

DuBoisian World Scholars Society: Educational Empowerment Amongst CMS Students



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Introduction

SOC 331 focuses on contemporary theory centering, community, society, and change. Each student partners with a community partner and assesses a community need. The end product of this assessment is a proposal for change, led by concepts discussed in the course. My proposal is orchestrated through the DuBoisian World Scholar's Society (DWSS) is a student operated service organization, funded by the Davidson College Center for Civic Engagement. DWSS provides mentorship through engaging in culturally relevant educational lessons and discussions with students from the Project LIFT Learning community at West Charlotte High school.

VISION

To form a cohesive community representative of the diverse skills and walks of life found in the CMS school system and Davidson College, while realizing solutions to systemic issues.

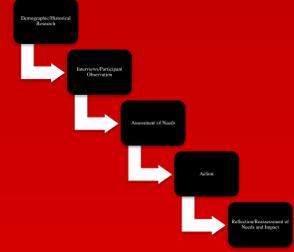
MISSION

To engage those of various cultural backgrounds in a manner that stimulates articulation of real-world issues and solutions, develops organic relationships, and establishes channels for service-learning

CENTRAL FOCUS

The central focus of the Society is enriching the educational experience of CMS students through a network of mentorship, and a curriculum tailored to the interests and needs of the students.

Methods



Community Relations

Responsible for all interactions with community partners & leaders

Data Analytics

Responsible for analyzing student data, as well as researching critical pedagogy

DWSS Committees
 The society is made up of over 50 Davidson undergraduates divided into 5 committees seeking to address needs specific to our demographic.

Alumni Relations

Responsible for all interactions with the College & Alumni

Development

Responsible for management of current & future funding

Mentorship

Responsible for collection of student data, and direct mentorship with students

Background

The standardization of traditional schooling make it impossible to discuss American schooling, and thus the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system, without first addressing the implementation of the standardized model of schooling. The origins and aims of mass schooling root it firmly in Western culture; this is made evident by the gradual inclusion of diverse people in traditional schooling, as well as the initial articulation of mass schooling as an "articulated cultural project" (Baker and LeTendre 2005). Mass schooling was conceptualized in the 19th century, but it was not until much later that schooling was made available to diverse populations. The Charlotte School System was not desegregated until 1971 (Currie 2004). The desegregation of Charlotte is largely contributed to the school busing program, which ran from 1971 until 1999 where it was discontinued with a federal judge ruling the schools had done all they could to help end segregation (Currie 2004). Today, the Charlotte Mecklenburg School system consists of 147,151 students of which 72 percent are non-white and 39 percent are African-American (Charlotte Mecklenburg Diversity Report 2016). Still, the school system struggles with dealing with segregation along racial and socioeconomic lines (Guo 2015). The racial and socioeconomic divides are reflected in school performance across the system. Multiple efforts have been made across the school system to address gaps in achievements, the most recent of which is the integration of critical pedagogy and culturally relevant lesson plans by Project LIFT, a \$55 million initiative to close the opportunity gap in West Charlotte.

Methodology

Identification of LIFT Student Needs

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to identify the needs of LIFT students. Techniques utilized include participant observation, interviews with students and teachers, demographic research, and literature written from working with similar groups. From this, LIFT students and DWSS identified the following needs:

- More connections between in-class curriculum and current events
- Guidance through practical aspects of Higher education (socialization, financial support, academic success etc.)
- Consideration of cultural background and individual identity
- Consistency in presence of Mentors
- Confidence in articulating experiences
- Broadening of conceptions of "knowledge"



Meet the World's Future Leaders.

Models/Best Practices

DWSS is primarily modeled from a combination of two already existing critical pedagogy curriculums:

CT3, a model that focuses on strategies for classroom management, teacher coaching during instructional time, and the development of school and classroom culture. All aspects of the model are designed to equip schools to instruct in culturally relevant ways.

AND

The **Harlem Children's Zone**, a model developed and employed by Geoffrey Canada, which is seen as a hallmark in educational strategies for reaching minority youth. The model focuses on providing a holistic support system to meet the individualized needs of children throughout their educational experience.

Applicable Course Concepts

Social Justice: Identity, Oppression, & Privilege: "The individual of privilege strengthens the power it creates and maintains" (Wildman and Davis 8). While identity is a fluid social construct, it has very real implications in terms of oppression and privilege.
Power, Empowerment, & Shared Authority: "Empower suggests that power can be given, provided, controlled, held, conferred, taken away" (Gore 59). The concept of power as limited and homogenous in society makes empowerment the transfer of power from one source to another.
Social Movements: "But in reality it [social movements] is the thinking of a powerful citizenry... and take meaningful action" (Feldmann 8). Social movements provides opportunities to take positive statements of society, and make them normative.
Strategies for Advocacy & Activism: "An underlying assumption behind direct action organizer is that you are working with people who are primarily motivated by self-interest" (Bobo et. al 8). Understanding your personal stake, and that of those involved makes for empathetic advocacy and lasting change.

Application of Methodology

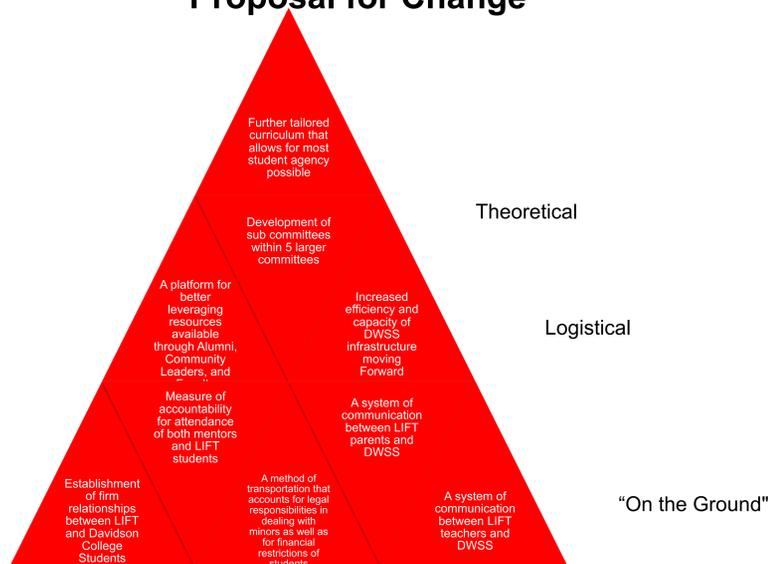
The data analytics and development committees were primarily responsible for the application of methodology. The data analytics team conducted qualitative surveys and interviews to collect data on the current state of LIFT, CMS, DWSS and West Charlotte. Additionally, they helped collect research on the history of West Charlotte and CMS.

Development helped assess the needs of students at West Charlotte and DWSS, as well as what is feasible for the organization and the students based on the constraints of current policy and legal logistics.



The proposal for Change is broken down into 3 spheres, based on observations and comments from DWSS and W. Charlotte Students

Proposal for Change



FEET ON GROUND. HEAD IN CLOUDS.

Acknowledgments

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*Additional sources available upon request