

AY20 Academic Program Improvement Report: Civic Engagement

SOCIOLOGY

W20 SOC 403

n = 12

AY19 Recommendation for Improvement: 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 could 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? It appears that key adjustments—such as making feedback more transparent, introducing higher grade percentages for formative work, requiring students to respond in writing to the instructor's evaluative comments, etc.—have been shared programmatically already, which constitutes an improvement plan insofar as it is operationalized. 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.

Improvements (briefly describe improvements made based on the recommendation above):

There were only three students enrolled in 403 winter term. Two of them fell ill and took incompletes. I will use this term (Spring '20), where enrollment is 16, to discuss civic engagement in the social welfare capstone experience. Only one student out of 16 was able (so far) to complete her field time actually in the field. Because of closures and lockdowns and remote work, other students who had arranged field placements were forced to adapt. The typical adaptation has been to contact professionals in the field and ask them how the pandemic has affected their work, and they and their office have responded to the challenges. This has come in the form of surveys or informal interviews either by email, Zoom, or telephone. Because of the increased enrollment without addition of a third faculty position to provide adequate instructional and program support, and because of the added complexities of working with capstone students online, we will have to transition to a 'thematic' model for capstones that functions more like a course than a one-on-one field placement with a research component (for both the Sociology and the Social Welfare students in our program). As always it will include a component requiring interaction with professionals in the field, in students' communities, related to the theme for the term (we are following Anthropology's model, they too reached an enrollment point where one-on-one capstones with all impending graduates became unsustainable).

However, this term students in my capstone class are working with managers of local community action agencies (mostly on household food insecurity and food bank issues), domestic violence advocacy and support organizations (safe houses and problems

posed by sheltering in place where abuse is likely or occurring), local community development agencies (helping with the completion of the Census), Tribal health organizations, and behavioral health organizations working with clientele mostly in remote settings.

Program Civic Engagement Verticality (briefly describe how Civic Engagement is reinforced in the program curriculum & co-curriculum, e.g. club activities):

The above should help provide context for a program in transition, where flexibility must exist to accommodate students' needs to finish, but where diminution in the acquisition of basic principles such as field experience, research exposure, and the building of professional network opportunities should be minimized to the extent possible, while the program deals with online growth and inadequate instructional staffing to accommodate it. Students are also in 403 this term journaling about their own management of stress related to the class and their capstones, as well as interacting with professionals about how they are managing stress while helping clientele. I receive regular feedback from students that they appreciate the ability to model some of the challenges, such as self-care, that they will confront in earnest as degreed professionals.

Faculty Review (Have the results of these improvements been reviewed by program faculty?):

This is simply an unusual time, and we have had to improvise. There is little time right now to discuss how this is going or how we will transition, which will have to wait for a calmer period (I have four classes, 17 loads of credit, with 16 capstone students, when I had never had more than 5 in a term prior).