

SJ4SA: a social justice tour of San Antonio

Eliot Howard, Brian Halderman, Vincent Perez, Latrice Owens

The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX 78249

Objectives of the Project

Social Justice for San Antonio (SJ4SA) took 30 college students, faculty and staff on a one day tour of contemporary social justice activism within San Antonio, TX.

- As a result of participating in SJ4SA, students will gain knowledge, skills and/or values associated with Civic Engagement.
- Students will be able to describe aspects of several local programs' work and the relevance to social justice.
- Students will identify one or more involvement opportunities with each organization.

Background

SJ4SA was developed in response to students' eagerness to engage in current local social justice inquiry and activism, culminating in their participation in the César Chávez March for Justice in Spring of 2015. Grant funding was secured by the Student Leadership Center for project that would involve service-learning researchers in designing an educational tour exploring issues and engagement opportunities.

Program Design Highlights

- Focus on social justice (underlying assumption of an inextricable link with transformational leadership)
- Student research teams identified key issues and agencies, developed site visit lesson plans based on call for proposals
- Framed issues, current efforts and engagement opportunities
- Developed campus and community partners (Faculty research advisors, aligned departments, community agencies)

SACA community murals



MOVE SA youth voting

Participant Comments

- "This program put me in contact with several organizations that I want to volunteer with next semester."
- "SJ4SA taught me the vital need for a passionate young student like myself pursuing a higher education, to not shy away from social issues relevant to me or to others. This ties into leadership because leaders are instigators of change within their community, which I want to be! An idea can manifest into a desire to change and that can start with one person."
- "It brought awareness in me and made me realize that anybody can become a leader for a non-profit."
- "I have never been much of a leader. I've never seriously given thought to exactly how much communication, networking, volunteering and all of the other things it takes to be able to help educate people on issues such as the ones we have received here. This program was an amazing eye opener, and at the very least if I don't think I'm prepared to be a leader just yet, I at least know that I want to be more involved to start building my confidence to be a leader."
- "Organizing is about asking and involving others. These groups are making changes not just for, but with, the community."
- "This program has provided me with the insight needed to be a professional who actively participates in opportunities to enhance the community."

Participant Assessment

Social Justice for San Antonio 2016 Pre/Post Self Evaluation

HOW DID SJ4SA MOVE YOU? [30 respondents]

Pre-Trip Avg. Post-Trip Avg.

Engaged Citizenship Definition	Benchmark (1)	Milestone (2)	Milestone (3)	Capstone (4)
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures	Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.
		2.50	3.81	
Analysis of Knowledge	Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
		1.96	3.52	
Civic Identity and Commitment	Provides little evidence of her/his experience in civic engagement activities and does not connect experiences to civic identity	Evidence suggests involvement in civic engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.	Provides evidence of experience in civic engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.	Provides evidence of experience in civic engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.
		1.91	3.68	
Civic Communication	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action.
		1.92	3.44	
Civic Action and Reflection	Has experimented with some civic activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.	Has clearly participated in civically focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual(s) or communities.	Demonstrates independent experience and team leadership of civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Demonstrates independent experience and shows initiative in team leadership of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.
		1.86	3.36	
Civic Contexts/Structures	Experiments with civic contexts and structures, tries out a few to see what fits.	Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to participate in civic contexts and structures.	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Demonstrates ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.
		1.92	3.52	

Assessment instrument adapted from the American Association of Colleges & Universities Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric, <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>



Academic Learning

Arts activism, living wages, refugee detention and youth voter participation were the four areas of focus identified by the Fall 2015 Introduction to Leadership Class (EDL 3003). Students from that course worked in service-learning teams, researching and designing each of the content blocks that formed the backbone of the SJ4SA experience. Each research team received support from a faculty advisor to develop a site visit proposal that outlined a focus issue and a 45-minute lesson plan to foster deeper understanding and to engage their peers in addressing the problem. Each team developed working definitions of social justice and civic activism. Teams were asked to identify connections to their academic majors and to the study and practice of leadership.

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