

The Impact on Students of SIA Projects at Four Campuses in the CSU

Background

This report is the third in a series of reports over the past two years on Students-in-Action (SIA) projects at four campuses in the California State University (CSU): Humboldt, Monterrey Bay, San Jose, and San Luis Obispo. The first report covered the start-up phase of these projects and was based on off-site, video-conference interviews conducted between April and November 2004 with student leadership teams on each campus. The second report was based on personal interviews conducted with project participants in spring 2005. This report revealed that students experienced significant learning and personal growth in the areas of knowledge, skills, interests, and attitudes. It also described four different types of change, reinforcement, developmental, transitional, and transformative, to suggest that the process of change that students undergo in their SIA experience is different for different students. The current report is also an impact assessment of the same four SIA campus projects continuing from spring 2005 through fall 2005 and into spring 2006 but with a completely new group of student leaders.

Methods

Study participants

A total of 26 SIA students participated in this study: two from Humboldt, fifteen from Monterrey Bay, five from San Jose, and four from San Luis Obispo. Most students (20) were female. Among this group of students there were 21 upper-division, three lower-division, and one graduate student. Twenty-three of the 26 students performed community service prior to their participation in the current projects, and 19 students spent at least two college semesters doing so.

Students were asked why they chose to participate in their campus SIA projects. Twenty-five of the 26 students said "Course credit" and "No particular reason." Fifteen students checked "Gain leadership skills" and 13 students indicated "Interest in the subject matter". Seven students reported "Interest in Community Service" as their reason for participating in SIA.

Instrument

SIA projects started in fall 2005. In spring 2006 study participants responded to the Civic Engagement Questionnaire (CEQ), which can be found in Appendix A: Civic Engagement Questionnaire. The CEQ was developed from lengthy interviews conducted with SIA students working on SIA projects in spring 2005. Interview transcripts were evaluated to determine if a general survey questionnaire could be developed for assessing future SIA projects in the CSU

and possibly in other colleges and universities with similar programs to SIA. A pilot version of the CEQ was drafted and then piloted with a small number of CSU students who participated in last year's SIA projects.

The CEQ itself is a nine-part questionnaire consisting of 92 questions designed to gather the following kinds of information:

- student background (e.g., demographics, extent of prior community service work, reason for participating in SIA, etc.)
- student engagement in SIA project activities,
- student valuation of work activities
- project impact on students (e.g., abilities, self-understanding, social perceptions, interests, motivations, behavior dispositions, social attitudes and opinions, etc.)
- project effectiveness, and
- project value to students

Data Collection and Analysis

The CEQ was distributed to a total of 26 students by each campus Service Learning coordinator at the end of the SIA project academic year in spring 2006. All 26 students completed and returned their questionnaires to the campus coordinator who then forwarded them to the CSU Service Learning Office for analysis and reporting.

Results

The results of the CEQ are presented in the following four parts: (1) SIA Project Activities, (2) SIA Project Impact, (3) Student Attitudes and Opinions, and (4) SIA Project Value.

SIA Project Activities

Table 1 on the following page reports the number and percentage of students who participated in each of 15 SIA project activities. The data suggest that SIA projects provided opportunities for students to engage in many common experiences despite differences in project mission. More than half the students across the four SIA campus projects indicated they were involved in 11 of the 15 of the activities listed. Participation was highest (greater than 75%) in those activities involving project management (Activity 2 and 4), direct interaction and/or communication with campus or local community constituencies (Activity 1, 3 and 8), and building project support through fund raising, recruitment, and outreach publicity (Activity 5, 6 and 7). Each project, however, performed activities that were unique to its mission and goals such as conducting community research, tutoring/mentoring, developing educational materials, and

writing articles for campus publication. Understandably, student engagement in these activities was much lower (around 50% or less).

**Table 1. Student Participation in SIA Project Activities
(In Descending Order by Percent)**

Participation			SIA Project Activity
Yes	No	Percent	
25	1	96.2	1. Interacted with people in the off-campus local community
22	3	88.0	2. Organized/coordinated a project activity or event
21	3	87.5	3. Presented a talk/speech to a campus or community group
21	4	84.0	4. Managed/supervised people
20	5	80.0	5. Recruited people into the SIA project
20	5	80.0	6. Raised funds to support the SIA project
20	6	76.9	7. Developed project publicity materials (e.g., fliers, pamphlets)
19	6	76.0	8. Built an ongoing relationship with a project recipient
15	9	62.5	9. Mentored a project recipient (i.e., served as a role model)
12	11	52.2	10. Trained SIA peers on how to perform their duties
13	12	52.0	11. Gathered research data on the off-campus local community
11	13	45.8	12. Developed educational materials for teaching purposes
4	20	16.7	13. Wrote an article for a magazine
3	20	13.0	14. Tutored a project recipient
2	22	8.3	15. Developed or conducted a community survey

The CEQ asked students to rate each activity they performed in terms of how much (High=3, Medium=2, Low=1) it contributed to their learning or personal development. Table 2 shows the mean score and distribution of student ratings:

**Table 2. Student Ratings of the Value of SIA Project Activities
(In Descending Order by Mean Score)**

SIA Project Activity	N	Mean	Percent		
			High(3)	Med(2)	Low(1)
1. Managed/supervised people	21	2.90	90.5	9.5	0.0
2. Organized/coordinated a project activity or event	23	2.83	87.0	8.7	4.4
3. Interacted with people in the off-campus local community	22	2.73	77.3	18.2	4.6
4. Presented a talk/speech to a campus or community group	21	2.71	71.4	28.6	0.0
5. Developed educational materials for teaching purposes	12	2.67	75.0	16.7	8.3
6. Recruited people into the SIA project	21	2.57	66.7	23.8	9.5
7. Mentored a project recipient (i.e., served as a role model)	16	2.50	56.3	37.5	6.3
8. Trained SIA peers on how to perform their duties	15	2.47	60.0	26.7	13.3
9. Built an ongoing relationship with a project recipient	20	2.45	60.0	25.0	15.0
10. Gathered research data on the off-campus local community	14	2.36	57.1	21.4	21.4
11. Developed project publicity materials (e.g., fliers, pamphlets)	20	2.30	45.0	40.0	15.0
12. Raised funds to support the SIA project	21	2.29	47.6	33.3	19.1
13. Wrote an article for a magazine	7	2.00	42.9	14.3	42.9
14. Tutored a project recipient	8	1.88	25.0	37.5	37.5
15. Developed or conducted a community survey	6	1.83	33.3	16.7	50.0

Students seemed to gain most from their experiences involving project management (supervision, coordination), interactions and communication with project constituencies, and developing teaching materials. These activities (1-5) received mean scores between 2.67 and 2.90 (on a three-point rating scale) and “High” ratings of at least 75 percent. In contrast, students did not see nearly as much value in doing community research, writing a magazine article, tutoring, fund-raising or developing publicity materials. These activities (10-15) received mean scores between 1.83 and 2.36 and the highest percentage of “Low” ratings (15%-50%). The lowest rated activity, conducting a community survey (15), was a major activity in only one of the four campus SIA projects.

SIA Project Impact

The assessment of SIA project impact was multi-dimensional. It involved measures of students’ abilities, perceptions, interests, and attitudes and how these were affected by students’ experience in SIA. Three sections of the CEQ were specifically aimed to carry out this assessment: Part C, Project Impact; Part D, Project Outcomes; and Part F, Overall SIA Project Impact. The results from each of these parts of the CEQ are reported next.

CEQ Part C. Part C of the CEQ consists of 26 items that were grouped into five clusters labeled as follows: Ability (5 items), Self-Understanding (5 items), Social Perceptions (5 items), Interest/Motivation (4 items), and Behavior Dispositions (6 items). Students were asked to indicate the degree to which their participation in SIA projects brought about changes (increases or improvements) on each of these items. It is important to emphasize that in responding to these questions students had to reflect retrospectively on what they were like several months earlier when campus projects started in fall 2005 and then decide how much (A lot, Some, Only a Little, Not at All) they have changed from that time to when projects ended in spring 2006. The results of this impact assessment are presented in Table 3 on the following page.

The results clearly indicate that students felt they experienced significant and/or highly positive changes in all areas assessed. Mean scores range from a low of 3.15 to a high of 3.77. Even the lowest mean score (3.15) on Item 20, “Interest in social-advocacy-oriented graduate studies”, is substantially above the neutral point (2.5) on the four-point rating scale. (This comparatively low rating is probably an indication that relatively few students were planning to pursue graduate work.) The mean scores of more than half (14) of the 26 items exceed 3.50 and the mean scores of an additional eight items fall closely behind in the range of 3.30 and 3.40. The breadth of these changes that students reported making both within and across the different clusters of items indicates that SIA projects, regardless of mission and context differences, appear to produce substantial and relatively homogeneous impacts on students.

**Table 3. Student Ratings of SIA Project Impact
(In descending Order by Cluster Mean Score)**

Questionnaire Item	N	Mean	Percent			
			A Lot	Some	Only a Little	Not at All
Ability Cluster						
1. Ability to communicate with project recipients	26	3.69	69.2	30.8	0.0	0.0
2. Ability to plan/coordinate an activity/event	26	3.65	69.2	26.9	3.9	0.0
3. Ability to work as part of a team or group	26	3.65	76.9	15.4	3.9	3.9
4. Ability to manage/supervise people	26	3.23	46.2	34.6	15.4	3.9
5. Ability to speak in front of a group of strangers	24	3.17	41.7	41.7	8.3	8.3
Self-Understanding Cluster						
6. Confidence that I can make a difference for project recipients	26	3.77	76.9	23.1	0.0	0.0
7. Confidence in my ability to accomplish my personal goals in life	25	3.56	56.0	44.0	0.0	0.0
8. Awareness of how my communication may affect project recipients	25	3.48	56.0	36.0	8.0	0.0
9. Awareness of my strengths/weaknesses	26	3.46	50.0	46.2	3.9	0.0
10. Confidence in presenting/speaking before a group of strangers	26	3.38	46.2	50.0	0.0	3.9
Social Perceptions Cluster						
11. Understanding the needs of project recipients	26	3.65	69.2	26.9	3.9	0.0
12. Recognition of how difficult it is to solve the problems of project recipients	26	3.65	65.4	34.6	0.0	0.0
13. Understanding the difficulties that project recipients face in their daily lives	26	3.54	65.4	23.1	11.5	0.0
14. Understanding the skills/abilities of project recipients	25	3.52	60.0	32.0	8.0	0.0
15. Understanding the culture (e.g., attitudes, values, behavior) of project recipients	25	3.52	64.0	24.0	12.0	0.0
16. Understanding how a group functions	26	3.38	42.3	53.9	3.9	0.0
Interest/Motivation Cluster						
17. Desire to continue doing community service work after college	26	3.65	73.1	23.1	0.0	3.9
18. Interest in social advocacy as a career	26	3.46	69.2	15.4	7.7	7.7
19. Interest in doing voluntary community service	26	3.46	61.5	26.9	7.7	3.9
20. Interest in social advocacy-oriented graduate studies	26	3.15	61.5	7.7	15.4	15.4
Behavior Dispositions Cluster						
21. Compassion/empathy for project recipients	26	3.65	65.4	34.6	0.0	0.0
22. Optimism about alleviating social injustice	26	3.54	57.7	38.5	3.9	0.0
23. Determination to alleviate social injustice	26	3.54	65.4	26.9	3.9	3.9
24. Openness to ideas/opinions that conflict with my own	26	3.42	57.7	30.8	7.7	3.9
25. Willingness to change my views or opinions	25	3.36	56.0	28.0	12.0	4.0
26. Patience in working with project recipients	25	3.28	52.0	28.0	16.0	4.0

Scale: A lot=4, Some=3, Only a little=2, Not at all=1

Further inspection of Table 3 reveals five items on which students reported having changed the most. These are items that all 26 surveyed

students marked only the top two categories on the rating scale, “A lot” or “Some”, to indicate the degree of SIA impact or change they experienced. The five items are:

- “Confidence that I can make a difference for project recipients” (Self-Understanding Cluster, Item 6)
- “Confidence in my ability to accomplish my personal goals in life” (Self-Understanding Cluster, Item 7)
- “Ability to communicate with project recipients” (Ability Cluster, Item 1)
- “Recognition of how difficult it is to solve the problems of project recipients” (Social Perceptions Cluster, Item 12)
- “Compassion/empathy for project recipients” (Behavior Dispositions Cluster, Item 21)

Responses to these items suggest that students, through their SIA experience, gained a heightened sense of inner self-confidence and self-efficacy and a broader understanding and empathy with the realities of project recipients and the problems they face.

There were six questionnaire items that students reported as having been least affected by SIA. Approximately 15 percent to 30 percent of the students (4 to 7 out of 26) marked either “Only a little” or “Not at all” to indicate the degree of project impact as reflected in the following items in Table 3:

- “Ability to manage/supervise people” (Ability Cluster, Item 4)
- “Ability to speak in front of a group of strangers” (Ability Cluster, Item 5)
- “Interest in social advocacy as a career” (Interest/Motivation Cluster, Item 18)
- “Interest in social advocacy-oriented graduate studies” (Interest/Motivation Cluster, Item 20)
- “Willingness to change my views or opinions” (Behavior Dispositions Cluster, Item 25)
- “Patience in working with project recipients” (Behavior Dispositions Cluster, Item 26)

These results do not exhibit any general pattern that can be clearly interpreted. However, a possible reason that there was not as much change on these items, particularly Item 4 and Item 5 in the Ability Cluster and Item 26 in the Behavior Dispositions Cluster, is that almost all students (nearly 90 percent) performed prior community service work and most (80%) of these students spent two or more college semesters at such work. This previous experience would have likely given students opportunities to develop supervisory and public speaking skills and to work directly with targeted community populations. Consequently, students came into SIA projects with already high levels of the characteristics assessed by these items beyond which they could attribute only minimal change or project impact.

The relatively low but still positive interest expressed by students in social-advocacy as a career and in social-advocacy graduate studies may mean “social-advocacy” is not likely to be central to their careers or educational pursuits but will still be an active influence in their lives.

Finally, students were less affected by SIA in their willingness to change their views and opinions. Still 80 percent of the students indicated they were more willing to change their views and opinions following their SIA experience. There was no particular expectation that SIA would bring about this kind of change, although previous SIA research found some students who were impacted this way.

CEQ Part D. Several questionnaire items were designed to assess SIA outcomes in three additional areas: Career Plans and Life Direction, Personal Development; and Political/Religious/Social Views. Table 4 presents mean scores and the percent distribution of student responses in descending order by mean score in each of these three areas:

**Table 4. Student Outcomes: Career Plans and Life Direction, Personal Development, and Political/Religious/Social Views
(In Descending Order by Mean Score)**

Questionnaire Item	N	Mean	Percent			
			Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Career Plans and Life Direction						
1. SIA opened my eyes to new possibilities in life.	25	3.40	56.0	36.0	0.0	8.0
2. I now have a clearer sense of purpose and direction in life because of SIA.	25	2.80	24.0	48.0	12.0	16.0
3. SIA affirmed the career plans I already had.	23	2.78	30.4	34.8	17.4	17.4
4. SIA helped to clarify my career plans.	22	2.77	18.2	50.0	22.7	9.1
5. SIA has made me re-think what I want to do in the future.	24	2.45	16.7	41.7	12.5	29.2
6. As a result of SIA, I have changed my career plans.	23	2.30	4.4	43.5	30.4	21.7
7. SIA has influenced what college courses I want to take.	25	2.24	20.0	20.0	24.0	36.0
8. Because of SIA I am uncertain about what I want to do in the future.	25	2.08	12.0	24.0	24.0	40.0
Personal Development						
9. I am proud of the contribution I made to the SIA project.	26	3.88	88.5	11.5	0.0	0.0
10. SIA helped me develop important new skills/abilities.	26	3.58	57.7	42.3	0.0	0.0
11. I feel better about myself after having worked in SIA.	23	3.52	69.6	21.7	0.0	8.7
12. As a result of SIA I am more introspective (i.e., inclined to self-examination).	25	3.16	40.0	44.0	8.0	8.0
Political/Religious/Social Views						
13. SIA has influenced my political views.	26	2.85	30.8	42.3	7.7	19.2
14. SIA has influenced my religious views.	25	1.48	4.0	8.0	20.0	68.0
15. SIA has changed the way I view project recipients.	24	3.08	41.7	37.5	8.3	12.5

With the exception of Item 1 under “Career Plans and Life Direction”, the items that have the highest mean scores and received nearly unanimous student agreement (Strongly Agree and Mildly Agree) fall into the “Personal Development” category. This finding indicates that skill development, strengthened self-concept, and an increased propensity toward self-reflection were among the most salient SIA outcomes for students found in this study.

In at least one respect SIA projects also influenced students’ career plans. Although most students remained just as certain about their career choice (Item 8) at the end of SIA as before SIA and did not change their career plans (Item 6), about two-thirds of the students said that SIA helped to clarify or reaffirm their career plans (Items 3 and 4).

SIA also seemed to impact students’ vision or outlook on the future. Nearly all students (92%) felt that SIA “opened my eyes to new possibilities in life” (Item 1). At the same time many students (72%) said they now have “a clearer sense of purpose and direction in life” (Item 2) and had also made them (58%) “re-think” what they want to do in the future (Item 5).

Table 4 results indicate that SIA had considerably less influence on students’ religious views (Item 14). On the other hand, about 73 percent of the students felt SIA influenced their political views, although the CEQ did not explore further how students’ political orientations (e.g., liberal /conservative) were affected.

CEQ Part F. The CEQ attempted to capture the impact of SIA from a holistic perspective. It presented four brief statements describing different types of impact that a student might experience as a result of having worked in SIA. They were developed from interviews conducted with SIA students in spring 2005 and were defined in the SIA report of that year as follows:

- **Reinforcement:** A reinforcement change is a process by which a student comes to recognize that some learning or personal characteristic has deepened, broadened, or otherwise intensified. In this process an individual becomes a more complete person as opposed to a different person. The initial characteristics that a student brings to SIA do not undergo a basic or dramatic change. An interaction takes place between the students’ initial characteristics and the SIA experience. A student chooses to participate in SIA because it is consistent or compatible with certain characteristics (interests, attitudes, etc.) he/she already possesses. These characteristics are then strengthened or accentuated through the SIA experience. In effect, the student becomes even more like the person he/she was before SIA.

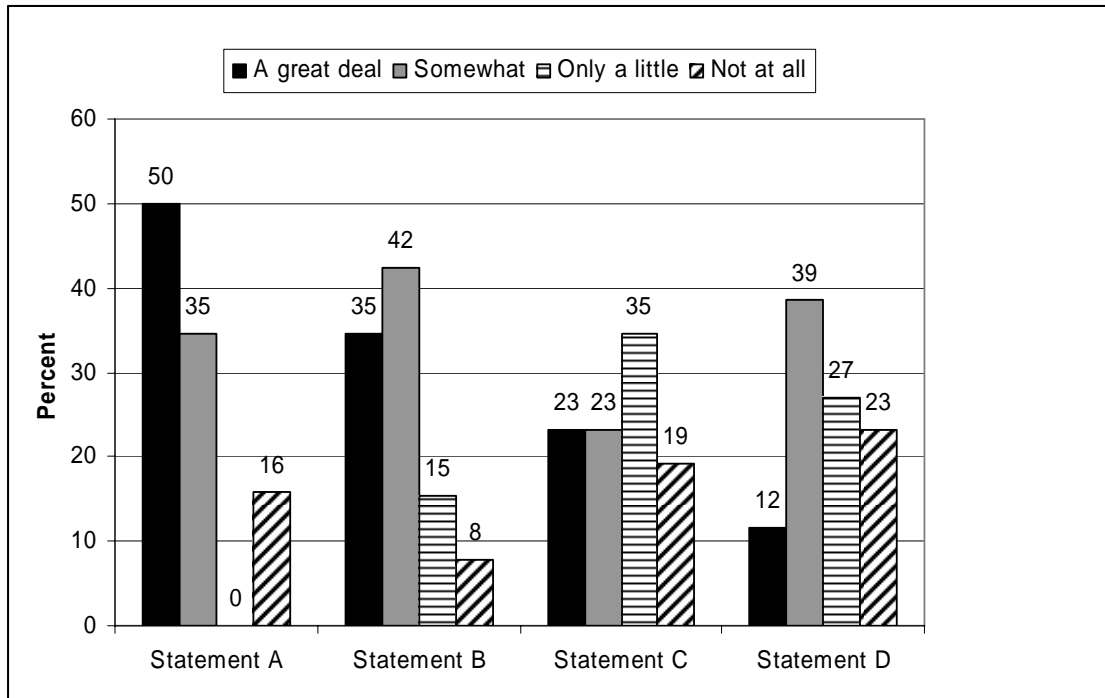
- **Developmental:** A student who undergoes a developmental change discovers something new or different about himself/herself. Whether it is new or different knowledge, skills, interests, and/or attitudes, the student acquires greater capacity or potential in the process. For developmental change to occur the student must be open to change or predisposed to accept rather than resist what is new or different about himself/herself. Developmental change is additive and heuristic. It adds something of personal value or importance to one's life and has the potential to influence and shape one's ongoing and future development

- **Transitional:** A student who is in the process of moving from one point in his/her life to another without fully completing the process is making a transitional change. A student can experience varying degrees of uncertainty and/or psychological discomfort during a transitional change depending on its importance to the individual. A transitional process is forward, not backward looking. The individual who is making a transition is not likely to turn back to his/her former self but rather to continue moving forward wherever the transition is likely to lead.

- **Transformative:** A transformative change is marked by a significant, short-term and possibly long-term, life-altering impact. The change may represent a turning point or decisive point in one's life which may carry through into some indefinite future. The individual is truly different now relative to the past and perceives this change to be very significant. Transformative change is also developmental but differs from the latter in the degree of significance that the individual attaches to the change. A transformed individual has made a major turnabout or changed the direction in some important aspect of his/her life. At the level of its greatest impact transformative change affects the whole person, not simply a narrow aspect of a person's life.

Each statement above was then turned into a CEQ question in greatly abbreviated and simplified terms. Statement A on the CEQ was intended to represent Reinforcement; Statement B, Developmental; Statement C, Transitional; and Statement D, Transformative. Students were asked to respond to each statement in terms of how well it described their SIA experience. They were then asked to select the one statement that best described their experience. Figure 1 displays the percent distribution of responses from all 26 students to each of the four statements:

Figure 1. Distribution of Student Responses to SIA Impact Statements



Statement A (Reinforcement): I am still basically the same person I was when I started the SIA project. However, in certain ways I have become both deepened and broadened by the experience. Although the project has not changed my life drastically, it has definitely added to my skills and affected some of the feelings and attitudes I had before SIA.

Statement B (Developmental): Through my SIA experience I have discovered something new and different about myself.

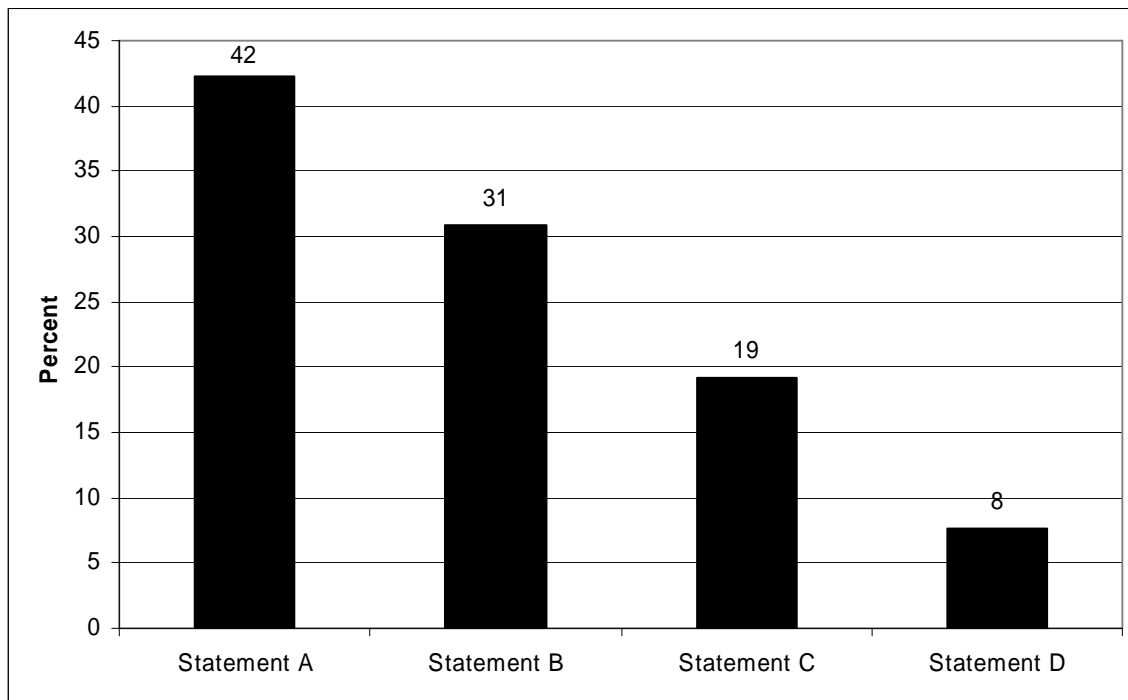
Statement C (Transitional): I am in transition, moving from one phase of my life to another. SIA has made me re-think what I want to do in the future. It has opened up new possibilities that I had not considered before.

Statement D (Transformative): The SIA project has had a significant, possibly long-term, life-altering impact on me. I consider the impact of SIA as a turning point in my life. In certain respects I am a very different person than I was before SIA.

Figure 1 shows that 85 percent of students chose Statement A as the one that best describes (i.e., “A great deal” or “Somewhat”) the impact of SIA. Statement B follows with 77 percent, Statement C with 46 percent, and Statement D with 51 percent. These results indicate that each statement contains at least some elements that describe a student’s SIA experience, or to put it another way, no single statement fully describes the experience. Some combination of elements from different statements must, therefore, provide the best description of SIA impacts for any given student.

It is almost but not entirely clear from Figure 1 which single statement comes closest to describing SIA impacts. The CEQ asked students to select the one statement that best describes their experience. Figure 2 displays these results:

Figure 2. Distribution of Student Responses to the Single Most Descriptive Impact Statement



Statement A (N=26): I am still basically the same person I was when I started the SIA project. However, in certain ways I have become both deepened and broadened by the experience. Although the project has not changed my life drastically, it has definitely added to my skills and affected some of the feelings and attitudes I had before SIA.

Statement B (N=26): Through my SIA experience I have discovered something new and different about myself.

Statement C (N=26): I am in transition, moving from one phase of my life to another. SIA has made me re-think what I want to do in the future. It has opened up new possibilities that I had not considered before.

Statement D (N=26): The SIA project has had a significant, possibly long-term, life-altering impact on me. I consider the impact of SIA as a turning point in my life. In certain respects I am a very different person than I was before SIA.

The precedence of each statement is clear: Reinforcement first, followed by Developmental, Transitional, and Transformative. These results are probably not surprising. Reinforcement and Developmental impacts are, by definition, not as deep or dramatic as are Transitional and Transformative impacts. This is not meant to diminish the importance or significance of SIA impacts brought about by Reinforcement or Developmental experiences. Arguably, however, students who are re-thinking their future (Transitional) and/or who have undergone a major life change (Transformative) as a result of SIA are more profoundly affected than students who continue to develop and grow in ways that follow a smoother path from their past experiences and who do not require major, new life adjustments.

It is noteworthy that SIA has made such a profound difference for as many as 25 percent of the students as Figure 2 above shows.

Student Attitudes and Opinions

The CEQ explored student attitudes and opinions about community service and society without regard, however, to whether any such changes might have occurred as a result of SIA. Previous studies of CSU service learning courses and SIA projects have shown that students place a high value on community service. The current study was expected to produce similar findings. Personal interviews with SIA students in spring 2005 revealed that students held certain kinds of attitudes about society, specifically about society's commitment and ability to deal with issues of social and economic inequality and to alleviate or eliminate hunger, homelessness, and social prejudice. Ten CEQ items were developed from the interviews to assess attitudes toward community service and society among students in this follow-up study of SIA projects. Student responses to these are shown in Table 5:

**Table 5. Student Responses to Questions Assessing Attitudes and Opinions about Community Service and Society
(In Descending Order by Mean Score)**

Questionnaire Item	N	Mean	Percent			
			Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Community Service						
1. Being involved in a program to improve my community is a high priority for me.	25	3.80	80.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
2. Everyone should give some of their free time to community service.	25	3.76	76.0	24.0	0.0	0.0
3. Contributing to the solutions of community problems is my responsibility.	25	3.68	72.0	24.0	4.0	0.0
Society						
4. Society has the ability and resources to alleviate social injustice.	25	3.56	64.0	28.0	8.0	0.0
5. The problem of addressing community problems is more complex than I had originally thought.	25	3.36	52.0	36.0	8.0	4.0
6. Most disadvantaged people got that way because of circumstances beyond their control.	24	3.25	50.0	33.3	8.3	8.3
7. Most people really care about helping others in need.	25	2.88	24.0	44.0	28.0	4.0
8. Society lacks the will to eliminate social injustice.	24	2.75	33.3	25.0	25.0	16.7
9. All we can really hope to accomplish in social advocacy work is to help people through hard times.	23	2.07	8.7	17.4	47.8	26.1
10. Life is getting better rather than getting worse for most people who are less fortunate.	23	1.78	0.0	26.1	26.1	47.8

Results reported in Table 5 indicate the following:

- As expected, students exhibit a strong commitment to community service, as evidenced by responses to Items 1-3.
- Nearly all students (92%) believe that society has the ability to address social justice issues (Item 4), although many fewer students (58%) feel that society has the will to do so.
- Student responses (74%) to Item 9 suggest that society can do better than just helping people through difficult times.
- Most (83%) believe that people become disadvantaged because of circumstances beyond their control rather than of their own making (Item 6).
- A majority of students (73%) also see a worsening trend toward the plight of people in need (Item 10).
- Most students (88%) recognize that the problems they were addressing in their SIA projects are more complex than they originally thought (Item 5).

In summary, students appear both pessimistic and optimistic about society. On the one hand, they feel that the problems of the disenfranchised and disadvantaged are getting worse and that society lacks the determination to resolve these issues. On the other hand, students feel society is capable of solving these problems and that they have a commitment and duty to be actively involved in making life better for others.

SIA Project Value

Students were asked to evaluate their campus SIA project. Table 6 reports student responses to four assessment questions:

**Table 6. Assessment of Campus SIA Projects
(In Descending Order by Mean Score)**

Questionnaire Item	N	Mean	Percent				
			V. High	High	Med.	Low	V. Low
1. Support received from campus program staff	26	4.58	61.5	34.6	3.9	0	0
2. Importance of the project goals	26	4.54	65.4	23.1	11.5	0	0
3. How well the project was implemented	26	4.42	50	42.3	7.7	0	0
4. How much the project helped recipients	26	4.23	30.8	61.5	7.7	0	0

Scale: V. High=5, High=4, Med.=3, Low=2, V. Low=1

Nearly 90 percent or more of the students indicated that:

- SIA projects pursued important goals,
- projects were well implemented,
- projects were effective in helping people, and
- projects received strong support from campus staff

A comparison of mean scores suggests that students feel more positive about the importance of project goals (4.54) and the way projects were carried out (4.42) than with the success of the projects in helping clients (4.23).

Table 7 provides additional feedback from students on the personal and educational value of SIA projects:

Table 7. Personal and Educational Value of Campus SIA Projects

Questionnaire Item	Response	N	Percent
1. To what extent did the SIA project meet your personal goals?	A great deal	11	42.3
	Some	14	53.9
	Only a little	1	3.9
	Not at all	0	0.0
2. Overall how would you rate The SIA project as an educational experience?	Excellent	13	50.0
	Very good	10	38.4
	Good	2	7.7
	Fair	1	3.9
	Poor	0	0.0
3. How would you compare the SIA project with other educational experiences you have had?	Excellent	16	61.5
	Very good	9	34.6
	Good	1	3.9
	Fair	0	0.0
	Poor	0	0.0

Almost all students gave the two highest ratings on each of the three questions. Twenty-five of the 26 students reported that their personal goals were mostly met. Twenty-three of the 26 students said that the educational value of SIA was either “Excellent” or “Very good”. Similarly, 25 of the 26 students rated campus SIA projects as “Excellent” or “Very good” compared with other educational experiences they have had.

Conclusion

The results of this study clearly indicate that SIA projects at Humboldt, Monterrey Bay, San Jose, and San Luis Obispo led to many positive student outcomes. Students performed numerous activities from which they derived considerable value, especially activities involving project management, interaction and communication with project recipients and members in targeted communities, development of teaching materials, and project development through fund raising, recruitment, and outreach publicity.

Significant project impact was exhibited in all areas assessed: ability, self-understanding, social perceptions, interest/motivation, and behavior dispositions. The most salient impacts on students in these areas included a heightened sense of inner self-confidence and self-efficacy, and a deeper understanding of and empathy with project recipients. Career plans were reaffirmed and student self-concept was also strengthened by SIA. However, SIA did not greatly influence students' political, religious, or social views.

Most students described the impact of SIA as a reinforcing and developmental experience – one that deepened and broadened their outlook on the lives of poor and marginal populations, gave them new skills, and facilitated the discovery of something new and different about themselves. For other students SIA was a transitional and transformative experience. It opened up new possibilities in life they had not considered before and brought about the realization they had become a very different kind of person at the end of SIA than they were at the beginning.

This study explored students' attitudes about community service and society. Students indicated they want to be actively involved in community service work. They feel optimistic that society has the wherewithal to solve the kinds of problems they addressed in their SIA projects but that society lacks the will to do so.

Finally, students evaluated the SIA project goals, implementation, project outcomes, and campus support very highly. They also derived significant personal value from SIA and considered SIA as one of the best educational experiences they have had.