Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center

Educate | Collaborate | Innovate | Reward

A center dedicated to learning and event management leadership

ExperientialLearningCenter.org
Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center
KELC

- **We create event experiences.** Our team follows the trends and works to understand how these trends can be relevant in our community.

- **KELC is a place where college interns work in the areas of marketing, public relations and event management.**

This work is done through four core principles:

- **Educate:** On-site training programs
- **Collaborate:** Integrate students into local organizations
- **Innovate:** Create unique customer-centric event solutions.
- **Reward:** Provide a rewarding experience that supports leadership through doing.

As a placemaking change agent, the Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center is dedicated to the promise of connecting interns to the greater Kalamazoo Community.
KELC | Who We are:

Board of Directors:
- Libby Ziemelis, Vice President, Data Services at HandsOn Connect Cloud Solutions
- Greg Ayers, President and CEO of Discover Kalamazoo
- Bob Miller, Associate Vice President for Community Outreach, Western Michigan University
- Jacob Droppers, Attorney, Varnum Law.
- Becca Shemberger, Recruiter, Aerotek
- Deborah Droppers, President, founding member.

Our Location:
210 Farmers Alley
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-388-2830
ExperientialLearningCenter.org
46-5093471 IRS 501-c-3
Connecting Students to Downtown

With a direct connection to the WMU Event Management Minor, KELC is a conduit to directing college students to volunteering at events and connecting as interns.

In the classroom, the Event Management Minor program curriculum helps to create hypothetical events as part of the ability to see beyond the here and now. The students use downtown as the footprint for their events.
Through the Event Management Minor and the Sports Management Major, volunteer projects are formalized as student experiential learning. As one of the pillars of student retention, we know that when students are engaged in their communities they are more likely to stay in college and finish their degree.

73% of the top employers are more likely to hire a candidate with volunteer experience.

Client Benefit Outcomes

- Audio Tree Music Festival - 110 WMU students supported the beverage tent/vip tent support/ticket sales
- Heco Manufacturing - RPM Symposium 30 WMU students for registration/conference ambassadors
- Portage Winter Blast Half Marathon 10k & 5k - 90 students supported the 2 day event.
Things that we are ....Well...Proud of...

We were given a challenge by Mayor Bobby Hopewell......

“Create a Food Truck event in a rather “pigeon invested area.”

Today, Food Truck Rally is launching its 3rd year and has a pledge and a promise to help new food trucks create a business that introduces great culinary delights.

Decade Night - April 6
May the 4th Be With You - May 4
Michigan Summer Camping - July 6
Back to School- September 7
WMU Pride - October 5
An Event That Tugs at our Heartstrings

KDPS started this cool event that created pop-up events in rather challenging neighborhoods. They asked, can you help plan and connect college students as volunteers?

Our secret? WMU athletes are interns and they plan the events...and bring their friends.

WMU Football players took the lead with these events in 2017
How Can You Not Fall in Love?

For 3 years, we have had students create these events. As they leave their internships, they say that the KDPS Block Parties were the most meaningful.

We Agree!

The Toilet Bowl Toss was an intern’s idea. ...Surprised?
60% of what we do is plan events for clients. Here’s how students learn:

- The dynamics of client enhancement
- Soft Skills - oral and written communication
- Entrepreneurial Development - innovative “concepting”
- Committee Reporting
- “Servant Leadership”
- Event Day Customer Centricity
- Crisis Management
- Technology
Leadership

It comes with a clipboard. Doing the right thing while problem solving requires diligence.

- Students help businesses think outside the “box” as to how to brand for Do-Dah.
- You have 500 donated hotdogs, 700 people showed up.
- How do you convert an old parking lot into a carnival, with cotton candy.
- How do you embrace the coldest winter in nearly “50 years” and move forward with an event?
- Your Sag Driver took a wrong turn...you can’t find the last runner.
- So, you have a roof, dj’s, and you need to raise a lot of money - what’s next?
Connecting Interns to Professional Jobs

What I have learned at KELC is really incredible. Learning by doing and the ability to take ownership and responsibility helped me land a job. In fact, my future employer in Chicago told me he added another $5,000 to my salary because of the things that I have learned at KELC.

Sarah Skwarczyk
Public Relations Major
Event Management

Success Rates:

- In 3 years, over 46 student interns have worked at KELC and nearly 23 are holding event/PR “type” jobs in the Midwest. And, just over 93% have professional jobs.
- Students comment that they are “still” using the technology and the “templates” they learned at KELC.
- The #1 take-away as stated by interns leaving KELC is the ability to accentuate soft skills learned during their internship.

The WMU Event Management Minor started in 2009 with 5 students. Today at any given time there are about 170 students. Many of these students have spent time with KELC.
Our On-going Central Challenge

- Encourage our future leaders to invest in their communities by being involved, learning new skills, and connecting through events.
- Identify ways to incorporate skill based volunteers for our clients and the work that they can do beyond the event.
- Get students to believe in their downtown and community by creating events that solve problems and connect the innovative power of millennials.
- Authentically remind our student volunteers that we simply couldn’t operate with out them and always look to innovate the ways that we empower them to be part of the community.
- Believe in the power of events.