



# Loyola High School Service Learning Reaches New Level with Help from x2VOL

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## Single sign-on to manage service for 1,200 students

Service learning is deeply embedded in the culture of Loyola High School, a Catholic Jesuit school enrolling more than 1,200 boys in Los Angeles.

Students must complete a certain number of service hours each year, culminating in a three-week senior project in which they leave school to volunteer in a soup kitchen, work with disabled children, or otherwise help less fortunate individuals.

"We are focused on opportunities that foster compassion," said Community

Service Coordinator Angela Moran. "We look at service as a two-way street: We hope students will develop into young men who can make a difference in the world and give back."

Service learning is an essential component of Loyola's efforts to prepare students for college and a career, but with so many service opportunities to manage—and so many hours to record—Moran needed an easy way to keep track of this information.

She found that, and much more, in x2VOL from intelliVOL—an online platform that

simplifies the management, verification, and reporting for service learning programs.

x2VOL tracks the hours students give to community service, eliminating paperwork and automating the tracking and reporting process. School administrators can easily manage activities, post opportunities, and review and approve students' service

projects—while students also benefit from a single, online source for recording and reviewing their hours.

As an added benefit, x2VOL integrates directly with Naviance, an online platform for

college and career preparation. Loyola already used Naviance to help students prepare for life after high school, assessing their interests and learning styles and then matching them to appropriate college and career options.

As a result of a partnership between intelliVOL and Hobsons, the provider of Naviance, Loyola students and administrators can access x2VOL from directly within the Naviance platform without having to log into a separate system. With x2VOL integrated into the system, the experiences that students

gain through community service tie directly into the choices they make as they plan for their future using Naviance.

x2vol "has made my job a lot easier," Moran said. It has saved time for both students and administrators, while providing greater visibility into students' service activities. And that, in turn, has led to deeper reflection on the importance of these activities.

Perhaps most importantly, x2VOL has driven service learning as a key component in preparing Loyola students for a life of service after they graduate.

### A 'wonderful surprise'

To illustrate the importance of service learning to Loyola's mission and how x2VOL brings this mission to life, Moran described how the software helped make Loyola's freshman tutoring project more efficient.

Each Loyola freshman is required to help tutor eighth-grade students from Catholic elementary and junior high schools in Los Angeles. The goal of these Saturday morning tutoring sessions is to help inner-city youths with their vocabulary, comprehension, math, and test-taking skills, so they can apply for admission to Loyola or another rigorous Catholic high school.

## Reflection and self-discovery

"Many students can afford to get tutoring, but not the students we serve," Moran said. "They don't get a lot of experience with preparing for a high school entrance exam."

Loyola opens its classrooms to 700 eighth-graders each weekend for the duration of the six-week project. Before x2VOL, Loyola freshmen would fill out a paper form indicating which two tutoring sessions they wanted to volunteer for. But it was a challenge for Moran and her colleagues to staff each tutoring session appropriately or to confirm whether the students showed up.

With x2VOL, students receive an automated reminder, which helps them remember to come and Moran also can set limits on the maximum number of students who sign up for any given date. Once a session fills up, the software prompts students to choose another date.

Moran discovered she could get a roster of who was signed up for each session. "With x2VOL giving me the rosters in advance, I could pre-assign rooms and create nametags for each student with their room numbers indicated. That was a wonderful surprise that has really streamlined the process."

## No more excuses

Before discovering x2VOL, Moran had used a Microsoft Access database to keep track of students' service.

"There was so much paperwork behind the way we used to do community service in the past," she said. Students had to fill out a paper registration form describing their intended activity. Once they received approval, they could begin their service.

Now, this process takes place online resulting in fast and efficient approval. Students log in to x2VOL within Naviance and choose from hundreds of service activities, or they can create their own and submit it for approval.

After students completed a service activity, their on-site supervisor used to sign a form to verify their service hours. "The problem was that students were losing their forms," Moran

said. "Or, the supervisor wasn't there to sign so the forms weren't getting turned in."

Now, students log into x2VOL from their cell phone and record their hours right after they finish. Then their supervisor receives an automated message asking for verification. Supervisors also can comment on students' service. "It makes students more accountable," Moran said. "There is no reason why they shouldn't turn in their hours. There are no more lost forms, and no more excuses."



## Recognizing everyone's contributions

Saving time and improving efficiency are important, but these aren't the only benefits from Loyola's use of x2VOL. Having a single, easily accessible platform for students and administrators to record and monitor service enhances accountability and spurs reflection.

For instance, students view and track their own service hours, helping them take ownership. Counselors, too, can access x2VOL directly through Naviance to monitor students. What's more, Loyola gives college scholarships to graduating seniors in recognition of their service, and x2VOL lets administrators easily track this while noting everyone's contributions for recognition.

"We can see the accomplishments of the quiet students who aren't letting everyone know what they do, and we can recognize them."

Loyola places a high priority on reflection. Students must reflect on their service and what it meant to them and the people they served. x2VOL gives students an easy way to record these reflections.

## Powering formative experiences

The importance of service learning to the community is underscored by Loyola's

required senior project, a tradition spanning nearly 35 years and helping shape students' character as well as their future life choices.

This deeply formative experience calls for students to volunteer off-site every day for three weeks instead of attending school. It results in 80 to 90 hours of intensive service.

Students can choose from about 200 options for service that have been added to the system. Using x2VOL helps administrators manage the program's logistics, Moran said.

Administrators can log in and see where each senior is among the 80 or so sites being used each year, allowing them to visit these sites once a week to ensure all is well.

Students are also placed in small reflective groups to share their experiences

and discuss what they learned about themselves.

"Generally, the feedback I get is how attached students get to the community they are working with," Moran said. "They are sad when they have to leave that group. They create a strong bond with the community."

The senior service project helps many students decide on a career path. Some decide they want to teach because they learn how rewarding it is to work with children. Others who volunteer in hospitals go on to pursue medical careers.

"One student worked in an inner-city school last year," Moran remarked. "He spoke Spanish, so he translated for the students and he now wants to be a speech therapist."

She concluded: "Students get a true appreciation for what they have." And, what they have to offer their community.

