



Noteworthy Practices – Student Diversity

Appendix

2.B. Student Diversity – University of Cincinnati

The following seven (7) programs have been put in place to enhance the diversity of the Bachelor of Urban Planning program:

1) ACE - Activating Community Empowerment with Hughes High School

In an effort to stem the decline and increase diversity in the undergraduate student population, the SOP has, over the last two years, developed a series of initiatives involving: high school counselors, the Cincinnati Public School system, high school teachers and principals, high school students, SOP alumni, SOP faculty, and current SOP students. The initiatives have been implemented in the Cincinnati area, as a large percentage (between 80 to 90%) of the undergraduate population is local, a condition that, due to the geographic position of Cincinnati in southwest Ohio, includes students from a select number of counties in Northern Kentucky and Eastern Indiana. As a result of these initiatives, two issues related to the decline became apparent.

The first issue is that most of the high school counselors were not as familiar with planning as they were with other potential career paths available at DAAP, such as architecture, art, and design. Some were completely unfamiliar with planning as an education program or career.

The second issue is that some counselors admitted that, in many cases, they did not suggest planning as a potential career, especially to first-generation college students in inner-city high schools, due to two common misunderstandings. The first of these is that the College of DAAP's programs are known to have admission requirements higher than other programs at the University of Cincinnati, leading counselors to pre-emptively quash applicants who might otherwise prove excellent SOP students. Secondly, a false axiom had been created and propagated: Planning is in DAAP together with creative-related programs such as Art, Architecture, and Design. Hence Planning is a creative arts-related program. This assumption makes SOP programs harder to market to inner-city high school students and their families, particularly first-generation college students, due to a perceived lack of professional opportunities once the program is successfully completed.

In addition to the above issues, which are particularly impactful upon the SOP's matriculation rate, high school students are rarely exposed to planning-related issues in their courses. The resulting lack of student understanding of planning is compounded and reflected by their family's ability to consider it as a potential career path.

The School of Planning is trying to alter the national and local trends regarding planning program enrollments by developing a more significant local awareness of urban planning among youth and children. Among the initiatives, the one most specifically designed to address awareness of urban planning was a three-week long workshop with high-school juniors at Hughes STEM High School (HSTEMHS) called "Activating Community Empowerment" (ACE). HSTEMHS was chosen because it is one of the core academic programs of the UC Center for Community Initiative. The program has been established at UC "to strengthen... the relationship between the University of Cincinnati and HSTEMHS through reciprocal partnerships that benefit all involved" (University of Cincinnati, 2016). The School is located in the immediate vicinity of the main campus of UC. As a Cincinnati Public School, it serves 7-12th grade students from all across the city of Cincinnati. According to data published by the Cincinnati Public Schools (Ohio Department of Education, 2016) of the 944 enrolled students, 90.7% are Black Non-Hispanic,

3.6% Multiracial, and 4.8% White Non-Hispanic. In addition, 938 students (or 99.5% of the student population) are considered to be “Economically Disadvantaged” while 24.8% have “Disabilities”. The 4-Year Graduation Rate is 74.5% (1 out of 4 students does not graduate in 4 years), while the District’s Graduation Rate is 83%.

In November 2015, two very successful African-American SOP alumni were invited as guests to a Power Lunch at HSTEMHS, an event designed to bring students and local professionals together to spark interest, mentorship, and collaboration between the school and community. After the lunch and a brief presentation, Power Lunch guests, including SOP students and faculty, engaged participating students in a short exercise to activate an interest in the built environment around their school.

In coordination with participating classroom teachers and the School’s Principal, an activity was designed with the intention of empowering students’ ability to engage with, and make changes to, the urban places in which they live. Forty-four 11th graders were guided through a process to investigate the urban environment around their school, identify problems, engage the wider community of students, recognize the decision processes needed to solve problems, explore areas of improvement, propose solutions, and present them to decision-makers. SOP faculty and students, a combination of two full-time faculty, one DAAP Academic director, one PhD, three MCP, and three undergraduate students, developed a comprehensive teaching plan and facilitated the students through four two-hour sessions, with the support of the student’s engineering teachers. A two-hour meeting with the two junior classes that joined the initiative took place on Mondays and Tuesdays in the afternoon. This was to enable the students and their teachers to have time during the rest of the week to work on the assignments before they met with the SOP team again. The initiative culminated with a final presentation to the school and community leaders. (Note a paper on this very topic has been presented at the ACSP Conference in Portland in November 2016: “Urban Planning as a Career Preference for High School Students. Rethinking Efforts to Improve Awareness About the Profession,” Authors: Danilo PALAZZO, Leah HOLLSTEIN, Stephen Kofi DIKO)

(2) PLANit at Hughes STEM High School's After Hours in the Tower

The School of Planning is also involved with a UC Initiative at Hughes STEM High School called *After Hours in the Tower*. This initiative brings after school programming to the students. The School of Planning's club is called PLANit. At PLANit, students learn about urban planning and community development. This year, students explored the neighborhood around UC and Hughes, creating a physical map and Google map based on their experiences. They used a photography guide and tool to photograph and commentate on their surrounding environment. They are currently working on planning their own city, including land use planning, writing a city charter, and designing a street. Throughout the programming, PLANit students visit DAAP and the School of Planning, exposing them to academic offerings and allowing the students to envision themselves as part of the SOP and the planning community at large.

(3) Discover UC: University of Cincinnati Scholars Academy Experience - Spring 2017

The School of Planning participated in a week-long activity for Hughes High School students. The program was for students interested in exploring the University of Cincinnati as a potential college option and for students who are interested in applying to the UC Scholars Summer Bridge program. During this collaborative program with colleges and departments at UC (University of Cincinnati) students experienced first hand what it feels like to be a UC Scholar and the everyday life of a typical college student

The School of Planning played an active role in creating two activities at DAAP for the students. The first activity was the "DAAP Amazing Race." This session introduced students to the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning, the college's building, its services, and its majors. By participating in an interactive scavenger hunt throughout the DAAP building, students worked together to solve clues and discover all that DAAP has to offer. Students also had the unique opportunity to engage with DAAP students, staff, and faculty during the scavenger hunt. At the conclusion of the scavenger hunt, the group gathered back together and each team presented on a specific school and its majors, or an area of DAAP and its services (such as the library, CGC, or gallery). The second activity at DAAP was the "Visual Narrative" activity. Each student was paired with a UC representative. Students took photographs throughout the week and the photographs were printed out. Each student selected a printed photograph(s) and worked with his or her UC representative to discuss the image and together created a caption or title. The captioned photographs were pinned to boards to form a collaborative visual narrative reflection of the students' experience.

(4) DAAP CAMP – Summer 2017

Every year, the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning hosts DAAP camps, residential and day-camps focused on an area of art, architecture, and design. This year, the School of Planning is hosting its first DAAP camp, called "City Transformers." The City Transformers camp will be a day camp for rising 9th-12th graders. The camp will explore issues related to city planning, community development, and sustainable landscapes, allowing students to engage in the Cincinnati community and identify ways to positively transform their own communities. DAAP camps provide students a unique opportunity to spend time on the University of Cincinnati's campus and explore potential academic majors and career paths.

(5) 2017 Equity & Inclusion Incentive Grant

The School of Planning was awarded with \$2,500 for *Empowering City Transformers: Delivering Access to the School of Planning DAAP camp & Building Youth Capacity*, a project meant to provide scholarship for inner-city students to participate to the City Transformer DAAP camp. The grant provides both application support and a camp fee scholarship. Not only will this grant provide access to attend the camp, it will also allow scholarship recipients to gain skills required to apply for a program and skills that will be transferred throughout the week-long day-camp, such as leadership, time management, critical thinking, exposure to a college environment. Increasing access to the City Transformers DAAP camp for both Hughes students and other Cincinnati area students is a continuation to the School's commitment to engaging youth from diverse backgrounds in the discipline of planning.

(6) Urban Futures Cluster

The Urban Futures Cluster is the second phase of UC's university-wide cluster hiring initiative. The Urban Futures Cluster is designed to attract faculty whose teaching and research focuses on challenges facing urban areas, that might include race and social (in)justice, educational and/or health disparities, urban housing, poverty, policing, and any other topics that speak to the challenges facing American cities and urban living. The Office of the Provost and participating units will invest some \$1.4m and an overall faculty investment of \$10m to strengthen research, teaching and engagement in urban issues while potentially developing a pipeline for diverse undergraduates, graduate students and faculty members.

The School of Planning has opened a position to fill an interdisciplinary faculty position focused on research, teaching and service to improve the quality of life for residents of disadvantaged urban communities on how the built, natural, and social environments found in disadvantaged urban communities affect decent and affordable urban housing and the relationship between housing, racism, poverty, social justice, educational inequity, and health disparities.

The open position is part of a \$4 million University investment to fund five faculty members in different units (Urban Planning; Education; Criminal Justice; Sociology; and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies) who will work together to comprise an Urban Futures Research Cluster. Each of the new faculty members will be provided support for an Urban Scholar Graduate Fellow (at the graduate-level) and an Urban Scholar Undergraduate Research Assistant, in addition to start-up funds and relocation benefits.

(7) Agreement with Chinese Universities

The School has a number of exchange and joint degree agreements with major Chinese universities. Current agreements allow students from Beijing University of Technology and Beijing Jiaotong University to enroll for one year in our Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies program, and receive that degree, before enrolling in our MCP program. Most of these students take classes that are part of the BUP curriculum and therefore add to the cultural diversity of the program.

For the Master of Community Planning, the following strategies was implemented:

Reclassification of MCP Program

The faculty of the School of Planning decided unanimously to seek a reclassification for the Master of Community Planning (MCP) program from the CIP code of 04.0902 0301, for City/Urban, Community and Regional Planning Architectural and Building Sciences/Technology, to the CIP code 30.3301, for Sustainability Studies. The faculty has urged for the appropriate offices to begin this reclassification process because the MCP program has, in recent years, stressed the sustainability component of physical planning, policy development, and urban planning and design in the entire curriculum. Sustainability is key to the planning profession and to the planet we live in; thus, it has become an integral component of most courses in the curriculum. City and regional planning, and all of the planning specialties taught in our curriculum, are per their interdisciplinary nature, embedded in many CIP Code descriptions. The program now has sustainability as a central thread, and the courses and studios offered reflect that evolution. An additional reason for the reclassification is the recent acquisition of the Horticulture program in the School of Planning and the approval of the Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) program. The research and teaching activities of the Horticulture and Landscape Architecture faculty, and the potential connections between the MCP and the MLA program, further support sustainability as central core of our mission and vision.

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