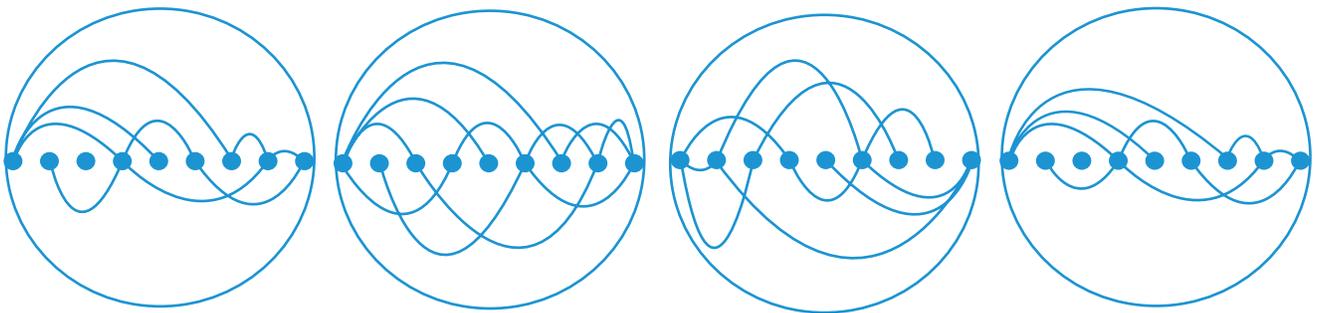


PROFILE
MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP



community learning partnership
Pathways into Community Change Careers

CONTACT:

[Sydney Beane](#), Faculty
Minneapolis Community and Technical College
Syd@communitylearningpartnership.org

[Lena Jones](#), Faculty
Minneapolis Community and Technical College
Lena.Jones@minneapolis.edu

[Ken Rolling](#), Executive Director
Community Learning Partnership
Ken@communitylearningpartnership.org

www.communitylearningpartnership.org

BY ANDY MOTT WITH SYDNEY BEANE

Andy Mott is the founder and former Executive Director of the Community Learning Partnership. He previously served as Executive Director of the Center for Community Change.

Sydney Beane is on the faculty at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and is the national Field Director for the Community Learning Partnership.

community learning partnership *Pathways into Community Change Careers*

The Community Learning Partnership (CLP) is a national network of community change studies programs, based in community colleges in partnership with local nonprofit and civic organizations. Our mission is to develop a diverse workforce to address injustice and inequality, and to improve the quality of life in low-income communities. We reach out to low-income students and people of color who may not otherwise gain exposure to the career possibilities in organizing and related fields.

CLP's programs offer specialized degrees or certificates that can lead directly to jobs or provide transfer credit to other educational institutions. Community change studies prepare students for jobs in community organizing, economic development and policy advocacy – and to be agents of positive, social change in various aspects of their careers and communities.

PROFILE

MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- A.S. Degree in Community Development at Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- Forty Students Enrolled in the Degree Program; Two Hundred Students Taking Courses (2013)
- Local Organizers and Community Development Practitioners Work as a Team with Community College Faculty and Students
- Broad-Based Advisory Committee Represents Academia, Nonprofits and Civic Partners
- Students Reflect the Diverse, Changing Demographics of Minneapolis
- Skill Development and Internship Opportunities On and Off Campus
- Field Experiences Structured into the Learning
- Curriculum Adapted for Professional Development Training in Local Nonprofits

BUILDING ORGANIZING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY IN AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE CITY

Forty students are currently enrolled in the Associate in Science (A.S.) degree in Community Development at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), and over two hundred other students are taking courses in this curriculum. It is a very diverse group of students, drawing from the African American, Latino/a, immigrant and white as well as Native American communities. Initiated in 2010, the program is growing, as it becomes better known among students as well as faculty and guidance counselors.

The Minneapolis CLP program team operates as a learning community. Lena Jones, the faculty coordinator, is a tenured political science professor who teaches two of the CLP courses. The program team reflects the diversity of the student body, and includes both college-based and adjunct faculty who are practitioners from the field. Team members consult with each other as they design the series of interrelated courses in English, political science and community organizing and development. They also collaboratively foster local internship opportunities.

The A.S. degree in Community Development was originally housed in the Business Department at the college, but early experience demonstrated it would benefit from being transferred to the Liberal Arts curriculum where there are fewer prerequisites and more students and faculty members are interested in community change studies.

MINNEAPOLIS CLP REQUIRED COURSES FOR THE A.S. DEGREE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: HISTORY, THEORY, PRACTICE

Students learn the history, development and basic assumptions of community organizing. Through experiential learning and study, students become familiar with the basic capacities and skills needed for effective organizing including recruitment, relationship-building, issue and strategy development, and campaign organizing.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Students explore the interrelationship between community organizing and community development, including strategies for community planning and for creating community-based housing, economic and business development projects; how indigenous culture impacts communities, including opportunities for students to reflect upon their own cultural experience in the broader community; and strategies for helping indigenous communities influence public and private sector development plans and investments to increase their benefit to low-income communities.

POLITICS, MEDIA, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Students examine the relationships among the media, community organizing and community power, with special emphasis on how the organizing efforts of indigenous communities use various media forms. Students learn about the historical connections between community organizing and the media; evaluate how community organizations use various media forms in their efforts to achieve their goals; and develop a media plan for a community organization.

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY

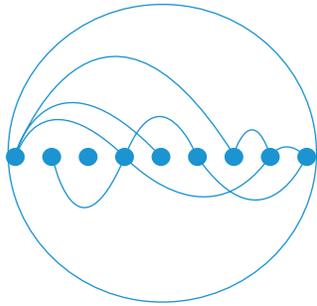
Students examine key public policy models and methods and how individuals and groups become involved in the policy-making process. Students learn practical techniques for involving themselves and communities in the design, implementation and assessment of public policies. They examine public policies that affect economically disadvantaged communities, communities of color, women and young people.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Students review state and local government with an emphasis on Minnesota and the Twin Cities; gain opportunities to develop their own political views and apply these to local issues and strategies for exercising rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

POLITICAL SCIENCE FIELD EXPERIENCE

Students are required to take the political science field experience. It provides them with on-the-ground work experience. Students earn one



STUDENT IMPACT: *Say Yang*

Say Yang is a Hmong woman and a student at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), the primary college partner in the Minneapolis Community Learning Partnership (CLP). She is on a professional pathway to a career in public service and community development, and plans to use her skills for the benefit of her community.

Say is developing her public speaking and organizing skills through her active role in student government. She is also the lead organizer of the community development club at MCTC. This club grew out of a CLP core course created by a local practitioner in collaboration with students. In this role, Say is building relationships between the college and local organizations for internships and on-the-job learning opportunities. Her own internship is with a community partner, the Organizing Apprenticeship Project. As an apprentice, she helped win a major political victory in Fall 2012, working with other students and the Hmong community to defeat a voter-ID amendment in Minnesota. Say Yang intends to complete the A.S. degree in Community Development at MCTC and is well on her way to a promising career as an effective agent of change.

credit for each three hours they devote to this course each week, and they must devote at least nine hours per week to it. Students collaborate with faculty and their field mentors to devise a detailed learning agreement, and they keep weekly journals to track their progress. Their work includes interview experience and final assignments that must be useful to the sites as well as important learning opportunities for the students. Minneapolis CLP is raising funds so that students will earn stipends as they take this course/internship.

The A.S. in Community Development also incorporates community projects in class assignments to provide students with additional experiential education.

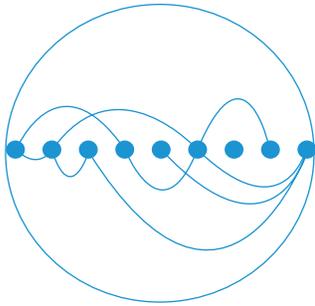
USING AN ORGANIZING STRATEGY: STARTING WITH THE NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Minneapolis CLP began with the city's Native American community under the leadership of Syd Beane, an experienced community organizer, community developer and educator. Syd and other leaders of the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) saw a need to focus on developing a new generation of Native American leaders with skills in organizing, development and community transformation. When MCTC President Phil Davis and Dean Mike McGee approached NACDI with a concern that the college was not attracting sufficient numbers of Native American students or, more broadly, demonstrating its value to the growing Native American community that borders the MCTC campus, Syd seized the opportunity. He suggested that they collaborate in developing a new curriculum to attract Native Americans and other students of color to MCTC and help prepare them for careers in community organizing and development. The college responded quickly and positively to this idea.

Syd and Justin Hueneman, NACDI's Executive Director, developed and taught an initial course in community development at MCTC. In designing the course and planning a broader strategy for developing the degree program, Syd drew on previous experience as Chair of the Community Development Technologies Center (CDTech), in Los Angeles. CDTech was a national pioneer in developing community change studies programs in the 1990s, offering an A.A. degree in Community Planning and other courses at a community college serving South Central Los Angeles.

As Syd established relationships within MCTC, a planning team/ learning community formed and developed a sophisticated organizing strategy for systematically gaining support inside and outside MCTC. There have been several key components of this organizing strategy.

The Minneapolis CLP program draws students from all ethnic groups. It has responded to the rapidly changing ethnic demographics of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, which has the largest concentration of Native Americans in an urban area, the largest Somali population in the United States, and one of the largest Hmong populations nationally. Both the Somali and Hmong populations are recent immigrants. The courses help students cross and work across cultural barriers in class and in the field.



STUDENT IMPACT: *Adbi Muse*

Adbi Muse is a Somali union organizer who came to MCTC's community development program to broaden his understanding and his view of community organizing and community development. Foundation funds provided a small stipend for Adbi to work as a summer intern with Syd Beane. He focused on learning more about how media impacts minority and immigrant communities, and worked on a local Somali media campaign. Following his internship, Adbi enrolled in the Media and Community Organizing course in the community development degree program, to further his skills and experience for his ongoing work in his community.

MINNEAPOLIS CLP ORGANIZING STRATEGY:

- *First*, they leveraged NACDI's influence with city and county officials as well as in the Native American community. NACDI's Board and its growing role in developing housing, a shopping center and otherwise creating jobs, has added greatly to its credibility and weight.
- *Second*, Minneapolis CLP developed an ongoing partnership with MCTC's President and key Deans at the college, which has included regular meetings with those leaders to keep them informed and supportive as the program moves forward.
- *Third*, Syd began building relationships with faculty members who were familiar with the college's curriculum approval process and ways of marketing the program within the college. This led to the current planning team. Lena Jones, now the faculty coordinator for Minneapolis CLP was an early ally, along with Michael Kuhne and other faculty who had been involved with the Center for Civic Engagement that combines service learning with civic education programs at MCTC.
- *Fourth*, Minneapolis CLP has cultivated close working relationships with MCTC's academic advising, counseling and financial aid staff, familiarizing them with the community development program and curriculum and seeking their help in recruiting students. Those allies are especially interested in how the program could help with student recruitment, retention and graduation rates.
- *Fifth*, the program team created a powerful Advisory Committee. This has helped with the program's design and expansion and helped maintain strong support for the program inside and outside MCTC. The Committee includes representatives of several important community-based organizations as well as public officials and representatives of various resource organizations. They help with feedback on course design, publicity and outreach, student recruitment, student retention, intern placement and student employment opportunities after program completion.
- *Finally*, Minneapolis CLP has created a very active community development club for students. With weekly meetings, the club strengthens relationships among the students and between them and the faculty members who teach courses in this discipline. It is helping with outreach to potential students and in building student support for the program. Furthermore, it is geared to preparing students to become activists and to take on leadership roles in student government.

Minneapolis CLP's link to the national Community Learning Partnership has greatly facilitated this organizing process. CLP funds both Syd and Lena's time to direct and coordinate the program. It also provides

Minneapolis CLP's link to the national Community Learning Partnership has greatly facilitated this organizing process. CLP funds both Syd and Lena's time to direct and coordinate the program. It also provides technical assistance, a network of colleagues who are creating similar programs, faculty institutes, curriculum support and resources for additional fundraising.

STRATEGIZING FOR GROWTH AND FOR ESTABLISHING A PATHWAY IN MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL

Courses in the A.S. in Community Development are designed to attract students who aren't majoring in community development and to familiarize them with the degree program. This recruitment strategy is helping the program grow rapidly as an increasing number of students switch into this major.

To help with both short-term internships and long-term job placement, Minneapolis CLP is organizing a community-jobs committee that includes city and county government agencies, and private and nonprofit sectors, including the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers.

Minneapolis CLP has ambitious plans beyond continuing to grow the MCTC program. Plans include three possible routes for expanding students' access to education in organizing and development.

STRATEGY FOR GROWTH:

- *First*, in order to increase enrollment in the program, Minneapolis CLP is exploring collaboration with one or more high schools to design dual credit courses in community organizing and community development, thus creating a pathway for recruiting and educating students from high school through community college.
- *Second*, Syd is working within Metro State University, a public four-year university in St. Paul to which many MCTC graduates go for their four-year degrees, to devise a set of courses that build upon the courses offered at the community college. This can provide a career pathway for graduates of the MCTC program.
- *Third*, as national CLP and Minneapolis CLP identify resources, they plan to explore working with one or more tribal colleges to create new certificate and degree programs for Native American students.

Bringing the program full circle to focus on the Native American community and its particular needs, the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) has capitalized on its experience in designing the MCTC program to devise a training program outside the college for young staff members from various social service and community development organizations in the Native American community. This program has proven to be of great value in preparing people for the challenges of their daily work and for long-term upward mobility.

To attract more students from the Native American community into the college program, Minneapolis CLP is working with faculty in the American Indian Studies program at MCTC to modify the curriculum and add a requirement that students majoring in that program take the course in Community Organizing: History, Theory, Practice. It has also created a new course on Community Development and Indigenous Cultures as part of their strategy for linking the American Indian Studies and community development programs.

CONTACT:

[Sydney Beane](#), Faculty

Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Syd@communitylearningpartnership.org

[Lena Jones](#), Faculty

Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Lena.Jones@minneapolis.edu

[Ken Rolling](#), Executive Director

Community Learning Partnership

Ken@communitylearningpartnership.org

www.communitylearningpartnership.org

community learning partnership
Pathways into Community Change Careers

www.communitylearningpartnership.org