HS335f Perspectives on Youth Policy, Program Management and Systems Design

Module 2 – SPRING 2014
MONDAYS, 9:00 AM – 11:50 AM
Classroom: Heller G2

Professor, Susan P. Curnan
Chair, MBA & MPP, Children, Youth & Families Concentration
Director, Center for Youth and Communities
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OVERVIEW

Researchers and practitioners have examined many aspects of inequalities and injustices related to healthy development for youth and communities and their findings are both encouraging and alarming. While significant progress continues to be made in this field, it is not enough to bridge the gaps young people are facing in America or around the world. Nor is it enough to close the gap between what we know and what we do as managers, policy analysts, policy makers and leaders to create the conditions where all youth can thrive and successfully transition to healthy, productive, economically viable adulthood.

The “knowledge explosion” of the past decade is encouraging. We “know” for example that a growing evidence base and practice confirms that fulfilling five fundamental needs of young people enables them to thrive and prepare for college, work and life. The five building blocks are:

1. Ongoing, nurturing relationships with adults and positive relationships with peers
2. Safe places for living, learning, working, and playing
3. Resources that promote optimal physical and mental health
4. Educational preparation and economic opportunity
5. Opportunities to make a difference through community service and civic participation

Yet the conditions our young people are growing up in are alarming – many go without these supports and opportunities for healthy development. There are more than 80 million youth (aged 5-24), living in America’s communities¹ (and almost 73 million aged 0-17). 44% of Americans surveyed believe that when today’s children grow up they will be worse off than

¹ http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U_DP1&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&-_lang=en&-_sse=on
people now. At least 25% of young people in America are at risk of failure in school and the workforce, engaging in substance abuse and the criminal justice system.

Today, 2014, there are an estimated 6.7 million “opportunity youth” – defined as young people between the ages of 16 to 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market – who represent enormous potential for our nation’s economy as well as a powerful case for the advancement of future generations of low-income children and families. The successful reconnection of these young people requires community collaborations that effectively remove barriers, connect the many systems that touch their lives, and build and deepen education and employment pathways.

63% of Americans surveyed do not believe the U.S. Congress is doing enough to help “opportunity youth” and working families with children. 86% of voters nationally believe access to quality after-school programs that prevent crimes and keep youth safe should be a priority in greater investments in youth. Access to quality education is a critical asset. Yet, access is not equal for all American youth. For example, Black and Hispanic 4th graders are more likely to attend high poverty schools than their white counterparts. College access also remains a challenge: only 29% of 25-29 year olds have a bachelor’s degree. The benefits of having a good education are clear: higher earnings. Adults aged 25-34 with at least a bachelor’s degree earn an average of about $20k more per year than those who have only completed high school. Better health. The majority (78%) of adults over 25 with at least a bachelor’s degree report being in very good or excellent health, compared to only 56% of high school completers and 39% of those with less than a high school education. Higher voter participation rates. In the 2000 Presidential election, 77% of citizens with a bachelor’s degree voted while only 38% of citizens who had not completed high school voted.

An epidemic of anti-gay harassment and violence in the schools has made traditional education a risky business for LGBT youth. Victimization of these groups is a significant predictor of dropping out, suicide, substance abuse, and engagement in risky behavior.

Providing safe and healthy activities for youth during out-of-school time is also key to the healthy development of youth and communities.

At the same time young people aged 10-24 years account for 29% of the population in low income and middle income countries. Over 100 countries have a significant “youth bubble” in their populations and increasing vulnerability in terms of literacy, employability, life skills and health. The World Youth Report 2007, from the United Nations Programme on Youth,

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http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids
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The Heller School for Social Policy and Management examines the challenges and opportunities existing for the roughly 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15-24 in the world.

In the United States and worldwide, 2014 is largely considered to be the year to address the crisis in youth unemployment.

In short, this course is offered to both deepen student understanding of one of the great challenges facing our nation and many developing countries, “Inequalities for All”, and to explore emerging and best practices related to policy, program management and systems design to address those challenges and create sustainable conditions for preparing youth for college, work and life.

**COURSE GOAL:** To inspire and support interdisciplinary knowledge development, hope and leadership to address inequalities and injustices related to youth and community development.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- **To expose students to theory and evidence based frameworks for healthy development of youth and communities and answer the questions:**
  
  o How do we use science and experience to create conditions where all youth can thrive and successfully transition to healthy, productive, economically viable adulthood?

  o What policy, program management, and systems reform are indicated for better preparing young people for college, work and life?

- **To introduce students to “real time” change initiatives underway in organizations, foundations, government, business, and communities, to better prepare youth for college, work and life.

- **To enable students to apply the knowledge gained in this course to their personal theory of change aimed at improving the quality of life for young people in America and around the world.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course is both reading- and action-packed. **Students are co-creators of the teaching-learning experience and will have responsibility for leading at least one seminar and participating in all.** Student leaders are expected to read all materials and prepare discussion questions before coming to class, and to reflect this fact through active participation. As is the custom with Professor Curnan’s courses, the readings include the work of philosophers, policy
leaders, scholars, grassroots activists, thought-leaders, management consultants and practitioners. Specific expectations include:

Attendance at all sessions; prompt arrival prepared for the topic
  1. Preparation and facilitation of at least one 90-minute seminar (team assignment)
  2. Participation in class discussions and exercises (Note: class participation is expected and includes each student’s contribution to the learning environment, i.e. not only the frequency of comments but also their quality. Quality will be based on ability to draw upon course material and reflect on life experiences productively, to advance or sharpen class discussions, willingness to take risky or unpopular points of view and precision in making arguments.)
  3. Timely presentation of assignments
  4. Helpfulness and team work with other students

Ground rules for discussions will be collectively established in the first class in order to ensure a safe, productive teaching and learning environment for all.

ASSIGNMENTS

Grades based on:
  1. Seminar Preparation and Facilitation.  66%
     Rubric elements include:
     Once topic is selected, identifying learning questions; preparing reading list; PowerPoint summary of the problem, policy, management and system implications related to the topic; and Student Engagement in the topic during classtime.
  2. Weekly Participation and Written Reflection on the Topic (form provided).  34%

Grades for individual components above will be assigned as follows:

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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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OFFICE HOURS
You may see Professor Curnan by appointment. Professor Curnan’s office is located in the Heller Building, 3rd Floor, Room 341.
UNIVERSITY NOTICES

1. If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodations made for you in this class, please see Professor Hughes immediately.

2. You are expected to be honest in all your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty are subject to possible judicial action. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your roommate –without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotations marks to indicate the sources of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. If you are in doubt about the instructions for a any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.
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SCHEDULE AND CLASS TOPICS – DRAFT

Module 2 – SPRING 2014
Mondays, 9:00 AM – 11:50 AM

1. March 17
   • Introductions & Opening Lecture
     Opportunity Youth and the Crisis of “Disconnection”: Policy; Management; & Systems Dilemmas and Community Solutions Showing: “Inequality for All”

2. March 24
   • Community Youth Development in Theory & Practice: Detroit Case Study
     Della M. Hughes, Senior Fellow, Center for Youth and Communities

3. March 31
   • Transitions to Post-Secondary Success: Problems, Policy, Program & Systems Building
     Susan Lanspery, Scientist, and Alan Melchior, Senior Fellow, Center for Youth and Communities

4. April 7
   • Mentoring as a Key for Facilitating Positive Youth Development: Theory and Practice
     Tammy Tai, MBA ‘06, Chief Program Officer, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

5. April 14*
   • Student Led Seminars (2)

6. April 28
   • Student Led Seminars (2)

7. May 5
   • Student Led Seminar (1)
   • Reflection and Analysis of Learning Goals
   • Course Evaluation

*No class session on Monday, April 21 – Patriot’s Day Holiday

Students may choose from the following topics:
   • Family Well-being in Rural America
   • Dilemmas in Foster Care and “Aging Out”
   • LGBT Justice and Equity Issues
   • Adolescent Health
   • Youth Engagement in Violence Prevention
   • Hunger/Nutrition
   • Homelessness/Housing
   • Internships and/or Service
   • Citizen Leadership
• Therapeutic High Schools & Mental Health Supports
• Other as Students Suggest (subject to approval by Professor Curnan)

READINGS

All readings for class will be available online via LATTE or directly at websites.

Critical Websites
Center for Youth and Communities: http://cyc.brandeis.edu
Forum For Youth Investment: http://forumfyi.org/
Search Institute: http://www.search-institute.org/
Innovation Center: http://www.innovationcenter.org/
Jobs for the Future: http://www.jff.org/
The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions: http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/
FSG: http://www.fsg.org/
White House Domestic Policy Council: http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/dpc
American Youth Policy Forum – Bridging Youth Policy, Practice and Research: http://www.aypf.org/
The Michigan Study of Adolescent and Adult Life Transitions: http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/msalt/
National Youth Development Information Center: http://www.nydic.org/nydic/index.html
Youth Today newspaper: http://www.youthtoday.org/
America’s Promise: The Alliance for Youth: http://www.americaspromise.org/
The Fenway Institute: www.thefenwayinstitute.org
Welcoming Schools: http://www.welcomingschools.org/
HRC (Human Rights Campaign): http://www.hrc.org/
GLSEN (Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network): http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html
GRLZ Radio: http://grlzradio.org/
More Than Words: http://mtwyouth.org/
One Family: http://onefamilyinc.org/
The Commonwealth Corporation: http://commcorp.org/
YouthBuild U.S.A.: https://youthbuild.org/
United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley: http://supportunitedway.org/
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service: http://www.nps.gov/oclp/

Foundation Sites
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx
The Skillman Foundation: http://www.skillman.org/
The Wallace Foundation: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/
The Hyams Foundation: http://www.hyamsfoundation.org/
Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF): http://www.nmefoundation.org/

Government Sites
Find Youth Info: http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: http://www.hhs.gov/

Class #1: Introductions & Opening Lecture
Mar. 17
Opportunity Youth and the Crisis of “Disconnection”: Policy; Management; & Systems Dilemmas and Community Solutions
Showing: “Inequality for All”

ASSIGNMENT PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS SESSION ON MARCH 17th:

Please explore the readings and websites below and come to class prepared to discuss the following learning questions:

- What policies and systems reform are indicated to address inequalities and better prepare young people for college, work and life?
• What **program** strategies and **best practices** in youth development would be advised to address inequalities and better prepare young people for college, work and life?
• How would you “make the case” to the **business/employer** community to invest in opportunity youth?


And scan the following resources from the The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions website: [http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/resources/](http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/resources/):

[http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/resources/A_Bridge_To_Reconnection.pdf](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/resources/A_Bridge_To_Reconnection.pdf)


http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/resources/White_House_Council_For_Community_Solutions_Final_Report.pdf

http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/resources/White_House_Council_For_Community_Solutions_Tool_Kit.pdf

Video:  

SCAN Critical Websites  
The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions: http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/  
FSG: http://www.fsg.org/  
White House Domestic Policy Council: http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/dpc

Additional Reading  

Class #2: Community Youth Development in Theory & Practice: Detroit Case Study  
Mar. 24 Della M. Hughes, Senior Fellow, Center for Youth and Communities

(Search for book title in search terms to retrieve full text.)


**Class #3: Transitions to Post-Secondary Success: Problems, Policy, Program & Mar. 31 Systems Building**


**Class #4: Mentoring as a Key for Facilitating Positive Youth Development:**

Apr. 7 Theory and Practice

Tammy Tai, Chief Program Officer, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

03.06.14 Syllabus HS335f Working Copy – Subject to change Curnan Spring ’14
http://www.mentoring.org/mentoringeffect


Class #5: Student Led Seminar
Apr. 14

Class #6: Student Led Seminar
Apr. 28

Class #7: Student Led Seminar
May 5 Reflection and Analysis of Learning Goals and Course Evaluation
ATTACHMENT A

CYF Concentration Core Competencies and Themes – MBA

1. Engage people and build community to achieve mission
   – Create learning organizations and partnership
   – Manage diversity within org & partnerships
   – Inspire shared and engaging leadership
   – Embrace community voice and change

2. Balance mission with margin
   – Articulate clear Theory of Change/Manage to mission
   – Foster adequate finance and accounting infrastructure for transparency and accountability
   – Use benchmarking & evaluation to “prove & improve”

3. Measure and manage outcomes for continuous improvement
   – Use science and experience to create “quality” approach
   – Conduct outcome-based planning and benchmarking
   – Use evaluation strategy as a management and learning tool

4. Manage complex change
   – Inspire systems thinking
   – Broker partnerships and collaborations within and across sectors
   – Develop leadership and organizational capacity
ATTACHMENT B
CYF Concentration Core Competencies and Themes – MPP

CYF CONCENTRATION
CORE COMPETENCIES AND THEMES — MPP

1. Understand and evaluate social policies and the social interventions policy makes possible
2. Understand how advocacy and communication strategies “frame” policy and social change for decision makers and the public
3. Practice analyzing policy and the context that give rise to policy options