

Ray'Von Jones

**Graduation Year:** Senior

**College:** Arts & Letters

**Major(s):** Sociology & Spanish

**Minors(s):** Education, Schooling, and Society & Poverty Studies

**Scholar Group Membership:** MSPS Scholars

**Did you received other funding for this project?:** N/A

**Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding?** No

**More details on CUSE funding assistance?** Without CUSE funding, I would not have been able to attend this conference!

**Project Title:** Presentation: "Unpacking Privilege: Biographical Mapping as a Window into Understanding Social Justice Orientations and Pathways in Young Adults"

**Project Location:** Maynooth, Ireland. (National University of Ireland at Maynooth)

**ND Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Maria McKenna

**Project Type:** Conference - Presentation

**Why did you undertake this project/experience?** Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Prepare for graduate school (MA or PhD), Prepare for national fellowships, Career discernment and/or preparation, Internationalize your Notre Dame experience

**Did your funded experience help you:**

**[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]:** Very Much

**[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]:** Very Much

**[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]:** Very Much

**[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]:** Very Much

**[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:**Very Much

**Tell us about your experience.**

I have been Dr. Maria McKenna's research assistant for the past two years. Our research focuses on the ways in which people become interested in issues of social justice. We conduct interviews with students, while guiding each interviewee through the process of creating a map of their experiences. This process is instrumental in identifying the ways in which people become interested in issues of social justice. Through my relationship with Dr. McKenna, I have learned a lot about the process of conducting research, as well as its challenges. This conference presentation, with the help of CUSE, was a culmination of this relationship. The International Youth Studies Conference in Maynooth, Ireland is a conference in which scholars from around the world gather to discuss their work on youth and youth studies. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to present at this conference.

**Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.**

Presenting at this conference was instrumental for my development as a student-scholar. As the only undergraduate presenting the conference, I had the opportunity to present our research to other scholars who have unique experience in the fields that we are interested in. Presenters at the conference were from a plethora of different countries so this conference was a great opportunity for both intellectual and cultural exchange. I learned a lot about research related to youth that is taking place globally, which truly added much-needed perspective to my thinking about educational equity.

Beyond my development as a student-scholar, I truly believe that this research is essential in efforts related to socially conscious pedagogy. This work could better equip teachers, parents, and others to encourage youth to become interested in issues of social justice.

**Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.**

I believe that this experience is connected to my future plans in many ways. I got to learn more about education, which is a topic that I am very passionate about and interested in. I wish to become an educator in the future, so this experience will stay with me as I move forward to pursue this. I am currently applying for a Fulbright fellowship, and this experience is integral in my potential role as an educator and ambassador abroad. Furthermore, I am applying to graduate programs, and this experience has been an essential talking point as I try to illustrate my experience as a researcher and presenter.

**What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?**

For students who are planning to pursue similar projects, my advice is to not be afraid to reach out to faculty members for help! In addition, take full advantage of opportunities to receive funding from CUSE.


