Introduction
Marquette University's Jesuit tradition places an emphasis on social justice and provides an environment to challenge students to engage in their community as “men and women for others.” Both the domestic Service Learning and South Africa Service Learning (SASL) programs offer students a hands-on opportunity to develop an ethic of service, social justice and engaged citizenship. Anecdotaly, it is known that many students who participate in the SASL program have been engaged with service or service learning domestically prior to applying to the program. Likewise, many return to campus with a heightened interest in engaging in service either during the remainder of their time at Marquette or after graduation.

This phenomenological study was undertaken to better understand student patterns of service learning domestically and internationally. Additionally, the study provides insight into the post-graduation endeavors of students who decide to participate in a semester-long international service learning experience, such as SASL.

Theory
Kolb’s Experiential Learning

Methods
Participants
The study reviewed the domestic service learning patterns of 113 SASL participants from Marquette. A survey was administered to a convenience sample of 67 students. Twenty-nine (29) respondents completed the survey, which equates to 25.7% of the total population and 43.3% of the sampled population.

Survey Instrument
A 15-question survey was administered via an online system. Questions were primarily open-ended and asked students about their experiences with service-learning at Marquette, why they selected the SASL program and how it impacted their academic goals, career path, personal identity, spirituality, and remainder of their time at Marquette. It also asked about post-graduation experiences.

Data Collection
Records from the Registrar’s Office and the Service Learning Program were obtained to determine which semesters students had completed domestic service learning in relation to their experience in South Africa.

For the survey, current email addresses were obtained from University Advancement. An email explaining the study was sent to each alum along with a link to the survey. Participants voluntarily completed the survey, which remained opened for one month.
“South Africa taught me that I needed to be an advocate. That I had to do something to improve the lives of others and fight the injustices all around us...I am now an immigration attorney and I run a small non-profit program...the xenophobia in South Africa shined a light on the xenophobia we have right here in America.”

Service Learning at Marquette
- Managed by the Center for Teaching and Learning
- Approximately 1,200-1,300 students from 55-65 university courses are placed at 100-125 community agencies each semester
- 189,000 hours of service in the Milwaukee community annually
- Program started in 1994 to support the Jesuit motto: “men and women for others”
- Establishes a mutually beneficial relationship between Marquette and the community
- Students gain content knowledge, develop skills and shape values by serving 2-3 hours per week as part of an academic course
- Coordinates with Residence Life to run the “Dorothy Day Social Justice Living Learning Community”

South Africa Service Learning
- Located in Cape Town, South Africa
- For the past 10 years, up to 20 students from multiple universities participate each semester
- Students work two days a week with a local non-profit organization
- Student live in community, learning from each other’s experiences
- Students take two courses together to better understand the South African context and to reflect on their service experiences: Theology of Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Justice; and Grassroots Organizations: Community Development and Social Analysis
- Students enroll at the University of the Western Cape, a university that played a key role in ending the apartheid
- A South African Resident Director provides support for students to delve deeply into cultural learning and knowledge

Excellence
Faith
Leadership
Service
Conclusions

The data did not reveal any significant patterns of domestic service learning (DSL) with respect to selecting or returning from an international service learning (ISL) experience. However, several themes emerged from the data and survey responses.

- Participating in a DSL opportunity encourages and prepares students to select an ISL program. Likewise, after an ISL experience, career trajectories can be altered or affirmed and lead to service after graduation.

- ISL has an impact on the remainder of students’ on-campus experience specifically increasing engagement in community service and service learning courses.

- After an ISL experience students recognize a change in their personal identity noting that they now see themselves as citizens of the world and advocates.

References


“SASL helped me to continue to invest in the Milwaukee community once I returned. I also think it was one of the more significant factors in my decision to do a year of service after graduation...I am now pursuing my Masters in Social Work so I can continue to work to change some of the challenges that I witnessed while I was in South Africa.”