

5. Infrastructure and Public Facilities



RESEARCH TEAM: Education policy, culture and social justice

Grand Challenge: Education and Equity

Key Terms:

Community representativeness, charter schools, student empowerment, study abroad programs, underrepresented groups

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Student Members/Student Research Project Titles:

- Rowena Ramos - Community Representativeness and Violence Affecting San Diego's Educational System
- Yolanda Chioma Richards - Abroad and Beyond: Building Global Citizens in Higher Learning through Studies Abroad Programs
- Kevin Mann - Student Initiated Educational Equity: The Legacy of Lumbaba-Zapata College and SPACES
- Emily Lipoma - A Comparative Study of University Assisted Charter Schools

Mentor(s) Leader:

- Cecil Lytle

Research Team Narrative:

Our Research Team worked on the Education and Equity Grand Challenge with a focus on infrastructure and public facilities. Our studies examined tactics to improve equity in secondary (K-12) and tertiary (university level) educational systems. We focused on equity issues in the context of measuring the advantages and disadvantages of charter schools, education justice and student initiated programs to increase diversity, violence

and its effects on test performance, and efforts to increase study abroad opportunities for all students (not just the most privileged). All of these studies convey the challenges and struggles of fostering educational equity. The philosophy underlying our approach is that education is much more than a privilege; it is a right that should be equitably accessible regardless of one's race, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and so forth, in our increasingly diverse and globalizing world.

Rowena Ramos: Community Representativeness and Violence Affecting San Diego's Educational System

Since the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers are responsible to teach a test rather than a subject and are held accountable if students do not meet the standards set by the State. Given that standardized testing is highly stressed, studying the effects on academic performance is important. My study examined crime incidents surrounding a school and whether or not effects are evident in test score results. By inferring crime report data, Census 2000, and School Accountability Report Cards, I hypothesized that crime has a negative effect while representativeness has a positive effect on academic performance. The variables analyzed were crime, arrest, representativeness, and API scores by using a multivariate statistical regression. In short, the hypothesis was proven true. Violence had a negative effect on academic performance and community representativeness did have a positive effect.

Emily Lipoma: Educational Partnerships: A Comparative Study of University Assisted Charter Schools

The actions of the University of California after the ban on affirmative action in school admissions have had a profound effect in the attack on educational inequality in California. Through the system's support, university assisted charter schools were able to develop and grow into an educational model for all universities. Presenting college as an attainable future to disadvantaged students is an admirable goal and by comparing the three case study relationships one can identify what characteristics best support the university assisted charter school relationship. In the case studies presented, (UC San Diego and Preuss School, UC Berkeley and CAL Prep, and UC Davis and West Sacramento Early College Prep) it was found that all are strongly working towards their goals yet the length of the program and the student body that each school attracts greatly affects the relative success of each school. The process of establishing such university assisted charter school partnerships is a long term solution with a growing impact and is a strong complementary establishment to the many programs throughout the state of California that are working to open educational equality in public education. One can look to the potential that these charter schools have to change the future diversity of university population. With years of public disinvestment student fees have sky rocketed as California's lawmakers duke out a political battle with college students feeling the brunt of the debate. UC San Diego, like the rest of the UC system, is becoming less accessible to people from diverse first generation and low-income backgrounds.

Kevin Mann: Student Empowerment and the Legacy of the Lumumba-Zapata College and the Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service

This research project critically examined a new approach to educational equity currently sweeping the University of California system. The study aims to fill an academic void in the understanding of student-initiated, identity-based educational equity. Using the “education as the practice of freedom” framework of Paulo Freire, this case study links the efforts of students from the 1969 Lumumba-Zapata College to the present day establishment of the Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service, an educational equity center founded by students, for students. The study analyzed student empowerment (using Paulo Freire’s model). The research design included data collection on the rates of application, admission, and enrollment. The research shows that campuses with student-initiated access and retention centers (ie. UCB, UCLA, UCSC, UCD) tend to have overall higher rates for student yield than UCSD and is especially higher for underrepresented students. While a number of factors contribute to student yield, campus climate is consistently a top concern for underrepresented students. Thus, because student-initiated centers link the concepts of access and retention together, they inherently attempt to alter and enhance the campus climate for underrepresented students as well as the larger study body.

Yolanda Chioma Richards: *Abroad & Beyond: Building Global Citizens in Higher Learning through Study Abroad Programs at the University of California in San Diego (UCSD)*

My research examined study abroad programs at the University of California in San Diego (UCSD) to see if they create a sustainable and multicultural community on campus. The Programs Abroad Office (PAO) is the main administrative center for study abroad programs. The PAO on campus serves as a resource core to encourage students to become international scholars and global citizens. Although the amount of students studying abroad has increased tremendously, this does not mean that PAO has perfected its methods in reaching out to all spectrums of the student body. There are in fact barriers and bridges to study abroad opportunities that undermine equitable access to such opportunities. This presents PAO with unique challenges. My research design identified bridges and barriers based on three main factors: communication, economics and integration. The following questions were addressed: who is actually going abroad? Who is underrepresented in study abroad? Is the PAO succeeding or failing in their attempt to outreach to underrepresented groups? Are there better ways of outreach within the PAO at UCSD? In this study, my focus on underrepresented groups included mainly students of color and students majoring in science and engineering (two types of students who historically have not done as much study abroad as other types of students on campus). In my findings, over 56% of the UCSD population happened to study abroad in the most expensive countries, in which financial aid was the biggest barrier for students to study abroad. The colleges at UCSD as well as the major/minor departments on campus do very little to promote study abroad opportunities as a way of meeting major/minor or college requirements. To increase the number of students who take advantage of study abroad, my study recommends a kind of institutional culture change in which the university embraces study abroad in a more robust fashion. That is, study abroad can become a more integral part of UCSD’s educational mission to empower “uncommon scholars and global citizens” (Jorge Huerta, UCSD’s Chief Diversity Officer).

San Diego continues to be one of the fastest growing and most diverse regions in the nation. This diversity however is not reflected at the University of California campus. As a whole, the research conducted on education has brought forth many ways in which it can be improved. Moreover, outreach programs that are in fellowship with educational institutions are the backbone in strengthening education for all. Such programs benefit in creating diversity on all spectrums regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and so forth. In Emily Lipoma's research on charter schools, it is apparent that when examining case study examples at schools in California, one can learn the benefits and problems as well as the justifications for each partnership. In correspondence, Kevin Manns' findings convey the importance of student initiated outreach programs in which they reach out to underrepresented communities that need retention and preservation. Rowena Ramos's study on school violence illustrates the reoccurring problem in urban education. These results are all beneficial in their aims in fostering educational equity.

References:

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