The Engelhard Project

FOR CONNECTING LIFE & LEARNING

THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS

cnrls.georgetown.edu/engelhard
Dear Friends,

It is a great pleasure to introduce the Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning: The First Seven Years. The Engelhard Project, which began on our campus in 2005, has flourished since its inception, reaching over 7,500 undergraduate students and involving more than 60 faculty members. By infusing health and wellness topics into courses across the undergraduate curriculum, the project fosters powerful partnerships between faculty members and student affairs professionals, links our academic curriculum and co-curriculum in synergistic ways, and cultivates the type of high-impact learning that makes a lasting mark on the student body.

However, the project does even more than enhance our ability to help students grapple with contemporary problems and issues, both personally and intellectually. It demonstrates to students that professors care about them as individuals—not just as students in their classes, but as aspiring scientists, politicians, business leaders, and members of our globally connected world. It helps our students reach their fullest potential as contemplatives in action. It increases students' engagement with the academic content of their courses and helps us fulfill Georgetown’s mission as a Catholic and Jesuit University to educate the whole person.

The Engelhard Project is a truly exciting initiative for Georgetown. I am deeply grateful to the faculty, students, staff, and friends who make possible this transformative project. In particular, I extend profound appreciation to Sally Engelhard Pingree for her generosity, leadership, and vision. Her commitment has created a sustainable project that offers tremendous opportunities for Georgetown in the years ahead.

Please join me in congratulating all project participants on their work and in enjoying the rich contents of this project report.

You have my very best wishes.

Sincerely,

John J. DeGioia
President, Georgetown University
The Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning, Georgetown faculty and campus health professionals use course readings, discussions, and reflective writing assignments to help students improve their health and well-being. The project aspires to:

• challenge students to reflect on their own health-related attitudes and behaviors as intellectual work within academic courses;
• create powerful partnerships between faculty and university health professionals to support students personally and academically; and
• connect students to campus resources to aid in their personal and professional development.

The Engelhard Project is made possible by an endowment from the Charles Engelhard Foundation, with additional support from alumni and parents. This support has enabled over 7,500 students to experience an Engelhard course at Georgetown.
By bringing in Georgetown Staff Psychologist John Wright to discuss the topics of resilience and self-forgiveness, Sarah Vittone emphasizes to her students that these are necessary components of human development. The reflective writing required in every Engelhard course gives Vittone an opportunity to ask her students about their ability to cope with the stresses of college life. She finds that this reflective exercise helps students to pause and see themselves in what they are learning, creating more connection between course concepts and their own lives. She hopes that the stress-relieving techniques introduced in class help students to handle both their academic workload and their clinical work with patients.

As a critical aspect of intellectual inquiry, reflective writing encourages students to process what they have read and discussed, pushing them beyond observation and description to apply theoretical and disciplinary lenses to their own personal experiences.

Human Growth and Development
Sarah Vittone, Nursing

By bringing in Georgetown Staff Psychologist John Wright to discuss the topics of resilience and self-forgiveness, Sarah Vittone emphasizes to her students that these are necessary components of human development. The reflective writing required in every Engelhard course gives Vittone an opportunity to ask her students about their ability to cope with the stresses of college life. She finds that this reflective exercise helps students to pause and see themselves in what they are learning, creating more connection between course concepts and their own lives. She hopes that the stress-relieving techniques introduced in class help students to handle both their academic workload and their clinical work with patients.

Math Modeling
James Sandefur, Mathematics

James Sandefur has been teaching Math Modeling as an Engelhard course to non-math majors for over six years. “The Engelhard Project fits right into what I want to do—use engaging math models that are important to the students where they can see math as it affects their life and the lives of those around them.” By modeling the effects of alcohol and food intake on body functioning, and asking students to use themselves as real examples, Sandefur hopes that students will see math as a way to make informed life decisions.
“I realized that students were originally uncomfortable with philosophical texts. I was able to use examples from their reflective writing to help bring the texts to life. With Engelhard, I started to emphasize not just analytical skills, but the virtues of compassion, self-respect, honor, trust, and forgiveness.”

— Alisa Carse, Philosophy

Collaboration between faculty members and campus health professionals promotes integration and connection between students’ intellectual lives and their emotional, artistic, social, spiritual, and physical selves.

**Foundations in Biology**
Heidi Elmendorf, Biology

Heidi Elmendorf teaches her 250-student introductory biology class as an Engelhard course in order to more fully engage students and humanize the material. Phil Meilman, Director of Georgetown’s Counseling and Psychiatric Service, collaborates with Elmendorf to create an interactive class session on genetic predispositions to mental health issues, preparing students to write independent research papers on this topic. As Elmendorf explains, “students look forward to working on the paper, and are engaged from start to finish. Afterward, students say biology makes much more sense to them. They talk about personal connections with new knowledge, arising from their independent research and writing.”

**Immigrant Ethnography**
Betsi Stephen, School of Foreign Service

Betsi Stephen’s students partner with local junior high and high school students born in other countries to document their immigrant experiences. To prepare them for this community-based learning experience, her students study the effect of immigration on adolescent mental health with a Georgetown campus health professional. The reflective writing of this Engelhard course helps students to find points of connection between their own adolescent experiences and those of the younger immigrant students with whom they work.
The Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning | The First Seven Years

The Engelhard Project creates multiple layers of connections within our campus community—personal connections to academic material, intellectual connections across courses, and professional connections across departments and out into the community.

Abnormal Psychology
Yulia Chentsova Dutton, Psychology
“Taking theory out to play” is Chentsova Dutton’s phrase for assignments that ask students to try out some of the more complex course concepts on themselves. For example, during a unit on stress management, she asks her students to observe and catalog their patterns of negative thoughts and examine the impact of reframing these ideas using positive thought formulation techniques. She also invites Tim Casey from Georgetown’s John Main Center for Meditation and Inter-religious Dialogue to lead students through a group meditation exercise. Chentsova Dutton believes that the Engelhard components of her class help make difficult concepts and theories more applicable and more easily understood by students.

Immunology
Pablo Irusta, Human Science
Pablo Irusta teaches Immunology as an Engelhard course because he believes it allows him to connect with his students on a deeper intellectual level. “Learning how cells and molecules protect us during an infection becomes more meaningful when students consider the socioeconomic, behavioral, and public health factors that frame life on and around campus.” Discussing their own health and well-being also helps students see how the science they study affects their own lives and those of the people around them.

Voices from the Classroom: Don Quixote

“Cervantes provides lessons for everyday living. Often in class we discuss current events, newspaper editorials, or even dorm or classroom conflicts from the perspectives illustrated in the book. We consider how we can learn both to defend an ethical position and to see issues from standpoints different from our own.”

— Barbara Mujica, Spanish and Portuguese
inspired by their experiences in Engelhard courses and the ideals of the larger project, Johanna Caldwell (SFS’11), Katie Cronen (C’11), Emma Furino (NHS’11), Stephanie Hannah (B’11), and Lauren Scherr (C’11) created the Magis Row Cura Personalis house for their senior year. The main goals of their house were to promote closer relationships between professors and students, to encourage students to have casual conversations about mental wellness issues, and to “create a continuous dialogue that maintains the spirit of Engelhard discussion within our home.”

Throughout the year, they planned several events where they invited faculty members and their students to the house for a chance to “hang out” in a more casual way than they are able to do in a classroom setting. As they explained in their original application for Magis Row housing, “we are passionate enthusiasts for the Engelhard Project, the growth and goals of which we would like to cultivate at the student level.”

### GU Campus Farmers’ Market

As part of an assignment for Joan Riley’s Health Promotion and Disease Prevention course, students developed proposals for health promotion activities for Georgetown’s campus. Students Bré Donald (NHS’12) and Melissa Gadsden (NHS’12) created the idea for a weekly campus farmers’ market with the goals of making fresh, locally-grown produce more accessible to Georgetown students, helping to educate students about healthy eating, and connecting campus life to the broader Georgetown and D.C. communities. Donald and Gadsden’s excitement for their concept drove them to pursue their project beyond the completion of the course.

Following conversations and collaboration with various campus offices and administrators, they were able to implement their idea on a trial basis starting in April 2011. The Farmers’ Market was very well received and has now become a weekly event on campus during the fall and spring market seasons. Each Wednesday, the market draws dozens of faculty, staff, and students to enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables, organic produce samples, cooking demonstrations, and local food stands. Donald and Gadsden developed an advisory board with student volunteers so that this new Georgetown tradition would carry on even after their graduation.

### Magis Row Cura Personalis House

Inspired by their experiences in Engelhard courses and the ideals of the larger project, Johanna Caldwell (SFS’11), Katie Cronen (C’11), Emma Furino (NHS’11), Stephanie Hannah (B’11), and Lauren Scherr (C’11) created the Magis Row Cura Personalis house for their senior year. The main goals of their house were to promote closer relationships between professors and students, to encourage students to have casual conversations about mental wellness issues, and to “create a continuous dialogue that maintains the spirit of Engelhard discussion within our home.”

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Learning experiences where students engage real-world problems and grapple with moral dilemmas help students develop self-agency, which they can use to improve their own lives as well as the lives of others.

**Management and Organizational Behavior**

Robert Bies, Business

For the Engelhard component of Management and Organizational Behavior, Robert Bies asks students to view the film *The Great Debaters* and invites Georgetown Staff Psychologist John Wright to co-facilitate a post-film discussion. The discussion encourages students to critically examine lessons learned from the civil rights era in the U.S. and to look at how these lessons might apply to creating healthy organizations and companies. The discussion contributes to Bies’s course goals to help students “understand their moral purpose as global business leaders and make a difference in the lives of others.”

**Social Entrepreneurship: Leading Social Change**

Sarah Stiles, Sociology

In order to enable her students to better apply theories of social change and to see social entrepreneurship as a lifestyle, Sarah Stiles asks her students to commit to a personal wellness routine for the semester. Students partner with one another as “accountability buddies” and keep journals of their progress toward their wellness goals. Students also work with local organizations to undertake a social change project, engaging with real problems in D.C. and attempting to achieve sustainable change. The students’ experience is deeply shaped by connecting these two aspects of their lives within a single framework. As one student reflects, “this course has been able to educate me about things that no other course has been able to do and made me draw on all aspects of my educational experience.”
When faculty understand the issues that affect the everyday lives of students—such as stress, substance use, and nutrition—and are aware of campus resources for students, they are better able to promote flourishing within all their students.

**Theatre as Social Change**

Natsu Onoda Power, Performing Arts & Carol Day, Human Science

In Theatre as Social Change, Georgetown students work with Ballou Senior High School students in Southeast D.C. to develop, write, and perform a play. One of the goals of this collaboration is to explore ways in which to use performance as a platform to discuss solutions to social issues that concern the high school student community. In past semesters, the plays have included such issues as depression, suicide, substance abuse, and homophobia, along with many forms of peer pressure the Ballou students face.

Natsu Onoda Power and Carol Day explore with their students the theory and practice of performance as social activism, as well as to support their Georgetown students in taking on multiple roles as mentors, co-collaborators, peers, instructors, and guests at Ballou. The Engelhard aspect of this course creates the structure and space for students to reflect on their experiences in the community, seek out support for themselves or the high school students with whom they are working, and further strengthen their community-based learning experience.

"It was great to have a professor bring up issues of wellness in class and demonstrate how we can use statistics to assess mental and physical health. I felt cared for—like the professor was genuinely interested in our well-being rather than us just churning out good grades."

— Engelhard Student
Through their reflective writing, research papers, and online discussions, first-year students demonstrate their new-found perspectives on their academic and personal experiences, building foundations for continued learning and growth.

**First Year Health Studies Colloquium**

Coordinated by Joan Riley, Human Science

The Health Studies Colloquium provides all new students in the School of Nursing and Health Studies with an overview of the many personal and academic opportunities available to them at Georgetown. Joan Riley and other Engelhard faculty fellows have further strengthened the first-year student experience by weaving health and wellness themes into the course. One of the most powerful Engelhard components is a collaboration with Georgetown Staff Psychologist Afshin Nili. Using an anonymous survey, students answer questions about the issues they are grappling with at Georgetown, such as being away from home for the first time and fitting in. Class discussion of the survey responses with advice and ideas from Dr. Nili normalizes students’ struggles in a powerful way. As one student noted: “Through this class, I found out many things about myself and was able to make changes that will benefit me for the next four years, and probably even beyond.”

**SFS Proseminar**

Betty Andretta, School of Foreign Service

Two major themes of Betty Andretta’s Proseminar in the School of Foreign Service are class struggle and the reproduction of social inequalities in the U.S. As part of the course, students examine how issues of mental illness and substance abuse differentially affect the poor and the middle class. To deepen their exploration of this topic, Andretta brings in a campus health professional to engage students in personal reflection on mental health and substance issues in their own lives and those of their peers at Georgetown.

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**VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM:**

*The Problem of God*

“The Engelhard Project reinforced the idea that asking questions is just as important in the real world as it is in class. We can never learn without asking questions, we can never make the world a better place without challenging the established norms, and we can never assume that we have all the answers.”

— Engelhard Student
Engelhard Faculty Fellows

Over 66 faculty members and graduate students have taught Engelhard courses in Georgetown's four undergraduate schools.

Betty Andreotta, International Affairs
Edward Barrows, Biology
Randi Bass, English
Karen Berman, Performing Arts
Robert Bies, Management
William Blattner, Philosophy
Benjamin Bogin, Theology
Denise Brennan, Anthropology
Alisa Carse, Philosophy
Yulia Chentsova Dutton, Psychology
Susan Coleman, Nursing
David Crystal, Psychology
Carol Day, Human Science
Margaret Debelius, English
Justyna DesVergnes, Philosophy
Maria Donoghue, Biology
Rhonda Drakapas, Physics
Heidi Elmendorf, Biology
Robert Friedland, Health Sys. Admin.
Claudia Guidi, Spanish & Portuguese
Phil Hagan, Human Science
Rebecca Heino, Management
Cassie Herbert, Philosophy
Brendan Hill, History (SFS-Qatar)
Pablo Irusta, Human Science
Maryanne Lachat, Nursing
Julia Lamm, Theology
Sivan Leviyang, Mathematics
Judith Lichtenberg, Philosophy
Dana Luciano, English
Anthony Manela, Philosophy
Sam Marallo, Sociology
Torsten Menge, Philosophy
Dan Merenstein, Family Medicine
Barbara Mujica, Spanish & Portuguese
Joseph Neale, Biology
Patricia O'Connor, English
Lee Okster, Philosophy
Todd Olson, Human Science
Nanu Osoda Power, Performing Arts
Terry Pinkard, Philosophy
John Rakestraw, Theology
Joan Riley, Human Science & Nursing
Mark Rom, Government
Anne Rosenwald, Biology
Janet Russell, Biology
James Sandleur, Mathematics
Colleen Sanders, Nursing
Christine Schwiete, Sociology
Henry Schwarz, English
Adi Shafir, Philosophy
Betsy Sigman, Business
Steven Singer, Biology
Rosemary Sokas, Human Science
Christopher Steck, Theology
Elizabeth Stephen, Foreign Service
Sarah Stiles, Sociology
Karen Stohl, Philosophy
Alex Theos, Human Science
Jason Tilan, Nursing
Willfried Ver Eecke, Philosophy
Sarah Vittone, Nursing
Heather Voke, Philosophy
Astrid Weigert, German
Kathleen Maas Weigert, Justice & Peace Studies
James Welsh, Human Science
Andria Wisler, Justice & Peace Studies
Jennifer Woolard, Psychology
Edilma Yearwood, Nursing

Engelhard Health Professional Fellows

Georgetown professional staff act as expert presenters and discussants within Engelhard courses. These health professionals come from the Georgetown Counseling and Psychiatric Service (CAPS), Health Education Services (HES), the John Main Center for Meditation and Inter-religious Dialogue, the LGBTQ Resource Center, the Medical Center, the School of Nursing and Health Studies (NHS), Student Affairs, the Student Health Center, the Women's Center, and Yates Field House.

Tim Casey, John Main Center
Carol Day, HES
Meghan Dinsa, Yates
Raj Goerveys, CAPS
Susan Gordon, CAPS
Gregory Jones, CAPS
Paul Jones, Medical Center
Patrick Kilcarr, HES
Laura Kovach, Women's Center
Matthew LeBlanc, LGBTQ Center
Hallie Lightdale, CAPS
Sonja Lillrank, CAPS
Amanda Malby, HES
James Marsh, Student Health
Deirdre McGuire, CAPS

Philip Meilman, CAPS
Kenneth Moon, Student Health
Deborah Morone, Student Health
Afshin Nili, CAPS
Joan Riley, NHS & Student Health
Colleen Sanders, NHS
Alisa Schwartz, CAPS
Jennifer Schweer, HES
Leigh Stewart, CAPS
Sivagami Subbaraman, LGBTQ Center
Charles Tartaglia, CAPS
Tessa Telly, HES
James Welsh, Student Affairs
John Wright, CAPS

Safety Net Training

As members of the Engelhard Project, faculty and teaching assistants attend a safety net training where they are introduced to health issues on campus, learn to recognize signs of distress, and prepare to respond to student needs. At the training, campus health professionals provide faculty and teaching assistants with classroom resources and ideas for presentations, connecting their knowledge of students’ co-curricular lives with the academic programs and courses which are the focus of faculty interactions with students. These meetings are essential in forging connections between faculty who are in daily contact with students and health professionals who can help students who are struggling.
Based on the success of the Engelhard Project, Georgetown faculty, professional staff, and students have collaborated to produce publications, conference presentations, and the Institute for the Study of Engaged Learning.

Publications


Presentations


Yearwood, E., & Riley, J.B. (2010, November). Curriculum infusion to promote nursing student well-being. Presented at the Sixth World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, Washington, DC.

Gratitude

The Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning has been made possible through generous funding from:

SALLY ENGELHARD PNGREE AND THE CHARLES ENGELHARD FOUNDATION
REGINA KULIK SCULLY (‘85)
JEFFREY AND VICTORIA EDWARDS
JAMES THANOS AND CHRISTINE BUDD

We want to express deep gratitude to Don Harward, Director of the Bringing Theory to Practice Project, and to the other members of the project, for many years of support and collaboration on engaged learning and the well-being of students.

Website: aacu.org/bringing_theory

Engelhard Project Team

The Engelhard Project Team comprises representatives of the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS), the Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching, and Service (CSJ), various offices within the Division of Student Affairs, and Georgetown faculty.

For more information about the Engelhard Project, contact:

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Joselyn Schultz Lewis, CNDLS
Mindy McWilliams, CNDLS
Phil Meilman, CAPS
Todd Olson, Student Affairs
John Rakestraw, CNDLS
Joa Riley, NHS & Student Health
Kathleen Maas Weigert, CSJ
James Welsh, Student Affairs

Sharing Our Work

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Publications


Presentations


Yearwood, E., & Riley, J.B. (2010, November). Curriculum infusion to promote nursing student well-being. Presented at the Sixth World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, Washington, DC.
“The courses that I’m going to most remember are my Engelhard courses, and the faculty I’m going to stay in touch with are those professors who taught those classes.”

— Sarah Jones, C’11