

# All Things Ignatian



## Integration of Jesuit Values into the ILAC Water Quality Program

### Abstract

The Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC), Creighton's Jesuit mission in the Dominican Republic, was established almost 40 years ago to provide healthcare to impoverished, rural Dominicans. Early in its history, the organization realized that systemic change required a focus on public health. As a result, water quality became an integral part of the public health effort. In 1997, a program was established to distribute home-based water filters to families in the rural communities. In 2005, a service-learning program for undergraduates was incorporated into a model to sustain this program.

The objective of the water quality program is to increase accessibility of safe drinking water and to provide education on correct filter usage and maintenance. The three facets of the program are cultural awareness, service and immersion, and water testing. It is through the former two facets that the Jesuit ideals of men and women for and with others, forming and educating agents for change, Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam, and Magis are realized.

Since its inception, 87 students have participated in the program. These students have supported five rural communities by funding materials for construction of latrines and for concrete floors for homes, thus providing the opportunity for participants to live and work with Dominicans. The program has overseen the installation of approximately 1,500 filters that provide safe drinking water for about 7,500 Dominicans.



Participants of the 2011 program mix concrete for the floor of a nearby house.

Lauren Turco and Gary Michels, PhD



Three students work with a Dominican to dig a hole for a latrine.

### Men and Women for and with Others

#### CULTURAL AWARENESS

- Despite significant economic difficulties, students learn that Dominicans have a great sense of pride in their culture and identity.
- Cultural activities and lectures give students the knowledge necessary to truly be *with* the Dominicans and work alongside them in solidarity.

#### SERVICE AND IMMERSION

*"When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection."* Peter-Hans Kolvenbach

- Students work, not for the community, but together with individual members of the community on service projects and water quality testing.
- Direct cooperation creates a shared sense of dignity and accomplishment that is as uplifting to a community as the results of the service itself.

Sponsored by the Creighton University Jesuit Community, in association with the Degelman Center for Ignatian Spirituality.

### Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

- Students reflect on and share their experiences during a morning group prayer in the ILAC chapel.
- Prayer and spirituality are significant aspects of Dominican culture, which help students integrate into the community and form insightful conclusions from their experiences.

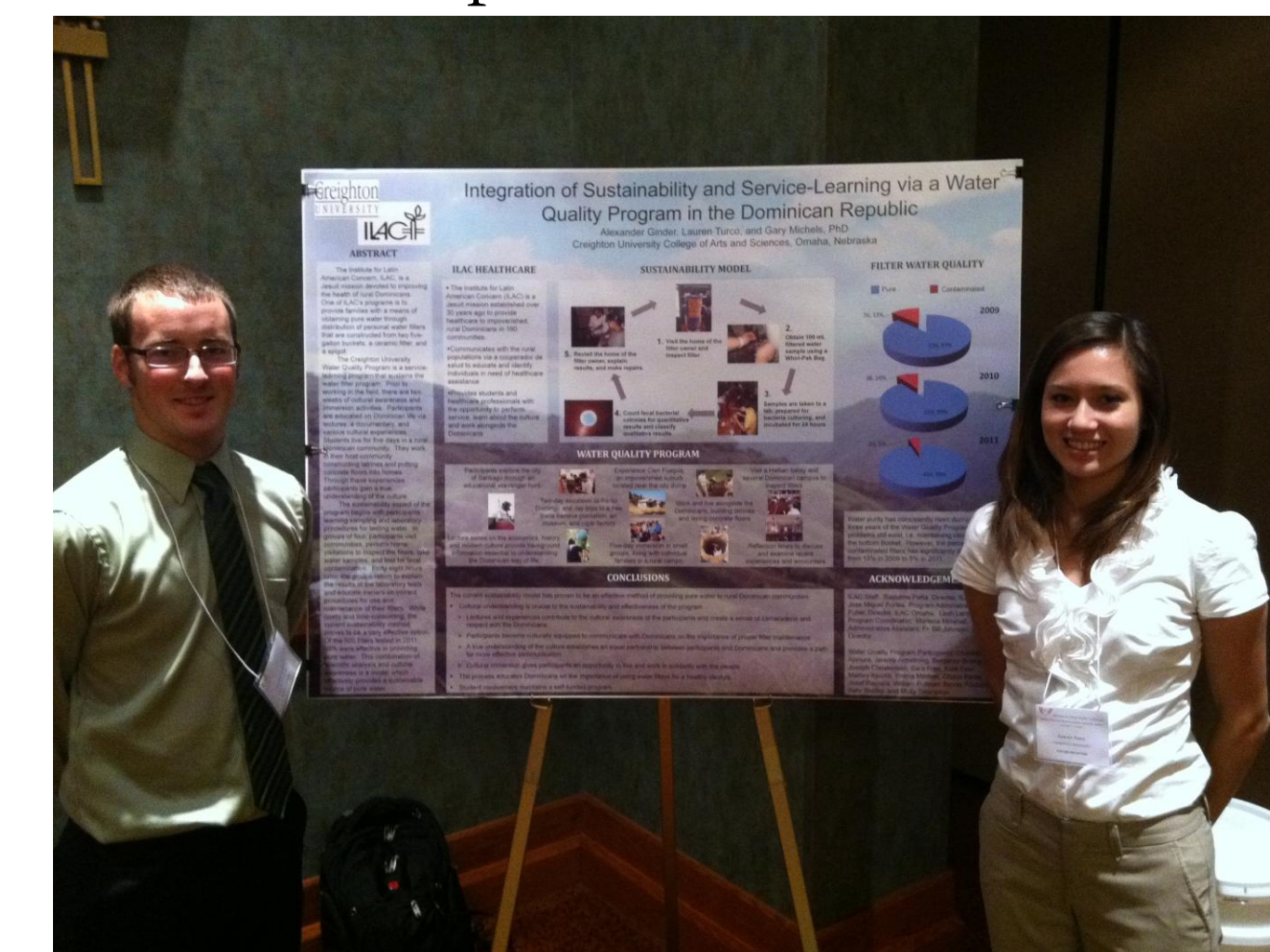


Fr. Bill conducts morning prayer, the Ignatian "EXAMEN" of Conscience.

Final reflection on the beach at Sosua.

### Magis

- Participants are encouraged to further their experience by performing research and presenting results. Throughout the 7 years of the program, 35 presentations involving 28 student participants have been made at local, national, and international meetings.
- Upon return to the United States, several students remain in contact with their Dominican families through phone calls and online video chat. This sustained communication reaffirms the bond created through the cultural, spiritual, and physical togetherness of the five-day immersion in the campo.



Alex Ginder and Lauren Turco display their poster at the Midwestern Global Health Conference.