

AY19 Program Learning Outcome (PLO) Assessment: Civic Engagement ANTHROPOLOGY/SOCIOLOGY

Assessment Type: Academic Program

Year/Term: AY19

Level: SOC 315

Learning Outcome: Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Assessment Method/Tool: Program Civic Engagement Rubric

Measurement Scale: 3-1

Sample Size: 15

Proficient Adequate Developing

(# of students) (# of students) (# of students)

Identifies Real World Problems through Research & Civic Engagement

Analyzes Real World Problems

Benchmark: 100% Institutional benchmark median percentage of students meeting "Proficient" or "Adequate" levels

Median % Achieving Benchmark: 100% percentage of students meeting "Adequate" or "Proficient" levels 15 7

100%

47%

0 8

0% 53%

0 0

0% 0%

Addresses Real World Problems

Evaluates critically research & field experience to suggest sound solutions.

7 7

47%

47%

8 8

53%

53%

0 0

0% 0%

Means 60% 40% 0%

% scoring 2 or 3 100%

Closing the Loop

Statement

Summary of Results

Students were asked to participate in a community-based project as part of fulfilling requirements in

SOC 315, Introduction to Social Welfare. The idea is to get them out into the community, engage in analytical thinking, interact with potential community partners, design a project that addresses needs identified by the group in consultation with the partners, and propose/complete project and write up the results. The three projects were:

1. **Food Insecurity**—Students worked with the University-based Haven from Hunger (HfH) initiative, and the

coordinator of HfH Bridget Thamert. The main function of the project is to maintain an emergency food pantry, one with minimal requirements for accessing food, accessible to any residents in Union County (including EOU students). HfH has operated and undertaken a variety of projects since its inception in 2003, geared around: alleviating food insecurity; building social capital among community partners; raising awareness of issues surrounding hunger and food insecurity; and reducing the stigma of asking for assistance. The project secures and gives out on average about 1000 lbs of food in a given year. Supply is always an issue, and the students decided to plan and organize a neighborhood food drive. There are three components to measuring results, first being donations collected, second being observations relating to interactions with the community, third being demonstrating lessons learned from the process to communicate to future groups/students who seek to engage the project. The students collected 815 lbs of food and 45 lbs of non-food items (diapers, paper, hygiene, etc.). They were well-organized, made decisions in a thoughtful way about how to canvass neighborhoods, discovered that their presumptions about which neighborhoods might donate at higher levels were not supported (if anything, the neighborhoods with lower property values donated more frequently), and showed a sense of surprise at the efficiency of the project and the generosity of citizens. 2. **Campus Sexual Assault**—Changes in Title IX and a VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) grant awarded to EOU,

authored by Colleen Dunne-Cascio, led to the placement of a person on campus, employed by Shelter from the Storm (the county's domestic violence advocacy agency). This person—who happens to be an EOU graduate of the Anth/Soc program, is a "Privileged Campus Advocate" and as such not mandated to report if students, staff or faculty come to her to report sexual assault or related allegations. Research on campus sexual assault has been aided by a project based out of Columbia University, SHIFT (Sexual Health Initiative to Foster Transformation), which has used ethnographic approaches to better understand the disconnect between what students hear and intellectually understand with respect to sexual assault, and what happens in social situations where that valuable learning often seems disregarded. Colleen was approached, and came up with some possible projects, and the group chose to plan an activity that would occur in April 2019 as part of the campus' Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) events. Orange County has done a "Paint the Town Teal" project to raise awareness, and the students decided to mirror this effort at the campus level ("Paint the Campus Teal"). Because this is a proposal, their collective job was then to plan the events, identify campus partners and stakeholders, come up with the substance of their awareness campaign (i.e., how to convey some of the more recent learning about sexual assault and affirmative consent), and do so in a way that would allow a relatively smooth transition for those who in April would actually undertake the project. Overall the group was able to come up with some doable project ideas, but the overall output was somewhat disappointing given there were seven students working on the project.

3. **Warming Station**—La Grande opened a "warming station" last year. Warming stations are available to those

without shelter for spending the night. The station opens at 6 pm and guests must leave by 8 am the next day. It has been a struggle because of opposition in some corners of the community, especially some nearby neighbors (the Warming Station is this year located in a house on N. Willow, behind Dutch Bros). To understand some of the issues, the group members (numbering three) needed to take the station training, and also chose to participate in a mental health/first aid training. Between these two, students spent upwards of 10 hours. Then they each volunteered to take shifts at the station (a variety of shifts were available, from early evening to late-night/early morning). This participation helped them to observe and better understand the station, how it functions, where potential problems exist, and what kinds of measures might be taken to address them. We had discussed as well the potential for a “documentation project,” wherein residents could receive assistance applying for birth records, social security numbers, immunization forms, etc. Students clearly learned from the project and had a better understanding of the problems posed by unsheltered homelessness, but invested so much time up front, coupled with the busy schedule of the station manager, that progress on some of the additional initiatives they proposed (such as the documentation project) was inconsistent at best. They were able to identify more pressing needs (e.g., a system for more accurate record-keeping/incident reporting) that I will meet with the station manager and a SOC capstone student to further.

Accounting for Results

▫ **Food Insecurity**—The students were on top of this project from the beginning. It was the most concrete project

to undertake, and Haven from Hunger has conducted dozens of similar food drives over the years (they involve placing bags on doors and returning later). However, this group collected over 100 pounds more than any other food drive, with fewer hours and fewer students—it was both productive and efficient in its undertaking. They also added an extra layer of interaction—going by houses to describe the project, coming back later to hang bags with instructions, and returning to collect the food. So the success had somewhat to do with being able to build on previous projects. Also their community partner, Bridget Thamert, is a graduate of the program and understands how to work with students within the context of their class and assignments, due dates, etc. It was a very motivated group, with a couple of students taking leadership. Division of tasks was clearly delineated, and the students in their individual papers reported some interesting findings that I presume will serve them well (especially with respect to making assumptions about which households and neighborhoods, based on “curb appeal” and the presumed SES of most residents, were more likely to donate). ▫ **Campus Sexual Assault**—This project was less successful, in my estimation. There were seven students in the

group, and I had expected more information and planning to occur. The group members were able to build on a pre-existing project, “Paint the Town Teal,” and their assignment was then to tailor it to the campus community. They chose mostly to work on awareness-raising projects—putting up ribbons, writing on sidewalks, painting on glass around the student union, posting flyers, etc. Teal is the color that has been used to signify Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Some of the tasks simply required a knowledge of campus staff and functioning (e.g., they had to contact facilities and planning and make sure janitorial staff knew of their plans, and some advanced warning of the clean-up that would happen afterwards). The group members did some research on the history of the project, but were

less successful in reviewing any of the literature from Columbia's SHIFT project into their more substantive recommendations for important messages that needed to be communicated to the campus body. There were two students who seemed to assume leadership roles, and it was clear everyone was involved; however, for seven students, the output was somewhat disappointing, and the connection to the deeper issues of sexual assault and how a different approach may be required—based around some of the findings of the SHIFT project on “affirmative consent”—did not happen. ▫ **Warming Station**—The warming station project was handicapped in part because the station was not going to open until November 15. The manager, Cami Miller, was extremely busy prior to the opening trying to put out small brush fires of neighborhood opposition (as the students identified, the NIMBY or “not in my back yard” syndrome). Then they had to undergo the trainings in order to volunteer for a shift. So by the time they were ready to work on the documentation part of the project, it was Thanksgiving break. They did have, however, ample resources to help them get a head start with reading before the obligations of training and volunteering approached. Although for the most part, their time volunteering was uneventful, there were a few incidents that happened while they were working on the project, and it became evident that the station needed some better procedures for reporting these incidents, in sufficient detail, to both learn from this year's iteration of the station, and to collect data that might be useful for future grant writing opportunities (and of course, to ensure as much as possible the smooth functioning of the station and clear policies that all volunteers could understand and apply if any incidents were to occur on their shifts). The students in their individual papers did seem to have some of their presumptions about the residents seriously challenged—in the best of ways, sociologically—that these people were anything more or less than any other people, simply lacking predictable and safe shelter from the elements and other threats that accompany living outdoors.

Assignment Design and Lessons Learned

▫ **Food Drive**—The food drive was relatively straightforward--we have done them many times, we have conducted various social psychological experiments along the way, and learned much anecdotally about what works and what doesn't. I would say that the fact that some of the pieces of the assignment had been created, or at least templates that the students could modify, helped let them focus on other aspects less well laid out. One of them was their decision to engage in more interaction with people in the neighborhoods they chose (which they chose based loosely on property values, ranging from low to mid to high socioeconomic status, or SES). As one might anticipate, they encountered a variety of responses to their knocking on the doors. There were some that either ignored them on the porch, or were somewhat agitated at having to deal with strangers (we discuss wearing EOU gear and making clear who is sponsoring the project). There were some that simply took the information politely, and either later decided to donate or not to donate (one of the things we discuss is the lag time between announcement and placing of bags and returning to collect them—students realized that doors without bags didn't necessarily mean a decision not to donate, but perhaps simply someone who had good intentions but forgot). The element of the project design that needs to be developed is the data collection—keeping track of who came to the door, any observations about the interaction (hostile, warm, enthusiastic, neutral, etc.), tracking the exact number of houses and possibly mapping this out at the neighborhood level, comparing this to the donations, having some sort of fish scale where donations

could be weighed on the spot as they're being placed in a vehicle, etc. Obviously, all of this would require more than five students, or a greater portion of a student's grade in the class, to carry out effectively. All questions I will have to evaluate for next year's iteration of the class. ▫ **Campus Sexual Assault**—I must take some responsibility for some of the shortcomings in the output of this

project. In hindsight I should have made sure that students had met with Colleen and our Privileged Campus

Advocate, Tyana Musrasrik, early in the process. I should also have inquired with the Shelter from the Storm if there were some shorter trainings in domestic violence that they could take, to provide some sensitizing and background information for the group. I also could have used one of our other assignments from class—small group discussions—to allow students to work on the project, and do more of the reading, in these students' cases on the SHIFT project at Columbia University. More generally, I should have limited participation in this project to five students, as when the group size grows, assignment of tasks to individual group members becomes problematic, with increased overlap and opportunities to engage in some level of "free riding" (that is, letting the more motivated do more than their fair share of the work). Because it is a project designed to be undertaken in April—I gave students some choices based on Colleen's perceived needs, and that's what they chose—I should have given them a more specific framework for identifying tasks, prior tasks that needed to be undertaken to complete the main tasks, etc. This project provides students with opportunities for substantive learning, of course, but also some opportunities to learn about project design and organization, even recruitment, which I could predict will be left up to others to wrestle with as April approaches. ▫ **Warming station**—It would have been useful if this group had had two more members (and the Sexual Assault project two less), because they could have then perhaps divided labor in such a way that one or two group members could work on some of the ancillary components of the project, such as helping guests secure documentation, assessing what some of their needs for assistance might be (e.g., health care, mental health), etc. We did discuss in class things in particular, like the importance of foot care (for instance, seeking donations of orthotics, making sure they had comfortable and warm shoes, wool socks, etc.). Snoring also seems to be an issue, and though we did purchase some nasal strips, students realized quickly the need for tact in suggesting their use (which we decided should be approached from a health perspective of good breathing, rather than sounding like an industrial-grade wood chipper). There was so much up-front training just to volunteer, that some of these great ideas simply were deemed luxuries by the end of the project. In addition the timeline was problematic. In future project design, I think I would recommend that students engage in different parts of the project, and share their learning with the group, so that a variety of tasks can be completed without everyone first having to put so many hours into preliminary needs. This group also could have done more research on housing and homelessness, but I also will require in the future that group members who volunteer keep journals of their time and observations as they go, which can be included in their report and shared with other group members. Cami Miller is someone I hope to continue to have students work with however, as she is highly motivated, energetic, and hyper-effective at getting things done in a variety of social welfare settings. She is a good role model for our students (her spouse graduated from our program, works here professionally, and she will be enrolling if she's ever able to delegate some of the many tasks people ask her to do).

Action Plan (Academic)

Program):

My next step for this class is to require students to review my feedback on their draft papers.

Apologies for writing this up in a way that might be more project-based than evaluation-based. Hopefully it is close enough for placing it where it needs to be. Now ... these three project areas are all valuable for students to have some experience. Food insecurity and hunger are found in most any community where a student might settle and work. They learned much about Haven from Hunger's philosophy of not asking questions and lowering the threshold for receiving food, and also learned about the sometimes mediocre quality of the food that is donated, with respect to health and nutrition. I will continue to identify students who want to work on these projects; however, with only two faculty in Sociology, our ability to do this kind of work is quite constrained, outside of the classroom setting (a hard lesson I have learned over time). Still, we are able to, having learned how to do it efficiently, collect as much as 1-2 tons of food per year, and provide families in emergency situations with 3-5 days' worth of food. I believe the success of this project has much to do with the design and implementation structures already having been laid out by previous students, with Bridget's assistance and guidance.

As for the Campus Sexual Assault project, this is one that needs some development, but it was pretty evident that there were several women students keen to work on this. There are good connections to be made with our Privileged Campus Advocate, Tyana, and with the Shelter from the Storm, where four Anth/Soc graduates of our program are currently employed. We have the social capital on campus and in the community to take better advantage of this in student learning. I may try something in an advanced Social Welfare class in the winter.

The Warming Station is another opportunity for students, who may understand the problem of homelessness, of a lack of housing, and the kinds of circumstances that might drive someone to use a warming station. But the problems encountered in setting up such a station, seeing that it is run efficiently, procuring supplies, undertaking volunteer recruitment efforts, etc. These are all leadership skills that are mostly available in the classroom setting to students who already have them. We could do much better, with adequate resources. As is, we do the best we can with what we have.

When Rosemary Powers was my colleague, one of her priorities was a student club, the Anth/Soc club, Alliance for Social Change, Mission for Environmental and Social Awareness ... the names changed, but the work was always similar. I do not have that organizing gene that Rosemary did, and Jennifer Puentes has her own project priorities, based around community food systems and issues that affect our students of color, on campus and in the community. Suffice it to say with another faculty member and some creative options about how load is assigned, we could as a program do some pretty innovative things in the community, but at a much higher level of participation and, one presumes, learning.

This isn't just about engaging in work with the community, however—there are many opportunities to conduct community-based research, which would inform a proposed degree program being designed in Sustainable Rural Systems, where there is an interdisciplinary community focus. We

know students like working on these projects, but have difficulty helping them do so with competing obligations—athletics, employment, other classes, any lives outside of school, etc. Lacking sufficient resources, as well as the inherent limitations of a compressed 10-week term, it requires extremely committed students and faculty to undertake these projects, and the results reflect that—a few highly motivated students, but many missed opportunities for experiential learning and pre-professional socializing.

I will also share these results with the rest of my department and explore more creative load assignments in order to fully serve students in our civic engagement opportunities, which are at the very center of our program, enjoying a complete commonality of purpose among our faculty.

AY20 Civic Engagement Improvement Plan Recommendation (Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Quality)

ANTH/SOC's programmatic approach to Civic Engagement should be used as a model for all programs in terms of effective assignment design and sequencing of steps, with a clear, exceptionally thorough, insightful, reflective analysis of results. It appears the program looks forward to refining efforts at community engagement so that all students and projects are fully served and improving student mastery of the program's civic engagement outcomes criteria. The assessment demonstrated Sociology's commitment to Civic Engagement, as it should since that commitment is central to its mission.

The AY20 ANTH/SOC's Civic Engagement Improvement Plan should focus on the suggestions offered in the analysis above. Reflecting on the students' civic engagement experiences would be a valuable addition to the program's outcome criteria, providing important data on how students view the meaningfulness of the outreach efforts—can they approach the faculty's level of reflection? But a pressing concern, which the improvement plan should address, is the managing of course loads and the cultivation of student leadership, especially for Haven from Hunger, an issue discussed during the Academic Program Review. The AY20 CE Improvement Plan should report on the results of these efforts and provide data on a course where the improvements have been operationalized.