STANDING COMMITTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

UW Tacoma: Action Mapping Project (AMP)

INFORMATION ITEM

AMP is a community mapping initiative that is working directly with youth to generate actionable spatial data about youth experiences and perceptions of neighborhood spaces and pathways. In partnership with Tacoma Public Schools AMP Community Mapping Centers are being established in each Tacoma area high school. AMP Centers engage middle-school and high-school aged youth in the practice of producing data about their own neighborhoods. Using a combination of classical sketch mapping techniques and a cutting-edge geographic information system (GIS), AMP is working with youth to make visible their everyday lives in the form of maps and spatial data. The maps and data produced by AMP are made public annually, and are expected to inform a host of community-based, municipal, design, and planning-oriented agencies that are engaged in efforts to improve the livability of Tacoma area neighborhoods.

BACKGROUND

AMP Centers are being piloted during the 2018-19 academic year at Foss, Lincoln, and Mt. Tahoma high schools in the Tacoma Public School District. A total of 8,000 students live in this area. AMP Centers at Stadium and Wilson high schools are proposed to open in 2019-2020, given necessary funding is made available. With all five Tacoma Public Schools catchment areas being activated and addressed, the total number of students involved will increase to 15,000. AMP Centers are youth led, staffed by Community Mapping Teams of graduate, undergraduate, and high school students. The Community Mapping Teams collect and digitize sketch mapping data produced by the middle schools students. At least 75 percent of middle and high school aged youth are represented in data for each high school catchment area in Tacoma. The annual map reports reflect how middle- and high-school aged youth experience, perceive, and utilize space for each catchment area in Tacoma. It is the hope that using the sketch maps and the resulting digitized data, analysis will provide decision-making fuel for community improvement projects to be identified and planned during collaborative summer workshops known as AMP Camp.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

AMP Centers provide unique, extracurricular educational opportunities for high school students to earn high school credit while gaining experience with GIS. Students help to facilitate the production of participatory data about their own
communities. The educational outcomes of the Action Mapping Project are woven tightly with current student learning objectives to improve STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) education. AMP connects youth with college students and professors, thus building the college-going culture we as a South Sound community are committed to. High school and middle school students gain the skills necessary for admission into the Urban Studies program at UW Tacoma. High school students who serve as AMP Center Community Mappers have the opportunity to gain direct admission to the UW Tacoma Urban Studies degree program in GIS and Spatial Planning as well as the UW Tacoma GIS Certificate Program upon graduation from high school. For particularly ambitious Community Mappers, there is a pathway to post-baccalaureate Graduate-level GIS education in the Urban Studies Program at UW Tacoma following completion of the undergraduate GIS curriculum.

UW Tacoma undergraduate GIS students serve as mentors in the AMP Centers by providing training, support, and instruction to high school students who participate. Undergraduate mentors benefit from their experience working with a diverse array of local high school students while helping to facilitate a community engagement project that is designed to manifest real change in local neighborhoods. For students in a highly technical program at the university, this is an opportunity to better understand the outcomes that science and data can have in real-world scenarios. This is something that is often studied, but less-so observed or experienced while in the classroom.

While there are numerous examples of university-community GIS and mapping partnerships in the U.S. and abroad, the Action Mapping Project is unique in both its approach and scope. By partnering with Tacoma Public Schools, AMP Centers represent a new approach to drawing youth into the production of knowledge about neighborhoods. And with long-term commitments from project partners, AMP Centers promise to stimulate data-driven decision making to improve quality of life in neighborhoods and communities by producing an unprecedented set of longitudinal neighborhood-scale data about youth perception and experience.

Attachments
1. Presenters’ biographical information
2. Action Mapping Project: Mapping Youth Experience
**Presenters’ biographical information**

Dr. Matthew Kelley, Associate Professor of Urban Studies, MSGT Graduate Program Coordinator, and Director of the Action Mapping Project

Matthew Kelley is an Associate Professor in the Urban Studies faculty at the University of Washington Tacoma. He has a background in community development and geographic information systems. At UWT he coordinates and teaches in the undergraduate and graduate Geospatial Sciences programs and directs the Action Mapping Project (AMP). He has long been fascinated by the ways that maps, spatial data, and new information technologies can be leveraged to improve and/or augment the ways that we work to make our neighborhoods more livable. With five young children at home, he also spends a lot of his time at work and in his free time thinking about youth in the city.

Leslie Kirk, MSGT Candidate and Project Manager of Action Mapping Project

Leslie Kirk is a MS Candidate in Geospatial Technologies at the University of Washington Tacoma, where she received a BA in Sustainable Urban Development and a certificate in Geospatial Information Systems in 2018. Currently Kirk serves as the Project Manager of the Action Mapping Project (AMP) under Dr. Matt Kelley. As an undergrad, Kirk was active in the campus community by serving as an RSO officer in two organizations: GIS Society—President; CIVITAS—Community Outreach Coordinator. Remaining on the Dean’s list every quarter, Kirk was honored with several awards including: the UWT President’s Medal, Urban Studies Director’s Award for Academic Excellence, and the Urban Studies Director’s Award for Service to the Community. Kirk also earned both an undergraduate merit scholarship and the Urban Studies Endowed Scholarship.

Augustine Canales, Undergraduate Social Welfare Student and Lead Action Mapping Project Community Mapping Mentor

Augustine Canales is a senior at the University of Washington Tacoma, where he is currently majoring in Social Welfare after completing a Certificate in Geospatial Information Systems. He is an active member in both the GIS and SSWO societies. Outside of school his main focus is his family; he and his wife Mindy have three children, Zant (18), Mariana (13), and Santiago (12). Other interests include camping, hiking, fishing, traveling, or any outdoor activity. After graduating in 2019, he plans to apply for graduate school and eventually wants to integrate what he has learned about GIS with Social Welfare in order to help further his future career.
Youth have unique, unseen, unknown experiences.

Without knowledge decisions are made for youth.

With knowledge decisions are made with youth.
What routes do you use when walking or biking?
WHAT ROUTES DO YOU AVOID WHEN WALKING OR BIKING?
When not at home, where do you spend your time?
WHAT AREAS DO YOU AVOID WHEN NOT AT HOME OR SCHOOL?
I FEEL UNSAFE / SCARED
BIG WATTS HAPPENING
IN THE WORLD HONESTLY

AMPLIFY

For more information about the project, or to find out how you might become involved, please contact Matt Kelley, PhD. MJK3LL3Y@uw.edu | ACTIONMAPPINGPROJECT.COM