

Experiential Programs

Experiential education is an important element of the K-Plan, with on-campus and off-campus opportunities in both domestic and international settings. Study abroad, study away through domestic programs, service-learning, student research, internships and externships, and student activities and athletics are key curricular components of the K-Plan, and are supported by a variety of administrative departments on campus.

First-Year Experience

The intentional weaving together of hands-on involvement, experiential learning, and mentorship within the context of a rigorous academic life is the hallmark of our First-Year Experience (FYE). Kalamazoo College was named one of thirteen "Institutions of Excellence in the First College Year" by the National Policy Center on the First Year of College and is featured in *Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College* (Jossey-Bass, 2005). *US News & World Report* has recognized Kalamazoo's First-Year Experience as a "program that really works." FYE at Kalamazoo College helps students:

- achieve academic success,
- identify and pursue passions,
- connect with Kalamazoo College and the greater Kalamazoo communities,
- construct complex intercultural understandings, and
- develop a purpose-filled and balanced life.

First-Year Seminars are the foundation of the FYE program, which includes participation in orientation and the Summer Common Reading, connections with Peer Leaders and academic advisors, residing on campus in a first-year residence hall, and attendance at First-Year Forums. Peer Leaders, carefully selected student-mentors, share their knowledge and experiences to help first-year students achieve greater academic and personal success. Each First-Year Seminar is assigned a Peer Leader.

Center for Career and Professional Development

The Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD) empowers students to clarify their career aspirations, broaden their networks, hone their professional skills, and articulate the integrated outcomes of their K-Plan, so that they are well prepared to step confidently into life after Kalamazoo College.

To support students in their career development, the CCPD offers the Discovery Externship Program and support for internships in the summer months, and recruiting events, networking opportunities, and a variety of workshops and events during the academic year. The CCPD's staff also offers services including individual counseling appointments, peer advising, career assessment tools, résumé and cover letter critiques, and practice interviews,

Managed by the CCPD, the Kalamazoo College Professional Networking Group on LinkedIn is an exclusive professional network that brings together students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of the College around common career interests. For students, the KPNG offers networks and mentoring relationships useful after graduation.

Center for International Programs

Every study abroad program at Kalamazoo College is unique, but each offers challenging course work in an education system whose values and methods reflect those of the local culture, opportunities for integrative cultural experiences, and structured opportunities for using the local language(s) both in and out of the classroom. As the academic, language, and other specific qualifications differ from program to program, it is imperative that students carefully read the program descriptions and Study Abroad Handbook, available from the Center for International Programs (CIP).

Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

About three-fourths of Kalamazoo College students are actively engaged in the city of Kalamazoo through service-learning courses and programs with the nationally recognized Mary Jane Underwood Stryker Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). Each year, faculty teach over 20 courses - across the disciplines -- that involve students in public problem-solving and efforts to build a more equitable community. Every week, over 200 students work - as volunteers or through federal work study - in ongoing programs that student Civic Engagement Scholars lead and coordinate. In the summer, the CCE offers six-week, fully-funded Community Based Internships in Kalamazoo with many of our partner organizations. Our programs address issues such as health and educational equity, migrant rights, prison reform, community arts, food justice, sustainability, and neighborhood development. In sustained partnerships with over 40 community organizations and grass-roots groups, students serve as scholar activists who conduct research and outreach; develop community gardens; make films; register voters; advocate for policy change; work with Kalamazoo Public School students; create health education materials; create stories, ceramics, visual arts, art and poetry with community members; influence environmental practices; and more. We emphasize building long-term relationships that are transformational for individuals and communities. The CCE requires all students, within courses or in student-led programs, to engage in structured reflection in order to make critical connections between service and learning, theory and practice, the global and the local, and to integrate these experiences into their individualized "K Plans." All of our programs foster civic, academic, and personal growth within a social justice framework, and offer plentiful opportunities for student leadership and collaboration with communities.

Domestic Study Away Programs

Kalamazoo College students who meet appropriate qualifications are eligible to apply for participation in a fine arts program in New York City, a fall quarter seminar at the Newberry Library in Chicago, an arts, social justice and entrepreneurship program in Chicago, a semester program on the U.S.-Mexico border through the Border Studies Program, and a science/social science term at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee.

College faculty members serve as liaison advisers to these programs. Students interested in the GLCA programs should consult with the appropriate faculty advisor or the Center for International Programs.

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