Poverty Traps and Sustainable Solutions: Using Mixed Methods to Understand the Economic Barriers to Living-Wage Jobs in Indiana, Pennsylvania

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Title of Project: Poverty Traps and Sustainable Solutions: Using Mixed Methods to Understand the Economic Barriers to Living-Wage Jobs in Indiana, Pennsylvania


Grantee Name: Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Project Director: Dr. Brandon Vick

Description of Project:

With support from the ARC through the Appalachian Teaching Project, students from two classes — ECON 481: Global Poverty and Local Perspectives and ANTH 360: Applied Anthropology (Fall 2015) — partnered with the Center for Community Growth, Indiana, PA (CCGI) to meet three goals: conduct quantitative research on the economic decisions and hardships of families in the region; conduct qualitative research on the experiences of people facing hardship due to expenses, debt burdens and/or barriers to gaining/keeping employment; and communicate findings to help CCGI in its mission to educate people about local barriers to economic justice.

CCGI is a local community member organization seeking to promote a more fair, equitable, and sustainable community. CCGI is “actively working to improve the livelihoods of residents by addressing issues of social, economic, racial, and environmental justice.” The 2015-2016 ATP partnership with the CCGI stemmed from a collaboration on economic research to calculate living wage estimates in our region. Working with a national policy research organization, the Alliance for a Just Society (AJS), Brandon Vick headed a team of student interns, including ATP students Christian Sadowski and Savannah Thorpe, and CCGI members to collect economic data on Pennsylvania families from a number of public sources to calculate the typical expenses that people in the region face, the budgets they must maintain, and the wages required to live under such financial constraints. The purpose of this research was to inform the community and policy makers about debt burdens, inability to pay expenses, and the disparity between families working in jobs that pay living wage jobs versus those that do not. Our budget and living wage estimates for Pennsylvania were included in national reports generated by the AJS.

Indiana County, Pennsylvania has a poverty rate of 17% and a child poverty rate of 22%, well above the national average and near the Appalachian region rate. Local service providers, community organizations, and political leaders have held three poverty summits in the past two years with the intention to encourage better
collaboration, identify barriers to leaving poverty, and develop sustainable solutions. Although the unemployment rate for the county is currently 4%, many of the jobs people work do not earn them enough to pay bills and cover debt. Some people have jobs but may face other barriers that keep them on the brink of poverty: broken-down transport that cannot be fixed, unreliable daycare, or unexpected catastrophic health expenses. Better understanding such poverty traps and their prevalence can inform pro-poor investments in employment and infrastructure initiatives.

In conjunction with CCGI, we began work on research that can assist local programs, service providers and policy makers by providing them with better information on the economic lives of low-income families in Indiana, PA. Research can serve as a real asset to local organizations in a number of ways. First, research on family debt, expenses, and budgets can identify “poverty penalties” — areas where the poor pay more for goods and services, in terms of a longer time period to acquire a good or service, poorer quality per dollar spent, or higher spending on a good/service as a percentage of one's total budget. Common examples are poorer quality childcare available to low-income families or higher costs of health services in an emergency situation compared to preventative use of services. While service providers, such as local food banks or temporary housing, collect information on clients after economic hardship has hit, broader research on poverty penalties in the local context may identify the most prevalent reasons for such hardship.

Activities:

Please include full details regarding all activities, including the conference presentation, poster, and the following requirements of the 2015-2016 Scope of Work:

- Activities with community partners (include partner name(s), dates and locations of meetings, topics of focus-group discussions, etc.)

Our students actively engaged with CCGI throughout the semester. On 9/4/15, CCGI Co-Chairs, Reverend Joan Sabatino and Gerald Smith, along with CCGI liaison with the Indiana Borough Council, Peter Broad, attended a session of Dr. Vick’s Poverty class. They introduced the students to CCGI, the types of work they do in the community, and the ways the class can get involved. Mr. Broad discussed the importance of how poverty and the lack of high-wage paying jobs in the area hurts the community and gave ideas about possible research that the students could engage in.

During a class session on 9/23/15, students met with representatives from the Department of Human Services, Lisa Spencer, and the Indiana County Community Action Plan (ICCAP), Michelle Faught. They discussed the services their organizations provide (i.e. PowerPack and Food Bank) and the poverty-related problems their clients face. Students asked a number of questions about various
barriers to overcoming poverty and learned a lot from Ms. Spencer’s and Ms. Faught’s experiences.

On 10/15/15, CCGI held a Living Wage Report press release at the Indiana Public Library. Reverend Sabatino and Mr. Smith attended and explained the project we collaborated on and its importance to local families. Due to a scheduling conflict, ATP student Tina Sadowski could not attend. Dr. Vick said a few words about this work and how other ATP students were following up on this research.

Student from Dr. Poole’s Applied Anthropology class conducted qualitative research with IRB approval. On 10/26/15, these students conducted a group interview with ICCAP employees, at the local ICCAP office. The interview was related to barriers to getting out of poverty faced by their clients, especially related to problems around hunger, housing, and mental health. On 10/30/15, the students conducted a group interview with various directors of DHS-related programs: PA Workwear, EARN, Career T.R.A.C.K., Dept. of Human Services, Peerstar Mentoring, and Medical Assistance Transportation Program. The interview took place at the DHS-CareerLink office. Topics were related to barriers to getting out of poverty faced by their clients, including the role of mental illness, addiction, and lack of transportation and jobs.

On the first weekend of December, I took nine students (Rachel Haan, Robert Werder, Danielle Yushinski, Kayla Good, Lucas Mafrica, Savannah Thorpe, Victoria Lorenz, Joseph Franze, and Christina Sadowski) to Washington, D.C. for the ATP conference. Reverend Sabatino was invited but could not make the trip due to a last-minute conflict. The group performed very well, with 82% of conference participants agreeing (mid-high or high) that the IUP group engaged its community partners and addressed the question of sustainability well. 93% agreed that the group was well prepared and communicated their research well.

After returning from D.C., the students attended the 12/6/15 CCGI Board meeting at the Brown Restaurant and presented their research and findings. The Board had many questions related to findings from the group interviews and were surprised by findings related to the number of people who were homeless and used the food bank. The Board discussed with the students opportunities to share their research in the community during the spring semester.

Unfortunately, the primary opportunity to share this research, the Indiana County Poverty Summit, did not resume meetings in the spring semester. However, Rev. Joan, Mr. Smith, and Dr. Vick met with Representative Dave Reed to discuss minimum wage proposals in the state legislature on 3/18/16. Dr. Vick discussed the ATP student research on the subject and findings related to local poverty.

With five of the nine ATP students having graduated in December, much of the project leadership was lost and the remaining students had to overcome new time constraints to communicate their research findings. However, the remaining four students presented their ATP poster at the IUP Undergraduate Scholars Forum:
Danielle Yushinski, Kayla Good, Lucas Mafrika, and Joseph Franze. More on their continued research is described below.

- links to any videos or social media that show the students interacting with their community partner(s)


Tina Sadowski’s contributions to *The Job Gap* and living wage studies is noted here: [https://thejobgap.org/author-pay-up-2015/](https://thejobgap.org/author-pay-up-2015/)

**Project Outcomes:**

The project has met its goals in both pedagogy and project deliverables. Students conducted original research that required active engagement with service providers in the community. Students took on leadership roles in ensuring that these projects were organized, met deadlines, and produced valuable results. Students became more aware of regional economic development initiatives at the ARC. Additionally, students utilized the opportunity to share their research with researchers from many disciplines.

Findings from the project have been used to bolster local advocacy efforts by CCGI to push for a higher minimum wage. Research generated by the ATP students was communicated in both the CCGI’s press release of the Living Wage study and CCGI’s meeting with state officials.

The project has also laid the groundwork for continued research related to local poverty. Two students, Lucas Mafrika and Joey Franze, continued the work they began in Dr. Vick’s Poverty course, turning it into a paper titled “Understanding Poverty: Differences in Rural-Urban Pennsylvania Counties” drafted for their Advanced Econometrics course. Mr. Mafrika is continuing to use methods he learned in this class (regression analysis and decomposition) to analyze the gender pay gap in Appalachia and estimate the role that occupational segregation plays in this. He is working under funding through the Center for Northern Appalachian Studies and may turn this into an Independent Study course. Additionally, ATP students began working with Dr. Idamarie LaQuatra to discuss ICCAP’s PowerPack program and whether it provides nutritionally beneficial food to low-income elementary students in the county. Their initiative led Dr. LaQuatra and Dr. Vick to apply to the College of Health and Human Service’s Research Incentive Award to determine the feasibility of performing a program evaluation and nutritional analysis of the PowerPack program. They won this small internal grant, which will help them establish connections with local stakeholders that are necessary to perform such research.

Finally, this project helped to spread information about local poverty issues to other students on the campus and to the broader region. Student presentations at the
IUP Undergraduate Scholars Forum were well received by both faculty and students. Dr. Vick was asked whether the poster could be used to demonstrate the outstanding work that IUP students are doing to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean’s Advancement Council. Students involved with this project also presented on their research at the Appalachian Teaching Project Annual Conference in Arlington, VA, December 2015.

Problems Encountered:

The project encountered a couple of problems that limited dissemination of research results to the further community. First, we had planned to pursue presenting results at the Spring 2016 Indiana County Poverty Summit. Although similar summits had been held in the previous three semesters, no summit was held in Spring 2016. Second, more than half of the ATP participants graduated in December 2016, leading to a loss of student resources that could be utilized. The remaining participants found ways to either continue their research or present their previous findings, but time constraints due to new classes limited their ability to further disseminate findings in the spring. Third, while we think that partnering two classes (Economic and Anthropology) was a novel idea, the coordination problems were substantial. Rather than being able to divide project work between two professors, more work was created and we found it difficult to get students from the two classes to work together, due largely to different schedules. A related problem is that the overall topic of poverty traps is perhaps too broad to take on in one semester. Fourth, scheduling conflicts will keep Dr. Vick from offering his Global Poverty and Local Perspectives course again next fall; and, Dr. Poole will be on sabbatical in Fall 2016. However, another course and professor has been identified to lead the ATP project next year.

We learned several lessons from these obstacles that we will implement in the next ATP cycle. First, we will front-load more of the results sharing with the community in the fall semester and encourage our community partner to organize these events. Second, we will utilize a course that is taken primarily by freshmen and sophomore students in hope to have students available for project follow up and expansion over a longer period. Third, rather than partnering two courses, two professors will work together to prepare students from one course for the ATP project. More specifically, Dr. Vick will provide support in working with the community partners and share his learned experience of working with the previous ATP project, while another professor implements the ATP project in her course.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

a. Short-term impact

Student research results were used by CCGI in their advocacy efforts. Although no policy changes have been made, their efforts and the student research have been
used to raise awareness of issues related to hunger, homelessness, and low wages in the local community.

In the short term, the goals of this project will continue to be pursued through research stemming from the ATP project. As noted above, Lucas Mfrica will continue to study issues related to poverty and low wages through research funding from the Center for Northern Appalachian Studies and a potential independent study with Dr. Vick. Additionally, Drs. Vick and LaQuatra will continue to lay the groundwork for further research on the PowerPack elementary food program. With such preparation, this preliminary research may lead to a future ATP program focused on implementing the PowerPack evaluation.

b. Long-term impact

This ATP partnership stems from previous ATP work. The Center for Community Growth formed after our 2012-2013 ATP Project: Sustainable Indiana. Based on student research with members of the grassroots group, Coalition for a Healthy County (CHC), including a survey of members, video interviews with partner environmental organizations, and focus groups held at the CHC annual meeting, this organization decided to broaden its mission and tackle a range of interconnected social, environmental, and economic justice issues. Although we will not be partnering with CCGI for the next ATP project, it is likely that future partnerships may occur related to sustainable food projects that CCGI engages in, such as growing the local farmer’s market or planning a community food cooperative.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The 2015-2016 ATP was a tremendous success in terms of the growth of student leadership. They faced an extreme challenge to try to get a grasp of the various barriers to poverty that people in Indiana County face, to engage in research on these broadly based problems, and to deliver and interpret meaningful results to be shared with the ATP and the local community. I see the ATP project as a valuable resource for our students on many levels as they gain hands-on experience practicing economics and anthropology outside of academia — the fastest growing segment of both fields professionally. This ATP project has also been important for the Economics and Anthropology departments, opening the opportunity to teach using high impact learning strategies.

The ATP has also been a catalyst for growth in our IUP Center for Northern Appalachian Studies, which is working on a number of economic development initiatives with the Downtown Indiana Business Improvement District Office, including the Northern Appalachian Folk Festival. We are planning an ATP project next year that will expand on Downtown Indiana’s push for walking trails within the borough. Our “Adventure Learning” project will combine the use of GeoCache to explore historical locations along a walking trail with links to oral histories of local people sharing their stories related to the specific site or the broader historical
context. We will work with the Historical Society to identify topics/sites they most wish to explore (i.e. the underground railroad or relationships with Native Americans) and Downtown Indiana to link the project to business promotion and tourism. Dr. Abigail Adams will teach the ANTH course and lead her students in working with community partners to identify sites, collect oral histories, promote the new learning tours, and ensure sustainable upkeep of GeoCaches. Dr. Vick will assist Dr. Adams to foster relationships with community partners in hope of future ATP collaboration.

Students of the 2015-2016 ATP cycle saw food issues, mental health, and the lack of high-paying jobs as the largest barriers to people in the area and recommended that future projects relate to these. Their work has planted the seeds for a potential future ATP project related to food issues and growing sustainable food opportunities for low-income families. Ultimately, this ATP project built relationships, generated good ideas, and created momentum for building sustainability through an awareness of the barriers keeping families in poverty.

Attachments (in PDF format):

Items in the attached PDF file include the following:

- Gerald Smith’s email coordinating the 10/15/15 Living Wage Report Press Conference.
- IUP media covering the student presentation at the ATP Conference in Washington, D.C.
- Local media covering the student presentation at the ATP Conference.
- My students reaching out to Dr. LaQuatra to get further information about the nutritional contents of the PowerPack Program.
- Announcement of IUP Health and Human Science Awards, of which Dr. LaQuatra and Dr. Vick won for their PowerPack Feasibility Study proposal.
- The list of students represented at the Undergraduate Scholars Forum, of which ATP students Danielle Yushinski, Kayla Good, Lucas Mfrica, and Joseph Franze presented.
- A note from Dr. Gracey on the Dean’s use of the ATP poster in the Dean's Advancement Council.
Hi folks,

I'm confirming for tomorrow's Press Conference for the release of the Living Wage Report. Attached are a few more documents, including the State Handout which has INDIANA COUNTY'S living wage numbers, FAQ's, and a few slides that I'll use tomorrow.

We'll start promptly at 5:30pm, Indiana Free Library, first floor. I'm expecting Indiana Gazette, Renda, and someone from campus. Here's the line-up:

1. Gerald Smith - co-director, Center for Community Growth
   - Introduction and MC - I'll review the specific findings of the report
2. Dr. Brandon Vick, Economist with a focus on labor and poverty.
3. Dale Lydic - Importance of an increase in the minimum wage on labor
4. Rev. Joan Sabatino - Call to action - we're joining a chorus across the state for PA to raise the minimum wage. There is legislation that would raise it to $10.10 an hour, which is a step in the right direction.

I'll be there starting at 5pm, we'll be video taping.

See you tomorrow, please call if you're not able to make it.

Gerald
724-910-0690

On Thu, Oct 8, 2015 at 4:55 PM, Gerald Smith <g.e.smith@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi folks,

Thanks for joining our release of the 2015 Living Wage Report, Pay Up. A copy of the final report is attached, Feel free to share among your own organization, but please don't share widely until after next Tuesday.

We are on for a Press Conference on Tuesday, 10/15 at 5:30pm at the Indiana Free Library. On our speaking list (and cc'd) is:

Gerald Smith - Center for Community Growth- discuss specifics of finding and questions about the living wage in general
Daly Lydic - United Mine Workers of America
Brandon Vick - IUP Economist
Rev. Joan Sabatino - faith based perspective
???? - Personal Story

For convenience, I've attached a DRAFT press release along with a suggestion with quotes from you all.

I have three requests before Tuesday to prepare.

Please edit, or remove those quotes as you feel is appropriate by Sunday, 10/12.

Can we have a short coordinating Conference Call on Sunday evening at 10/12 6 pm?

Do you know of an individual who is working under a living wage, struggling to make ends meet, who would be willing to be a part of our press conference on Tuesday to share their story? Please contact me ASAP.

Thanks much! Talk to you soon!

Gerald
724-910-0690

PA Handout FINAL.pdf  Pay Up! Final PA.pdf  release ppt.pptx
Ten students from Indiana University of Pennsylvania will attend the S5th annual Appalachian Teaching Project (ATP) Symposium in Washington, D.C. on December 4 and 5, S05S.

The students will be hosted by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).S

Supported by the Appalachian Regional Commission and organized by the Center of Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University, ATP coordinates student teams from participating colleges and universities in Appalachia to develop applied research projects building a sustainable future for the region. As part of ATP, these projects are formally presented to Appalachian Regional Commission leadership in Washington.

"The Appalachian Teaching Project is a flagship event for the Appalachian Regional Commission and one IS look forward to every year," said ARC Federal Co-Chair Earl Gohl. "ATP is an opportunity to hear directly from the region's next generation and learn about their innovative ideas for community development. I am always deeply impressed by the leadership, creativity, and poise each student brings to this program and to Appalachia's future."

This year's symposium will feature S50 students representing S5 schools in S0 Appalachian states. Students from IUP will present a project on "Poverty Traps and Sustainable Solutions: Using Mixed Methods to Understand the Economic Barriers to Living-Wage Jobs in Indiana, Pennsylvania." Their research team is led by Brandon Vick, who was named an Appalachian Teaching Fellow for the S05S–S6 academic year. Vick is an assistant professor of economics at IUP.

"The goal of this project was to get students to interact with the community to better understand the economic lives of local people," Vick said. "Poverty is a complicated problem that can affect different people in different ways, and anyone can be in poverty at some time in their lives.

"That's why it was important for students to look at a couple of specific problem areas, such as access to daycare, food insecurity, and job availability and pay. They worked with a number of local agencies, including the Indiana County Community Action Program and the Department of Human Services, to analyze local data and perform group interviews with caseworkers and clients of various services."

Mixed methods pair quantitative data analysis with qualitative techniques, such as in-depth interviews.

"My economics students researched statistical data to present a broad description of local poverty. We partnered with (IUP professor) Dr. Amanda Poole's applied anthropology class, who conducted group and individual interviews and analyzed the data they gathered," Vick said. Six of the students presenting are economics students and four are anthropology students.

IUP has an active Center for Northern Appalachian Studies, involving faculty from a variety of disciplines across the university. Its mission is to provide a focus for the enhanced understanding and appreciation of the richness of the region's diverse cultural heritage. The Center's work includes the creation of educational outreach programs, the development of historical archives, and the facilitation of community-based activities.

More than $8,000 students from S9 colleges and universities have participated in ATP since the program began in S05S.

The Appalachian Teaching Project can be followed on Facebook or on Twitter using #ARCATP.
The Appalachian Regional Commission is a regional economic development partnership of federal and state governments across 20 counties in 13 Appalachian states. ARC's mission is to be a strategic partner and advocate for sustainable community and economic development in Appalachia.

Posted on 12/2/201W3:29:26 PMW

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- Yoga Featured at Third Annual Northern Appalachian Folk Festival
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- Storytelling and Liars Contest to be Held at Northern Appalachian Folk Festival
- Economic Report to be Presented at Northern Appalachian Folk Festival

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1:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
IUP students attended symposium

December 05, T0T5 T0:49 AMT

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began in h001.h

The Appalachian Teaching Project can be followed on Facebook or on twitter using #ARCATP.h

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Hello all,
Aimee Kemp from ICCAP was kind enough to send me a list of items that are currently distributed, and I did a quick nutritional analysis. I also have the information on nutritional needs of elementary-aged school children. This can be compared with current intakes which is available from the Nationwide Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The latest data published are from 2011-2012. I would be happy to share this information with you. Would you like to come to my office in Ackerman 106? I am here most days. I have office hours Monday 10-11; Tuesdays 10-1 PM, and Weds 10-Noon.

On 10/21/2015 12:35 PM, victoria Lorenz wrote:

Hello, Dr. Laquatra and Ms. Faught!

Happy Autumn! We're Dr. Vick's students in his Economics of Poverty course, and we wanted to reach out to you to get rolling on our Power Pack project. We're in the preliminary stages of putting together and methodology, but we figured we'd start with you two.

Firstly, we think it would be wise to have some idea of what type of nutrition a school-aged child would need and what tends to be lacking in this township. If you have any literature or research on the subject, that'd be really helpful to inform our study and literature reviews.

Then, we'd like some idea of what exactly goes into the backpacks as far as the snacks and food so we can start to analyze their nutritional value.

Lastly, if possible (I know this is a big if), we want to see if we can get some raw data on attendance, grades, and performance of the students at the schools that utilize powerpack. We think that if we hold certain factors constant (ANCOVA style), we can use the students who don't have powerpack as a control group and compare their change in performance to that of the students who receive powerpack. We know that one might be tricky since confidentiality is tantamount, but if there's any way we could get the information without students' names or strongly identifying characteristics, we think we could do a really strong regression or ANCOVA to provide some stats-based evidence about the efficacy of the program.

If we need to work through the IRB, Dr. Vick said he could expedite that process from us.

Also, we have attached a list of questions regarding the Powerpacks. Ms. Faught if you could please answer the questions provided as detailed as possible that would be greatly appreciated!

That's where our heads are now, though, and if you have any more direction or ideas for us, please let us know!

Thank you so much, and I hope we can talk shortly!

--
Savannah Thorpe - s.m.thorpe@iup.edu
Victoria Lorenz - lorenzvictoria27@gmail.com
Dominic Dyer - d.p.dyer@iup.edu
Kathleen Lackey - rgft@iup.edu
Nick Smicker - isntqxl@gmail.com
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 26TH ANNUAL AWARDS

Posted on 5/12/2016 11:33:26 M

The College of Health and Human Services’ 26th annual awards luncheon was held on May 4, 2016, at the Rustic Lodge to recognize faculty members for outstanding research and service. Please join us in congratulating the following faculty:

OUTSTANDING HHS ACADEMY AWARDS: G
Service Award: Fredalene Bowers, Human Development and Environmental Studies

Outstanding Senior Teacher Award: Nicole Clark, Food and Nutrition

Senior Researcher Award: Christopher Janicak, Safety Sciences

Outstanding Junior Teacher Award: Pao Ying Hsiao, Food and Nutrition

Junior Researcher Award: Jonathon Cooper, Criminology and Criminal Justice

**HHS RESEARCH INCENTIVE AWARDS:**

Primary Investigator(s): Riah Hoffman and Shannon Dusack, Nursing and Allied Health Professions
Research Proposal Title: Mass Casualty Preparedness Simulation

Primary Investigator(s): Ida Marie LaQuatra, Food and Nutrition with Brandon Vick, Economics - HSS Research Proposal Title: Preliminary Evaluation of ICCAP PowerPack in Indiana County

**THE ASSE WILLIAM TARRANTS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SAFETY EDUCATOR:**

Tracey Cekada, Safety Sciences

**ACPAC TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLORATION AND INNOVATION AWARD:**

Principal Investigator: Richard Hsiao, Kinesiology, Health, and Sport Science
Research Proposal Title: Fly Above the Rest: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Drones, the Future of Sports Facility Management"

**HHS FACULTY AWARDED A UNIVERSITY SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE AWARD(S):**

Chivon Fitch, Criminology and Criminal Justice
Eun Jin Hwang, Human Development and Environmental Studies
Joyce Shanty, Nursing and Allied Health Professions

**HHS FACULTY AWARDED UNIVERSITY SENATE AWARD(S):**
Bitna Kim, Criminology and Criminal Justice

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ANTHROPOLOGY STUDENTS WELL-REPRESENTED AT UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE SCHOLARS FORUMS

Seventeen anthropology students worked with faculty to present on their original research at IUP’s Undergraduate and Graduate Scholars Forums, held on campus April 5 and 6, 2016. Anthropology major Alyssa Hyziak was awarded Best Poster in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and won second place in the Sigma Xi Honor Society Science Poster Awards.

Hyziak won two awards for her poster, “Life on the Conemaugh: Spatial Analysis of Artifact Distributions of the Monongahela Tradition at the Johnston Site (36In2) in Southwestern Pennsylvania Student.”

In the Graduate Scholars Forum, Katherine Thorwart presented her poster, “An Analysis of the Distribution of the Materials at the Johnston Site (36IN2),” working with faculty mentor Sarah Neusius.

Anthropology students presented the following research projects at the Undergraduate Scholars Forum:

- “Promoting the Gift of Life: An Ethnography on Blood and Organ Donation”
  Student: Jessica Brown
  Faculty Advisor: Abigail Adams
- “The Cost-Care Dilemma of the American Healthcare System”
  Student: Joseph Cristello
  Faculty Advisor: Abigail Adams
- “The Heterogeneous Latino Community Regarding Healthcare Coverage: A Case Study of Guatemalan Immigrants in Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania”
  Student: Nancy Lopez Sosa
  Faculty Advisor: Victor Garcia
- “Magic the Gathering: Card Game or Something Deeper?”
  Student: Steven Guzman
  Faculty Advisor: Abigail Adams
- “Furry Identities: Belonging and Play in a Modern Subculture”
  Student: Adam Lewis
  Faculty Advisor: Abigail Adams
- “A Living Wage: Perspectives on Poverty in Indiana, PA”
  Student: Danielle Yushinski
  Faculty Advisor: Amanda Poole
- “Stratifying Women and Children: An Ethnography of Nutritional Access and Health Inequality”
  Student: Amelia Eggan
  Faculty Advisor: Abigail Adams
- “Undecided: An Ethnographic Study of Undecided Majors”
  Students: Jamie S Forsyth, Angelica Sterling, Krista Wyrick, William Kane
  Faculty Advisor: Amanda Poole
- “Indiana Food Co-op Steering Committee: Applied Ethnographic Research Aiding the Organizations Planning in Indiana, Pa”
  Students: Amelia Eggan, Nancy Lopez Sosa, Cole Kedzierski
  Faculty Advisor: Amanda Poole
- “Digital Historic Preservation: Recording and Interpreting the Patterson-Altmans Mill with 3-D Scanning”
  Student: Sarah La Fevre
  Faculty Advisor: Benjamin Ford
- “Life on the Conemaugh: Spatial Analysis of Artifact Distributions of the Monongahela Tradition at the Johnston Site (36In2) in Southwestern Pennsylvania”
Faculty Advisor: Sarah Neusius

- “Using microartifacts to investigate prehistoric cooking methods at the archaeological site of Dust Cave”
  Student: Harley Burgis
  Faculty Advisor: Lara Homsey-Messer

- “Beyond Fort Walls: Geophysical and Archaeological Investigations of Fort Haldimand, Carleton Island, New York”
  Student: Taylor Napoleon
  Faculty Advisor: Benjamin Ford

- “Poverty Traps and Sustainable Solutions in Indiana, PA”
  Students: Lucas Mafria, Kayla Good, Danielle Yushinski, Joseph Franze, Ryan Fallen
  Faculty Advisor: Brandon Vick and Amanda Poole

Department of Anthropology

Posted on 4/12/2016 12:40:14 PM

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**Office Hours**
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Certainly -

The poster was used to demonstrate the outstanding work our students are doing to our Dean's Advancement Council. It clearly documents the quality of classroom instruction and motivation our professors provide to our students and highlights the collaborative work being conducted within our College departments.

Does that suffice? Thanks for a great meeting. I am excited to see where this goes and am constantly, honestly, impressed by the work that you, Amanda, Abby and many others do. Thanks for allowing me to serve such a great group of colleagues!

Dot

Dorothy Gracey
Associate Dean
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
201F McElhaney Hall
Indiana PA 15705
724.357.2280

On 5/20/2016 11:55 AM, Brandon Vick wrote:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hi Dot,</th>
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<td>Could you just write me a brief note on displaying our ATP poster for the Dean’s Advance Council? I just need a quick note to document it for my final report to ATP.</td>
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<th>Thanks so much,</th>
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<td>Brandon</td>
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Brandon Vick, PhD
Assistant Professor of Economics
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Phone: 724-357-4827
Email: brandon.vick@iup.edu
Poverty Traps and Sustainable Solutions in Indiana, PA

By J. Franze, K. Good, R. Haan, V. Lorenz, L. Mafrica, C. Sadowski, S. Thorpe, R. Werder, J. Williams, D. Yushinski
Faculty Advisors: Dr. Brandon Vick & Dr. Amanda Poole

Research Abstract

How can we help the people of Indiana better understand the economic lives of poor families in the community and inform poverty programs?

The central focus of the 2015 ATP project was to assist community partners in better understanding the nature of poverty traps in the local area by estimating the typical expenses and budgets of families; the pay from their jobs or the reasons they cannot find/keep jobs; the rate of this economic hardship; the gaps between pay and expenses; and the reasons and stories about why some families are not escaping poverty. Since food and reliable childcare are especially problematic in the county, we focused much of our research on these areas. We use mixed methods to understand the broader picture of poverty through economic statistics and qualitative research to see how specific problems affect individuals differently. A CBPR approach enabled community partners to inform our research questions, design, and approach.

Community Partners

• The Center for Community Growth
• Indiana County Community Action Program
• PowerPack
• Food Pantry
• Homeless Shelter
• Department of Human Services
• CareerLink
• PA Workwear
• Indiana County Assistance Office

Mixed Methods

• Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR)
• Descriptive Quantitative Analysis
• Nutritional Analysis
• Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT), proposed
• Snowball and convenience sampling
• Qualitative Interviews
• Semi-Structured Interviews
• 6 ICCAP and 6 DHS Employees
• 6 Individual Clients at shelter

Occupational Wage Analysis

Indiana, PA has an unemployment rate consistent with state and national levels (5.5%), but a higher poverty rate (roughly 18%). 11,700 workers in the county make less than $10/hour, 30% of the workforce. The top six occupational median wages are lower than the living wage for a single adult with one child – 59% of workers are employed in these occupations. An individual with a child must make about 30% of the minimum wage to cover basic expenditures – especially if one has children. Educational attainment, number of children, the gender wage gap, and lack of racial diversity all create barriers to employment in Indiana, Pennsylvania.

Ethnographic Interview Findings

Many different aspects contribute to continued poverty. Through case work and client interviews, we identified structural barriers to economic stability including transportation, housing, employment, education, skills, and stigmas and non-structural issues including financial literacy, addiction, motivation, mental health, and physical disabilities. The top three barriers identified by DHS and ICCAP, and confirmed by clients, are transportation, income, and skills. Public transportation is unreliable. The greatest concern of clients is jobs. They find it difficult to obtain grant funding for a walk-in cooler to expand the delivery of nutritional food; have to stay with family members, " (ICCAP Employee).

Lessons Learned & Further Questions

The lessons our class learned from this project include strategies for outreach, advocacy, and collaborative research. These include: 1) continuing work with ICCAP to obtain grant funding for a walk-in cooler to expand the delivery of nutritional food; 2) proposing a mixed-methodology to evaluate the PowerPack program through a RCT; and 3) developing strategies to expand research on child poverty and public transportation to develop solutions.

Bibliography

Housing Research Center. 2016. The Impact of Fair Housing on Pennsylvania's Middle Class Wage & $10 Wages.
Keystone Research Center. 2015. Giving the Local Economy a Boost: The Impact of Raising the Pennsylvania Minimum Wage to $10.10 for Families.