e.g., Homeboy Industries, Covenant House, Corita Art Center, St. Bernadette Parish, San Gabriel Mission, and St. Joseph Arab Christian Community), and a group film project. Drawing on theological resources from Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition and their own experiences, participants reflected on current social justice issues, cultural conceptions of otherness, and the importance of inclusivity.

**Religious Diversity**

BCLA continues to encourage interreligious diversity, dialogue, and collaboration. The BCLA Interfaith Forum hosts events that examines cultural and political events in light of comparative religious texts and perspectives. In 2018, the Interfaith Forum annual event will address the themes of “Decalogue: Ancient Text for Modern Times” in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Jewish Studies Program. Other recent Interfaith Forum programs have included a public interfaith dialogue on “In the Divine Image: Our Relationship to God and to Each Other,” which included reflections by representatives of the Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic communities.
BCLA Events Promoting Inclusive Excellence

In September, 2017, the Departments of African American Studies and History jointly hosted a panel discussion on the debates involving Confederate monuments in response to events in Charlottesville, Virginia. History professors Carla Bittel, Elizabeth Drummond, and Amy Woodson-Boulton provided historical context and identified historical analogues to the events in Charlottesville. African American Studies professors Stefan Bradley, Marne Campbell and Jennifer Williams noted connections between the Jim Crow era and contemporary racist perspectives and challenged students to undertake active responses of resistance. The well-attended event generated thoughtful and constructive conversation.

The Theological Studies Department partnered with the Center for Migration Studies of New York and Mount Saint Mary’s University, to host the 2017 Catholic Immigration Integration Initiative Conference. Tying in with the LMU Latino/a Theology and Ministry Initiative (spearheaded by Theology faculty members Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu and Brett Hoover) and campus-wide efforts to support DACA and protect affected students and members of the greater Los Angeles area, the conference aimed to advance the goals of CMS’s Catholic Immigrant Integration Initiative (CIII). CIII seeks to study, document, and support a growing network of diverse Catholic institutions that are working successfully to advance immigrant integration, empowerment and well-being. BCLA’s 7th Annual Hispanic Ministry and Theology Lecture was included in this conference, featuring Brazilian liberation theologian Maria Clara Bingemer discussing “the stranger” in relation to the crises of displaced peoples and migrations.

Evangelina Arce is a mother from Ciudad Juarez whose daughter was kidnapped in 1998. Since that singular life-changing event, Arce has used poetry to battle against injustice and search for truth. Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures Alicia Partnoy collaborated with BCLA Professor of English Gail Wronsky and LMU students to compile and translate Arce’s soulful work in a new book of poetry titled Para Mi Hija Silvia/ For My Daughter Silvia. Of the 13 former and current LMU students who collaborated as translators on this book, several are Latina women whom were DACA “Dreamer” immigrants. In the process, they learned about feminicide from the perspective of a survivor.