

Martín-Baró Scholars Program Assessment Report

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Name of Program: Martín-Baró Scholars Program

Type of Program: Non-degree seeking

College of Arts and Sciences Division: Humanities

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Executive Summary

This report describes a unique program for first-year students that earns five cores over one academic year (A1, A2, C1, CD, SL). It then presents three relatively new program learning outcomes, written and approved in Spring 2017.

The report offers data that indicates that all students who completed an anonymous 5-point Likert-scale survey of PLOs felt that they had indeed accomplished all three PLOs with a high rate of support (i.e., PLO 1: 5.0; PLO 2: 4.79, PLO 3: 4.71). The response rate of 82% (14 out of 17 students) suggests a valid result.

The report also presents the number of hours that students spent volunteering at the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center as evidence of completing PLO No. 3 (562 hours collectively), and discusses the ongoing 200+ page book project that will also serve the community once it is published (this, too, will meet PLO 3).

The report also recommends a future re-examination of PLO No. 1, and emphasizes the need to carefully curate future community engagement projects to align with PLO No. 3.

Brief Description of the MBS Program

We are now in midst of working with our 17th cohort of the Martín-Baró Scholars, a program founded by Gerardo Marin, former Vice Provost, and friend of Ignacio Martín-Baró, a Jesuit priest who was assassinated in El Salvador in 1989. I have served as director of the MBS Program since Spring 2012 and have revised the curriculum significantly over the last six years.

MBS, as we call it, eludes simple description: we are a freshman-only living-learning community, a public speaking class, a composition class, a literature class, a class on cultural diversity, and we perform significant service in one community each year. Yet MBS is truly meant to be a coalescence of all of these endeavors, to be truly interdisciplinary.

We meet the following cores: A1 (public speaking), A2 (written communication), C1 (literature), CD (cultural diversity), and SL (service learning, though we prefer the appellation “community-engaged learning” as a more accurate description of our work).

We strive to meet 20 student learning outcomes each year over our 16-unit curriculum. If your committee is interested, I can provide a document that demonstrates that students felt—at least in their anonymous self-reporting in May 2018—that they did indeed meet all 20 learning outcomes (which has obviously been my primary concern every year).

Now that we are instituting this annual assessment report, I decided to survey students about whether they feel they met all three of our PLOs. I offer the data below.

The student group under consideration for this report is the 2017-18 MBS cohort. There were 17 students of various majors who completed the program (we began the year with 18 students, but one student left USF to be with her mother who had cancer).

BACKGROUND ON THE PROGRAM

For the purposes of this report it will be helpful to foreground our mission statement and program learning outcomes.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Martín-Baró Scholars Program is to introduce students to the complexities of policies that affect the underserved in San Francisco and the Bay Area. This community-engaged program inculcates advocacy and encourages students to act as well-informed, compassionate, and patient agents of change, focusing on long-term goals associated with ethically establishing social justice.*

- Adams, Bell and Griffin define social justice as both a process and a goal: “The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. We envision a society in which individuals are both self-determining ... and interdependent.” (Adams, Maurianne and Lee Anne Bell, Pat Griffin. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge, 2007)

Program Learning Outcomes

These learning outcomes were written in 2017, and approved by Assoc. Dean Suparna Chakraborty. It is my hope that the PLOs will endure in validity for many years, but this is, after all, just the second year we've put them into place, so we are open to modifying them to best suit the needs of our students and indeed the university. Here are the PLOs as they now stand:

Students who complete the Martín-Baró Scholars Program will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze policies and systems in San Francisco and the Bay Area that have historically created inequities.
2. Research, present on, and work alongside underserved people in at least one neighborhood of San Francisco.
3. Co-create and implement a community-engaged project with enduring impact on the community they serve.

Put more poetically, we aim—as a program, as a community—to cultivate what Henry James once identified as “perception at the pitch of passion.” As one might expect I lack the assessment acumen needed to turn James’s words into a measurable outcome, but we do, nonetheless, aim to produce students passionate about creating change, and patient enough to work toward long-term ameliorative goals.

How we arrived at our PLOs and Mission Statement

Although these PLOs and Mission Statement were newly minted in 2017, I arrived at them by reviewing—as objectively as possible—what MBS has historically attempted to accomplish. Although I have made significant curricular shifts over the years based on our annual projects, these PLOs could indeed, I think, apply to cohorts and curricula which preceded my tenure as director. Given the deep history of this institution and this program with preserving and honoring Martín-Baró’s legacy, I kept in mind the true motivation for this program—to serve, as Martín-Baró did—the poor and underserved, and to maintain—as Martín-Baró did as well—academic rigor. In terms of program learning outcomes, it’s entirely possible that there are more than three PLOs, and if more are apt, I will add them in future years.

Brief note on our project-based learning approach

Last year the MBS students worked on an ambitious project called Changemakers. Many of our learning outcomes center around this project. Briefly described: Students were invited to research and write biographies for 95 African American leaders, all featured on the Inspiration Murals, found on the walls of the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center in the Fillmore/Western Addition. The project, initiated in Fall 2015 by Dr. Stephanie Sears of the Esther Madriz Diversity Scholars, invited students to preserve the history and stories of all the people on the walls. Initially, the project consisted of oral histories and some written reports, but the project expanded into a book project when the Martín-Baró Scholars joined in Fall 2016. The project is

a community-identified need, and sprang from conversations with community leaders Altheda Carrie, Lynnette White, and Karin Cotterman of Engage SF at the McCarthy Center. We hope to complete a 200-page book in April 2019. I include data about our program's role in the project later in this report.

Survey Data Suggests That Students Believe MBS Meets All Three PLOs

During the last week of classes of the Spring 2018 semester I administered an anonymous survey of all 20 core learning outcomes for my program (not included here) as well as a survey asking students about all three of our Program Learning Outcomes (fully included in an appendix). I absented myself from the room to encourage honest narrative feedback (rather like we used to do in the old SUMMA days, when we would need to be out of the room). In any case, for the purposes of this report, the results appear to indicate that students felt strongly that they met all three PLOs.

I used a 5-point Likert-scale survey for all three PLOs. Here is a sample student entry:

MBS PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

During my academic year in the Martín-Baró Scholars Program, I have:

... identified and analyzed policies and systems in San Francisco and the Bay Area that have historically created inequities.

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Uncertain 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

During my academic year in the Martín-Baró Scholars Program, I have:

... researched, presented on, and worked alongside underserved people in at least one neighborhood of San Francisco.

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Uncertain 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

During my academic year in the Martín-Baró Scholars Program, I have helped to

... co-create and implement a community-engaged project with potentially enduring impact on the community we serve.

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Uncertain 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Please see a separate 14-page appendix with all the student responses, which I think would be cumbersome to include here.

Program Learning Outcome 1

Students who complete the Martín-Baró Scholars Program will be able to . . . identify and analyze policies and systems in San Francisco and the Bay Area that have historically created inequities.

For the question regarding PLO 1, we had a response result of 5.0 out of a possible 5.0

Program Learning Outcome 2

Students who complete the Martín-Baró Scholars Program will be able to . . . research, present on, and work alongside underserved people in at least one neighborhood of San Francisco.

For PLO 2, the response result was 4.79 out of a possible 5.0

Program Learning Outcome 3

Students who complete the Martín-Baró Scholars Program will be able to . . . co-create and implement a community-engaged project with enduring impact on the community they serve.

For PLO 3, the response result was 4.71 out of a possible 5.0

The response rate of 82% (14 out of 17 students) suggests a valid result.

Obviously it is difficult to gauge purely from student feedback on PLOs exclusively how well we might have met our goals. I think the main substantive feedback that might be most helpful to us in particular might actually also take into account our core learning outcomes as well, particularly those of Service Learning. Next academic year, I see the need to add a narrative component to solicit more qualitative feedback on just the PLOs, and, furthermore, to not burn out students on surveys, I could administer the core learning outcomes and PLOs on different days in May 2019.

Evidence from Biography Project Suggests MBS Met Program Learning Outcome 3

For this assessment report, I'd like to focus on PLO 3: "Students who complete the Martín-Baró Scholars Program will be able to . . . co-create and implement a community-engaged project with enduring impact on the community they serve."

Since we are working on a multi-year, multi-cohort book project of biographies that will ultimately benefit our community partners at the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center—and we're not quite done—it's tough to gauge the "enduring impact" of our work. We now have 185 pages of our 210-page student-produced book finished, but we will obviously have to wait till after the book comes out we'll have a better notion of our impact. (I can provide a PDF of the galleys, but that would likely be more capacious evidence than your committee is looking for.) All students worked on at least 8 biographies last year, so their input was crucial to the overall success of the project. Many students also edited and fact-checked numerous previous biographies, indicating that their work moved us toward our overall program goals. We have set a book launch date of April 25, 2019, so we should have a better sense of the impact of the project in next year's assessment report.

Grades on Biography Project as Evidence of Meeting PLO No. 3

Another slightly more specific measure of whether we are meeting PLO No. 3 would include an analysis of the grades of students who worked on the project, year over year, and semester over semester. Because MBS students exhibited a high degree of enthusiasm about the biographies over the last few years, the project grades are relatively high, almost all As and A minuses, with a smattering of Bs. According to my records, of the 17 students whose grades I reviewed in Fall 2017 in MBS, 8 earned As, 8 earned A-, and one earned a B+ in the first semester. In spring 2018 in MBS, these same students earned similar grades (1 A+, 8 As, 4A-, 3 B+), but they were also asked to complete more biographies. In my analysis, the data seem inconclusive as evidence of meeting PLO No. 3. Below is a table representing the anonymized grades of the students on the biography project, from first semester to second semester in the program.

	F17 biography project grade	S18 biography project grade
Student 1	A-	A-
Student 2	A	A
Student 3	A-	A-
Student 4	B+	B+
Student 5	A-	B+
Student 6	A-	A-
Student 7	A-	A
Student 8	A	A
Student 9	A	A
Student 10	A	A-
Student 11	A-	A
Student 12	A-	A
Student 13	A	A+
Student 14	A-	A
Student 15	A	B+
Student 16	A	A
Student 17	A	A-

The above grades were not a metric I was considering as evidence last year, but in future years I will keep in mind that this kind of data might be helpful in determining the relative success of certain PLOs vis-à-vis our community engagement projects.

The grades from previous cohorts on the biography project could potentially be interesting and illuminating to include; however, because the specific tasks and rubrics required the biography project were quite different, I'm not sure it would be helpful to include all that data here.

Some Evidence for Having Met Program Learning Outcome 2

Volunteer Hours at Ella Hill Hutch Community Center

I looked at the number of hours that students served the community by reviewing their reflection papers and a spreadsheet which kept track of their service-learning hours at Ella Hill Hutch Community Center. Students reported, collectively, providing 562 hours of direct contact hours with kids in various after-school programs. The goal was to have at least 20 hours per student over the academic year (which is the threshold required for service-learning core courses) and we obviously exceeded that goal. All 17 students who completed the program completed at least 20 hours total.

I must say, too, that to some degree I am not entirely convinced that counting hours is necessarily the best metric, as indeed we are more concerned with creating the conditions for “meaningful moments.” As squishy as that concept might sound—it better defines what we hoped we could achieve between my MBS students and the kids at the Magic Zone. In other words, the *quality* of the contact was arguably more important to me than the *quantity*—although both were intertwined. Naturally, the more frequently my students met with kids, the greater their chances were of creating community and indeed “meaningful moments.”

According to our spreadsheets, maintained and updated throughout AY 2017-18, there were 186 student contact hours with the community documented in Fall 2017 (one student, for medical reasons, could not participate directly with students). There were 376 student contact hours with the community in Spring 2018 (100% of students met our goal of 20 hours per year). This totaled 562 contact hours. All students wrote reflection papers as well, documenting the complexities of their experiences and how they related to our overall research project. Reflection papers do, of course, address to some degree the quality of the interactions.

The chart below indicates anonymized students’ hours of community engagement at the Magic Zone in both Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. Bureaucratic delays on securing student fingerprint scanning (also known as LiveScan background checks) plus our routine tuberculosis tests, alas, set us far behind in fall in terms of the number of hours we could volunteer, but we clearly made up for it in the spring semester.

As for the qualitative aspect, my students arranged and planned with almost professional skill, a very meaningful farewell party for the kids they worked with in May 2018. My guess, from having seen the connections forged among my students and the Magic Zone kids, indicates that there might indeed have been some enduring positive impact that might result from our time and energy commitment.

Below is the chart indicating our volunteer hours, for each semester.

MZ F17 hours	MZ S18 hours	TOTAL HOURS
12	22	34
16	20	36
19	21.5	40.5
0	27	27
14	24	38
6	17	23
15	25	40
14	26	40
6	18	24
6	18	24
0	28*	28*
10	14	24
23	40.5	63.5
6.5	20	26.5
20	13	33
2.5	20	22.5
16	22	38
186	376	562

NOTES

MZ = Magic Zone, after-school program run by the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center

* = 28 hours spent working on alternative project that met a community-identified need by a student who did not receive medical clearance to work with children directly

Recommendations / Closing the Loop

It appears that we have, at least according to anonymous survey data, student volunteer hours, and significant progress on our book project, met our primary goals for this year, particularly for PLOs 2 and 3. My concern going forward is actually for me to adapt the curriculum *after* we complete our book project. The current cohort of MBS, for example, is exploring Democracy in Crisis as our theme, with voter registration as our primary project in fall, and working with a non-profit Generation Citizen in the spring. I want to make sure that I make sufficient curricular adaptations to our new theme that will help us achieve our program learning outcomes to the same degree that we now enjoy. Because I am in an experimental phase with this current cohort, it's difficult to tell at this early stage if we are successfully meeting all our targets.

My perennial concern with this program is that I will need to ensure that any future community-engagement projects are carefully curated to align with PLO 3 (i.e., “Students will . . . co-create and implement a community-engaged project with enduring impact on the community they serve”).

Again, as I mentioned last year, I am considering expanding the language in PLO number 1 to go beyond addressing S.F. and Bay Area concerns, especially as students in the Trump era appear to be far more engaged with national issues than local and state issues. Nonetheless, I think it would be wise pedagogically to consider making this change after I have more data from student research projects.

I thank your committee for reviewing the above materials and invite your feedback and dialogue.

—*David Holler*