

### **Portfolio #1: Chapter 1 of CHANGE! and Reader**

#### 1.1 Explain the difference between an individual problem, a social problem, and an issue.

- The difference between an individual problem, a social problem, and an issue is the way a problem is interpreted and whether or not it is actively being solved. An **individual problem** is when you have come to the conclusion that this is affecting only you. An example of an individual problem used in “CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action” would be if you got sick but don’t have health insurance and therefore cannot go to a doctor but you state that this is because you are a student with only a part-time job who could not afford it, therefore, affecting only you (Myers-Lipton 2017: 2-3). A **social problem** is when you realize that this problem is affecting many people besides yourself. You may talk about this with others, however, you are not actively doing anything to create any change within society but are only becoming enlightened on the fact that this social problem is something that commonly happens to others. The example used in “CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action” is talking to your roommates or classmates about how none of you can afford health care (Myers-Lipton 2017: 2). An **issue** is composed of two key steps including (1): acknowledging the social problem as an issue and (2): creating a group of people and demanding change. The example in “CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action” is talking to classmates about the lack of health care, creating a group of students, and demanding change to the university president (Myers-Lipton 2017: 2).

#### 1.2 What are the six components of an issue in CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action?

- The six components of an issue in “CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action” is that it is composed of a specific demand meaning that it is (1): a concrete and measurable demand that requires a yes or no answer. (2): The demand should be simple, meaning that it is stated in one sentence and has a right and wrong side within the demand. (3): A campaign should consist of three demands, too many demands and the campaign will begin to lose its focus or priorities. (4): An issue delivers concrete and positive social change. (5): The issue should be winnable in a reasonable amount of time. (6): An issue requires a clear target which is the lowest ranking person who can meet your demand (Myers-Lipton 2017: 3).

#### 1.3 What is the social problem that your group will work on? How are you hurt personally by this social problem? How has a family member or friend been hurt by it,

and/or your community? How have previous social action students answered this question about how they are personally connected to their issue?

- The social problem that our group will be working on is raising awareness about college for students in elementary and middle school. I have been personally hurt by this social problem because I am a first-generation college student. I did not know about college until I was 11 or 12 years old and all I knew about it was that I had to go in order to make my mom proud and be successful. Other than that, I had no idea what it took to get there and had no passion for it. Once I was 18 and applying for colleges, I applied to the college that provided me with the best financial aid or I would not have been able to afford college otherwise. I was fortunate enough to be at a startup charter high school that had what we called “Senior College Prep” classes that guided us through the college application process, financial aid, and so forth which helped me significantly. I would most likely not have applied otherwise. Additionally, once I got to college, I lost my guidance and college has been a struggle to get through with no support or mentorship. College should begin to be introduced to elementary or middle schoolers because it will provide them with exposure from a young age, making it easier for them to understand the process of college as they get older. Many of my family members, such as my sister, have this conception that college is way too difficult so they do not even try. This is because we have never been provided with proper exposure and guidance as to what college consists of. My other group members answered similarly by stating that they are first-generation, did not know about college until later, or are currently struggling with college as well due to low exposure and guidance. Additionally, there have been multiple students from past Sociology 164 classes who have participated in College Awareness Network because they were passionate about the issue as well.

1.4 What is the policy your group wants to change? Please provide 1-3 demands. What were your favorite specific demands when looking at the previous SJSU campaigns, and explain in-depth what made these demands “good”?

- The policy our group wants to change is to implement a program at San Jose State University that provides elementary and middle school students with the opportunity to learn about college directly from San Jose State University students. Our 3 demands are not in their final draft yet as we are meeting with Samantha and others who were part of the College Awareness Network in the past. As of right now, our demands consist of funding for College Awareness Network (we do not have a specific amount of funding that we want yet), we want College Awareness Network to be institutionalized, and we want College Awareness Network to host at least one tour and three workshops every semester for the students. Our demands are yet to be polished but we are hoping that San Jose State University funds College Awareness Network so there is at least one full-time employee, provides funding for the field trip, and materials needed for the workshops. We have yet to calculate the cost of the funding for the College Awareness Network. My

favorite specific demands when looking at the previous SJSU campaigns are from the Students for Racial Equality because they perfectly meet the requirements of the six components of an issue. All three of their demands were simple, concise, delivered concrete positive change, had a target, and was winnable within a measurable time. Their demands were very simple and straightforward and perfectly resolved the issue which is what I really liked about this campaign's demands (Myers-Lipton 2017: 10). Another campaign's demand that I liked was the group named Society for Teaching Responsible Options in Nutrition and Growth (STRONG). This is because their demands followed a similar pattern to the ones from Students for Racial Equality. Their demands also met the requirements for the six components of an issue. Their demands were simple, concise, delivered a concrete positive change, had a target, and was winnable in a measurable amount of time. Their demands are directly related to their issue and specific numbers within their demands which is important for demands because it provides the target with a clear demand and may make them more likely to say yes to the demands (Myers-Lipton 2017: 15).

1.5 What is the definition of a target? Who is the decision-maker for your issue? If it is a committee, please list all names of the committee (or board). Who were your targets in the SJSU campaigns that you read about in the book and reader, and explain why the students chose them.

- A target is a lowest-ranking person who can meet your demand. There are a few options for decision-makers for our issue with Patrick Day, Vice President of Student Affairs, being our target since he is the lowest-ranking person who can meet our demands. However, College Awareness Network has had trouble following through on past promises that he has made so we will also be targeting interim President, Steve Perez. Apparently, he is trying to shift from interim president to president at San Jose State University which would be beneficial to us. If this is the case, then it is within our best interest to target him now as we believe that this is the moment that he is more likely to give in to our demands. This is because as someone who is trying to become president at San Jose State University, he may try to display himself as someone who is reliable, helpful, and an ally to the students at San Jose State University. Therefore, he may give in to our demands whether it be because he genuinely cares or as a publicity stunt to make himself look better. Whichever the reason, if he gives in to our demands, we win! Students for Campus Safety targeted the University Police Department (UPD) police chief because their demands revolved around safety, the UPD, and blue light call boxes all of which include the UPD. The UPD police chief was targeted due to their relevance to their issue and they were the lowest ranking person who could give in to their demands (Myers-Lipton 2017: 7). The Students for Racial Equality targeted the university president because he was the one who had the power to fire the Tower Foundation board member, write the letter of apology on behalf of the university to the Latina staff member,

and implement mandatory anti-racism meetings (Myres-Lipton 2017: 11). All San Jose State University campaigns try to target the lowest-ranking person. If that person is not the lowest-ranking person, then they simply move down a status level. If the lowest-ranking person denies, then they can try again or rise above their rank and try asking someone else who is above them.

1.6 Do you feel strongly about your issue? Are you willing to fight for it? Using 2-3 previous SJSU campaigns from the reader and CHANGE!, provide in-depth examples of students who felt strongly about their issue and who were willing to fight?

- I feel very strongly about my issue and I am willing to fight for it. I feel so strongly about my issue that my desired job is to become a College Counselor for high school students, particularly those of low-income or first-generation because I empathize with them and want to ensure that they have an easy and smooth transition from high school to college. However, I do work as an after-school instructor for elementary and middle school students and I enjoy telling them about my college experience. I enjoy finding games and workshops for the students to do relating to high school or college because it is important for them to have exposure. An example of a student who felt strongly about their issue and who were willing to fight was Natasha from the Students for Campus Safety (I mention this campaign a lot throughout the portfolio because it motivates me) who was so passionate that she convinced her group to change the group's initial issue to an issue about campus safety. It was an issue that she was personally connected by and the majority of students on campus could relate to (Myers-Lipton 2017: 8). Another example of a student that was passionate was Elisha St. Laurent whose issue was about raising the minimum wage. Initially, she was interested in this issue but began to feel discouraged after realizing how hard it is to bring social change. However, she spoke at an event about her personal connection to this issue and it made her passionate about the issue again. She felt so passionate that she became one of the key leaders of the minimum wage victory (Myers-Lipton 2017: 12).

1.7 How will your group's solution provide positive change in people's lives? In what ways did the other SJSU campaigns provide positive change?

- Our group's solution will provide positive change in people's lives by encouraging and informing students about college starting from elementary school. This will guide them into learning information about college which will help prepare them for college before they begin to attend it. This will provide them with an easier transition and will encourage students to consider attending higher education once they graduate from high school. College Awareness Network may result in an increase in college enrollment as it is encouraging and informs students about college from a young age. Graduating from college has been statistically shown to provide college graduates with a higher salary compared to those who graduated from high school or dropped out of high school. This

will help families and may even break the cycle of those within families who do not have anyone who is in higher education. Students for Campus Safety made our campus safer for students through their demands (Myers-Lipton 2017: 6). Up until now, I took those Alert SJSU messages for granted and believed that it was natural or started by the university. Students for Racial Equality showed that racism is not tolerated by anyone, especially staff, on our campus. San Jose State University has always claimed to be one of the most diverse campuses so why would it want to hire anyone who makes racist remarks, especially someone of high status with the employers? It is offensive to us San Jose State University students and provides positive change by ensuring that they were fired (Myers-Lipton 2017: 11). Campus Alliance for Economic Justice provided positive change by helping in raising the minimum wage which impacts multiple college students and people within our community (Myers-Lipton 2017: 12). All campaigns from Sociology 164 have provided a positive change in one way or another whether it be through policy change or inspiring others to step up and create social change.

1.8 Explain what is a “frame” and then describe what is the best frame for your issue? Compare your frame to the frames from 2-3 student campaigns that you have read about in CHANGE! and the Reader.

- A “frame” is expressing the values of your issue and connecting the shared values of our future allies and to the larger public (Myers-Lipton 2017: 6). The best frame for our issue, College Awareness Network, is to portray our values as education, fairness, and hope. Although it does not directly state what the frames from the campaigns are, I can imply what their frame is based on their campaign, demands, and issue. For Students for Campus Safety, I would say that their frame includes safety, awareness, and peace because their group wanted to make students feel safe as a result of the number of crimes occurring on or near campus by increasing the number of campus blue lightboxes, automatically send alerts to all campus members through Alert SJSU, and increase the service of the evening escort program (Myers-Lipton 2017: 9). For Students for Racial Equality, I would imply that their frame included justice, diversity, and integrity because they demanded the removal of the Tower Foundation board member who made the racist comment, a letter of apology from the university to the Latina staff member who was present at the meeting, and mandatory anti-racism training for administration (Myers-Lipton 2017: 10). All three of our frames are different because they are dependent on a combination of our issue, allies, and audience. Our issue focuses on introducing college to young students at an early age, elementary school students, that way they are better prepared and encouraged to attend college in the future. I chose our frame based on our issue because we value higher education and believe that everyone deserves to go to college. Furthermore, I listed hope because I believe in the younger generation and they are the hope for our future. The younger generation is the future and we need to help guide them while they are still young.

1.9 Testing your demands/issue: As part of your issue identification, individually go out and interview 2 students and ask them the following: How concerned are you about your issue? How does the issue impact you (or not)? Do you agree with the demands? Would you be willing to work on this issue, and fight for it? Please record their answers and include a description of the people you interviewed (ex: age, year in school, lives on/off-campus, gender, and ethnicity/race). Importantly, analyze their responses, and explain what are the implications of their responses for your campaign. For example, if the interviewees are unconcerned about the issue or unwilling to fight for it, your group may need to change the message, the demand, or perhaps even the issue itself. In your responses, integrate ideas discussed in the reader and book with your answers. FYI: You can count the time conducting the interviews for your portfolio, but not the time to write up the portfolio.

- My first interviewee is a third-year Middle Eastern female who is 21-years-old and lives off-campus. She mentioned that her current desired career is as an elementary school teacher so she does care significantly about the issue. She stated that nowadays elementary and middle school students should be given the opportunity to learn about college, what it is, and what impact it has on their future because they should learn about adulting sooner rather than later as it would better prepare them. If she does get to be an elementary school teacher then she wants to be able to start introducing college to her students. Furthermore, she stated that this is a good issue to fight for and she is willing to fight for it.
- My second interviewee is a fourth-year Filipino-American female who is 21 years old and lives off-campus. She is pretty concerned about this issue due to personal experience. She believes that there are not many elementary and middle school students who think about college because they think they are too young to worry about that but this can create a big problem and gap where students do not feel that they are prepared for college in the future. She did not have role models to look up to for college for advice or resources which significantly impacted her experience. She also felt that her high school advisors were not very helpful and this led to her not having much motivation to try and do well during her first few years of high school. She feels that if she had more people teaching her about college earlier in her adolescent years, she would have been much more motivated to focus and work hard in her first year of high school. Unfortunately, her poor work ethic continued throughout high school and did not strengthen until her junior year which she felt was wasted time and potential. She is willing to work on this issue and fight for it.

1.10 Testing your demands/issue: As part of your issue identification, interview (in-person or Zoom) one stakeholder (ex: non-profit staff member, a union leader, a

campus staff leader) that focuses on your social problem and issue. Ask her/him/they: How are you addressing the social problem? Then tell them how your group is conceptualizing the issue and ask them if they think this approach makes sense. Do they agree with your group's approach? If so, why, and if not, why not? Also, ask whether, if your group moves forward, would they support you or become involved as an ally. If so, what would they be willing to do? In addition, ask them who else you should talk to, and who else is working on solving this social problem. Even better, can they connect you to them? Lastly, ask if they have any questions for you. In your response, integrate the book and Reader with your answers. Importantly analyze their response, and explain what are the implications of their responses for your campaign.

- I interviewed my current Child and Adolescent Development (ChAD) 168 professor. In our class, we are collaborating with a program called CommUniverCity and Coral (after-school program) to have us students teach a lesson for students in elementary school. She did this because this is her way of addressing the social problem by allowing us the opportunity to be role models for low-income and first-generation students. We are going to provide an introduction on how and why we chose to become San Jose State students. We are going to talk about why we chose college and what our career choices are. Additionally, she was one of the professors who would let elementary students sit in during her pre-pandemic lecture classes. She mentioned that she can be considered an ally who will continue to think about this and send suggestions for the College Awareness Network. Some suggestions she mentioned were that the schools that we are collaborating with should sit in during her lectures when they are touring the school and vision boards as an activity. She agrees with our group's approach because it is really important. She stated, "There is a huge gap between parents who have their children decked out in USC gear and talk about the moment that they are born but there are also other parents who do not have any conversation about college," which I entirely agree with. She did suggest other ChAD professors for us to talk to who could potentially be allies. She will be a very helpful ally to us during our campaign as she continues to suggest her brilliant ideas and provides a space for us.