TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCE AT A POLYTECHNIC:

APPLIED INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
SOCIAL SCIENCES AT STOUT

- Stout background
- Service department w/adjuncts → tenure-track hires, new major
- Interdisciplinary Department
- Social Science Research Center
APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

- APSS program highlights
- Concentrations
- Research a core component
- Career focus – grad school prep not the goal for many students
APSS PROGRAM GOALS

- Goal 1: Knowledge Base in the Social Sciences and History
- Goal 2: Inter-Disciplinary Learning
- Goal 3: Context
- Goal 4: Professional Communication Skills
- Goal 5: Research Methodology
- Goal 6: Data and Primary Source Analysis

- Goal 7: Application
- Goal 8: Technology
- Goal 9: Diversity and Inclusion
- Goal 10: Professional and Research Ethics
- Goal 11: Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility
WHY SOCIAL SCIENCE?

- Social Science adds value to STEM fields
- Provides data on human side that many fields are increasingly realizing is needed
APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

- LAKES REU
  - Disciplines
  - Projects
  - Findings in brief
  - Policy and practice spillovers

www.uwstout.edu/lakes
ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS NSF GRANT

- Who’s involved
- Research Questions
- Initial Findings
- Outcomes
  - Service Learning Best Practices
  - Ethics and Social Science Methods Workshops
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Dissemination in the community key in all projects
- Also incorporated into courses
INTERNSHIPS AND CAREER PLANNING

- Social Science Research Center Community Dashboard
- Community Partnerships
  - Mayo Clinic Health System
  - County Social Services
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Tainter-Menomin Lake Improvement Association
- Outside Internships/Co-ops
Student-designed projects → Career opportunities

Dissemination key as resume and confidence builder
LAKES LESSONS

- Community capacity and partnerships are built through research and dissemination
- Spill-over projects for students will emerge
- Good way to secure faculty research help without grad students
- Undergrads need space and support for this work
OTHER LESSONS

- Hands-on projects key to student success
- Finding partnerships and grants is time consuming but worth the investment
- Students might initially resist, but a culture of research can be built
CURRICULUM DESIGN TIPS

- What tools do they need? Design around that…
- Rigorous methods classes focused on practice/skills building (less theory, more problem-focused)
- Team teaching very beneficial
- Student/faculty ratio matters—small classes and/or few interns
- Build in ability for students to carry projects forward
- Need urgency in IRB and data collection to leave more time for analysis
- Research examples needed throughout, focus on question-asking and curiosity in addition to content knowledge building
- Faculty buy-in key (collegial relationships, faculty who are less narrowly discipline focused)
RESOURCES NEEDED

- Student-focus -- program-director model, emphasis on mentoring, small-ish program with personalized attention
- Faculty support for grant-writing, course development, reassigned time from courses for research
- Student support—research grants, research events outside the classroom, student travel money
RESEARCH MENTORING TIPS

- Allow students to pick things they are passionate about
- Trust students to try something ambitious or that you think might not work
- Build in back-up plans for projects
- Give students real-world deadlines—events, clients, etc..
- Try to be a mentor, not a task-master
Questions?