



SOCIAL ACTION 164

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT REFLECTIONS

NATASHA BRADLEY, enrolled in Social Action in fall of 2011, graduated, BA, Sociology from SJSU in 2012.

Organization: *Students for Campus Safety*

Occupation: Currently, Creative Project Manager in Brooklyn, NY. Previously, worked as a door-to-door salesperson, recruiter, baker, and executive assistant.

Impact of Social Action: “The education that I received when it comes to race and ethnic relations along with the real-life skills I gained in the Social Action course, prepared me to be effective to bring about change and taught me to build allies with others so change can take place. The Social Action class has affected not only the impact I have on my company as a whole but has also armed me with real-life tools to use when I want to get some real work done. The class has also always reminded me of the Margaret Mead quote, ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.’

It was hard back then in 2012 to find a decent paying job that focused on social action and community change, and unfortunately my on-campus connections weren’t too helpful with job prospects. But, with the influx of Diversity & Inclusion being a hot topic in corporate settings, I’ve had the opportunity to lead D&I initiatives at my company. For the last two years, since the inception of a D&I initiative at my company, I have been a leader in our DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Community, & Equity) Council, a co-founder to the BSEWomen & Black Alliance Network (BAN) employee resource groups, as well as the co-chair to BAN for the last year.

It’s funny though, I actually still have the *Tools for Radical Democracy* book and actually referenced it recently when a few of the employees and I needed to get some of our ‘demands’ met. I will say though that it is definitely an uphill battle when you seek to make real changes in a corporate environment because you have to deal with more than just the injustices at hand but the fear of potentially losing your job for speaking out.”

Soci. 164: Social Action Alumni Questions (older)

1. In your own words, explain what your project was, and what you hoped to accomplish.

A: The project was called *Students for Campus Safety* and our goal was to be able to address the safety issues that were happening on the campus at the time. During the fall semester in 2011, there were a combination of sexual assaults and robberies that took place within a short period of time both on and off campus, leaving many students, like myself, feeling unsafe even walking around campus at night.

Our group wanted to implement 3 ways to create a safer campus for students, staff, and faculty.

2. What motivated you to become involved in this project?

A: Originally our group wanted to address the graduation rate of Latino and African-American males at San Jose State but once safety on the campus became an issue, we immediately changed it. At the time of the project I was already in my last year of school so I had already been familiar enough with the campus and the surrounding city that walking around alone was never an issue. But for the first time, walking to the bus stop scared me because I thought that something was going to happen to me. So when the opportunity arose to make myself and other students feel safer, I jumped at the opportunity.

3. What did you learn from working on your issue? What did you learn about social change? about power? leadership? yourself? community, etc.

A: What I learned from working on our issue was that it was an issue the whole campus wanted to address as well, from UPD to the Student Health Center. What I learned about social change is that it's actually possible. When people care enough about an issue and there's enough people from different sectors, then a lot can be accomplished and can be accomplished quickly.

4. How did your background research help prepare you?

A: The background research that I did helped prepare me when it came time to addressing the issues to the resource center directors or the Police Chief, I had specific incidences that helped validate the changes that needed to be made.

5. How did you recruit people for your issue? What worked?

Aside from the students that were in the class, I had a friend/ally of mine that was in Associated Students that had experience writing petitions so when it came to getting it out to the masses, she had the knowledge and resources for doing it in an effective way. We had a fairly small group of additional students that assisted us but because of my connections to different resource centers on campus, we were able to get the support we needed in order to get our issue addressed ASAP.

6. How many leaders were in your group? Working members? General members? Paper members? Did you have enough of each to do "the work"?

There was probably just myself as the leader in the group, maybe one or two working members, and the rest were working/paper members. We definitely did not have enough members to get the work done.

7. How did your group make decisions? How did your group work together? What was your group dynamic? What did your group do to work together better?

When it came to making decisions, a lot of it we just did without the consensus of the group. There were members that we more involved than others and those who wanted to participate because they saw the issue as something worth fighting for, always made sure they were present for any sort of decisions they needed to be made. Our group dynamic was uneven because of the participation difference among the group. When it came to doing things differently to make our group work better, it was a little bit difficult to do because of the classroom style project.

8. Did your group develop allies?

The allies that our group had were Yan Yin Choy from Associated Students, Staci Gunner from the Student Conduct & Ethical Development office, Bonnie Sugiyama from the Women's Resource Center

and Cathy Busalacchi from the Student Union, Peter Decena from UPD.

9. What advice would you give current Soci. 164 Social Action students?

A: The advice that I would give current social action students would be to use your resources! There are people on the campus that you know already that can help assist you with your social action project. Also, if you find yourself in the leadership role, it's okay to delegate tasks to others in the group so that you do not get overwhelmed because "you're doing all the work." If you're anything like me, you wanted everything to be perfect. But the people in your group are there for a reason, so let them do some of the work as well!

10. Looking back, how does your involvement in this project influence you today...in your life, your job?

Looking back at how my involvement in *Students for Campus Safety* and how it influences me today, I realized that I have a lot more power and influence than I thought I did. In my current job part of my duties is to coach and train people and through my time at this job what I need to do everyday is get people to believe in what I do and have them follow and trust me. I also realized that I have a lot of people on my side that feel the same as I do about issues that I care about. And if I can get enough people together for one common cause, a whole lot of social change and action can occur.