**SPU Internal Final Grant Report[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**2015-16 SERVE Grant**

**PI: Jennifer McKinney and Karen Snedker**

**Tent City as a Non-Traditional Classroom: Student Engagement and Student-Faculty Research on Homelessness**

The Final Project Report must briefly address the following in 1-2 pages:

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.

In this project, we

(1) analyzed data from our student researchers to discover how their engagement with TC3 impacted their attitudes toward homelessness, their advocacy for marginal populations, and their sense of vocation. We did this by assessing the field notes and interviews submitted, as well as assessing the students’ overall experiences of their engagement with homelessness and the residents of TC3 through course evaluations, student reflections, and two debriefing sessions (one group, one a one-on-one recording).

(2) analyzed data taken from the SPU community to see how or if their understandings of homelessness changed due to SPU’s hosting of TC3 by cleaning and coding the data to run descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-test surveys administered to a random sample of the community.

(3) organized the interview and field data taken on the residents of TC3 to better understand their experiences of homelessness within the context of a tent city, in order to analyze the data. Students worked to analyze themes in the interview data including gender differences, pathways into homelessness, and benefits to being in Tent City 3. Working alongside the PI’s students also used the interview data to characterize the experience of residing at SPU with TC3.

1. 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?
2. Student Vocation: We were surprised at how deeply the students’ faith was influenced by the research experience. Students reported personal transformations in their lives and shifts in future careers and vocations. Their faith was also challenged, which resulted in them questioning how faith is experienced and then interpreted. We plan to link the student vocation data to the literature on vocation in the next stage of the writing process.
3. SPU Community Response: A majority of SPU faculty, staff, and students were positive about SPU’s hosting of TC3. There were significant shifts, however, between the fall pretest and the spring post-test, with the SPU community reporting even more positive attitudes after TC3’s stay, especially for students and staff. Please see Appendix B for some examples.
4. TC3 residents: Students organized the myriad of student reflections from classes, on and off-campus events, as well as the field notes, creating lists of all activities (campus events, independent student events, etc.) The student-conducted interviews were transcribed and have been organized with preliminary thematic analysis completed.
5. 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.

Please see Appendix A.

1. What future scholarly works will be related to this project?

Please see Appendix A.

1. Is there external funding that you would like to pursue with the [Office of Sponsored Programs](http://blog.spu.edu/csfd/external-grantssponsored-programs/)?

No

1. Did you run into any problems or difficulties in completing the project? How were these resolved?

NA

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

Students expressed in their written reflections, video interviews, and classroom debriefing sessions that this experience was influential in their lives. Students spoke of personal transformations, changing worldviews, changes in everyday interactions in public spaces, new conversations with friends and family members about homelessness, volunteerism and advocacy. Other students drew a more direct line from this experience with TC3 and homelessness to their future careers. In many ways it clearly influenced their vocational path. These students felt better equipped to engage with people who are homeless and the issues around homelessness given the knowledge and skills they acquired as a part of this experience. Here are some key quotations that reflect the vocational impact:

* “The whole reason I wanted to get involved is because these are issues that I care about, but also these are issues that I want to do for my occupation... So homelessness issues… it has themes that I can learn for my future, because homelessness comes down to poverty issues, issues of poverty, structural issues, and so learning about those, I hope, will help inform the ways I work in my occupation and giving me a broader view, a better perspective, a more educated perspective on issues of poverty within the U.S. and in the world.”
* “If I do social work—work with homeless people. It was really impactful in that sense, because that wasn’t my plan before taking these courses. But now I’m like, “I want to work with homeless people”… like I wasn’t even interested in it [being a social worker]. But now I’m like, “I think this is what I want to do…” So, yeah, it was impactful.”
* “I have learned about how sociological research is hard work and incredibly time consuming, but participating in the research process has nevertheless taught invaluable lessons that I will carry on into my future profession. In the development field, baseline research is conducted to understand the patterns and systems before implementing a project and there is a push for increased monitoring and evaluation during the life of the project. Under the guidance of Dr. Snedker, I learned about how to conduct qualitative interviews, collect meaningful field notes, read through qualitative data to effectively identify themes and patterns, and analyze the findings. The research skills that I learned will undoubtedly be incredibly beneficial in my career.”

Appendix A: Current and Future Dissemination of Results

Publications/Submissions

* The American Sociological Association’s (ASA’s) public sociology journal *Contexts* is printing our Teaching & Learning article “From Charity to Change” in the Spring 2016 issue.
* “Park Your Privilege at the Tents” submitted to *Teaching Sociology*.

Presentations

* Day of Common Learning presentation (Oct. 2015)
* Creative Conversations presentation (Nov. 2015)
* Paper on TC3 organization and residents accepted to ASA’s 2016 (August) annual meetings.

Community/Media

* *Real Change*, *The Daily* (UW paper), and SPU’s *Response* featured our research on TC3.
* Karen Snedker is serving as a consultant to a UW Committee to bring TC3 to UW’s campus.

Future Scholarly Dissemination

* Vocation article on the response of our research students to their learning about, research and involvement with TC3 residents.
* Substantive article on the history, organization and experience of living in TC3 to be submitted to *City & Community*
* Book proposal pulling together the teaching, research, and vocational breadth of the project

Appendix B: Selected Descriptive Statistics from the SPU Pre- and Post-test Surveys

Who participated in the surveys?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pretest** | **Posttest** |
| Undergraduate students | 56.7 | 52.8 |
| Graduate students | 14.9 | 10.6 |
| Faculty | 10.4 | 10.0 |
| Staff | 14.4 | 17.8 |
| Administrators | 2.4 | 2.2 |

Have you or someone you are close to ever experienced homelessness?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pretest** | **Posttest**a |
| Yes | 27.3 | 33.3 |

a The posttest also asked if SPU community members had ever experienced homelessness, 6.5 percent reported that they had personally experienced homelessness.

**General Impact Questions**

Do you think Tent City 3 will impact/impacted SPU positively?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| **Pretest** | Yes | 85.3% | 100.0% | 93.1% |
| **Posttest** | Yes | 86.1 | 100.0 | 95.5 |

Do you think Tent City 3 will impact/impacted SPU negatively?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| **Pretest** | Yes | 38.7 | 29.4 | 36.2 |
| **Posttest** | Yes | 14.8 | 5.6 | 22.7 |

Did you expect there to be/experience any problems associated with Tent City 3 being on campus?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pretest** |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| Yes | 28.7 | 16.7 | 25.0 |
| **Posttest** | Yes | 10.4 | 0.0 | 15.9 |

**Changing Stereotypes**

Tent City 3 poses/posed a danger to people on campus.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| **Pretest** | Disagree | 50.9 | 75.8 | 64.4 |
| **Posttest** |  | 77.4 | 94.7 | 90.7 |

Tent City 3 will bring/brought more crime to the neighborhood.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| **Pretest** | Disagree | 56.4 | 79.4 | 64.4 |
| **Posttest** |  | 78.3 | 78.9 | 81.4 |

Tent City 3 allows/allowed the homeless to continue not taking responsibility for themselves.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| **Pretest** | Disagree | 65.5 | 79.4 | 65.5 |
| **Posttest** |  | 75.7 | 78.9 | 81.4 |

Shifts from individual to structural explanations of homelessnessb

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pretest** | **Posttest** | **Difference** |
| ***Structural causes*** |  |  |  |
| Cost of housing | 20.6 | 34.2 | 13.6 |
| Lack of job opportunities | 12.1 | 19 | 6.9 |
| Cost of living | 18.9 | 23.4 | 4.5 |
| Limited government support | 10.7 | 13 | 2.3 |
| Lack of healthcare | 5.1 | 6.5 | 1.4 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Bad economy | 21.8 | 20.1 | -1.7 |
| Lack of education/educational opportunities | 18.1 | 14.1 | -4.0 |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***Individual causes*** |  |  |  |
| Physical illness | 7.1 | 13 | 5.9 |
| Lack of family support | 22.9 | 28.3 | 5.4 |
| Bad luck | 4.8 | 7.1 | 2.3 |
| Domestic violence | 5.4 | 7.6 | 2.2 |
| Broken families | 13.6 | 14.1 | 0.5 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Substance abuse | 41.5 | 28.8 | -12.7 |
| Mental illness | 52.5 | 48.4 | -4.1 |
| Lack of personal responsibility/personal choice | 17.5 | 13.6 | -3.9 |
| Laziness | 1.7 | 1.1 | -0.6 |

b The top five explanations given for homelessness remained the same in the pretest and posttest, though their order shifted somewhat. These explanations include mental illness, substance abuse, lack of family support, bad economy, and the cost of housing.

SPU should host/should have hosted Tent City 3.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Students | Faculty | Staff/Administrators |
| Pretest | Agree | 66.1 | 85.3 | 70.7 |
| Posttest | 84.3 | 94.7 | 93.0 |

1. When electronically submitting your report to CSFD, please cc: your chair and/or dean (whomever received your original grant notification). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)