

**Letter of Understanding
April 2008**

The Master's of Public Administration (MPA) 550 and the Political Science (PLS) 417 courses on policy process and program evaluation-- in collaboration with:

City of Pomona Housing Office located at:
Agency

505 Garey Ave.
Street

<u>Pomona.</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>91766</u>
City	State	Zip

will implement an evaluation of the Weed and Seed Program.

The objective of the study effort will be to describe and examine current efforts in the target area and to compare and contrast the 2008 data with information collected and analyzed in 2005.

The Objective of the Study:

Based on materials provided by city administrators and police officers, in-depth discussions with the Weed and Seed Steering Committee and a focus group meeting on April 15, 2008, the MPA 550/PLS 417 classes will provide an assessment of the posttest conditions and challenges facing the Weed and Seed program.

Program Design

Weed and Seed is a community-based strategy sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and is an innovative, comprehensive multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and community revitalization. The Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) of the Department of Justice (DoJ) oversees the Weed and Seed initiative.

Weed and Seed aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country. The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in "weeding out" violent criminals and drug abusers while public agencies and community-based organizations collaborate to "seed" much-needed human services, including prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration efforts. A community-oriented policing component bridges the weeding and seeding components of the DoJ strategy.

Community policing embraces two key concepts: community engagement and problem solving. Community policing fosters a sense of responsibility within the community for solving crime and develops cooperative relationships between the police and residents.

The prevention, intervention, and treatment components concentrate on an array of services that links law enforcement with social services agencies, the non-profit sector, and the community to improve the quality of life for area residents. Weed and Seed sites are required to establish safe havens, multi-service centers where youth and adult services are available. Through coordinated use of federal, state, local, and private-sector resources, neighborhood restoration strategies

focus on economic development and improvements to housing and the physical environment of the neighborhood.

The Weed and Seed program services include safe havens located at:

- Renacimiento in the Angela Chancellor neighborhood
- Philadelphia Community Center at 600 E. Philadelphia Street
- Lexington Elementary School at Lexington and Park

In 2005 the City sought to provide academic courses, mentoring, prevention education, recreation activities, job training, anti-drug education, community based policing, safe corridors, youth leadership, anti-gang education, victim assistance, community projects, (e.g. clean-ups) and general health screening services to youth at safe haven centers. In 2008, the evaluation team will assess what programs have been provided and the resident's response to these efforts.

Additional resources in the area will mean more police and truancy officers, youth-related programs, code enforcement officers and improved infrastructure in target neighborhoods.

The Weed and Seed clientele are residents of the City of Pomona located in three police reporting districts (83, 84 and 87) bordered by: Lexington Ave. (north), Reservoir Street (east) and the 60 and 71 Freeways to the south and west. The population of this community is estimated to be about 15,000 residents.

Based on elite interviews and a focus group the information needs are as follows:

- Are residents engaged in community efforts?
- Is there trust between residents and city agencies?
- Do residents feel safer than in 2005?
- Is there support by providers and the community to sustain existing efforts?
- What should the City's role when federal and local funding diminishes or ends?

South Pomona's primary need is a reduction in criminal and gang activity. There is a need to improve education, specifically an increase in literacy and after school programs for youth. Finally, community pride, civic awareness and a willingness to participate in community efforts were identified as core objectives.

Of the top two areas of concern: crime reduction is seen as best measured by calls to police, felonies and incidents of gang activity. After-school programs and youth program efforts will be assessed based on resident response to programs and the number of net new services for youth in the area as a consequence of Weed and Seed initiatives.

Expectations include:

- ☑ Greater understanding and cooperation between residents and the Pomona Police Department,
- ☑ A reduction in crime and gang activity in the area,
- ☑ After school programs and expanded enrichment activities for youth,
- ☑ Improved and increased adult/parental involvement in programs for area youth
- ☑ Integrated social services leading to self-sufficiency and a reduction of social ills,
- ☑ Increased adult services to support the integration of immigrant families into community life
- ☑ Increased resident participation in community projects resulting in unity and cooperation among neighbors

The Final Report:

Executive Summary

Describe assessment issues, methodologies, findings and recommendations

I. Weed and Seed Evaluation

A. The Weed and Seed Program Description

Overview, vision, target population, target area, history, and scope of services.

B. Perceptions of Program and Criteria for Assessment

Focus group and elite interviews with Weed and Seed Oversight Board

C. Program Efforts:

Examination and analysis of elite interviews with service providers and on-site observations.

D. Resident Response

Resident Surveys: Analysis of community differences between 2005 and 2008 knowledge and response to efforts, analysis of influence on resident view of neighborhoods.

E. On-site Assessment of Neighborhoods and neighborhood life

Observer-participant field observations

F. Crime: The Public Record

Records of crime from 2001-2007 and assessment of changes in and around target areas.

G. Conclusions and Recommendations

Applying criteria to data on program efforts and effects

H. References

- Appendices
 - Focus Group Summary Chart*
 - Summary of Provider Data*
 - Charts, Tables and Graphs*
 - Field Observations Form*
 - Citizen Surveys*
 - Area Map*

The Study Plan:

The MPA 550/PLS 417 study will be comprised of four sections: elite interviews of program service providers and the Weed and Seed Steering Committee, a resident survey, field observations and analysis of annual police summary reports. The specifics of the research design, methods to be used and analysis are noted below.

Methodology

Resident Survey

In an effort to determine community attitudes and perceptions relevant to issues addressed by the Weed and Seed Program, the assessment team (Cal Poly Students) conducted a household survey in 2005 (pretest) and will conduct a comparable survey in 2008. A random selection of households in all quadrants of the target community will be employed. The 2008 survey is comprised of predetermined questions regarding community life, relations, Weed and Seed services, programs, neighborhood events as well as demographic questions about participants. The sample size is approximately 400 residents. Survey teams will provide a letter to each respondent that authorizes the survey team to conduct research and encourages participation in the study. Upon completion of the surveys, the teams will present respondents with a thank you gift in appreciation for their participation. The resident surveys compiled in 2005 will provide the baseline data for the analysis of the data collected in 2008. In addition, the second resident survey will enable evaluators to summarize and identify any significant differences within or among residents of the target community.

Service Provider Elite Interviews

Since 2005, the Weed and Seed program has supported ten community programs and three safe haven sights. The researchers will interview spokespersons for each of these programs. The interview guide has 14 open ended questions regarding: projected outcomes, personnel, facilities, costs, record keeping and sustainability. The objective of these interviews is to compare and contrast efforts in the target community. A summary of the interviews will be incorporated in the final report to the city of Pomona and the Weed and Seed Oversight Board.

The interview guide has been reviewed by Weed and Seed Board co-chairs and the program's administrator

Field Observations

Field observations will be done before and after the implementation of the Weed & Seed Program. Evaluators will use a standardized observation form with questions about physical features and the extent of resident use of public space. The observers will rate the level of maintenance and repair evident at schools, residencies, and commercial buildings. Observers will take note of areas afflicted by noise, traffic, and debris. Examples of questions for observers may include:

“Is there garbage or broken glass in the street or on the sidewalks?”

“Is there paper trash, litter, or junk in the street or on the sidewalks?”

“Are there cigarette or cigar butts or discarded cigarette packages on the sidewalk or in the gutters?”

Most questions will have standardized options -- such as: “almost none”, “yes, but not a lot”, “yes, quite a bit” and “yes, almost everywhere.” Other areas of note may include: the number of parked cars, the volume of traffic and visibility of police or security personnel in the area.

Records analysis

Secondary data sources for this evaluation will come from the Pomona Police Department (PPD) on offenses and arrests by reporting districts for 2005 to 2007. This data will be incorporated with the reports from 2002 to 2004 to determine if there have been significant shifts in crime rates in and around the target area.

The PPD data allows comparisons between the target area and the immediate surrounding reporting districts as well as within the target community. The data will be summarized and analyzed to identify any significant area differences.

Communication

In order to assure that the study meets the needs of the City of Pomona and that resources are used effectively, the MPA/PLS classes and city administrators will be in contact during the course of the study. Copies of elite interviews, focus group meetings, drafts of field instruments and citizen surveys will be shared with staff for their review and comment. The Weed and Seed Steering Committee and city staff have had an opportunity to add, change and/or delete questions from the resident survey. For specifics on what materials will be shared at what times during this study, see Research Schedule discussion below.

Preparatory Steps:

Elite interviews

On April 15, 2008, the Cal Poly Pomona MPA/PLS research team conducted elite interviews with members of the City of Pomona leadership, Weed and Seed Steering Committee, Pomona agencies, and residents. The research team interviewed nine representatives from the city regarding their views of the core issues in the target area. Each Weed and Seed Committee representative spoke with two or more researchers about the nature of their participation in the program, successes, challenges and the scope of questions and issues that need to be addressed in the posttest phase of the evaluation.

This methodology used open-ended questions regarding respondent's experience and work in the community. Questions were designed to explore the steering committee's perceptions of the programs achievements and challenges. The elite interviews enabled committee members to elaborate on their participation, observations, and experiences in the target area thereby providing more complete picture of the issues facing the City of Pomona. This research approach provided the student research team with qualitative data.

As a result of this exercise two priority areas emerged: reduction in crime/gang activity and expansion of programs for youth. Crime reduction is seen as best measured by calls to police and declines in the number of incidents of gang activity. Involvement by youth in local programs is harder to assess, in the short term. While it provides youth with social, career and academic options the utility of these programs are typically realize in the long term. For the purposes of this evaluation, knowledge of these programs and a positive response to program efforts will be used to assess program impact.

Focus group

A focus group was also held on April 15th with members of the Weed and Seed steering committee comprised of community leaders (church & youth group leaders), officials (members of the police department and city administrators) and residents. Dr. Emerson conducted the focus group and discussed the process and ground rules. Each member of the committee introduced him/herself, shared information about his/her background and drafted a hypothetical headline that he/she would like to see represent the success of the Weed and Seed program in 2008. The headline enabled participants to focus on their long term vision for their community while providing a sense of ownership to communicate positive changes.

After the introductions, participants discussed each of the program efforts undertaken since 2005. They shared their understanding of the challenges programs faced and accomplishments realized and/or anticipated. In conclusion the group discussed the criteria established by the Department of Justice to empower citizens to work cooperatively in building safer communities. This overall objective is shared by members of the Weed and Seed Committee.

The notes from the meeting have been compiled and will be forwarded to the staff liaison for comments and corrections. This data along with the elite interviews will be part of the overall discussion of the Weed and Seed program, evaluation objectives and criteria that will be used to analyze program efforts in the 2008 final report.

Research Schedule

	DATE	DESCRIPTION/PRODUCT	Location and Persons Involved
1	April 1	Evaluation Team Meets for introduction to practicum course.	Cal Poly University 98-5-007
2	April 8	Meeting with Weed and Seed Administrators	Cal Poly University 98-5-007
3	April 15	Meeting with Weed and Seed Oversight Committee Focus Group/Elite Interview	Members of Weed and Seed Steering Committee, MPA/PLS students at Downtown Center
4	April 22 April 26	Draft Letter of Understanding Finalize elite interviews. Resident Surveys	MPA 550/PLS 417 Email notes to Steering Committee. Students survey resident using post test survey instrument approved by Co Chairs and University IRB
5	May 3	Complete Resident Surveys and data input.	Students in field and/or Social Science Lab 1-317.
6	May 6	Analyze Resident Surveys	Cal Poly 98-5 007
7	May 13	MPA 550 Students compare and contrast data from provider elite surveys PLS 417 students organized for field observations and data collection. Revalidate field instrument. Forward instrument to City of Pomona.	Cal Poly 98-5 007 Cal Poly 98-5 007 In field from May 14-26
8	May 20	Completed Field Survey Data Submitted Discussion of Police Records Process	Data submitted by email Pomona Police Department and MPA/PLS will meet at PPD Station at Mission and Park streets in Pomona.
9	May 27	Draft Research Report and Power Point Presentation	Cal Poly 98-5 007
10	June 3	Finalize Report, forward draft report to City of Pomona, rehearse presentation	Cal Poly 98-5 007
10		Final Report and Presentation	TEAM – Downtown Center, Pomona, CA.

MPA 550

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Kinnick,Amy	
Mielish,Robert	
Solis,Hector	
Truong,Michael	
Carrillo, Juan	

PLS 417/417a

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