WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

In previous years, the Les Aspin Alumni Council served to bridge the gap between Aspin and Kleczka alums and the programs’ current students and initiatives. As alumni engagement remains our priority, we are re-establishing the Alumni Council to strengthen the Les Aspin and Kleczka community and lead it in new and exciting directions.

The Alumni Council, composed of current student interns in the Office of Public Affairs who have participated in the Les Aspin or Kleczka programs, has heard from former Aspinites about the need to better connect with alumni throughout the year. In taking on this responsibility, we have created the newsletter to inform alumni about the Aspin Center, the Kleczka Program, Alumni Council programming and the success of our former students. This is our inaugural issue, and we intend to publish a new issue annually during the spring.

Of course, we would deeply appreciate your input about how best to keep in touch with all of our Aspinites. If there is anyone that we missed on our distribution list, please let us know. Send us an email at lesaspinalumni@marquette.edu; we would love to hear from you!

For more information on the Les Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program, follow us on Facebook, visit our website and join our LinkedIn group.
Greetings Aspin Center and Kleczka alums!

I am delighted to engage all of you in a hope to build community and foster goodwill. Alumni work is always a challenge. Alums have fond memories but usually only of their class - to have a crossover from one class to the next is difficult. I think we have been successful in our efforts at fostering good alumni relationships because the faculty and staff are the happy faces that span 20, 25, and even 30 years of dedication to the Aspin Center’s students. The thousands of Marquette students that have studied at the Aspin Center have had common experiences, and many are deeply devoted to the mission of the Center and want others to share what they once enjoyed. My hope is that the newsletter will help them do this.

Our celebration dinner last September of the 30th Anniversary of the Center demonstrated to many the fond memories alums have of their Washington, D.C. experience. The very generous financial support of alumni and others on that occasion, totaling $725,000, is a testament to the commitment of our alums.

I am encouraged by the Aspin Alumni Council’s efforts, and I look forward to their hearing more from our students and alumni.

THE NEXT GENERATION: THE LES ASPIN SCHOLARS

This year, The Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Aspin Center collaborated to establish the Les Aspin Scholars Program, beginning with the freshman Class of 2023.

Our newest program extends our mission of developing resourceful, well-informed leaders by connecting with students before they even step foot on campus. Each year, the Les Aspin Scholars Program will select high school seniors attending Marquette to be guaranteed a spot in the Washington, D.C. program during their junior year. Our scholars will also have the opportunity to attend a symposium every semester to meet with elected officials and community leaders.

We received 91 well-written applications, and our selection committee hopes to welcome between 15 and 20 students to the first class of scholars.

For more information about applying for the Les Aspin Scholars Class of 2024, visit our website here.
30TH ANNIVERSARY:  
BY THE NUMBERS

As part of the 30th Anniversary celebration, we launched a GiveCampus gift-giving campaign to honor the past three decades of the Aspin Center’s impact and to fund the Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program for years to come. Because of our alumni and friends, our campaign was an immense success. Together, we raised more than $725,000, with more than $8,000 stemming from our student-driven online campaign.

Looking to the next 30 years, the gifts we received will meaningfully advance the Aspin Center, the Kleczka Program and all of the students it touches. With this funding, we can continue to improve the accessibility of our programs for students of all economic backgrounds and ensure that any Marquette student with drive and dedication will have the opportunity to grow and succeed in D.C.

"The gifts we received will meaningfully advance the Aspin Center, the Kleczka Program and all of the students it touches."

The Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program endowment continues to grow and is always accepting contributions. Please consider a gift to the Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program to support this transformational experience and make it available to current and future students. For more information or to donate, visit our website here.

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$725,000+ RAISED

2/3 of our alumni online donors were from students who graduated in the last 5 years

148 donors participated in our online campaign, exceeding our goal of 100 donors

Our online campaign video celebrating Fr. O’Brien has been viewed more than 14,000 times

More than half of our online donations came from Aspin & Kleczka alumni

OVER THE YEARS

Over the last 30 years, the Les Aspin Center has hosted more than 3,000 students. Our students have interned in nearly 100 congressional offices, numerous executive agencies, and interest groups.

Since its founding in 1988, the Les Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program has raised nearly $5.8 million to support our students.

Fr. O’Brien’s dogs have always been an integral part of the Les Aspin experience. In the last 3 decades, the Aspin Center has been home to 4 dogs, named Contra, O’Congo, Buppy, and Doosie.

A CLOSER LOOK

Donors from 20+ states contributed to our campaign

Our online campaign raised more than $8,000 in two weeks to support future generations of Les Aspin and Kleczka students.

More than 250 guests attended our anniversary dinner, including more than 40 students

With 12 advocates our campaign website generated over 1,500 clicks

www.marquette.edu/aspin
A source of pride for Marquette, the O’Brien House, located at 4 4th St. SE, has long been an integral piece of the Les Aspin experience. The building, kitty-corner from the Aspin Center and just four blocks from the Capitol, has housed a full class of Aspinites each semester and summer since 1995. In 2014, Marquette alumna Jackie Ennis Lewis, Arts ’60, who was leasing the house to the Aspin Center, generously donated the building to the university.

After hosting more than 2,000 students over the course of 24 years, the house was ready for renovation. In summer 2017, students were placed in temporary housing with the help of Jackie Ennis Lewis, and Marquette undertook a $1.8 million investment into the O’Brien House. After the nine-month renovation, the house now has upgraded electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems. All six apartments were redesigned with an “open concept” in mind, creating more living space and uncovering previously hidden windows. Complete with an ADA compliant ramp and new bay windows, the O’Brien House reopened in 2018, just in time to celebrate the Aspin Center’s 30th Anniversary.

And of course, in a neighborhood of red and white doors, the O’Brien House door had to be painted Marquette blue!
We are quickly expanding to accommodate the increased demand for Kleczka interns and to match students’ interest in nonprofits and private organizations.

Carrying on Rep. Kleczka’s legacy of public service, our students are in every corner of Milwaukee, using their time and talent to improve our community. For a full list of Kleczka placements, click here.

EXPANDING KLECZKA PROGRAM INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

In 2005, the Les Aspin Center created a sister program named after longtime friend of Marquette and the Aspin Center, the Honorable Jerry Kleczka. The Kleczka Internship Program, made possible through the congressman’s generous financial gift, carries on Rep. Kleczka’s commitment to public service and civic leadership by providing and financing public policy-focused internships in and around Milwaukee. Students of all majors and backgrounds are connected to interning opportunities at civic-minded organizations and legislative offices in Wisconsin while still taking classes on Marquette’s home campus.

Over the last 14 years, the Kleczka Program has grown exponentially. Partnering now with more than 30 internship sites, our students have become a well-known asset to offices across Milwaukee and the state capital.
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Alumnus Jimmy Walsh attended the Les Aspin Center in 2009 and spent his D.C. days interning for Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL-13). After graduating the same year, Walsh returned to Capitol Hill to work for several members of Congress, but he has since landed a position as the Legislative Director for the Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation. In this job, Walsh has helped shaped foreign affairs, trade, and defense policy while traveling around the country and the world.

Over the last two years, Walsh worked as a lead author on the largest reform of U.S. foreign development in decades, the “Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act of 2018” (BUILD Act), which was signed into law by President Trump last October. While drafting the legislation was a challenge, Walsh rethought his approach to foreign development and complex political history.

As for advice for soon to be Aspin and Kleczka alumni, Walsh encourages students to “READ, read everything and make friends with people that challenge your political beliefs.” His sound advice is reminiscent of his favorite Aspin memory: smoking cigars with Fr. O’Brien, when according to Walsh, he was “shaking the foundations of [Fr. O’Brien’s] political beliefs. Walsh qualified, “at least I like to think I was.”

EMILY SEXTON, BUSINESS, 2018

Now employed at Artisan Partners in Milwaukee, alumna Emily Sexton participated in the Kleczka Program during the summer of 2016. For her summer internship, Sexton worked at Spotted Eagle, a nonprofit that centers on workforce development and training for American Indians in Greater Milwaukee. Through the support of Marquette administrators and her internship site, Sexton became involved with the First Nations Studies Program, which led Sexton to become even more active in Milwaukee’s Native community. Sexton credits her internship as a “jumping off point” for her increased advocacy for Native students by recruiting students, getting involved with scholarship initiatives and holding leadership positions in the Native American Student Association.

For Sexton, spending a weekend working a powwow in Milwaukee was one of the highlights of her experience. She described the event saying, “I would not have had the opportunity to be involved with such an incredible cultural experience had I not been working with Spotted Eagle. I am an Alaska Native and our traditions are very different, so it was an exciting learning experience.”

Sexton also attended the Les Aspin Center, where she interned in the Council for Opportunity in Education, in Summer 2017.
A case study in turning connections into opportunities, Alex Dinkel interned at The Federal Group, a healthcare lobbying group, during his Spring 2017 semester at Les Aspin. Post-graduation, Dinkel leveraged the network he developed in D.C. to land an internship at CURA Strategies, an integrated communications agency focused on healthcare advocacy. He was soon hired on as the Advocacy Manager for Advocates for Opioid Recovery.

Dinkel’s Aspin semester lined up with the Trump administration’s First 100 Days, allowing Dinkel and his class to witness both the inauguration and the first Women’s March, even though it sidetrack Dr. Carter’s usually rigid schedule. Dinkel recalled the Women’s March, saying “The sheer size of the crowd was enough to be impressive but the energy was incredibly moving as well. I’ll never forget Dr. Carter leading us through the massive crowd and turning around to say, ‘This isn’t my first protest,’ with an interestingly mischievous smile.”

WE WANT TO FEATURE YOU!

In each newsletter, we will highlight several of our alumni and their accomplishments since attending the Aspin Center or participating in the Kleczka Program.

If you would like to nominate a Kleczka or Aspin alumni to be featured in our next newsletter, send us an email at lesaspinalumni@marquette.edu
IN THE NEWS

HOW MANY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OPERATE IN D.C.?

BY NICK ANDERSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

"The growing presence of out-of-town universities in Washington underscores what has been true throughout D.C. history: The nation’s capital is very much a college town....Other schools with buildings or offices in Washington devoted to students and academic programs, according to a list that NYU’s Ulrich shared with The Washington Post, include Boston, Brigham Young, Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, Florida International, Marquette, Michigan State, Ohio State, Pepperdine, Stanford, Syracuse and Texas A&M universities, as well as the State University of New York at Brockport and the universities of Georgia and Wisconsin."

MORE NEWS:

Government Shutdown Affects Les Aspin Internship Program

MARQUETTE WIRE

Students Dish on First Impressions Abroad

MARQUETTE WIRE

Wisconsin U.S. Senate Race More About Republican vs. Democrat

WUWM 89.7 RADIO

U.S. Navy Performs Its First All-Female Flyover to Honor Rosemary Mariner

NEW YORK TIMES
LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH US!

DROP US A LINE

Want more updates on the Les Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program? Have a suggestion on how to connect with other alumni? Thought of an idea for our next issue? Like us on Facebook, join our LinkedIn Group or send us an email at lesaspinalumni@marquette.edu.

The Les Aspin Center and the Kleczka Program Endowment Fund is integral in providing our students with financial assistance and supporting programmatic operations of the Aspin Center. Your gift helps the Aspin Center continue its mission of providing a unique experiential learning opportunity for students committed to public service and the values of a Catholic, Jesuit education. For more information or to consider a gift to the Aspin Center, visit our website.