

**Due: Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

**PORTFOLIO 5: RESEARCH**

**POWER MAPPING**

5.7 The Student Homeless Alliance is an established and growing organization which has been actively campaigning on our most recent demands for over a year now. With that being said, we possess quite a bit of power which is largely derived from the support from our campus and the surrounding community. Over the past year, we have met with SJSU's administration – including people such as President Papazian, VP Day, Faas, and Bailey, as well as Marko from SJSU Cares. We have also connected with other allied stakeholders in the community who are also fighting homelessness and providing relief for those who are unhoused such as Matt King from Sacred Heart Community Service, Ingrid Granados from Amigos de Guadalupe, Phil from Grace Baptist Church, and Pastor Scott from CHAM Ministries. These are non-profit and faith-based organizations which share our same concerns regarding homelessness in the broader community, and they have provided us with insight on how to address student homelessness. The connections we have made with these organizations give us power because they not only give us insight and knowledge on how to address homelessness in a community, but they also give us credibility through their support.

The Student Homeless Alliance has also been very successful in attracting attention from the media. Being that homelessness and housing insecurity is such a hot topic in San Jose – and the larger Bay Area – our issue is attractive to the media. We have become a storyline that people want to follow. Recently, we were featured in San Jose's Mercury Newspaper – a major outlet here in San Jose. Following that article, readers have written letters to Mercury calling for action on our issue. A great deal of our power has resulted from our ability to attract the media so that the public eye is on our issue which puts pressure on the university's administration. The *Students Against Sweatshops* recognized the negative press that the university was receiving surrounding the university's response to the possible faculty strike during their campaign. They realized that making their target feel "under siege" might push the president to meet their demands, as the president didn't want another group to be making these demands publicly (Myers-Lipton 2018:97). Shortly thereafter, the students met with the president and won their demands. While we have been very successful in attracting press coverage on our issue and sparking a public call to action, this hasn't been enough to sway our target.

Even without all of our community allies and media attention, the Student Homeless Alliance still possesses power through our members. We are a highly passionate and driven team of people who enjoy working together. Moreover, we have members with lived experience surrounding homelessness and housing insecurity. These members provide the group with the most power, which is easily demonstrated when you hear one of them speak at our events. Their lived experience provides us with credibility and “power with” rather than “power over”, as well as the ability to formulate solutions through the lens of those most affected by the issue.

As I mentioned previously, we have met with several stakeholders in our community. Our community allies include Sacred Heart Community Service, the Cesar Chavez Community Action Center, Grace Baptist Church, CHAM Ministries, and SJSU Cares. In the political sphere, we have connected with Senator Jim Beall and Assemblyman Ash Kalra. Recently, San Jose’s Mayor Sam Liccardo as well as four other city lawmakers – including Vice Mayor Chappie Jones and Councilmembers Peralez, Carrasco, and Esparza – have written letters to the University expressing their commitment to partner with the university to find housing solutions for unhoused and housing insecure students (Hase 2019). Mayor Sam Liccardo expressed his interest in exploring a partnership with SJSU to help unhoused students in his March 2019 Budget address, which made us feel especially powerful. *CAFÉ J* students had a similar experience when the mayor called the minimum wage increase “the greatest threat to the downtown” (Myers-Lipton 2018:98). Dr. Myers-Lipton suggests that this type of public recognition is important since powerful individuals won’t often speak about your group if they don’t see you as a threat (2018:98). While we weren’t deemed to be a threat by the mayor, we still find this recognition from the highest-ranking city politician to be an expression of our power. These lawmakers have a lot of power based on their titles alone. Their status as public officials and their ability to do policymaking make them incredibly powerful. Having their support not only legitimizes us, but it also puts pressure on the university’s administration to take action. This combined with the ability to provide funding makes them our most powerful allies.

Organizations like Sacred Heart and Grace Baptist have a good amount of power because of their reputations for the work they do in the community. Sacred Heart is recognized as one of the largest providers of social services to fight poverty in Santa Clara County. Not only are they trusted providers of essential services in the community, but they also share a strong commitment to addressing poverty through community organizing. They are experienced in organizing campaigns, and they derive power from their ability to organize and win these

campaigns. Grace Baptist Church also derives power from their reputation, as they are a trusted provider of services like meals and beds as well as a safe place of worship for the local unhoused community. Grace Baptist Church also houses several SJSU students at no cost (Smith 2019), meaning that they have experience in dealing with our exact issue. In this context, they are demonstrating their power in their ability to house these students when the university couldn't.

SJSU Cares and the Cesar Chavez Community Action Center are on-campus stakeholders who are working to address the same issue that we are. Marko at SJSU Cares has been resistant to our demands, but at the end of the day, he still wants the same thing that we do: to house unhoused students. Marko and SJSU Cares derive their power from their position on campus and their designation as a services hub for students in need. They also have funding which provides them with the ability to realize their will. The Cesar Chavez Community Action Center derives its power in the same way as SJSU Cares, but also through their reputation and proven ability to support students and student organizations. Their support legitimizes us.

While I am reluctant to label them as opponents, SJSU's administration – particularly President Papazian and the Vice Presidents that we have met with – are powerful oppositionists to our demands. While they have rejected our demands, they have expressed their shared commitment to house every student in need. This is why I am reluctant to call them opponents, as I do believe that we ultimately want the same thing – to house unhoused students. These individuals derive their power purely from their status and prestige which comes from their positions on campus as well as their educational and professional experience. Their positions give them the ability to either implement or reject our demands, making them our most powerful opponents. These individuals have already actively opposed our demands, as they flat out rejected them in our meeting with President Papazian and Vice President Day in March 2019. Their reasoning rested on the perception that our demands were not the long-term, sustainable solutions that they are looking for. However, they failed to offer any long-term, sustainable solutions, and they don't seem very open to collaborating with us on those supposed solutions.

In light of the power possessed by the Student Homeless Alliance, our allies, and our opponents, I think that we already have so much power – a winnable amount of power. However, having someone high up in the administration who supports our demands would give us the most power in regards to winning our demands. We would also like to connect with more unhoused and housing insecure students, as affected students demanding action feels far more powerful than a group of housed students demanding action. The university's administration

would be more inclined to implement our proposed solutions if they saw that the students who are directly affected also wanted these solutions. Finally, we are still working to form alliances with other CSU student-led organizations that are working on the same issue. Our hope is that we could facilitate a statewide conference where we could take this even higher into the realm of policymaking.

5.8 From this power map, we have learned that, unfortunately, our most powerful allies and opponents are those most associated with status and with money. This means that we can't necessarily rely on our non-profit and faith-based allies alone. In order to overcome the rejection of the administration – a powerful opponent – we need to form a stronger connection with our more powerful allies – lawmakers. Not only can these individuals influence policy in our community, but they can also put pressure on the university to take action. In light of the administration's reasoning for rejecting our demands, we are focusing on “long-term, sustainable solutions” as we consider new demands. Keeping the same outcome in mind – to house all unhoused students – we are tailoring our new demands to their standards, making our demands less likely to be rejected.

## References

Hase, Grace. 2019. “San Jose Lawmakers Send Letter to End SJSU Homelessness.” San José Spotlight. Retrieved April 8, 2019 (<https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-lawmakers-send-letter-to-end-sjsu-homelessness/>).

Hase, Grace. 2019. “Sam Liccardo Focuses on Housing Crisis in New Budget Plan.” San José Spotlight. Retrieved April 8, 2019 (<https://sanjosespotlight.com/sam-liccardo-focuses-on-housing-crisis-in-new-budget-plan/>).

Smith, Azenith. n.d. “There Are More Homeless SJSU Students than You May Think.” KTVU. Retrieved April 8, 2019 (<http://www.ktvu.com/news/there-are-more-homeless-sjsu-students-than-you-may-think>).