



# Loyola University Chicago Expands Mentorship to Strengthen Alumni Engagement and Institutional Advancement

## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

MAY 2025

**Institution Type:** Private, Non-Profit

**Total Enrollment:** 17,000+

**Location:** Chicago, IL

**Academic Programs:** Undergraduate  
& Graduate



**LOYOLA**  
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO



# The Challenge: Strengthening Alumni Engagement & Philanthropy

For over 150 years, **Loyola University Chicago (LUC)** has been dedicated to shaping the futures of its students. Yet, like many institutions, LUC faced challenges in fostering deep alumni engagement and leveraging those relationships to drive student success and philanthropic giving. It also recognized an opportunity to enhance alumni engagement and support student professional development through mentorship.

However, the university faced three key challenges:

1

**Limited Alumni Connectivity & Engagement:** Alumni were not involved in formal mentoring at scale across the institution, leaving untapped potential for engagement.

2

**Missed Opportunities for Philanthropic Growth:** Donors engaged in mentorship programs are proven to be more likely to contribute financially, yet LUC needed a way to foster these relationships.

3

**Siloed Career & Mentorship Initiatives:** Different schools within the university had independent, disconnected career and mentoring efforts, limiting collaboration and visibility

To address these challenges, LUC partnered with **PeopleGrove** to launch **LoyolaLinked**, a scalable engagement platform designed to bridge students, alumni, and university leadership in meaningful ways.

# The Solution: LoyolaLinked – A Unified Mentorship & Engagement Hub

LoyolaLinked was launched in 2020 and initially piloted by the **Quinlan School of Business** before expanding across all university schools and disciplines in 2023. This university-wide initiative transformed mentorship and professional networking through a digital-first approach. Recent adoption across students and alumni alike has been remarkable.

## Key Successes & Impact:

### Explosive Growth in Adoption

- LoyolaLinked grew from 4,000 users in FY23 to 10,881 in FY24, marking a 172% increase in one year.
- This influx represents a fresh wave of alumni engagement, re-establishing connections with the university.
- 45% of alumni who joined in FY24 were newly engaged with the university, having not been involved in the last five years or ever before.

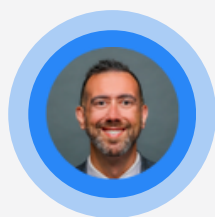
### Engagement & Global Reach at Scale

- The platform facilitated thousands of informal/flash mentorship connections.
- LoyolaLinked expanded beyond campus, enabling alumni from across the world to mentor students and create an international support network.

“

One of the biggest opportunities I saw in alumni engagement was bringing students and alumni together. PeopleGrove has enabled us to tap into those relationships, providing underrepresented students with role models in their fields and opening doors to career opportunities they may not have imagined before.

”



– Laurence Bolotin, Assistant Vice President for Constituent Engagement & Executive Director of the Loyola University Chicago Alumni Association

## Driving Philanthropy Through Mentorship

A key indicator of success was **LoyolaLinked's rekindling engagement with lapsed alumni, reconnecting those who had not engaged in five or more years.**

- **National research shows that mentorship engagement increases alumni giving likelihood.** Currently, a cross-functional team is working on the data infrastructure that will allow the Alumni and Advancement teams to correlate giving dollars to LoyolaLinked platform engagement. In the meantime, they are opening new paths to giving --LUC saw nearly **1,000 new potential Leadership Annual Giving and Major Giving participants in FY24** -- candidates were identified following a prospect management review.
- **Engaging lapsed donors through LoyolaLinked.** The platform reconnected alumni who had not engaged with LUC in **five or more years**, reigniting their involvement through mentorship and positioning them for future donors and university advocates.



# Leveraging Data to Drive Strategy & Growth

**With PeopleGrove's analytics capabilities,** LUC gains actionable insights to expand mentorship efforts strategically.

- LUC used platform data to identify high-demand industries (e.g., healthcare, education, environmental sustainability) and recruit industry-specific alumni mentors to fill gaps to scale and grow their mentorship programs.
- New integration with Advancement databases will ensure that mentorship engagement informs fundraising and engagement strategies.
- Additionally, plans are in motion to build the data infrastructure that ties directly to LUC's key performance indicators (KPIs) to support and showcase the relationship between mentorship, student retention, and alumni giving/philanthropy.

These insights enable LUC to optimize outreach efforts, ensuring mentorship drives social mobility and career readiness for students. For alumni, it fosters deeper connections, renews affinity for their alma mater, and lays the foundation for future philanthropic contributions.



# The LoyolaLinked User Experience

Loyola University Chicago continues to enhance mentorship and alumni engagement by expanding LoyolaLinked's reach and refining the user experience. Through strategic partnerships and platform innovations, LoyolaLinked has become a central hub for mentorship across campus.

- **Expanded Campus Partnerships** – LoyolaLinked collaborated with multiple university divisions to integrate previously siloed mentorship programs, including identity-based affinity groups, and the CARE Pathway to the BSN, which connects underrepresented nursing students with industry mentors.
- **Enhanced User Experience** – Implementing new sub-hub navigation features makes it easier for students and alumni to find relevant mentorship opportunities tailored to their academic and professional interests.
- **AI-Driven Matching** – Advanced algorithms ensure high-quality, career-relevant mentor-mentee connections, increasing engagement and long-term participation.
- **Strategic Outreach & Engagement** – LUC leveraged PeopleGrove's email segmentation tools to drive mentor recruitment, improving response rates and overall engagement.
- **Recognized for Excellence** – LoyolaLinked earned the **2023 PeopleGrove Rising Star Award** for its rapid growth and impact, while the **CARE Pathway program received the 2024 Co-Conspirator READI Award** for fostering mentorship among underrepresented nursing students and alumni.

By integrating mentorship into key initiatives and refining the digital experience, LUC creates a clear pathway from student to engaged alumni. By embedding mentorship early and sustaining it post-graduation, LUC is strengthening ties that drive career success, alumni involvement, and long-term institutional support.

# Scalability: Expanding Across Campus

LoyolaLinked has scaled across schools and colleges and is integrated into coursework, making formal mentorship a key pillar of the LUC experience. Through structured programs and expanded outreach, the platform is fostering deeper connections and career readiness for students while strengthening alumni engagement.

## ● Expanding Formal Mentorship Programs

New sub-hubs, including affinity-based alumni groups, have been established to extend mentorship opportunities across disciplines.

## ● Broad Campus Integration

LoyolaLinked is now embedded in **UNIV 101 (a first-year seminar)**, introducing students to mentorship early in their college journey.

## ● Growing Impact Across Schools

### ● School of Business

Expanded from **80 students and 73 mentors in 2020 to 262 students and 201 mentors in 2023**, becoming a key career-readiness initiative within the **Quinlan School of Business**.

### ● School of Nursing

The **CARE Pathway program** connects underrepresented prospective nursing students with mentors for academic and professional support.

### ● School of Social Work & School of Environmental Sustainability

Formal mentorship programs have been introduced to strengthen student-alumni relationships in these fields.

### ● Professional Development at Scale

The **Cura Personalis at Work** series, led by LoyolaLinked alumni, offers bi-monthly professional development workshops to enhance career growth.

### ● Strengthening Alumni Engagement

Every school at LUC now has its own alumni sub-hub, allowing graduates to stay engaged within their discipline while remaining part of the broader LoyolaLinked network.

Through strategic integration and expansion, LoyolaLinked continues to build a mentorship ecosystem that supports students from enrollment to alumni engagement and beyond.

“

LoyolaLinked has expanded access to mentorship and streamlined alumni engagement at Loyola University Chicago. By creating a structured and scalable platform, we've not only deepened connections between students and alumni but also laid the groundwork for long-term institutional impact. The ability to align mentorship with career readiness, alumni engagement, and advancement has been invaluable, and we're excited to continue leveraging PeopleGrove to strengthen the Loyola community.

”



– Paityn Korner, Sr. Associate Director, Mentorship and Engagement, Loyola University Chicago





# Key Performance Indicators: Defining Success and Securing Institution-Wide Buy-In

To ensure LoyolaLinked's long-term success and impact, the Alumni Relations team partnered with Advancement, Career Services, and Information Technology Services to establish clear performance metrics and secure stakeholder investment. Collaboration with additional leadership, including the Office of the Provost and Student Development, helped align institutional priorities, define platform success, and determine necessary resources for growth.

Key areas of focus include:

- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration** – Engaging key stakeholders across campus to ensure LoyolaLinked is integrated into institutional goals and supported by multiple divisions.
- **Strategic Alignment** – Establishing a shared vision for mentorship's role in student success, alumni engagement, and philanthropy, guiding long-term investment in the platform.
- **Resource Planning** – Assessing platform performance and user engagement data to allocate the necessary support for expansion and sustainability.

- **Tracking Impact Through Defined KPIs\*** – LoyolaLinked’s success is measured by key performance indicators that capture both platform growth and institutional impact:
  - **Platform Engagement** – Tracks user activity and participation levels.
  - **Platform Satisfaction** – Gathers user feedback through post-connection surveys.
  - **Platform Growth** – Measures annual increases in LoyolaLinked adoption.
  - **Platform Demographics** – Assesses user diversity to align with LUC’s student body.
  - **Alumni Giving & Philanthropy** – Evaluates mentorship’s influence on donor engagement in collaboration with Donor Relations and Advancement.
  - **University Engagement & Student Outcomes** – Measures alumni participation and student success metrics linked to mentorship.
  - **Current vs. Future State Analysis** – Schools implementing LoyolaLinked sub-hubs complete a Current State of Mentorship survey, providing baseline data that is later compared to post-implementation results to assess impact.

\*See the appendix for a complete list of key performance indicators.





# The Bottom Line: Measurable ROI for Advancement & Engagement

Loyola University Chicago's commitment to guiding students from enrollment to career success while deepening alumni connections and enhancing advancement efforts has delivered a **measurable impact** through PeopleGrove's platform:

- **150% increase in users** (4,000 → 10,000+ in one year).
- **Stronger alumni-student connections** lead to career success.
- **Data-driven alumni engagement strategies** for sustained growth.

While LoyolaLinked has already demonstrated significant gains in just two years, building the necessary data infrastructure remains an ongoing priority. Efforts continue to refine data collection and analysis to further strengthen the correlation between mentorship, engagement, retention, and philanthropy. Yet, even as these systems evolve, the results thus far highlight LoyolaLinked's transformative impact on student outcomes, institutional advancement, and lifelong alumni engagement.

LoyolaLinked is more than just a mentorship platform—it's a comprehensive engagement and advancement tool that seamlessly connects student success, alumni relationships, and philanthropic growth, ensuring a lasting impact for years to come.

To learn more about PeopleGrove, visit [PeopleGrove.com](https://PeopleGrove.com)





“

LoyolaLinked is a gamechanger.

”

– Loyola Linked Mentor

## • Callout: Success Story Highlight

Maria Kuntz (CAS '05), an experienced marketing leader, mentored Renee Zagozdon (SOC '17 & CAS '17), a healthcare communications professional. Renee credits her mentorship for directly leading to job offers:

“

LoyolaLinked transformed my career path.

”

– Renee Zagozdon, LoyolaLinked Mentee

“

I brag about our mentoring relationship to friends and family. It was a direct result of Maria's thoughtful guidance that I landed new job opportunities.

”

– Renee Zagozdon, LoyolaLinked Mentee

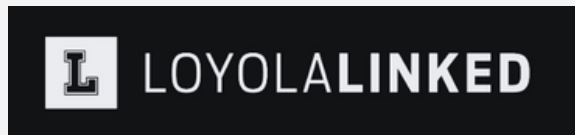






Visit [PeopleGrove.com](https://www.PeopleGrove.com) to learn more.

# \*APPENDIX



## LoyolaLinked Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

**Platform Engagement:** *measures activity by users on the LoyolaLinked platform*

Key Performance Indicator
# of mentees (students) and mentors with completed profiles
% of users with active contact information (within the existing Advancement database) who complete a profile on the platform
% of users with profiles that are active (logs in and sends a message, clicks a page, has a meeting, etc.) users
# of messages sent by users
% of messages that receive a response
% of users with complete profiles that make a connection

**Platform Satisfaction:** *measures user perceptions through responses to post-connection survey questions*

Key Performance Indicator
Average response to overall connection Star Rating question (response range of 1 to 5)
% of “Agree” to “Strongly Agree” responses to the Meaningful Interaction question
% of “Yes” responses to the Actionable Steps question (sent to Mentees Only)
% of “Yes” responses to the Would Recommend This Mentee question (sent to Mentors only)

**Platform Growth:** *measures annual growth of LoyolaLinked*

Key Performance Indicator
% annual growth in active users (active defined above)
% annual growth in users with a connection
% of active users who retain their profiles each year - measures activity year over year
# of mentees (students) who later serve as mentors (after being transitioned from Student > Alumni)
# of new users recruited by current users (per response to a new sign-up question)

**Platform Demographics:** *measures user demographics and overall community balance, with a long-term goal that the platform demographics reflect those of the student body*

Key Performance Indicator
# of mentors compared to # of mentees (students) that respond to identity-based demographic questions (ex: race/ethnicity, gender, ability, etc.)
# of mentors compared to # of mentees (students) that identify as first-generation students
# of mentors compared to # of mentees (students) that indicate a career/industry interest
# of mentors compared to # of mentees (students) with completed profiles

**Giving:** *in collaboration with Donor Relations and/or Advancement Information Systems data, measures the impact of LoyolaLinked on giving*

Key Performance Indicator
# of mentors who become annual donors (includes both never donors and lapsed donors)
Average dollar value of mentor gifts
% change in annual gift after engagement on LoyolaLinked
% growth in type of gift (unrestricted, directed towards a specific school, etc.)



**University Engagement and Student Outcomes:** *measures University engagement from alumni users on the LoyolaLinked platform*

Key Performance Indicator
# of users that are <b>newly</b> engaged with the University through LoyolaLinked (has not previously been engaged with the University within the last 5 fiscal years)
# of Alumni users that complete Visits with Alumni Relations after engaging with LoyolaLinked (a Visit is a meeting with an Alumni Relations staff member that furthers our relationship with the person)
# of Alumni identified for Leadership Roles after engaging with LoyolaLinked (folks who opt to serve in volunteer roles, like a Board Member)
Retention rate for students with a mentor as compared to those without

**Current State vs. Future State:** In addition to the metrics listed above, each new school that implements a LoyolaLinked sub hub will fill out a 'Current State of Mentorship' survey that captures any existing activities and data collection related to mentorship. These survey responses will be compared with the school's activities post-implementation of LoyolaLinked.