

Community through SCU Sociology Club

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As graduating seniors, we are blessed to reflect on all that the Sociology Department has done for us in the past 4 years. Starting at Santa Clara University in 2020, we took our first round of courses completely online, including SOCI 1: Introduction to Sociology, which we unknowingly took together, especially as it was so hard to meet other students asynchronously. In Spring 2021, a few classes transitioned into a hybrid format, one of which being SOCI 35: Intro to Research Design and Methods with Professor Nichols. We were one of few students that opted into the in-person learning option, equipped with masks and 6+ feet of space between us. Professor Nichols invited us to become the Peer Educators for SOCI 35 in Fall 2021. During one of the infamous Sociology Department pizza parties that fall quarter, the faculty, including Professor Pumar, head of the department at the time, invited us to restart the Sociology Club, as it had died out before the pandemic. They reassured us that we would have the department's support, in guidance, funding, and planning, so we accepted!

Then began the journey of figuring out how to start and run a club. Given that we had no access to any of the information from the previous club, not even the names of the past board members, we essentially started from scratch. Working alongside the department and the Center for Student Involvement, we created the official paperwork for the club. Once that was completed, the hard part began - recruiting a board and club members. Our first board helped us set the structure of the club in place and we started hosting a few get-to-know-us events in the Sociology Lounge on the third floor of O'Connor Hall, such as Valentine's making and an end of the year dinner.

As our junior year began in the fall of 2023, we felt more equipped to run a club. We finally understood how the reimbursement system worked and how to get members to attend our events: offer free food. This year, we reached out to other clubs to collaborate on events in the hopes of expanding students' understanding of sociology, regardless of their field of study. We answered the question "So what even is sociology?" at countless involvement fairs, tabling events, and collabs. Professor Hunter became our advisor and helped us navigate engaging event ideas while also providing aid to last minute challenges. We offered formal and informal advising and resume workshops. As the year

wrapped up, Professor King offered up their backyard for an end-of-year party, where we got to celebrate all we had accomplished that year.

Senior year, we started visiting classrooms and having set general meeting times, all aiming to recruit more students to our events. We expanded into more career exploration events, especially as our looming graduation date approached. Our headshots event allowed us and fellow students to update our LinkedIn profile pictures from the outdated photos of us at 17 years old. We held a few viewing events, offering students a space to watch movies and TV, talking about the content and sociological impact. We were also granted the opportunity to partner with MENA to continue on our collaboration event series titled Food at the Root, which we had begun the previous year through a collaboration with ASA, where we host dinner and discussion on the sociological implications of food and cultures.

Reflecting on what it means to win the Internal Community-Based Work in Sociology Award, we recognize that this award represents each and every person in our community that has gotten us to where we are today: the faculty and staff who help us through all of our event ideas; our board members who work hard to keep this club running and ensure successful events; and our classmates and club members who, by attending our events, help motivate us to constantly improve the club. Having a co-chair, co-founder, co-peer advisor, co-research assistant, and co-award winner by our side is the reason we are where we are today. And now onto the next adventure, where we must navigate post-grad life individually, but never alone. Thank you SCU Sociology Department for bringing us together and supporting us along each step of the way.