Community Context and Partnerships:

*State of Scranton*
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End of Industry...Challenges Remain

- Coal Strike of 1902...Knox Mine disaster in the 1950’s...end of the Industrial era in Scranton
- City has struggled with neighborhood blight and fiscal distress but has remained resilient
Population

- Scranton’s population is currently 77,291 (1.6%+ since 2010).

Data Sources for following slides: U.S. Census Bureau Data, American Community Survey, Labor and Industry Stats, Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development Indicators Reports
Race & Ethnicity

- Racial and ethnic diversity has been increasing:
  - 85% White/Caucasian
  - 7% African American
  - 4% Asian

- Hispanic/Latino population as a total percentage of the population for Scranton (at 13% as of 2016), Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania has increased annually since 2008.

- Catholic Social Services resettles refugees to the Scranton area, including: Bhutanese (1200+ since 2009); Syrian (50), Meshketian Turks (400) and Congolese (150+).
Median Household Income

- $38,232/year (as of 2016)
  - 20% less than the Lackawanna County average
  - More than 25% less than the state average income
- Median rent is $723/month
- According to the University’s Living Wage report…
  - 40% of households in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties have an annual income under $35,000, placing them below a “living wage” that provides a modest but dignified life for their families.
Poverty Rate

- 23.1% as compared to 14.1% for Lackawanna County and 12.9% in PA.
- 34% of children in Scranton live below the poverty level – twice the average for PA (19%). 1 in 4 children in NEPA is growing up in poverty.
- 63% of low-income families are led by single mothers.
- Use of SNAP benefits increasing as of 2018 Indicators Report – 17% in Lackawanna and 17.6% in Luzerne Counties while PA at 13.4%.
Educational Attainment

- 21.6% have a bachelor’s degree or higher in Scranton as compared to 26.1% on the County level and 29.3% in PA, with higher education correlating to higher incomes.
More than 80% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch – as of 2016 offered to all students.

Nine percent of students qualify for special education and more than 8% receive ESL services (30+ languages are spoken).

Performance and graduate rates lag with just 72.8% graduating in 4 years and scores on PA tests often on the low end of the state averages.
Housing

- There are 24 low-income housing complexes in Lackawanna County, with 3,260 apartments for rent; 3,227 have rents based on your income (sliding scale).
- Waiting lists for housing are significant.
- 51.9% of homes are owner-occupied; national average is 63.9%.
- 76% of those living below the poverty level in Scranton are renters.
Homelessness

- Nationally, 37% of those experiencing homelessness do so as part of a family. In Scranton that number is 59%.

- There are less than 10 emergency/transitional housing units available in Lackawanna County for homeless families.

- As of January 31, 2017, the homeless count in Lackawanna County is 198: those in transitional housing, emergency shelters, and anyone living outside.
Scranton is poised to depart from its Act 47 Distressed Status (that began in 1992), though issues of high taxation, municipal debt and underfunded pensions remain a challenge.

Downtown Scranton has seen increased residential living, new small businesses, thriving arts and culture and a new community initiative underway to focus on economic development.

The South Side Cedar Avenue corridor has seen progress through UNC’s Elm Street activities.
Employment/Jobs

- The unemployment rate is slightly higher than the state average: 5.4% in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre as of March 2018 as compared to 4.8% in PA.

- The region has more low wage jobs than high skilled opportunities, but also has a diversity of local sectors: defense, tourism, office/commercial, manufacturing, distribution, education and health care (“eds and meds”).
Points of Pride

- From “Coal to Cool” – Philadelphia Inquirer 2007
- Scranton has been ranked #1 by MSN Real Estate of “10 Best Places to Start Over”
- No. 8 by Forbes of “America’s Best Cities for Raising a Family” (87% of area homes are affordable at the median income)
- Regional Trail System; Downtown Dining, Arts & Culture; Historic Sites.
Engaged Non-Profit Sector

- Scranton’s challenges are met through its strong non-profit community
- More than 120 non-profit agencies
- Strong collaboration among organizations
- Fairly small staffs; doing a lot with less
- Top 4 Agency Areas:
  - Children/Family: 42, Senior Citizens: 38, Health Care: 33, Public awareness/fundraising: 26
Center for Service and Social Justice

- Works with over 120 non-profit organizations
- Resource for non-profit partners, maintains website of local agencies
- In-class presentations on opportunities
- Reflection resources
- Assist with course integration in collaboration with CBL faculty coordinator
- Assist with clearances, transportation and student preparation
Community and Government Relations

- Civic links
  - downtown businesses; neighborhood associations; civic orgs.; local school districts (K-12); local, state, federal governments
  - Experiential downtown walking tour

- Client-based projects – e.g. organizational planning
- Awareness-raising – e.g. oral histories
- Refugee solidarity initiative – e.g. Global Tastes of Scranton
Joint/CBL Office Resources

› Joint:
  • State of Scranton Seminar Series with guest speakers from community organizations
  • ‘State of Scranton’ class presentations

› CBL Office:
  • Faculty grants, workshop, networking among cohort and CBL Board, special seminars
  • Syllabi preparation, incl. linking with SLO’s
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