

# Messina

## Messina Spring Semester Survey Findings

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## Overview

979 students participating in Messina during the Spring 2016 semester were invited to participate in a web survey to assess their first-year experience and how they experienced Messina during the spring semester. The survey was based off of a similar survey administered in Spring 2015 that was developed in consultation with the Messina Advisory Board. In addition, the survey was submitted for Institutional Review Board for approval (FWA00013527) before it was sent to students. Questions were designed to correspond to the four main areas of Messina learning outcomes – Discernment, Critical Thinking, Community and Integrated Learning (see Appendix A for complete list of Learning Outcomes).

The survey was conducted from April 20, 2015 – May 18, 2015. At its completion, 259 students began the survey and 227 students fully completed the survey. Data represents the following themes and identities:

- 104 (45.01%) respondents represented Self and Other, 88 (38.77%) respondents represented Stories We Tell, 35 (15.42%) respondents represented The Visionary. (*n*=227)
- 67 (29.52%) respondents identified as men, 160 (70.48%) respondents identified as women.

## Summary of Findings

Students were asked a variety of quantitative and qualitative questions related to their spring semester Messina experience. As a follow up to the data collected in the Fall 2015 survey, this instrument had a continued emphasis of evaluating Messina learning outcomes around Jesuit Mission and Values. In questions related to the Messina Spring Semester Experience, students were asked to respond to how much their participation in Messina helped them to do or think about different areas during their second semester.<sup>1</sup>

- Relationships with working group members:
  - Different from previous years was a minor drop in the extent to which students connected with all members of their working group in the spring semester. For some students that had negative experiences with a working group member, there was a sense that in the fall semester they had a stronger connection with a member of the working group. It will be interesting to see if this is an anomaly to this year or becomes a pattern from year to year.
- Spring enrichment sessions:
  - A notable change from previous years was the increased number of students who indicated that their top spring semester enrichment session was those sessions that addressed aspects of the academic transition. Given that many Messina sections cover the topic of registering for classes during the fall semester it is interesting that students would indicate this also being a valuable topic in the spring semester.
  - Similar to previous years, some students did not find enrichment sessions to be as valuable to them in the spring semester- a general reaction of students was the belief that this was not needed as a weekly offering. However, this is not the consensus of every student- the majority find enrichment sessions to be of continuous value in the spring semester.
- Student development over the first year:
  - Students were asked to describe how they would currently describe themselves as a student compared to when they first entered Loyola. Similar to last year, 96% of students described positive changes over the course of the first year. This year the top five areas included the following qualities: confident, self-aware, actively engaged, broader perspectives, good relationships, and knows expectations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Students selected one of the following four choices: “Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, or A Great Deal.”

<sup>2</sup> Both “good relationships” and “knows expectations” had 17 responses which is why there are six areas represented in the top five.

- Discernment:
  - Students were provided with a copy of the description of discernment from the Loyola Mission, Vision, and Values website and asked to respond to the elements of the definition they were able to personally relate to as well as elements that were less personally relatable. Most relatable to students was the concept personal freedom and with that choices having consequences, particularly from the lens of the transition to college life.
  - The connection of prayer to discernment presented a struggle for some students- either as a barrier to entering into the practice of discernment or as something they didn't engage in during their personal discernment process.
  - An area with almost even amount of students indicating feeling both relatable and not relatable was the presupposition that "some choices are better – and freer – than others." It should be noted that for students who found this to be less-relatable their rationale suggested that they have encountered situations in which they have experienced these types of choices.
  - As in the Fall 2015 survey, students were asked to provide an example of a way in which they practiced discernment during their first year at Loyola. There was a slight increase in the quality of the responses by students with 84% able to provide an example that minimally displayed a "beginning" level of practice compared to 75% from the fall semester.
- Reflection:
  - 87% of students indicated making time for reflection at least once during the course of their first year, with 63% reflecting monthly or more frequently.
  - A follow up question asked students to provide ways in which they practiced reflection including offices or experiences that aided in that effort or barriers to reflection. A primary barrier for students was a sense of feeling too busy to give time towards reflection. Students who were able to practice reflection often took time to examine how their day or week was going. Unsurprisingly, for those students choosing to reflect, they found value in finding time alone and away from others to reflect.
  - Multiple offices were named by students as helping with the act of reflection including Campus Ministry, CCSJ, ALANA Services, and Outdoor Adventure Education. This came both through interactions with individuals and experiences offered through retreats, pre-fall programs, and leadership roles.

## **Future Consideration/ Areas to Further Explore**

- After having an added emphasis on our Learning Outcomes related to Jesuit Mission and Values this year, it is evident that more can be done in the first year to help students see that discernment is more than just making choices- student responses to examples of how they think they discern were more surface level in nature (i.e. deciding between studying vs. going out and the implications this decision has beyond the moment). It may also be helpful to be more explicit with students on what discernment is or to name it when is happening- particularly in conversations around selecting a major or when discussing taking time to explore outside passions/interests in the scope of extracurricular activities or projects. This is an area they will continue to learn about over the course of their four years but perhaps an earlier understanding of this act can help to better shape their approach to topics such as major selection and career interest. From a research standpoint, student understanding and practice of discernment over the course of their four years would be an interesting topic to further examine- shedding light on a student's development in this area.
- Finding ways to demonstrate the importance of finding time to reflect is of use to students. Those that are already making time to reflect experience value in this practice and have approached it in creative ways- both individually and with the assistance of experiences from offices like Campus Ministry and CCSJ. Strong consideration should be given to how to have students convey this concept to their peers. A potential conduit of this could be through student leaders such as a student's Evergreen or Resident Assistant.
- While the fall and spring surveys primarily examined student experience around discernment and reflection, more exploration can be done related to how first year students experience and understand other Loyola core values.

## Detailed Findings

### Student Status

Question: Were you a student at Loyola in Fall 2015? (n=219)

- No: 0, Yes: 219

### Messina Class

Question: Did you switch into a different Messina class than the class you were originally scheduled to take in the spring semester? (n=218)

- No: 162, Yes: 56

### Messina Spring Semester Experience

Question: The following set of questions relates to your participation in Messina and how your class and enrichment session experience contributed to the following areas.

To what extent did your participation in the spring semester of Messina help you to...<sup>3</sup>

Color Key:	
	Messina Spring 2016 Survey Results (current year)
	Messina Spring 2015 Survey Results
	Messina Spring 2014 Survey Results

Question	Not at All (1)	A Little (2)	Somewhat (3)	A Great Deal (4)	Mean
Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Evergreen(s) n= 159	12	29	44	74	3.13
	7.55%	18.24%	27.67%	46.54%	
n=237	5	25	83	124	3.38
	2.10%	10.55%	35.02%	52.32%	
n=59	3	8	18	30	3.27
	5.08%	13.55%	30.50%	50.84%	
Establish a positive relationship with your Messina spring Faculty Member <sup>4</sup> n=218	18	41	86	73	2.98
	8.26%	18.81%	39.45%	33.49%	
n=237	9	35	92	101	3.20
	3.80%	14.77%	38.82%	42.62%	
n=59	1	8	28	22	3.20
	1.69%	13.55%	47.45%	37.28%	
Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Mentor (administrator) n=161	26	36	56	43	2.72
	16.15%	22.36%	34.78%	26.71%	
n=237	17	38	92	90	3.08
	7.17%	16.03%	38.82%	37.97%	
n=59	3	11	21	24	3.12
	5.08%	18.64%	35.59%	40.67%	

<sup>3</sup> Responses that begin with an \* were only asked to students who answered “yes” to the question of if they switched into a different class in the spring semester. These questions were not asked in previous years so there is no comparative data.

<sup>4</sup> On the Spring 2014 survey, this question was worded as follows: “Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Professor”

Question	Not at All (1)	A Little (2)	Somewhat (3)	A Great Deal (4)	Mean
*Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Fall Faculty Member <i>n=202</i>	18 8.91%	29 14.36%	64 31.68%	91 45.05%	3.13
*Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Fall Mentor (administrator) <i>n=56</i>	11 19.64%	14 25.00%	17 30.36%	14 25.00%	2.61
*Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Spring Mentor (administrator) <i>n=56</i>	9 16.07%	18 32.14%	17 30.36%	12 21.43%	2.57
*Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Fall Evergreen(s) <i>n=55</i>	2 3.64%	11 20.00%	17 30.91%	25 45.45%	3.18
*Establish a positive relationship with your Messina Spring Evergreen(s) <i>n=53</i>	5 9.43%	11 20.75%	21 39.62%	16 30.19%	2.91

*If interested, please comment on any of the selections you indicated in the above questions. (n=23)* The following are some noted observations from the comments:

- Students that had positive or negative experiences with working group members (i.e. Evergreen/ Faculty/ Mentor) provided specifics as to why they liked or disliked their Messina experience. In five examples, students had a positive experience one semester followed by a negative experience the other semester- typically between how they felt about their two faculty members.
- 9 students commented about negative interactions with member(s) of their working group. 13 students commented about positive interactions with member(s) of their working group.

### **Student Experience (Reflection Question)**

*Question: As you wrap up your first year, how would you currently describe yourself as a student compared to when you first entered Loyola? (n=193<sup>5</sup>)*

Responses for this question were analyzed and common themes were pulled from responses. On the next page is a listing of common themes and the amount of times these themes were mentioned in student responses to this question. There were 196 total responses to this question but many of the responses incorporated multiple themes. In some, but not all instances, responses to this question provided connections to Messina Learning Outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup> Common themes were coded and responses sometimes covered multiple themes, hence a total of 311 times a theme was mentioned.

				Relation of Theme to Learning Outcomes for Spring 2016 Responses			
Theme	Context of Response	Spring 2016 Frequency of Mention	Spring 2015 Frequency of Mention	Jesuit Mission and Values	Critical Understanding	Connections to Loyola Community	Integrated Learning
Confident	Positive	36	52	X	X	X	X
Self-aware	Positive	35	44	X	X	X	X
Actively engaged	Positive	26	22	X	X	X	
Broader perspectives	Positive	24	29	X	X	X	X
Good relationships	Positive	17	23	X	X	X	
Knows expectations	Positive	17	11	X	X	X	X
Acclimated	Positive	16	16	X	X	X	
Knowledgeable (campus resources)	Positive	14	17		X	X	
Comfortable	Positive	13	17	X		X	
Changed positively	Positive	13	11		X		
Mature	Positive	12	17	X		X	
Resiliency	Positive	11	24	X	X	X	
Not enough information	N/A	11	4				
Well-rounded	Positive	10	10	X		X	
Independent	Positive	9	17	X	X	X	
Openness	Positive	8	24	X	X	X	
Focused	Positive	6	11		X	X	
Same	N/A	6	0				
Excited	Positive	6	4	X	X	X	
Organized	Positive	4	5	X	X		
Motivated	Positive	4	17	X	X		X
Curious	Positive	4	15	X	X	X	X
More Educated	Positive	1	0		X		
Depressed	Negative	1	0				
Responsible	Positive	1	5			X	
Empty	Negative	1	0				
Not Engaged	Negative	1	0				
Stressed	Negative	1	0				
Self-aware	Negative	1	1				
Bad class experience	Negative	1	0				
Worse	Negative	1	0				
Active learner	Positive	0	13				
Time management	Negative	0	1				
Tired	Negative	0	1				

**Below is a sample of responses that relate to the top five themes:**

Confident

- “I am more confident and feel like I can speak my mind in the classroom. When I first entered Loyola I was very nervous about being in new situations and I did not want to speak my mind and ask questions in the classroom. Now I am not afraid to ask questions and be able to communicate well with others.”
- “I would say that after my first year I have more self confidence, realizing that my voice as an individual is just as important as the voices of others. I am also more cognizant of how important it is to have supporters and to be one as well. It is also important to have leadership skills and to know that being an active member in the Loyola community can be both rewarding and fun. Overall, I have transformed into a more independent and well-rounded human being.”

Self-aware

- “I came into Loyola not knowing what to expect. Having gone to public school my whole life I was nervous about the transition to a Jesuit university. Not only was it nerve-wracking to be on my own for the first time, but I wasn't sure how I could fit in when I had never been to Catholic school. I now feel so extremely blessed to be a student at Loyola. First semester started out rocky for me, the transition was difficult. Despite the initial "smoothness" of the transition, by Thanksgiving I felt out of place and wasn't sure if I had made the right decision. I was even considering the possibility of transferring. Luckily, these feelings subsided by the second semester and I really found my place at Loyola and can't imagine myself going to any other university. This past year I have grown so much academically, socially and spiritually, in ways that I never thought I could have. Loyola's Jesuit values have instilled in me the importance of cura personalis, caring for the whole person. I have learned a lot in the classroom this year but some of the most important lessons I've learned took care out of the classroom through my involvement in activities on campus. SGA and Evergreens have taught me the importance of being a leader by helping other students on campus. I feel like I am making a difference in other people's lives and that feels really good.”
- “I have grown so much in my first year at Loyola. I have become a more positive, capable and independent person who is excited to take on the next 3 years of her college career and beyond. Although this year was a challenge to me academically, I now know what it takes to be a successful college student and the difficulties that comes along with this.”

Actively Engaged

- “I am more confident in speaking in front of groups, giving instructions, and trying to balance a goofy and serious side when relating to one on one conversations. I feel comfortable reaching out to professors while being honest with them in all ways. I recognize that I am the type of student that needs to participate to learn the most, and my messina sections allowed that.”
- “I was always a good student, but college classes were hard as expected. I am now more involved by going to office hours, emailing professors, and studying in groups to help me succeed.”

Broader Perspectives

- “As of now I have almost completed 10 classes at Loyola and I believe all of the 10 classes have in some way helped me to think and understand things in a better way. Each class has challenged some of the beliefs and thoughts I had before and I think I am a better student and person because of that. I am now able to look at situations and think differently.”
- “I am definitely more introspective and think about the world at large to a greater extent. I see myself as someone who has the power to actively make change.”



### Good Relationships

- “I wish I participated more which is different from when I first entered Loyola because I am normally very shy. I also talk to more people now. In high school I would practically only talk to my relatively small group of friends but here at Loyola I have a lot more acquaintances.”
- “I am more educationally stimulated, and interested in subjects I never thought would interest me. I have matured academically and met people who have positively influenced my life.”

### Knows Expectations

- “I am a lot more outgoing and have learned to reach outside my comfort zone by taking classes that have pushed me outside the realm of my major. I have also developed much more effective study habits and have learned to effectively managed my time.”
- “I feel I've adjusted to the changes, everything that made classes at Loyola different from classes in high school. I'm much more comfortable and confident as a student, compared to the start of fall semester.”

## Discernment & Reflection Related Questions

The following copy of the description of discernment from the Loyola Mission, Vision, and Values website<sup>6</sup> was displayed to students:

*At the heart of Ignatian spirituality is the practice of discernment – an art which St. Ignatius learned through sustained careful attention to and reflection on his own experience. Discernment is based on several presuppositions, including:*

- 1) humans have freedom, and their choices have consequences;*
- 2) some choices are better – and freer – than others;*
- 3) human choices are not only between good and evil, but are often between lesser goods and greater goods;*
- 4) it is possible through attending to motivations, feelings, and patterns of decision-making to improve the freedom, goodness, and authenticity of one’s choices.*

*...For Ignatius and his Jesuits, discernment involved prayer and the enlightenment of grace; they sometimes referred to their own practice of ongoing discernment as “seeking God’s will for their lives.” As they trained others in the practice of discernment, however, the art became practical as well as spiritual. Thus, Jesuit institutions have been known over the centuries for teaching people – regardless of their individual faith convictions – to think critically, to inform their consciences, and to cultivate habits of ongoing reflection and self-evaluation.*

After reading the definition, students were asked to respond to questions related to the elements of the definition that they were able to personally relate to as well as the elements that were not personally relatable.

### Discernment Definition- Relatable & Non-Relatable Elements<sup>7</sup>

*Question: What elements of this definition of discernment do you find you are able to personally relate to? Why? If none, leave blank.*

*Question: What elements of this definition of discernment do you find are difficult to personally relate to? Why? If none, leave blank.*

Element Number	Element	Relatable	Non-Relatable
1	“humans have freedom, and their choices have consequences”	39 responses	4 responses
2	“some choices are better – and freer – than others”	14 responses	13 responses
3	“human choices are not only between good and evil, but are often between lesser goods and greater goods”	18 responses	10 responses
4	“it is possible through attending to motivations, feelings, and patterns of decision-making to improve the freedom, goodness, and authenticity of one’s choices”	12 responses	6 responses

<sup>6</sup> Mission, Vision, and Values. (n.d.). Retrieved December 14, 2015, from <http://www.loyola.edu/about/mission-vision-values>

<sup>7</sup> A visual interpretation of student responses to these two questions can be found in Appendix B.

Observations about student responses- “Relatable Elements”:

- Students mentioned feeling a connection between these elements and the college experience- specifically that the independence of college provides many opportunities to make choices. For students, the concept of choices having consequences was strongly connected to college life.
- Element number 4 was relatable for students particularly during times when a student took a step back to examine personal priorities and passions. One student mentioned “Number four really relates to me following what you want and need is what gives you freedom in life. Especially when you do things you love, it gives a sense of freedom of mind and spirit.” Connected to this was also the idea that choices define you as an individual and the importance of considering others beyond yourself in the decision-making process.

Observations about student responses- “Non-Relatable Elements”:

- Element number 2 was difficult for students to relate to for the concept that a choice may be “freer” than another choice. One student mentioned “The idea that there are greater and lesser good decisions one can make. I find myself having difficulties choosing between the two at times.” Additionally, students indicated this was difficult to relate to because they felt that all choices shape you so that there could not be differences among the choices made.
- The idea that discernment involves prayer was something that was not as relatable for some students because they either don’t pray or pray infrequently but still felt as though they have personally practice discernment at times. One student acknowledged appreciation that there are other opportunities to practice discernment at Loyola that aren’t solely from a religious perspective.
- Some students indicating that this definition could not resonate with everyone given that some individuals are in situations/experiences where a lack of freedom exists (ex. slaves).

**Example of the Practice of Discernment While at Loyola**

*Question: Given this definition,<sup>8</sup> please describe a way in which you have personally taken part in the act of discernment during your first year of college.*

To evaluate responses to this question, students received a score from 0 to 4 using the criteria in the below rubric. Students receiving a (0) either had no example or the example provided was not actually discernment. Students receiving a (1) had a minimal description of an example that suggests a practice of discernment, while students receiving a (4) had a clear example discernment. This same rubric was utilized to code responses to a similar question asked in the Fall 2015 survey.

PRACTICE OF DISCERNMENT RUBRIC					
	N/A (0)	Beginning (1)	(2)	(3)	Advanced (4)
<b>Responding to the question:</b> <i>“Given this definition, please describe a way in which you have personally taken part in the act of discernment during your first year of college.”</i>	No response was provided or example provided is not actually the practice of discernment.	Example provided suggests that this may be the practice of discernment, but more information is needed to truly evaluate the response. Minimal details are provided.	Example provided is a rudimentary sample about their practice of discernment; few details are included in this response.	Example provided includes some specific details of how the student utilizes the practice of discernment.	Example provided shows that the student has a clear knowledge of what discernment is and includes strong details regarding their individual practice of discernment.

<sup>8</sup> The discernment definition was still visible to students on this page in the survey as a reference.

	PRACTICE OF DISCERNMENT RESPONSES									
	N/A (0)		Beginning (1)		(2)		(3)		Advanced (4)	
Spring 2016 (n=140)	22	15.71%	65	46.29%	39	27.86%	14	10.00%	0	0.00%
Fall 2015 (n=233)	59	25.32%	118	50.64%	38	16.31%	17	7.30%	1	0.00%

**Below is a sample of responses:**

Select Examples of “Beginning (1)” Responses:

- “In college there is so much more freedom and some choices are more effective others are not as much. The less effective choices could have consequences that would negatively affect my class participation and grades.”
- “Since we are away from home, we have more freedom in making decisions for ourselves, and need to accept the consequences.”
- “I think I really learned a lot about choices and consequences and how to make the best choices for myself to better the outcome of my future.”
- “I have learned to make the best decisions I feel like I can make for myself.”

Select Examples of “(2)” Responses:

- “I have personally taken part in the act of discernment in times where I have been a part of discussions that are challenging to participate in, usually with the same people. Sometimes it was best to speak on my behalf, and other times I would let the conversation dissipate naturally, as I did not feel that arguing would not change one's mind. I realized that there are external forces subconsciously affecting my engagements with these people, and I do not understand them - it is in that case I decide to not add more fuel to the flame.”
- “Going on the Kairos retreat allowed for me to religiously discern for my first time. I have religiously discerned on a far lesser extent before. This was an extremely life changing experience for me.”
- “In Messina, we reflected on our motivations and our strengths, accenting the patterns of decision making we use.”
- “Choosing who to room with for next year was a very difficult decision for me. I love all of my friends but I wasn't necessarily sure about living with some of them, so I had to discern in order to make a decision that was best for me.”

Select Examples of “(3)” Responses:

- “I believe I have taken a part in the act of discernment in this past year through my own reflection of what I really wanted out of college. I reflected on my ambitions, my feelings, and what I had been doing when I didn't feel as if Loyola was the right place for me. Thankfully, I overcame that feeling after realizing what it was I wanted and where I could find it. It helped me make the decision to stay.”
- “Several times during the past year I have had to make choices in favor of my own health and preferences rather than be overly concerned with the health of others. These instances have helped me to reevaluate my own importance more in the face of destructive and misguided altruism, brought on by low self-regard. I believe in these cases I discerned that living at the total beck and call of others is a lesser good than the greater good of putting oneself on the same level as others when interacting.”

- “Personally I had a run in with Student Life that totally changed me because now I think long and hard before I act. I take time to reflect on past events and decisions to help mold the ones I have to make. Before I would just live in the moment, but now I know that I cannot afford to live so recklessly.”
- “I have personally gone through many ups and downs this first year of college. Mostly downs, but those downs have allowed me to realize what I have been doing wrong for a long time. I discern in the chapel, the cathedral, the car, anywhere. It allows me to focus, calm down, and catch my breath in such a fast paced college life. I think meditation and discernment has and will change my life drastically for the better.”

### Reflection Practices- Frequency, Types, and Barriers<sup>9</sup>

*Question: On average, how frequently did you make time for reflection over the course of your first year of college?*

Frequency of Reflection (n=218)				
Never	Less than once a month	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
28	52	67	51	20
12.84%	23.85%	30.73%	23.39%	9.17%

*Question: Please describe how you have personally taken part in the act of reflection during your first year of college. If you experienced barriers to being able to reflect, or if there were offices/ individuals/ programs that helped you practice reflection please also list these here.*

Responses to this question were broken out into four different areas:

- Barriers to practicing the act of reflection,
- Offices/ individuals/ programs that helped with the act of reflection,
- Topics considered by students while reflecting, and
- Insights on the act of practicing reflection.

Barriers to practicing reflection included the following:

- Focus on other things including difficulty of schoolwork and being too busy
- Lack of self-care including fatigue, anxiety/depression with the latter developed both as reflection being a mechanism to inducing these feelings and as a barrier to approaching reflection
- Reconciling personal values/ Catholic values/ university values
- When forced to do this for a grade reflection felt less genuine
- Distinguishing between complaining and reflection

<sup>9</sup> A visual interpretation of student responses to these questions can be found in Appendix C.



Topics considered while reflecting include the following:

- Contemplating the world (3)
  - How can I help those around me?
- Who I am (12)
  - How what I am learning in class can make me a better person
  - My experiences
    - My relationships with others
  - What I am looking for
    - My spirituality/relationship with God
  - Evaluation of life
    - My feelings
    - What I've learned
- Thinking about the semester/ year (12)
  - Comparing it to where I am now & how I am as a student
    - The good and the bad
      - What can I be doing better
      - Contemplate career/ future
    - Areas I have grown
- My day/ week (26)
  - Who I interacted with
  - What I did
    - What I plan to do tomorrow
    - What I could have done better
    - Am I living how God wants me to live
  - Goal setting (related to all aspects of self)

## ACT OF PRACTICING REFLECTION

<b>HOW:</b>	- alone - with help of friends/family - journaling/writing - - in prayer - meditation - mentally reflect - in silence - - group reflection activity - short breathing exercises -
<b>WHERE:</b>	- at church/Mass - going to bed - running/walking - - sitting in room - on the Quad - at yoga-
<b>WHEN:</b>	- end of the day - when free time is available - - morning -
<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:</b>	- taking a step back - thinking after each class - - developing a plan for improvement -

**Below is a sample of responses followed by the level of frequency of reflection indicated by a student:**

- “During my first year, I didn't take the time to meditate and reflect on the fact that I was a first year. I was focused on thinking about the future which caused me stress over small things.” (never)
- “ALANA Services helped me to understand my placement at Loyola and allow me a safe space to open up and reflect on my time here at Loyola.” (never)
- “A barrier would be the constant craziness of having much work. It is difficult to reflect when my mind is preoccupied.” (less than once a month)
- “When I would reflect it would be when I needed to reevaluate what I was doing because I felt I wasn't acting to my fullest potential.” (less than once a month)
- “Every so often, I find it beneficial to take a step back and check in with myself to see where I am at in life. I like to make sure I am on the right track, I am happy, and the decisions I am making will help me be successful.” (monthly)
- “often during times I participated in yoga I would focus on my day ahead and the day i just left. it was the only time i was really able to take time in reflect because every where else was so busy” (monthly)
- “I have reflected both on my own and in a group. From time to time, I found myself taking long walks or finding a spot where I could be away from everyone else. It was during those times when I was able to evaluate my life at that point and the decisions I was making. I also took part in some group reflections with CCSJ, which were beneficial to me because I was able to think about my own actions while hearing the inputs of others.” (weekly)
- “I took time to reflect during times when I was alone and when I had time to be by myself with my thoughts. When I had trouble making decisions or with reflection, I turned to my friends and family from home most of the time for guidance.” (weekly)
- “I go running at the end of the day, usually to find new parts of Baltimore, and use that time to reflect on my day, my week, my year, my actions, and my future.” (daily)
- “I take time to think about how my day is going, what I can do to help those around me, and I specifically take time to write in a journal and reflect on my spirituality and my relationship with God.” (daily)

## Spring Enrichment Session Review

Students were asked to provide what they thought were the top 2 spring enrichment sessions. Responses were coded into the following 12 topic areas.

Question 1: Please describe the topic of the enrichment session that was of most value to you.

Question 2: Please describe the topic of the next enrichment session that was of most value to you.

Color Key:	
	Messina Spring 2016 Survey Results (current year)
	Messina Spring 2015 Survey Results
	Messina Spring 2014 Survey Results

Rank	Messina Spring 2016 Topic Area	Total Mention (n=217)	%	Messina Spring 2015 Topic Area	Total Mention (n=375)	%	Messina Spring 2014 Topic Area	Total Mention (n=87)	%
1	Academic Transition (may include major choice and course registration)	36	16.59%	Housing/ Roommate Selection	92	24.53%	Roommate Selection	18	20.68%
2	Study Abroad	35	16.13%	Study Abroad	78	20.80%	Off-campus Travel	12	13.79%
3	Housing/ Roommate Selection	30	13.82%	Other (different topics or not enough description)	33	8.80%	Study Abroad	11	12.64%
	Off-campus Travel	30	13.82%						
4	Campus Resources/ Transition Issues	18	8.29%	Off-campus Travel	30	8.00%	Diversity/ Identity	10	11.49%
	Career-related	18	8.29%						
5	Stress Management	13	5.99%	Campus Resources	29	7.73%	Discernment/ Reflection	9	10.34%
							Nothing	9	10.34%
6	Messina Course-Related Session	9	4.15%	Career-related	27	7.20%	Course-related	7	8.04%
	Other	9	4.15%				Academic Transition (including major choice and registration)	7	8.04%
7	Diversity	7	3.23%	Discernment/ Reflection	24	6.40%	Career-related	5	5.74%
8	A Discernment/ Reflection Activity	6	2.76%	Nothing	19	5.06%	Other (different topics or not enough description)	5	5.74%
	Service/ Volunteering	6	2.76%						
9				Academic Transition (including major	14	3.73%	Campus Resources	2 <sup>10</sup>	2.29%

<sup>10</sup> This number would be 4 if you counted the sections that visited the Career Center. Based off of the descriptions provided by students, these sessions were counted under "career-related."



				choice and registration)					
10				Course-related	13	3.47%	All Were of Value	1	1.14%
11				Stress Management	6	1.60%			
12				All Were of Value	2	0.53%			

### Noted Observations

- Similar to previous years, sessions on housing selection, study abroad, off-campus travel and campus resources remained among the top five types of enrichment session topics for students in the spring.
- One notable change was the increased number of students who indicated that their top enrichment session was related to those that addressed academic transition. When examining student open-ended responses to this question, ten students specifically commented on the assistance received in regard to how to declare a major and learning more about the timeline in which to complete classes while pursuing a specific major. Nine students found a review of registering/selecting courses was most beneficial for them. Given that many Messina sections cover the topic of registering for classes during the fall semester it is interesting that students would indicate this also being a valuable topic in the spring semester.
- Topics around discernment/ reflection have consistently dropped in being one of the top enrichment session topics. For those students who selected this as the most important topic, open ended responses shed light as to why this was personally meaningful. One student stated “I was able to better understand myself and my peers, therefore furthering my college experience and helping me grow as an individual.” Another student response suggests that the student experienced integrated learning through reflection, commenting “Because it was a way to creatively connect our coursework to reflections and our daily lives.”
- Multiple students who selected that a session related to campus resources/ transition issues was the most important topic emphasized an appreciation for times in which their section engaged in conversations related to the transition to college because in those moments a sense of comfort was felt in learning that others had occasions in which they encountered issues/challenges that others were also experiencing.
- Similar to previous years, some students did not find enrichment sessions to be as valuable to them in the spring semester- having a feeling that they were beyond needing this session weekly during the spring. However, this is not the consensus of every student- the majority find enrichment sessions to be of continuous value in the spring semester. One student provided this perspective: “I am a first-generation college student so all of this is new to me, so to have a session that catered to my needs in that regard was extremely helpful.”
- On course-related enrichment sessions: “During my spring semester, my professor planned multiple Messina activities that tied into our course. I really appreciated this because it helped me learn and retain course material better when I was given the opportunity to see it applied in outside ways.”

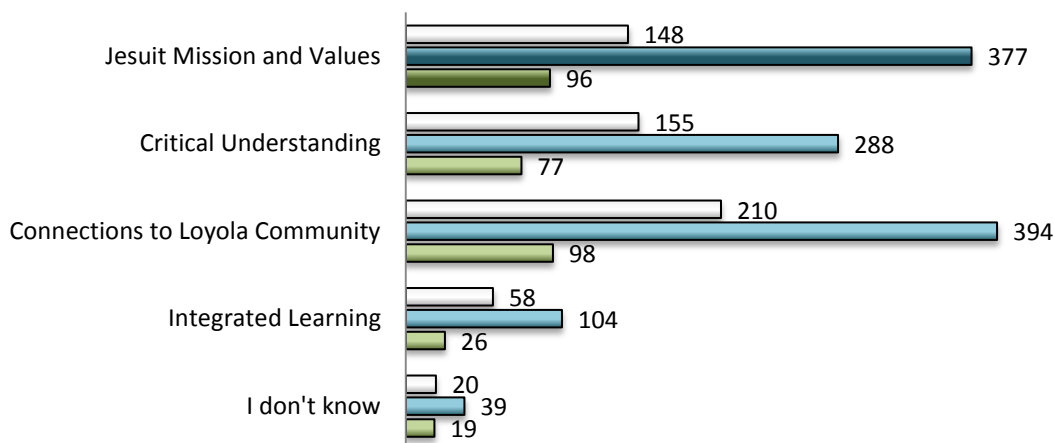
## Relation of Spring Enrichment Sessions to Messina Learning Outcomes

Students were asked to select which Messina learning outcomes they felt the enrichment session supported.

Question: For the enrichment sessions you just listed, please check the box(es) next to the Messina learning outcomes you believe this enrichment session supported. (please check all that apply)

Messina Learning Outcomes	Spring 2016 Total Mention	Spring 2015 Total Mention	Spring 2014 Total Mention
Develop habits of discernment and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.	55	147	44
Explore and articulate values and principles involved in personal decision-making.	93	230	52
Develop habits of reading, writing and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.	48	94	28
Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.	107	194	49
Establish healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with others including faculty, administrators, staff and peers.	106	191	50
Demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community at Loyola University both in and out of the classroom.	104	203	48
Integrate multiple sources of knowledge gained through various disciplinary lenses, texts, instruction, out of class experiences and personal reflection to offer a perspective on the interdisciplinary theme of the community.	58	104	26
I don't know	20	39	19

- Relevance of Learning Outcomes in Top Ranked Enrichment Sessions Spring 2016
- Relevance of Learning Outcomes in Top Ranked Enrichment Sessions Spring 2015
- Relevance of Learning Outcomes in Top Ranked Enrichment Sessions Spring 2014



## Participation in Messina Events

Question: Please indicate the number of Messina-sponsored events you have attended during the spring semester. Messina-sponsored events are defined as theme-wide lectures, performances, movies at the Senator, or RA theme-based programming.

Answer	Spring 2016 Response (n=219)	%	Spring 2015 Response (n=209)	%	Spring 2014 Response (n=47)	%
0	19	8.68%	8	3.83%	3	6.38%
1-2	78	35.62%	68	32.54%	17	36.17%
3-4	86	39.27%	87	41.63%	19	40.42%
5-6	26	11.87%	35	16.75%	6	12.76%
7-8	5	2.28%	9	4.31%	1	2.12%
9 or more	5	2.28%	2	0.96%	1	2.12%

## Respondent Demographics

### Student Athlete

Question: Are you a student athlete?

Answer	Response (n=219)
Yes, on a varsity team	24
Yes, on a club sports team	26
No	169

### Summer Program Participation

(Embedded Data from student roster)

Answer	Response (n=227) <sup>11</sup>
Ignatian Scholars Program (ISP)	0
Multicultural Awareness Program (MAP)	10
F.I.R.S.T.	10
Strategies for Success	5
Pathways to Peer Leadership	6
Outdoor Adventure	22
Experience: Baltimore!	4
Did not Participate in a Pre-Fall Program	171

### Gender

(Embedded Data from student roster)

Answer	Response (n=227)
Female	160
Male	67

### Race

(Embedded Data from student roster)

<sup>11</sup> One student participated in two different Pre-Fall programs- these numbers reflect this respondent

Answer	Response (n=227)
African American/Black	17
Asian	13
White	191
American/Alaska Native	1
Pacific Islander/ Hawaiian	1
Not Given	4

### **Ethnicity**

*(Embedded Data from student roster)*

Answer	Response (n=227)
Non Hispanic/ Latino	213
Hispanic/ Latino	14

### **Faith/Religion**

*Question: What is your religious affiliation?*

Answer	Response (n=219)
Islamic	1
None	29
Roman Catholic	127
Jewish	2
Other Christian	40
Prefer Not to Answer	12
Other (please specify)	14

*Other responses:*

- Protestant, Non-denominational
- Episcopal
- Christian
- Eastern Orthodox
- Agnostic
- Unsure
- Buddhism
- Atheist
- Pentecostal
- Baptist
- Lutheran
- Christian

## **Appendix A: Messina Learning Outcomes**

As a result of the *Messina*, first-year students will....

### Jesuit Mission and Values

- Develop habits of discernment and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.
- Explore and articulate the values and principles involved in their personal decision-making.

### Critical Understanding

- Develop habits of reading, writing and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.
- Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.

### Connections to Loyola Community

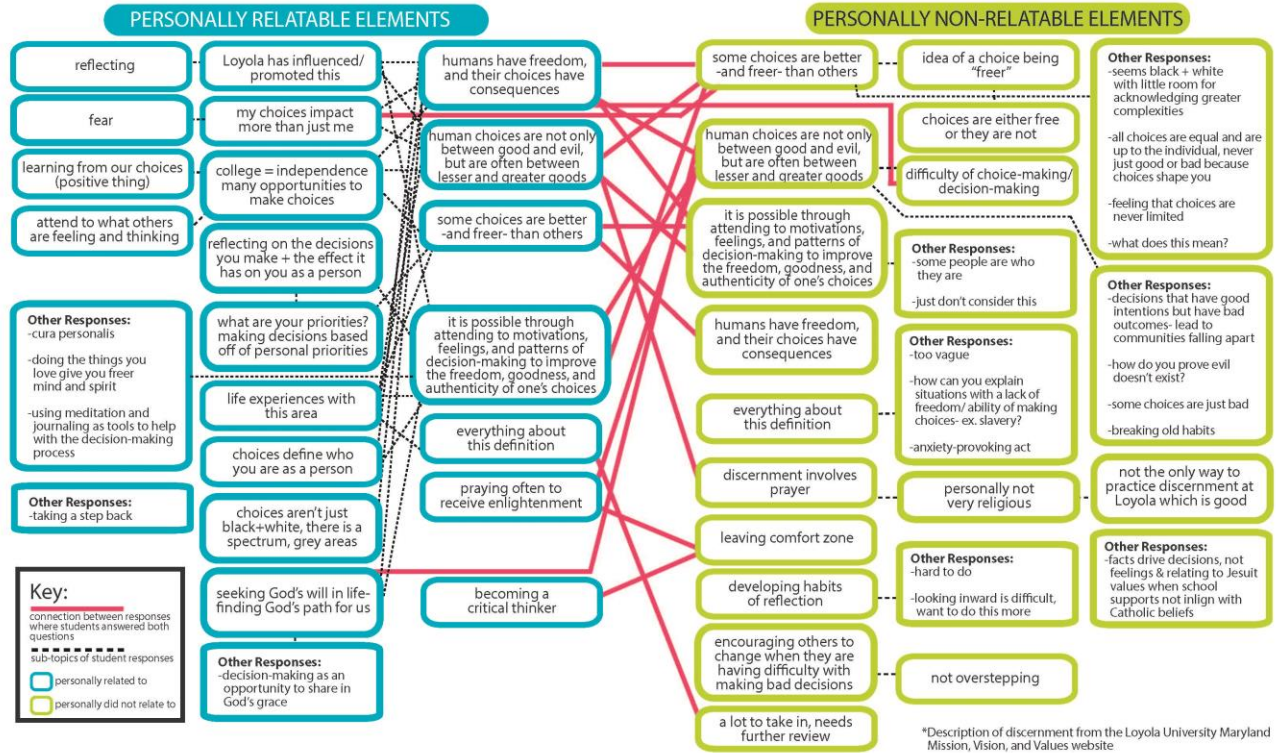
- Establish healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with others including faculty, administrators, staff and peers.
- Demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community at Loyola University both in and out of the classroom.

### Integrated Learning

- Integrate multiple sources of knowledge gained through various disciplinary lenses, texts, instruction, out of class experiences and personal reflection to offer a perspective on the interdisciplinary theme of the community.

# Appendix B: Personally Relatable and Non-Relatable Elements of Discernment

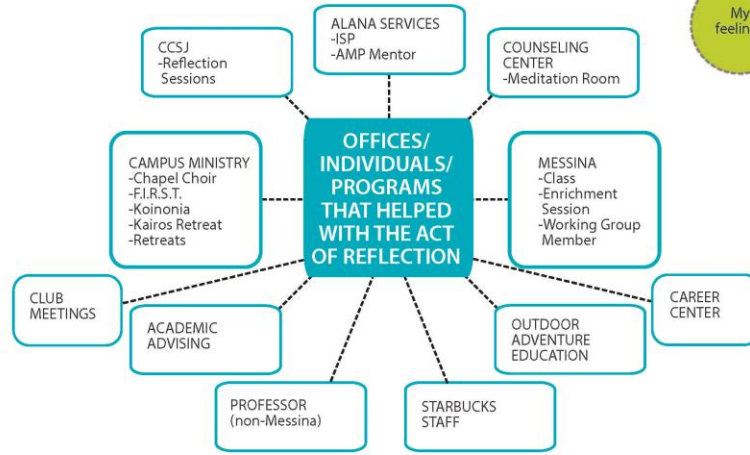
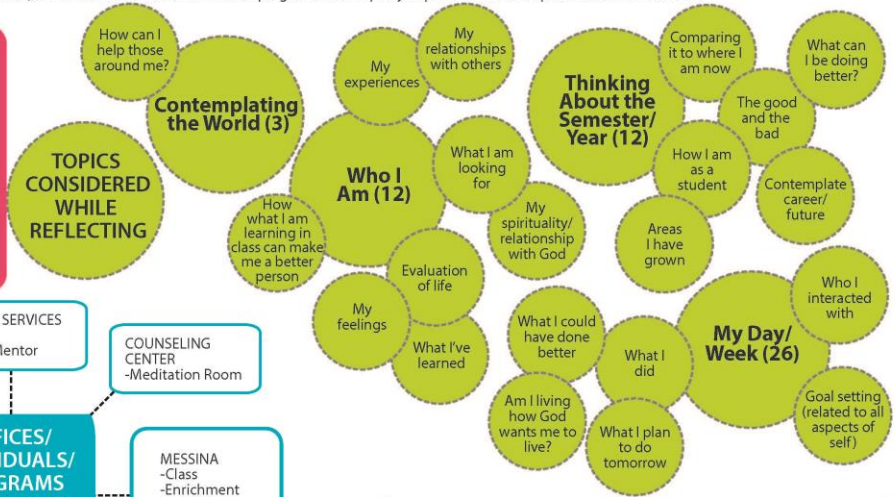
**DISCERNMENT** Questions: What elements of this definition of discernment\* do you find you are able to personally relate to? Why? If none, leave blank.  
 What elements of this definition\* do you find are difficult to personally relate to? Why? If none, leave blank.



# Appendix C: Reflection Visualization

**REFLECTION** >>> **Question:** Please describe how you have personally taken part in the act of reflection during your first year of college. If you experienced barriers to being able to reflect, or if there were offices/ individuals/ programs that helped you practice reflection please also list these here.

- BARRIERS TO PRACTICING THE ACT OF REFLECTION**
1. Focus on other things (6) including:
    - Difficulty of schoolwork
    - Being too busy
  2. Lack of self care (6) including:
    - Fatigue
    - Anxiety & depression:
      - Reflection inducing these feelings
      - As barriers to approaching reflection
  3. Reconciling personal values/ Catholic values/ university values (1)
  4. Forced to do this for a grade, less genuine (1)
  5. Distinguishing between complaining vs. reflection (1)



ACT OF PRACTICING REFLECTION	
<b>HOW:</b>	- alone - with help of friends/family - journaling/writing - in prayer - meditation - mentally reflect - in silence - group reflection activity - short breathing exercises -
<b>WHERE:</b>	- at church/Mass - going to bed - running/walking - sitting in room - on the Quad - at yoga -
<b>WHEN:</b>	- end of the day - when free time is available - morning -
<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:</b>	- taking a step back - thinking after each class - developing a plan for improvement -

# Appendix D: Copy of the Survey Instrument: 2016 Spring Messina Student Survey

## Section 1: Spring 2016 Messina End of Year Student Survey Consent

### Q1. Participant Consent Form

I agree to participate in a study of all first-year students in Messina at Loyola that is being conducted by Mary Ellen Wade of Loyola University Maryland. This survey will be used to assess the overall experience of Messina students at Loyola Maryland. This survey is designed to collect information that will enable us to develop Messina so that it will better serve future first-year students.

I understand that by participating in this study I will be expected to participate in a number of tasks relating to my knowledge, attitudes, satisfaction, and experience as a first-year student. This instrument includes multiple choice and open-ended questions. Additionally, I may be invited to participate further in this research several months after my involvement in the Messina program has ended. If I am asked to continue participation, I will be told exactly what further participation will entail and I am able to opt out at any time.

I have been informed that any information obtained in this study will be recorded with a code number and that my responses will not be linked to me as an individual. At the conclusion of this study the key that relates my demographical information with my assigned code number will be destroyed. Under this condition, I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for publication or education, provided that I am in no way personally identified. I understand that there is minor level of discomfort involved with this research and that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time. A decision to withdraw from the study will not affect the services available to me from Loyola or my participation in Messina.

If I have any questions or problems that arise in connection with my participation in this study, I should contact Mary Ellen Wade, the project director at (410) 617-2225 (work) or at mewade@loyola.edu THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD- (Approval FWA00013527) PHONE: 410-617-2004.

Please select one of the following two options:

- I have read the information above and I agree to participate in this survey.
- I am declining to participate in this survey.\*<sup>12</sup>

## Section 2: End of Year Survey Intro

(Survey Statement)

Thank you for participating in the Spring 2016 End of Year Student Survey administered by Messina. It is recommended that you take this survey on a computer or tablet. You are able to begin this survey and continue to take it elsewhere.

This survey is an opportunity to offer feedback and input on your Messina experience. The survey should take you less than 20 minutes to complete. Please be honest with your responses.

Were you a student at Loyola in Fall 2015?

- No

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<sup>12</sup> If this option is selected, the survey is complete for the individual.



- Yes

Did you switch into a different Messina class than the class you were originally scheduled to take in the spring semester?

- No
- Yes

Are you a student athlete?

- Yes, on a Varsity Team
- Yes, on a Club Sports Team
- No

To what extent did your participation in Messina help you to establish a positive relationship with your...

- Messina Fall Faculty Member
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Messina Spring Faculty Member
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Messina Mentor (Administrator)
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Messina Evergreen(s)
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Fall Semester Messina Mentor (Administrator)\*
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Spring Semester Messina Mentor (Administrator)\*
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Fall Semester Messina Evergreen(s)\*
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal
- Spring Semester Messina Evergreen(s)<sup>\*13</sup>
  - Not At All, A Little, Somewhat, A Great Deal

If interested, please comment on the choices you selected in the above question.

As you wrap up your first year, how would you currently describe yourself as a student compared to when you first entered Loyola?

### Section 3: Discernment & Reflection Related Questions

(Survey Statement) Below is a description of discernment from the [Loyola University Maryland Mission, Vision, and Values website](#). Please read the definition, and then respond to the three questions below:

“At the heart of Ignatian spirituality is the practice of discernment – an art which St. Ignatius learned through sustained careful attention to and reflection on his own experience. Discernment is based on several presuppositions, including:

1. humans have freedom, and their choices have consequences;
2. some choices are better – and freer – than others;
3. human choices are not only between good and evil, but are often between lesser goods and greater goods;

---

<sup>13</sup> Options with an \* are only visible to those who answered “yes” to Q3.

4. it is possible through attending to motivations, feelings, and patterns of decision-making to improve the freedom, goodness, and authenticity of one's choices.

...For Ignatius and his Jesuits, discernment involved prayer and the enlightenment of grace; they sometimes referred to their own practice of ongoing discernment as "seeking God's will for their lives." As they trained others in the practice of discernment, however, the art became practical as well as spiritual. Thus, Jesuit institutions have been known over the centuries for teaching people – regardless of their individual faith convictions – to think critically, to inform their consciences, and to cultivate habits of ongoing reflection and self-evaluation."

What elements of this definition of discernment do you find you are able to personally relate to? Why?  
*If none, leave blank.*

What elements of this definition of discernment do you find are difficult to personally relate to? Why?  
*If none, leave blank.*

Given this definition, please describe a way in which you have personally taken part in the act of discernment during your first year of college.

On average, how frequently did you make time for reflection over the course of your first year of college?

- Never
- Less than once a month
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

Please describe how you have personally taken part in the act of reflection during your first year of college.

If you experienced barriers to being able to reflect, or if there were offices/ individuals/ programs that helped you practice reflection please also list these here.

What is your religious affiliation?

- Islamic
- Roman Catholic
- Jewish
- Other Christian
- None
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (open ended text option)

#### **Section 4: Enrichment Sessions and Theme-Related Questions**

Please select the topic of the Messina enrichment session that was **most valuable** to you this semester.

- Campus Resources/Transition Issues
- Career-related
- A Discernment/Reflection Activity
- Stress Management
- Off-Campus Travel
- Academic Transition (may include major choice and course registration)

- Diversity
- Housing/ Roommate Selection
- Study Abroad
- Service/ Volunteering
- Messina Course Related Session
- Other (open ended text option)

Please briefly describe why this enrichment session was most valuable to you.

For the enrichment session you just listed, please check the box(es) next to the Messina learning outcome(s) you believe this enrichment session supported. (please check all that apply)

- Develop habits of discernment and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.
- Explore and articulate values and principles involved in personal decision-making.
- Develop habits of reading, writing and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.
- Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.
- Establish healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with others including faculty, administrators, staff and peers.
- Demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community at Loyola University both in and out of the classroom.
- Integrate multiple sources of knowledge gained through various disciplinary lenses, texts, instruction, out of class experiences and personal reflection to offer a perspective on the interdisciplinary theme of the community.
- This session did not relate to any of the Messina learning outcomes.

Please identify which Messina theme you were a part of during the spring semester.

- Self and Other
- Stories We Tell
- The Visionary
- I am unsure of my Messina theme

How did you experience your Messina theme this spring? (please check all that apply)

- Through conversations/activities during my Messina class (just with my Professor)
- Through conversations/activities during my weekly Messina enrichment session (Professor, Mentor, Evergreen)
- Through conversations/activities during classes not connected to Messina
- Through attendance at Messina theme events
- Through conversations/activities coordinated by my RA
- On my own with students from my Messina class
- On my own with students not in my Messina class
- Other (open ended text option)

Please indicate the number of Messina-sponsored events you have attended during the spring semester.

Messina-sponsored events are defined as theme-wide lectures, performances, movies at the Senator, or RA theme-based programming.

- 0 events
- 1-2 events

- 3-4 events
- 5-6 events
- 7-8 events
- 9 or more events

### **Section 5: Thank You Response**

Make sure you click the next button so your response is fully submitted. Thanks for your participation! Shortly you will receive an email that includes information on how to be considered for one of our ten Chipotle Cards and four Starbucks cards. Good luck!