CULTIVATING STUDENTS AS CO-RESEARCHERS IN BASIC NEEDS RESEARCH

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CHEBNA
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Colleges and universities are continuing to work towards innovative high impact learning experiences to promote informed citizenship.

Pedagogical research highlights the value of both interdisciplinary teaching and community-based participatory research (CBPR) in undergraduate civic development...but these do not appear in the literature as being used in the same course.
INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE ON RESEARCH & POLICY

Political Science and Criminal Justice, Community Psychology & Social Work

• *How does research inform policy at the local level?*

Evaluation findings highlight student growth in the domains of:
1) interdisciplinary collaboration (applying an interdisciplinary lens and resolving diverse perspectives)
2) transference of course knowledge to real-world application
3) critical consciousness building (specifically, critical reflection)
4) civic development
5) increased self-awareness
INTERDISCIPLINARY CLASS DESIGN

• Three classes:
  • Introduction to Research Methods (POLS)
  • Community Psychology (PSYC)
  • Social Welfare Policy, Programs & Services (SWRK)

• Large group 40-50% of course meetings:
  • Shared readings
  • Interdisciplinary small groups
  • Service learning assignment
  • Community speakers/consultants
THREE ITERATIONS

Fall 2017: PSYC/POLS/SWRK
- Two surveys soliciting information from people experiencing homelessness and the concerns of housed individuals regarding homelessness within the local community.
- Final presentations at a campus research forum

Fall 2018: PSYC/POLS/SWRK
- Interviews with the homeless focusing on key policies and community issues (i.e. bathroom access, alternative housing, etc.).
- Final presentations to City Council

Fall 2019: POLS/SWRK
- Analyzing data from Basic Needs study to develop campus strategies to alleviate student housing insecurity.
- Final presentations at an Open House for campus and community stakeholders
The Opportunity

Housing insecurity among college students has been a growing concern in our community and across the country.

Pre-November 8, 2018 Butte County/Chico had very low-vacancy rates

Then on November 8th, 2018 a massive wildfire destroyed more than 11,000 homes (10-15% of total housing stock in the county) in Paradise and surrounding communities.

Chancellor’s Office offers funding to study basic needs across the CSU December 2018
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are current levels of housing security at Chico State?
- Are students aware of and using existing housing programs at Chico State?
- What is the impact of housing security on academic performance?
THE RESEARCH

• Mixed methods design
  ➢ QUANT/qual
• Survey and focus groups
• Significant consultation with campus stakeholders
• Graduate student consultation on survey design and implementation
• Analysis and implications by undergraduate students in our interdisciplinary course
A total of 1,416 complete surveys were collected.

- By requesting that students take the survey during class, we were able to secure a response rate of 48.2%.

- Highly generalizable!
  - The sample of students closely mirrors the student population – no statically significant difference - giving confidence in the generalizability of the survey results for our campus.
43.8% of the sample had one or more experiences with housing insecurity.
Examples from Focus Groups/Interviews

Of the 610 students who reported being housing insecure, 343 selected a reason for their housing insecurity, including:

Housing was unsafe or unhealthy (8%, 27 respondents)

_The first few days of moving in, one dude...had like smashed glass or something and then he was bleeding. He was running through the hallways naked screaming ‘I love women!’_. He was detained by the cops when they got there.

Insufficient funds (37%, 127 respondents)

_I’m like, borrowing money from my roommate to pay for it [rent]...I can’t afford it. Like, I’m literally asking every month: ‘Oh, I’ll pay you back next semester when financial aid comes in._

Conflict with someone they were living with (19%, 64 respondents)

_It was just constant drama that ‘we’ll kick you out’, and certain things getting thrown in your face, and constantly feeling like you’re not wanted there._
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students without disabilities</th>
<th>Students with disabilities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Securely Housed Students</strong></td>
<td>88.1% (1,173)</td>
<td>72.9% (27)</td>
<td>87.7% (1,200)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students Experiencing Housing Insecurity</strong></td>
<td>11.9% (159)</td>
<td>27% (10)</td>
<td>12.3% (169)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (1,332)</td>
<td>100% (37)</td>
<td>1,369</td>
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Homelessness
The question asked students to select whether they have slept in any of the following places, in either the past 30 days or the past 12 months:

1) Campus or university housing
2) Sorority/fraternity house
3) In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment (alone or with roommates)
4) In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment with my family (parent, guardian, relative or caretaker)
5) At a shelter
6) Temporarily staying with a relative, friend or couch surfing until I find other housing
7) Temporarily at a hotel or motel without a permanent home to return to (not on vacation or business travel)
8) In a transitional housing or independent living program
9) At a group home such as halfway house or residential program for mental health or substance abuse
10) Outdoor location such as street, sidewalk, alley, park, etc.
11) In a car, truck, van, RV or camper
12) In a closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitation such as an abandoned building, garage, tent, etc.
Homelessness
The measure of homelessness was based on the definition used by the Department of Education, following the McKinney-Vento Act.
Examples from Focus Groups/Interviews

It was scary because we were going to end up living in our car...feeling you’re a burden to someone. I look at other people and I’m like ‘wow’ imagine not having to be a burden to someone your whole life.

I was living in the middle of a warehouse with no shower or anything else. I would go down to the street to the coffee shop to shower.

I got kicked out on Tuesday. I talked to my buddy from dance. I was like ‘Hey, I really need a place to stay. Like can I stay at your place tonight? I’ll sleep on the floor. It doesn’t matter.’ The next day I finished my final. My teacher asked ‘Are you okay?’ and I’m like ‘I’m alive.’
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<th></th>
<th>Students without disabilities</th>
<th>Students with disabilities</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housed Students</strong></td>
<td>85.8% (1,073)</td>
<td>60.6% (20)</td>
<td>85.2% (1,093)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students Experiencing Homelessness in past year</strong></td>
<td>14.2% (177)</td>
<td>39.4% (13)</td>
<td>14.8% (190)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (1,250)</td>
<td>100% (33)</td>
<td>1,283</td>
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IMPACT OF THE CAMP FIRE

- 185 students (13%) had to temporarily or permanently move due to the fire
- 14 students (1%) of sample, had to move because their home was destroyed in the fire
- 321 students (23%) reported that their rent or housing fees increased after the fire
USE OF CAMPUS SERVICES & SUPPORT

Awareness & Use of Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Unaware of Resource</th>
<th>Aware, but do not use</th>
<th>Have used in the past</th>
<th>Currently use</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wildcat Food Pantry</td>
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<td>Basic Needs Project</td>
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<td>Off Campus Student Services</td>
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<td>Student Emergency Grant</td>
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<td>Student Short Term Emergency Housing</td>
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<td>Financial Aid Advisor</td>
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Legend: Blue = Unaware of Resource, Orange = Aware, but do not use, Green = Have used in the past, Yellow = Currently use
STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

Development of the survey instrument & focus group protocol
• Summer 2019
• MSW Research Course
• 2 consultation days
• Significant input no the research tools and design

Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative data
• Fall 2019
• Interdisciplinary Course
• Data used to inform student final projects
• Final projects: websites
• Research Open House
Attended by Community stakeholders, Basic Needs partners, University administration

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

Creative Solutions to a Tough Problem:
CAMPUS/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO ALLEVIATE HOUSING INSECURITY

Interdisciplinary Course on Policy & Research

OPEN HOUSE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH
10:00AM-1:00PM IN TEHAMA 116

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Working in interdisciplinary groups, students designed Campus-Community Partnerships to address the issue of housing insecurity in our community. Two groups each focused on three populations: Chico State students, individuals displaced by the Camp Fire, and people who were already experiencing homelessness, prior to November 8th, 2018.

Informing the projects were four panels of experts, a series of readings, such as *Evicted* by Mathew Desmond, websites and videos, i.e. *(Un)Sheltered*. In addition, every student completed a number of assignments.

**Political Science & Criminal Justice contributions**
- Review of the existing scholarly literature
- Quantitative data analysis of the Chico State Housing Insecurity study*
- Qualitative data analysis of the Chico State Housing Insecurity study

**Social Work contributions**
- A survey of local newspaper stories
- Visits to community meetings
- Exploration of existing campus/community partnerships in other cities
CHANGE CHICO:
A CAMPUS/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Change Chico
Unsheltered Community

Group Members
Caitlyn Patterson
Salina Xiong
Rosario Zepeda
Sydney Ayoob
Ryan Elkins
Emma Grenier Selvig
Natali Naves
Larisa Zintzun
Why do student voices matter?

What is the benefit to the students?
What is the benefit to the research?

The class made me realize how we applied what we were learning in the class to the real world. Everything we were learning about homelessness was applied to the research questions, the actual service day and it made me realize this is a local issue that we have to deal with. It was very impactful for myself, and... I learned a lot.