

**Pathway Goal:** Community Partnerships    **Report:** Mid-Year: December 2017  
**Action Item #** 7-1

**Action Item Description:**

Goal: Help solve community problems.  
 Action: Identify UNLV resources and expertise that may be employed to assist in capacity building designed to help address the most pressing community needs.

**Submitted By:**

Name	Department
Sue DiBella	Office of Community Engagement

---

**Working Group Members:**

Name	Department
Carlton Craig	School of Social Work
Sue DiBella	Office of Community Engagement
Helen Neill	Greenspun Urban Affairs
Patty Cook-Craig	School of Leadership and Public Policy
Vivek Sah	Lee Business School
Shawn Gerstenberger	School of Community Health Sciences
Natalia Samoylova	School of Social Work
Garth Winckler	Community Member
Rae Lathrop	Community Member
Gillian Barclay	Community Member

---

**Process and Timeline: Provide a brief summary of the year-long process for your working group.**

Framed through the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare (AASWSW), this subcommittee works “to champion social progress powered by science. It’s a call to action for social work researchers and practitioners to:

- Harness social work’s science and knowledge base;
- Collaborate with individuals, community-based organizations, and professionals from all fields and disciplines; and
- Work together to tackle some of our toughest social problems.”

1a) Identify local issues, needs assessments, and relevant community organizations associated with each of the 12 grand challenges, and b) to identify current UNLV faculty expertise in each area.

2. Working Group #7 will recommend focus on one of the grand challenges (End homelessness) initially as a pilot and seek support for pursuit of this focus by the UNLV Top Tier leadership.

3. The group will utilize the findings of the GA on needs assessment, UNLV expertise, and relevant community groups on the issue of homelessness.

4. Meetings of UNLV personnel (deans and faculty with expertise in the area) and community groups will be scheduled for discussion of a project plan(s) within the area of homelessness.

5. Project teams will emerge from the discussion; each project team will research grant opportunities to pursue in partnership with relevant nonprofits.

6. Grants proposals will include funding for postdocs in order to build UNLV non-faculty research staff (supporting the Top Tier Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity Goal) and to provide the project (and its faculty leaders) with the personnel to produce deliverables.

**Describe what has been accomplished so far this year.**

*Harness social work’s science and knowledge base*

Dr. Carlton Craig, the director of the School of Social Work and co-chair of Working Group #7, has developed a conceptual framework that uses a systems level approach and is transdisciplinary in nature (see attachment). This model incorporates the “12 Grand Challenges of Social Work” with the goal of developing practice-based research networks in the community that facilitate collaborative grant writing to address community problems. The ultimate goal is to increase prevention programs, promote UNLV collaborations with the community, increase application of evidence-based practices, and advance community resilience. This year, the working group chose homelessness as its focus. A School of Social Work GA (working 20 hours per week with Dr. Craig) has developed a list of campus experts on homelessness (and related subjects) and has identified and synthesized several gaps analyses on the subject of homelessness as well as needs assessments from across the nation, Nevada, and for Clark County.

*Collaborate with individuals, community-based organizations, and professionals from all fields and disciplines*

Numerous collaborations with the homelessness service community have been developed thus far. Dr. Craig has applied to be a member of the Continuum of Care Committee starting in 2018 which is a steering committee for homeless resources and services in Clark County. He has met with several members and a subcommittee that represented Clark County human services and a number of other homeless serving agencies in Clark County (e.g., Nevada partnership for Homeless Youth, The Nest, and Sands Corporation). Social Work had a presence at the 2017 Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit. A number of social work students volunteered their help with the focus group session. GA Natasha Samoylova attended and took notes for the committee. Dr. Craig was a co-author of a white paper titled, "The State of Youth Homelessness in Nevada" that was presented by two of the keynote speakers, Drs. Patty Cook-Craig (UNLV School of Public Policy and Leadership) and Jennifer Guthrie, Ph.D (UNLV Department of Communications) (Cook-Craig, Guthrie, Sousa, Craig, Tudor, Word & Jacobowitz, 2017).

*Work together to tackle some of our toughest social problems.*

**1. Identify local issues, needs assessments, and relevant community organizations associated with each of the 12 national grand challenges and identify current UNLV faculty expertise in each area.**

The goal of the project that began in the beginning of fall was aimed at reducing homelessness through effective community-university partnership. The novelty of this project required a multidimensional approach. We started by identifying the extent of the problem, as well as local key players and university faculty interested in this population. On the national level we explored homelessness, current interventions used, and different subpopulations within the populations of interest. Several subpopulations were identified: homeless youth, including sexually trafficked children, immigrants and refugees; LGBTQ youth; homeless veterans; homeless families; homeless single adults; and chronic homeless people often with mental illness and/or substance dependence.

Next, we explored interventions, examined issues at the state level, and outlined the gaps analyses. These analyses produced several themes, including lack of affordable housing; issues with shelters, including narrow operating hours and limited availability of beds; limited transportation options; lack of animal services for those who have animals; lack of 24/7 food pantries in locations that are easily accessible; lack of a one-stop location where homeless individuals can have their many needs met; challenges with informational guides to services for homelessness; criminal justice issues; and healthcare for homeless populations.

**2. Working Group #7 will recommend focus on one of the grand challenges (End homelessness) initially as a pilot and seek support for pursuit of this focus by the UNLV Top Tier leadership.**

Homelessness has been identified as the first of the 12 challenges to be pursued, and members of Working Group #7 were selected for the special expertise they bring to this subject. This group met for the first time Nov. 30, and a presentation on the work-to-date was made. Additionally, meetings have been held with deans and directors of relevant programs.

**3. The group will utilize the findings of the GA on needs assessment, UNLV expertise, and relevant community groups on the issue of homelessness.**

Based on the information gathered, the working group will pursue several short- and long-term action plans, including:

- Continuing to meet with agencies and organizations providing services to the homeless and developing sustainable partnerships
- Supporting faculty/student scholarly activity on the issue of homelessness
- Partnering with/supporting UNLV's Hope Scholars Program
- Exploring use of technology to reach students who are food insecure
- Assisting agencies with creating more accessible homeless services guides

**Identify next steps.**

1. Meetings of UNLV personnel (deans and faculty with expertise in the area) and community groups will be scheduled for discussion of project plan(s) within the area of homelessness.
2. Project teams will emerge from the discussion; each project team will research grant opportunities to pursue in partnership with relevant nonprofits.
3. Grants proposals will include funding for postdocs in order to build UNLV non-faculty research staff (supporting the Top Tier Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity Goal) and to provide the project (and its faculty leaders) with the personnel to produce deliverables.

**What will your final product be at the end of the year? Such as, what metrics which will be used to assess your progress/achievement, will a report be generated, etc?**

The following products will be produced this year:

- A report on the findings of the School of Social Work graduate assistant.
- A list of community agencies and organizations the provide services to the homeless.
- A list of UNLV faculty with expertise in the area of homelessness or a related subject area.
- A meeting of UNLV faculty with expertise in the area of homeless or related subjects will be convened with representatives of key agencies and organizations serving the homeless.

You may have reference material to attach to this report. Select from the list.

No additional reference material

**OR**

Any material generated by this working group (if completed at this time)

*Local Community Needs – Addressing Homelessness*

**Additional information to include (optional).**

---

**End of Mid-Year Report**  
**Remainder of the report will be completed in May.**

---

**Year-End**

**This portion is to be completed in May.**

### 2017-18 Accomplishments.

--

### SWOT Analysis: Determine the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats presented in the data.

Strength(s)	
Weakness(es)	
Opportunity(ies)	
Threat(s)	

### 2018-19 recommendations and next steps

- **What does the SWOT analysis reveal?**
- **What should the goals / activities be for the subcommittee?**
- **Who should be responsible?**

--

### You may have reference material to attach to this report. Select from the list.

<input type="checkbox"/> No additional reference material
<b>OR</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Any material generated by this working group

### Additional information to include (optional).

--

---

**End of Report**

---

## **Local Community Needs – Addressing Homelessness Working Group Seven Report**

**Goal:** Help solve community problems.

**Action:** Identify UNLV resources and expertise that may be employed to assist in capacity building designed to help address the most pressing community needs.

**Who is Responsible?** Led by Carlton Craig and Sue DiBella.

Subcommittee: Helen Neill, Patty Cook-Craig, Vivek Sah, Shawn Gerstenberger, Natalia Samoylova, Garth Winckler, Rae Lathrop, and Gillian Barclay.

### **Measurable outcome 1:**

Harness social work's science and knowledge base

### **Accomplished so far this year:**

Dr. Carlton Craig the director of the School of Social Work and co-chair of working group seven has developed a conceptual framework that uses a systems level approach and is transdisciplinary in nature (see attachment page six). This model incorporates the 12 grand challenges of social work with the goal of developing practice based research networks in the community that leads to collaborative grant writing with community agencies in order to address 12 major community problems. The ultimate goal being to increase prevention programs, UNLV collaborations with the community, increase application of evidence based practices, and community resilience. This year the working group chose homelessness as the problem focus. A social work GA working 20 hours per week with Dr. Craig has developed a list of expertise on campus that may pertain to homeless and has identified and synthesized several gaps analyses and needs assessments done across the Nation, Nevada, and for Clark County on homelessness.

### **Measurable Outcome 2:**

Collaborate with individuals, community-based organizations, and professionals from all fields and disciplines.

### **Accomplished so far this year:**

Numerous collaborations with the homelessness service community have been developed thus far. Dr. Craig has applied to be a member of the Continuum of Care Committee starting in 2018 which is a steering committee for homeless resources and services in Clark County. He has met with several members and a subcommittee that represented Clark county human services and a number of other homeless serving agencies in Clark County (e.g., Nevada partnership for Homeless Youth, The Nest, and Sands Corporation). Social Work had a presence at the 2017 Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit. A number of social work students volunteered and helped for the

focus group session, GA Natasha Samoylova attended and took notes for the committee and Dr. Craig was a co-author of a white paper titled, The State of Youth Homelessness in Nevada that was presented by two of the keynote speakers, Drs. Patty Cook-Craig (UNLV School of Public Policy and Leadership) and Jennifer Guthrie, Ph.D (UNLV Department of Communications) (Cook-Craig, Guthrie, Sousa, Craig, Tudor, Word & Jacobowitz, 2017).

### **Measurable Outcome 3:**

Work together to tackle some of our toughest social problems.

### **Accomplished so Far this year:**

- 1. Identify local issues, needs assessments, and relevant community organizations associated with each of the 12 national grand challenges, and b) to identify current UNLV faculty expertise in each area.**

The goal of the project that began in the beginning of fall was aimed towards reducing homelessness through effective Community-University partnership. The novelty of this project required a multidimensional approach. We started by identifying the extent of the problem, local key players and university faculty who is interested in this population. On the National level we have looked at homelessness and current interventions used. There are many types of homelessness so the first challenge was to look into different subpopulations within the population of interest. There were several subpopulations identified: homeless youth including sexually trafficked children, immigrant and refugees, and LGBTQ youth, homeless veterans, homeless families, homeless single adults, and chronic homeless people often with mental illness and/or substance dependence. Each population has its own struggles and barriers. Homeless adolescents are hard to assess/find for homelessness and therefore it is hard to provide help for them. When it comes to families, it is essential to provide quick reliable interventions because there is always a threat of children being removed. Homeless vets are 40% more likely to reenter homelessness than any other population. Homeless students are quite difficult to identify and unless they come forward, they often fall between the cracks.

After we identified subpopulations, we looked at different interventions. We found that rapid rehousing programs are the most efficacious ones. Providing stable housing reduces stress, allows people to work on their addictions, drastically reduces child removals, and increases overall quality of life. Other programs like transitional housing, although sound, do not produce as robust of results. Additionally, and this may seem counterintuitive, rapid rehousing is a much cheaper option.

Our next step was to look at the state level and outline the problem. Nevada has one of the highest rates of homelessness when compared with other states. When we started looking into the gaps analyses we found several themes. One of them is the lack of affordable housing. The apartments that are provided by Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authorities are not readily available. You have to apply for openings as they

come. To get on section 8 a person has to be placed on the waitlist. Families, people with disabilities and veterans have a higher priority, and therefore would be housed sooner. Single people with no disabilities would have to wait their turn. If a family or someone with disability comes along, they would be bumped up the list, meaning that some people would be bumped down. When it comes to shelters, several gaps have been identified. Shelters have rigid operating hours and sometimes it is difficult for tenants to make those hours. Nevada has claimed a Functional zero status, which means any unsheltered vet can find a bed, but when it comes to non-veteran population, the shelters are often full.

Another big gap identified was transportation. Busses do not go to all locations in Las Vegas and Henderson. Many agencies that work with homeless populations are scattered across the valley and there is no one-stop-shop place. Many agencies provide bus passes, but they are fast to go. Another problem with transportation is the belongings that homeless people carry. Some people have many belongings and it is impossible to carry everything from one bus to another. Some additional barriers are lack of animal services for those who have animals and lack of 24/7 food pantries in locations that are easily accessible.

We conducted interviews with homeless people directly and found similar gaps. Most of homeless people report having difficulties with transportation. There is no unitary location where they can get all the needs met, so they have to commute from agency to agency and try to make it back to shelter on time, while keeping their possessions safe. There are no lockers that we know of, where people can drop off their belonging and safely travel about their business. Some homeless people report lack of knowledge on available resources and services that they might be eligible for. Although there are PDF files with comprehensive lists of services, the print is rather small and many homeless people have problems with vision. Moreover, people need to know where and how to look for those resources. They need internet access and phone access. After speaking with some police officers, we identified similar barriers. Some police officers are unaware of the local resources. When they apprehend homeless people they take them to jail and release them without providing a bus pass. When they have court dates set they might not have the means to make it to courthouse, and even then if they get community service hours, they are not provided with means for transportation. This creates unnecessary criminalization of the homeless population and possibly contributes to the problem in terms of making obtaining employment more difficult because of mounting legal record. Another route for homeless people is emergency rooms. Even if they do not have outstanding medical needs they still accrue medical bills that they are unable to pay if they do not have Medicaid insurance.

**2. Working Group #7 will recommend focus on one of the grand challenges (End homelessness) initially as a pilot and seek support for pursuit of this focus by the UNLV Top Tier leadership.**

Please see attached Model and we have been actively pursuing homelessness agencies and services as part of the 12 challenges. Many meetings have been held with Dean's and directors discussing the model including Dean Robert Ulmer of the Greenspun College of

Urban Affairs and Co-Chair of university community engagement committee, Richard Clark, Assistant Vice President of Campus Life.

**3. The group will utilize the findings of the GA on needs assessment, UNLV expertise, and relevant community groups on the issue of homelessness.**

Based on the information we gathered we came up with several short term and long term action plans. We first met with Richard Clark who is in charge of Hope Scholar program. We are currently working with him on the University Wide outreach to destigmatize student homelessness. We hope that by talking about it publically we can better identify the student homeless population. We also are working on coming up with a better identification system, but we believe first step is awareness.

We are employing technology to reach students who are food insecure. We had a meeting with Ryan Doyle who is in charge of UNLVSAFE app. We wanted to include a system where after faculty is done meeting, they can alarm students who identify as food insecure. Students then can come and get the rest of the food. Because there is already an app in place, this modification would be free for us. Another aspect to this is food safety. We have met with Mandy Martin who is Sands Senior Manager of Global Communications and Corporate Affairs. She was very interested in the project. Sands has been donating food for a while now and they have worked out much of the legal issues behind it. She connected us with the person who is in charge of the food donations. We will be meeting with Ryan Green shortly after the holidays to pick his brain about food donation legalities. Moreover, we might be able to generate some food donations from Sands for our students.

Some of the longer term goals that we have identified are creating a homeless services booklet. Booklet would be in large print and of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level. We will be placing pictures and maps in it as well. We are currently working to see how we can print such a large amount of copies and are identifying key “safe spots” where homeless people can come and pick up such booklets.

When it comes to community we have made some great connections. As stated earlier, we established good communication with Sands Cares and are hoping to continue and foster that relationship. We have met with the Continuum of Care Committee which represent approximately 31 homeless agencies and key stakeholders across Clark County and surrounding areas and presented our findings and goals to them. We were thrilled to find out that our gaps analysis outlined with their analysis and the goals were very similar. We hope to hear what challenges they have encountered when trying to eliminate those gaps so we could start to think more critically about them. We had established good contact with Libraries and are in negotiations to have social work students providing assessment and referral services at the libraries. They serve many homeless people and might be one of the key players when it comes to the distribution of resources. We have also made contact with LVPD and will be meeting with them shortly after the holidays. We are hoping to get more information from them and see how we can help them address homeless problems.

One of our committee members, Dr. Patty Cook-Craig has presented her study at the 2017 Southern Nevada Youth Homeless Summit. Dr. Carlton Craig and Judy Tudor collaborated with Dr. Cook-Craig on this white paper and presentation. In addition, Jennifer Guthrie, Ph.D. of the communication departments was a presenter. During the summit we made many valuable connections that we are looking to foster them into strong Community-University collaboration in order to reach common goals.

**Next steps:**

- 4. Meetings of UNLV personnel (deans and faculty with expertise in the area) and community groups will be schedule for discussion of project plan(s) within the area of homelessness.**

Some meetings have been held as discussed above and others scheduled. Meetings will be on-going in order to engage university expertise and match with community need.

- 5. Project teams will emerge from the discussion; each project team will research grant opportunities to pursue in partnership with relevant nonprofits.**

In spring 2018, after more meetings are held and interest/buy-in is obtained Project teams will be discussed. Formed, and introduced to community partners.

- 6. Grants proposals will include funding for postdocs in order to build UNLV non-faculty research staff (supporting the Top Tier Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity Goal) and to provide the project (and its faculty leaders) with the personnel to produce deliverables.**

Possible grant collaborations have been discussed with agencies and many are interested and in dire need of help with grant writing and are quite ready to partner. Once project teams are discussed projects will move forward hopefully by late spring 2018.



## UNLV Transdisciplinary Based Community Engagement: Rebels for Community Solutions

### Community Needs Assessment

1. State & County assessments
2. Agency-based assessments
3. National Comparisons
4. Community practitioners

### Transdisciplinary Approach

1. Transdisciplinary Research
  - a. Graduate Assistants
  - b. Post Doctoral Fellowships
  - c. Transdisciplinary Doctoral Education
  - d. Research Institutes
2. Transdisciplinary Practice
3. Practice Based Research Networks
4. Evidence Based Approaches
5. Grant Writing and Procuring

### Twelve Grand Challenges of Social Work

1. Ensure Healthy Development for all youth
2. Close the Health Gap
3. Stop Family Violence
4. Advance Long and Productive Lives
5. Eradicate Social Isolation
6. End Homelessness
7. Create Social Responses to changing environment
8. Harness technology for social good
9. Promote smart decarceration
10. Reduce extreme economic inequality
11. Build financial capability for all
12. Achieve equal opportunity and justice

### University Expertise

1. Research Expertise
2. Training and teaching
3. Community involvement
4. Community practitioners

### Community Solutions

- 1) Increased prevention programs
- 2) Increased UNLV & Community Collaboration
- 3) Increased evidence based approaches
- 4) Decrease in problem epidemiology
- 5) Increased Community Resilience