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Professor Rex

Honors PS1010

15 April 2015

Honors Group Project Reaction

During the course of my Winter 2015 semester at Wayne State University, I was enrolled in Honors PS1010 with Professor Rex. The main, overarching project that we were assigned was to select a problem in the Detroit area and to attempt to create a solution. My group chose to explore childhood literacy in the city, and how it was affecting not only the current generation, but also future generations. We explored everything from the roots of the problem to the policies that were trying to solve it, the stakeholders invested in the issue, and plans of action to ameliorate the issue. I feel more educated on the issue as a whole, and as though I could actually make a difference in the situation, should I choose to do so. Reflecting on the semester now, I appreciate everything that this project gave me.

What surprised me most in working with this issue was how much can be done by everyday people. One of the organizations involved with childhood literacy in Detroit is a non-profit organization called Reading Works. Of the students that enroll in this program, every single one of them shows improvement, and 90% of them continue on to college and higher education. It was amazing to me how much can be done through simple tutoring and taking the time to help individual students. I thought that the only way to elicit change was through the government, so it surprised me how much of an impact volunteer organizations can have on children. I personally volunteered at my local library, tutoring struggling students from local schools. It was fascinating to me how much some of them had the desire and passion to learn, but simply lacked the resources. It was rewarding to see how volunteering a few hours of my time greatly benefitted and impacted these students. I am glad that people are able to make a difference in more ways than one.

In my future endeavors, I plan to keep this issue in mind and do what I can to have it resolved. This issue holds very close to my heart because of how strongly I feel about the level of education in America, and specifically, Detroit. The education system could be much better, and the entire outlook of the city could be greatly improved simply by better educating our youths. The issue of childhood literacy is a longstanding one, and one that cannot be solved quickly or easily. However, I plan to spend at least a few hours every couple of weeks dedicated to volunteering or advocating for policies that will help improve the intelligence of these students, and help rid Detroit of this issue.

From this process of semester long group work, I learned many things. I learned how difficult it could be to work with others when your opinions may not be the same, especially in the roots of issues. It was easier to see why there is so much dissent in government as so many people have so many different ideas about how to solve problems. I also learned that working with friends is not always the easiest, especially when they are not as passionate about a certain subject as you. I think a major pro of having a group for this project was being able to have a larger outreach and have others to bounce ideas off. The other group members allowed for a breakdown of the work, resulting in more specific results and more though was put into each piece of the assignment. It was sometimes difficult coordinating times to get together or deciding that would do each part, but everything worked out by the end. Overall, I came to appreciate my group members a great deal more, and I attribute much of our success to being able to work together.

The skills I learned in this project and in the course can easily relate to other aspects of my life. I largely learned how to work with others in both a research setting and in a collaboration setting. This will greatly help me as I continue on to graduate school, and especially in my chosen profession of animation, as the field works almost entirely through collaboration. Also, the class gave me a much greater understanding of politics and government, and how they work. I feel that I can now be a more active participant in both elections and as a citizen. I appreciate how much this class has educated me on things that actually apply to the real world and what I can do to affect change in my world. I think the most applicable skill that I learned through this class and group project is how to be an active citizen and make a difference. Before this class, I would just assume that if there was something wrong with the city or the government, there was nothing to be done. After taking this class, however, I now know that I can take necessary steps to ameliorate issues, through lobbying, fundraising, awareness, and even coalitions.

I am grateful that I took PS1010 for everything that the class has taught me that I can use in my future. I look forward to applying the skills I gained during the semester, from the group work to citizenship, activism, and social entrepreneurships. I leaned much and I plan to continue being involved in both my group’s issue of childhood illiteracy and government as a whole. Overall, this class taught me more than I ever expected, and I am excited for the new ways that I can reach out in my life through the government and problems in my area.