



## SPU Internal Final Grant Report

**Academic Year & Type of Grant:** 2015-16 SERVE Grant

**PI Name:** Jill Heiney-Smith

**Original Title of the Proposal:** "Going to College" Visits



1. **Summarize the project goals and the activities that took place to meet those goals during the grant period. Note who was involved and if anyone was an SPU student.**

For thirteen years, the School of Education at SPU has invited classrooms from racially and culturally diverse districts that are highly impacted by poverty to visit campus in an effort to give elementary students an idea of what college is like and encourage them to begin envisioning themselves as college-bound.

These events are voluntarily staffed by undergraduate students from SPU who benefit from the opportunity to gain significant volunteer experience, interact with diverse student populations, practice teaching techniques, and reflect upon / refine their vocational goals.

The 2015-16 SERVE grant for "Going to College" Visits funded three campus visits—one in fall, winter, and spring quarters.

- On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, over **50 fifth-graders from Dearborn Park Elementary** (who had been prepared for the visit in advance with "Going to College" booklets and t-shirts) were given an SPU welcome from director of field placements Jill Heiney-Smith and a Planning for College talk from associate vice president Ruth Adams



before partnering with 47 undergraduate “buddies” for two activities: conflict management lessons presented by Emily Huff’s USEM 1000: Peace Literacy and Conflict Resolution students, and a Social Studies lesson organized by education library liaison Cindy Strong. The fifth graders also enjoyed lunch in Upper Gwinn, a tour of Arnett Hall (a brand-new addition to the day’s activities planned in partnership with resident hall coordinator Susie Becker), and an hour of physical education activities coordinated by assistant professor of physical education Dr. Jarrett Mentink and led by undergraduate Health and Fitness Education students. The fifth graders arrived on campus at 9:30 a.m. and departed at 2:15 p.m., happy and excited about their day spent as “college students.”

- Over **100 kindergartners from Tukwila elementary**, along with parent chaperones and classroom teachers, attended “Kinder to College” on March 1<sup>st</sup>. After a welcome message, the kindergartners—split into groups led by 25 SPU student volunteers—participated in a classroom/campus tour and in reading lessons prepared by Dr. Jorge Preciado and Dr. Max Hunter’s EDU 2300 (Diversity in the Classroom) class. The students then enjoyed lunch in Tiffany Loop and a visit from Talon the Falcon.
- Another **106 kindergartners from Honey Dew Elementary** in the Renton school district visited campus on May 25<sup>th</sup> and were hosted by 55 SPU students. In addition to the classroom/campus tour, students participated in small-group lessons designed and presented by two sections of Dr. Julie Antilla’s EDU 2100 (Foundational Issues in Education) class.

The 2015-16 “Going to College” visits grant budget provided the following:

- Bus transportation to and from campus for all three visits
- Multicultural children’s books for reading lessons
- T-shirts for fifth graders
- Name badges and snacks for kindergartners
- SPU “bling bags” for all visiting teachers with promotional items for classrooms

In total, over 250 elementary school students participated in Going to College campus visits during 2015-16, and around 125 SPU undergraduates served as volunteer teachers and leaders at these events.

**2. What were the major findings? If there are no findings or completed work at this time, what did you learn from carrying out this project that could be applicable to future scholarly works?**

While this project is not research-based and as such does not yield scholarly findings, the Field Placement team within the School of Education did encounter helpful internal findings.



In addition to the stated intent – to provide an opportunity for elementary students to begin to imagine themselves as college-bound and an opportunity for SPU education students to deepen their vocational self-understanding – there are additional tangential benefits to the Going to College visits.

One is the continued cultivation of relationships with districts and schools with which SPU's teacher education program seeks placements for students fulfilling internship requirements.

Another benefit is that the kindergarten groups are chaperoned by parents who are able to gain an understanding of SPU as a place that is welcoming and supportive of their young learners.

- 3. How were or will the results be disseminated (publication, presentation, creative work, etc. – be as specific as possible)? Please add an addendum or link to completed projects or provide a time-line for future dissemination.**

Photos and details from the events were shared via social media (with permission from schools) by University Communications and by the School of Education. The Dearborn Park visit was featured in the winter quarter issue of *On Point*, the School of Education's alumni newsletter, archived here: <http://spu.edu/academics/school-of-education/about/newsletter-archive/mar-2016>.

- 4. What future scholarly works will be related to this project?** N/A
- 5. Is there external funding that you would like to pursue with the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#)?** N/A
- 6. Did you run into any problems or difficulties in completing the project? How were these resolved?**

We did not encounter any significant difficulties completing the project. However, it becomes increasingly clear that the success of the "Going to College" visits is reliant upon the partnership of faculty who are willing to integrate the events into the classroom experience for their students.

Partnering with 1-2 classes each quarter ensures that 1.) each campus visit has an adequate number of student volunteers, and 2.) the student volunteer experience is contextualized beforehand and reflected upon afterward in the classroom, ideally in relation to existing coursework.



Because we were able to partner with EDU and USEM faculty this year, we did not recruit volunteers through the Center for Global and Urban involvements (as suggested in the grant proposal). That possibility remains for future events.

**7. If you had student participation – how did participation in this project further their professional goals or vocational understanding?**

This year's Going to College visits allowed students from USEM, Foundational Issues in Education, Teaching – A Noble Profession, Diversity in the Classroom, and Health and Fitness Education courses to interact one-on-one with a diverse group of elementary school students. SPU students were asked to submit written reflections after the events, and responses showed that participating in the Going to College visits sharpened the vocational vision both for participants who plan to be educators and those considering other fields.

Here are a few excerpts from those reflections:

- My only goal for my future is to make a positive impact on the people I come in contact with – kiddos and adults alike. As a student on the premed track, I hope to go on to become a healthcare professional and impact patients and their families in a positive way. This experience, paired with my recent volunteering through Urban Involvement at EYFO tutoring elementary schoolers, has made me wonder if my future will take me into pediatrics. Maybe I will follow in my family's footsteps and go into education. Who knows! Regardless of what God has planned for me, I hope it involves the kiddos that I so love to interact with. – (USEM student)
- I now see how much effort teachers put into preparing lesson plans. The biggest thing I got out of this was I learned that I am not suited for elementary education. I absolutely love working with children and it brought me so much joy seeing how happy all of them were, but I do not have the necessary passion to be an elementary teacher. I really admire how much patience and dedication elementary teachers have for their students. – (USEM student)
- I want to be an elementary school counselor and am hoping to be an educator who does multicultural education. I loved gaining experience with a culturally diverse student population. -- (Diversity in Education student)
- I had never really been interested in teaching at any level, certainly not kindergarteners, but something about this event made the experience so gratifying and enjoyable. It was so neat to see how excited the kids were, and it made the experience all the more enjoyable. I really cannot remember any instance where I was not smiling. -- (Foundational Issues in Education student)



- One aspect of Going to College day that took me off guard was how natural I felt teaching in front of the children. While I was getting ready that morning, I remember assuming that I would do a bad job conveying the concepts to them. However, everything changed when I actually stood up and saw their faces looking up at me ready to learn. I felt drawn to helping them understand how to solve problems and find solutions. -- (USEM student: a full draft of this student's reflection is attached to this report)

Final Grant Report Attachment #1: Full Student Reflection

USEM 1000: Peace Literacy and Conflict Resolution

26 October 2015

### **Going to College Day Reflection**

As I saw the bus pull up, my stomach dropped a little bit. In a little less than a half hour, I would be standing up in front of a class and actually educating students on the topic of conflict resolution. I had never been confident in my teaching abilities, so this idea made me nervous to say the least. What if I stumble over my words constantly? What if I mess up the point I'm trying to make? What if the kids don't answer the questions I ask? All of these thoughts only made my uneasiness worse. However, my worries proved to be unnecessary. During the Going to College Day, not only was I surprised at my own abilities, but also those of the students that I was teaching.

One of the first things I noticed was how responsive the students were to the questions and material. During the opening session in the Emerson Lounge, the kids continually asked really interesting questions about SPU and what college is like in general. It surprised me how they were exceedingly insightful and eager to learn. I also quickly found that they were happy to respond to any questions in the lesson that my partners and I were teaching. To top it off, the answers I got were often better than I could have put them myself. "Why is cooling off before talking to someone an important first step?" I asked during one of the four sessions. A little girl with wavy red hair shyly raised her hand. "Because we need



time to calm down and think before we talk about a problem with someone we're angry with," she answered.

Something else that surprised me about the students was how quickly that they implemented the material. I expected that while I was teaching they would be bored and daydreaming the whole time. An experience later that day proved me wrong. While we were heading out of Gwinn, one of the girls in my group was picking on one of the boys and saying that he had a bad bedhead and that he forgot to brush his hair. The boy retaliated, saying that her comment wasn't true. Before the argument could get any worse, another boy stepped in. "Hey you guys!" he exclaimed, "Maybe you should cool off before you get in a fight and say hurtful stuff to each other." The dispute ended almost immediately. This happening caused me to reframe my concept of how children listen to and engage with the material. Maybe these kids are listening and learning more than I do in my own college classes.

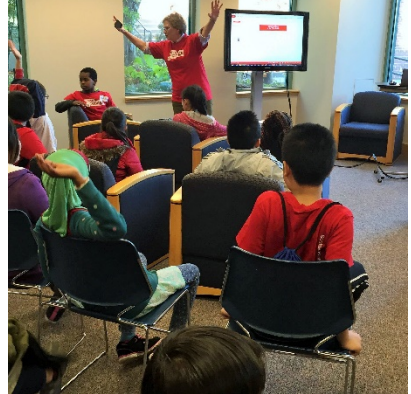
One final aspect of Going to College Day that really took me off-guard was how natural I felt teaching in front of the children. While I was getting ready that morning, I remember assuming that I would do a bad job conveying the concepts to them. However, everything changed when I actually stood up and saw their faces looking up at me ready to learn. I felt drawn to helping them understand how to solve problems and find solutions. When I had accessed this feeling inside of me combined with the information I had learned on conflict resolution, I was able to really engage in the lesson.

Going to College Day made me re-evaluate how I perceived myself and others. It caused me to step back and realize that I need to keep an open mind to my abilities and those of other people. Teaching the kids from Dearborn Park Elementary was an experience that changed my perception of education, and taught me that I still have a lot to learn as well.






Grant Report Attachment #2: Photos & Student "Thank You" Notes from College Visits






I'll like to say thank you  
 to danelle, Rebecca, and  
 everyone who gave us  
 fifth graders a chance  
 to go to collge and  
 know what to do and  
 how to do it



Sincerely  
 Jaelynn  
 Taylor



Thank's SPU  
 I had a great  
 time there



I wish I can  
 go to that collg  
 -e

Sincerely,  
 Salma

S P U