

Latino Healthcare Needs Assessment Survey

A Final Project Proposal For the
Consideration of the SDM Subcommittee.

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Class of 2009

11.14.08

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I would like to propose a final project that is a local examination of the core issues identified in my original proposal. Whereas my initial vision of my major focused on topics of development, peace and conflict in the world at large, the proposed project is an empirical study limited to Saratoga County. However, the questions that my proposed research seeks to examine are the same as those that underlie curriculum. My exploration of the healthcare needs and access of Latino workers in Saratoga County is rooted in the question of why basic human rights remain unfulfilled for some. In this sense, I am proposing a research project that turns the analytic lens of Human Security and equitable development on our own community.

I would like to propose the Latino Healthcare Needs Assessment Survey as the final project of my Self-Determined Major. As a collaboration of the Latino Community Advocacy Program (LCAP) of the Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council and Skidmore's Social Work Program, this project is designed to gather data on the healthcare needs of Spanish-speaking residents of Saratoga County. Specifically, the survey aims to answer the question: How well does the healthcare system in Saratoga County suit the needs of Latino residents and how can it be improved? The project is the result of the efforts of Prof. Crystal Moore of the Social Work Program and Krystle Nowhitney, the director of the LCAP. I first became involved in this project during my summer internship with the LCAP in which I helped develop the questionnaire and the method of implementation. Since the start of our research in September, I have been the head researcher and project manager. I have been pursuing my role as head researcher

and doing readings on Social Work research methods in the form of an HF-371 independent study with Prof. Moore.

The Latino Healthcare Needs Assessment Survey is a mixed methods study that employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather information about the healthcare needs Spanish-speaking workers in our county. The quantitative data is gathered using a 27 question multiple-choice questionnaire that is administered orally in Spanish by trained researchers (including myself). The questions are grouped into several categories: basic demographics, medical condition, healthcare access / experiences and potential improvements. The survey is completely anonymous with regard to the respondent and their employer. However, we do include the employer type (farm, restaurant, track, etc...) and job position (cook, groom, janitor, etc...) that is intended to serve as a rough proxy for income. We will utilize the occupational categories and average income figures from the 2000 census in order to establish rough income estimates. These estimates will in turn be used to look for a correlation between income, as a rough measure of productivity, and access to healthcare.

In terms of locating participants, we are utilizing two parallel processes: formally contacting employers and through the informal networks and connections of the LCAP. Our experience thus far has led us to rely primarily on the informal networks of LCAP. This technique is called 'snowball' research in Social Work literature and is recognized as a valid method. At the time of my writing, we have completed 25 quantitative surveys out of a target of 75. I hope to complete the research by mid February and to begin writing up the results at that point.

The end goal of this project will be to write a formal research paper analyzing the findings of my research. While I intend to draw from the relevant literature in Social Work and Sociology journals, my analysis will employ several of the disciplines included in my core curriculum. In crafting this final paper, I will seek input and guidance from professors in other disciplines such as Economics (R. Rotheim and M. Odekon) and Political Science (T. Burns). As a reflection of the diversity of my core curriculum, I will examine the data from a multidisciplinary perspective and address root causes as well as the empirical data. In my discussion of the data gathered in the survey, I hope to include considerations of the fundamental questions that underlie my major in Economic Development and Human Security. Upon completing my final paper, Prof. Moore and I will consider using my work as the basis for a co-authored article to be submitted to Social Work Journals.

I consider this research project to be local and empirical exploration of several of the key themes of my major. Specifically, this research is rooted in questions such as: what is the nature of true prosperity? Who enjoys the benefits of prosperity and why? How does the nature of prosperity relate to the distribution of its benefits? And, how can the benefits of prosperity best be shared among those who contribute to it? Although they are not mentioned in my original major proposal, this project also deals with questions of community and the common good that have been prominent in my recent study of political theory (GO-304, GO-308). While the theories covered in my course on Economic Development (EC-316) focused on large-scale capital accumulation, this survey allows me to examine individual contributors to economic growth such as migrant

labor. The opportunity to examine particular manifestations of essential political and economic questions is the most enticing aspect of this project for me.

While I appreciate the value of literature-based research, I feel that the Latino Healthcare Needs Assessment Project offers a unique set of opportunities for me as a scholar and as a member of the Saratoga Springs community. While my education has contributed greatly to my personal development, it has done so largely in isolation of the community in which it occurs. I am quite grateful for the close-knit community that our campus offers. However, I feel that education entails responsibilities as well as privileges. This project is an opportunity for me to bring together my own intellectual development and my involvement in the community. Furthermore, the success of this project has the ability to spark a sustained collaboration between Skidmore students and the Latino Community Advocacy Program. Considering the vast body of talent and enthusiasm at our college, I am greatly excited by the prospect of building a long-term relationship with the community around the issue of healthcare access. I hope that the Self-Determined Major Subcommittee will consider the special potential of this project with regards to our college's involvement with the community.

Thank you for considering my proposal,

Peter Brock

