Working Toward the Common Good:
An Online University's Perspectives on Social Change

Many institutions of higher education in the United States and indeed around the world are reaching out to their neighborhoods as a member of the community to contribute to the common good through research, service, and educational opportunities. In this descriptive study, the understandings and practices around this kind of activity by one university with a mission of creating positive social change is explored. While current literature indicates that researchers are examining campus-community engagements, very little research has been done on community engagement when the institution works primarily online and the communities involved are geographically dispersed and dependent on individual choices and preferences. The goal of the study was to discover how members of one such online university currently understand and practice the mission to provide a baseline of understandings for curriculum planning and mentoring student research projects and service activities. Through a series of interviews conducted with faculty members, students, and alumni, several themes were identified. These results give rise to several implications for the university in developing its community outreach, along with some suggestions for further research. The discussion of findings for this university might have applicability to other institutions of higher education, both online and traditional, with a similar commitment to the community.

Background to the Study

With the advances in online education and the significant numbers of institutions that have campuses in multiple locations, the ease with which colleges and universities can demonstrate mission fulfillment is more challenged. The reach of the university is broader in such programs and mission efficacy relies on more than confirmed relationships with constituency groups that are often local to the institution. For online education providers in particular, the strength of mission fulfillment must rely upon intentional promotion within

curricular structures, student services, and philosophical expectations that allow university members to carry out the institution's mission in their own communities. Finding references that speak to mission fulfillment in online and geographically dispersed programs is made particularly difficult given the limited number of writings that deal with this topic. In fact, a review of the literature for mission and online learning finds a greater focus on how the decision to deliver online instruction can become part of the institution's mission, not upon how the existing mission can be assured through online delivery (Checkoway, 2001; Johnson, et al., 2014; Levy, 2003). The complexity of understanding what is meant by "positive social change", the mission for the university in this study, adds to the difficulty of using traditional images of "community" within mission fulfillment.

Defining and Describing Social Change

The term "social change" has been defined and analyzed across the academic disciplines, reflecting the particular perspective of that discipline and its research agenda. In one study, a proposal for social change in schools (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009), the authors reported that their literature review was aided by such identifiers and organizers as *equity, diversity, social justice, liberatory education, race, gender, ethics, urban school, global education, critical pedagogy, oppression, social change, social development,* and *social order*, among others. From the review of the literature around these key terms, Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks see social change as bringing about a "new social order" in which marginalized peoples would have the same educational and social opportunities as those more privileged.

As the list of identifiers above suggests, the concepts of *social justice* and *equity* have been significant in discussions of social change in education, psychology, and social and cultural studies (see also Curry-Stevens, 2007; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Moely, Furco, & Reed, 2008; and

Peterson, 2009). The writing and advocacy of Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, civil rights leaders, and feminists during the last half of the 20th century influenced these understandings and helped shape the particular emphases of social change in recent decades.

Hoff and Hickling-Hudson (2011) sought descriptors of social change that would be appropriate for education and noted that Farley, writing in 1990, offered an understanding of social change as "alterations in behaviour patterns, social relationships, institutions, and social structure over time" (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011, 189). However, Hoff and Hickling-Hudson found this inadequate from an educational point of view because of its value-neutral stance. They preferred a definition that would give social change a "connotation of social progress or social development beneficial to society" (189). For this reason, they chose the definition proposed by Aloni in 2002, which places social change as challenging "trends of discrimination, exploitation, oppression, and subjugation displayed by groups who regard themselves as favored and, thus, take privileges for themselves and deprive other groups of the right to a dignified life" (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011, 189). In other words, the *change* in social change is defined here in positive and value-laden terms that relate more particularly to the agents of social change than to others they might want to change. They were careful to add that this cannot be cast in universal or absolute terms, but it is dependent on particular contexts and circumstances (see also Itay, 2008, writing in political science).

and Miller (2006), working in continuing education and innovation studies, respectively, identified influences on the meaning of social change arising from new political and social realities. For instance, during the economic recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s, education was seen to be increasingly determined by the needs and forces of the market and less by concerns for equity and social justice, a conclusion suggested also by Atkinson (2010) in

adult education and Feldman (2001) in economic history. However, we witness today a movement again toward social justice and equity issues (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015), brought about in part by Occupy activism (e.g., Cortez, 2013), current political debates, experience in campus outreach programs (e.g., Patterson, Cronley, West, & Lantz, 2014), social media (e.g., Taha, Hastings, & Minei, 2015), and exposure to other cultures in a globalized world (e.g., Bossaller, Frasher, Norris, Marks, & Trott, 2015).

Armstrong and Miller also noted that increasing global and international contact has led to revisions in the meaning of social purpose narrowly defined in Western terms and contexts and the "grand narrative" of modernism being replaced by less absolute and dogmatic post-modern discourses, an idea echoed also in adult education by Holst (2007). As a consequence, projects with a social change purpose are considered to be more effective when local community partners participate in determining needs and shaping the outcomes collaboratively (Bahng, 2015; Lees, 2007; Lewis, 2004; Nichols, Gaetz, & Phipps, 2015; Silverman & Xiaoming, 2015).

Brennan (2008) added that the social context in which higher education operates today calls for universities to be responsive in a number of ways to their constituent societies. One of these responses, playing "a role in constructing the 'just and stable' society", returns the social change mission to the goals of equity, which he suggested includes equitable access to the credentials needed to participate as equals in the new societal realities and guarantees of autonomy and freedom. Furman and Gruenewald (2004), working in educational administration, described yet another new influence on understandings of social change: ecological concerns. Their argument was that "environmental crises are inseparable from social crises" (48), primarily because they usually have to do with the misuse of racial and economic power.

Overall, it is apparent that social change and social purpose have been focused primarily on equity issues, although their working definitions, both implicit and explicit, reflect a spectrum of meanings ranging from simple activism around race, gender, and poverty, for instance, to more nuanced understandings of the impact of technology developments, diversity, globalization, as well as the ecological environment. More recently, this focus has received renewed attention as the gap between rich and poor is seen to be widening and the middle class to be diminishing (Gillis & McLellan, 2013; Goldberg, 2012; Guy, 2012).

It is important to keep in mind that "social change" can be either an action or a result, product or process, noun or verb. While educators need a clear end-in-view for their work with students, processural understandings of social change may serve them better in planning for the kinds of learning experiences that will bring about the desired results. The central concept of "conscientization" in Freire's writings on social change speaks as much to process as product (Hickling-Hudson, 2014) and using the concept of "transformation" rather than "results" in reporting on social change projects (e.g., Sewell, 2005; Silverman & Xiaoming, 2015) further supports this.

One of the most frequently made distinctions in social change is that between charity and helping on the one hand and change and justice on the other. In many cases, the distinction is assumed (e.g., Moely, Furco, & Reed, 2008); in other cases, it is elaborated. In simplest terms, charity work sets out to help someone; change efforts aim to modify social arrangements toward equity (Mitchell, 2008). In cultural and social studies, charity has been identified as "transactional" service; change and social justice as "transformational" (Peterson, 2009, 541, 545). From a social work perspective, charity seeks to discover the immediate elements of a particular individual's needs and deal with them; change investigates the wider picture of all

those with similar needs and how the whole group might be helped by systemic change (Allen-Meares, 2008). In effect, charity addresses the symptoms of a social injustice; change seeks to remove the root causes (Allen-Meares, Mitchell, 2008, Peterson, 2009). The former participants can usually see immediate results for their efforts; the latter work for the long term and may actually never see final results, or at least they will discover that results are usually not immediately apparent (Mitchell, 2008). At its worst, charity may be patronizing, perpetuating rather than overcoming the differential in power—the "us versus them" dichotomy—which may have brought about the need in the first place. At its best, change may not only amend the situation of the needy but also strengthen authentic relationships among all those involved as it redistributes and shares power more equally between those who are privileged and those who are not. In the reciprocity between the needy and change agents, each benefits although in different ways (Peterson, 2009).

Writing within the context of human services, Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri (2007) picked up on many of the distinctions between charity and change but put them in an entirely different light. They replaced charity with focused or peripheral change; that is, advocacy for individuals providing "relatively short-term interventions designed to gain access to, utilization of, or improve the existing service delivery system" (60). These interventions are critical in operationalizing an organization's mission in that they focus on implementing and achieving the intent of particular policies and processes. They are usually manifested as *case advocacy*—working for "individual clients whose rights have been violated and/or whose access to benefits have been denied" (p. 63). Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri also substituted "change" with "transformation" described as "long-term, structural interventions designed to change the status quo at broad community, state, regional, or even national level" (60). These kinds of

interventions may involve "social movement organizations, campaigns for social justice . . . and coalitions with system reform goals" (60). They may threaten the status quo and are usually manifested as *cause advocacy*—working in "an arena, locus of change, or target," which may be "an organization . . . legislation, law, and/or community or other large system" (63).

While the literature in general clearly weighs in on the side of *change* over *charity*, some writers have raised points in favor of taking a more holistic view of social change that includes both charity and change. Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri (2007), for instance, proposed that because both case advocacy and cause advocacy fall within the professional roles of human services providers, both must be planned for and their success evaluated. One argument in favor of a more holistic view is that charity may be needed as a necessary first step to improve immediate and pressing conditions. Change can then subsequently address the policies and social institutions that need reform and/or revitalization (Hoff & Hickling-Hudson, 2011). This argument takes on merit when one considers that change may take time whereas charity may bring some immediate relief. In a similar vein, charity may also be considered an important first step to build trust between social change activists and those for whom they work, which, once established, can be a basis on which to take later steps collectively toward political change (Peterson, 2009).

Over two decades ago, Boyer claimed, "At no time in our history has the need been greater for connecting the work of the academy to the social and environmental challenges beyond the campus (1990, xii)." Duderstadt, a decade later, noting some of the pitfalls to an institution of higher learning that arise from the expectation that it will "address social needs and concerns", nevertheless declares that "it is clear that public service must continue to be an important responsibility of the American university" (2000, 2003, 146). For the purpose of this

study, when individuals associated with colleges and universities find ways to serve their local communities and contribute to the common good, their efforts are identified as contributing to positive social change.

Research Method

The goal of this study was to explore and analyze the current state of understanding and practice around social change at one online university with geographically dispersed students and faculty. We selected a qualitative research design for this study in an effort to get at the understandings of faculty members, students, and alumni in their experience of social change processes and how they make meaning out of those experiences (see Creswell, 2003). The site selected for the project is a comprehensive, regionally accredited, for-profit institution originally founded in 1970 as a distance learning institution. It currently enrolls approximately 60,000 students. The institution is an appropriate site for this research in that creating positive social change was the university's mission from its founding. The mission statement is prominently displayed in university publications, shared widely with new faculty members and students, and frequently discussed in online forums and other venues.

Although the researchers considered both focus and group interviews as data collection methods, we ultimately decided that individual interviews would provide the richest information and would also permit comparisons among interview groups. Informed by both the literature review and the goal for the study, the researchers prepared an interview guide, utilizing cross referencing between the goals for the research and the interview questions. (The interview questions are provided in Appendix A.) A research team, consisting of six faculty members, completed inter-rater reliability training and piloted the interview guide. The study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board and appropriate measures were taken to preserve

confidentiality of responses with interviewers signing confidentiality agreements and the substitution of pseudonyms for real names in any reporting of the study. A small gift card ($50 for Amazon.com) was sent to participants in appreciation for their time and willingness to be interviewed.

Working in pairs, the researchers interviewed three groups of participants selected via purposeful, referral sampling from the institution's faculty, students, and alumni. Interviewees were identified by their colleagues, teachers, or mentors as active participants in social change activities and possessing an ability and willingness to articulate their understandings in a considered way. Eight current students, ten faculty members, and 12 graduates including five very recent graduates made up the pool of interviewees.

Interviews were conducted via telephone and transcribed verbatim using digital recordings. For each pair of researchers, there was a lead interviewer and an observer who debriefed after each interview. The observer also kept interview notes and verified interview transcripts; member checks were also used to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts. Two analyses of the responses were undertaken, concurrently but independently, to provide different perspectives for comparison. The analysis began with the interview transcripts, looking for recurring ideas and common themes. The initial and open coding identified key participant responses, followed by a second coding that labeled the nature of the emerging theme. Following the second coding, the researcher developed working definitions for each theme. The interviews were coded a third and final time, during which the working definitions provided a framework for confirming the code, and illustrative quotes were noted.

Coded Analysis

Significant Common Themes

When interviewees were asked to define social change and provide examples from their own experiences, their answers and the responses to follow-up probes yielded richly nuanced and diverse concepts, spanning a wide spectrum of ideas, reflecting the broad sweep of the university's official definition. Themes emerged about the focus on others, the charitable nature of social change, the way small actions in social change could expand from one or a few to many, and about the central role of education in changing perspectives and bringing about social change.

Focus on the "Other"

Most participants gave definitions of social change that were "other"-focused; that is, social change was seen as an important goal in order to improve some aspect of life for other people, but not necessarily for themselves. Others might need to benefit from social change, but the participants in this study did not typically include themselves in the change population. For instance, Brian, a faculty member, stated that social change "is anything and everything an individual does to improve the life or lives of others." In some cases, those "others" had unmet personal needs: their quality of life was seen as insufficient or their wellbeing was somehow in question.

Few participants first thought of social systems or community-at-large initiatives as they discussed social change, but they often added the larger community in an expansion of their definition. In some cases, this seemed to be added almost as an after-thought. Ray, an undergraduate faculty member, defined social change "as a group of people who are getting involved, who are giving of themselves, whether it be in terms of time or money or effort or all of the above, to make an impact on both individual people's lives and society as a whole". Other

respondents took in the larger community immediately. Arsi, for instance, an alumna whose work focused on the intergenerational transfer of learning, spoke of that expansion to the wider community in these terms: "[S]ocial change has a lot to do with making a contribution to society that will not only improve individuals' lives but will collectively improve the environments in which they live, and that can expand beyond just personal agendas." Only a few respondents spoke specifically of social change within the boundaries of democracy and related political principles, but the possible expansive nature of social change was a clear theme: "Social change," stated faculty member Christine, "is tinkering with the world."

Helping and Altering

Consistent with the focus on "the other" and with a framework that centers on individual needs, most participants used language associated with helping to describe the actions that support social change. Typical definitions included words such as "contribute", "serve", "give", or "provide", reinforcing the idea that social change is something that participants initiated for another individual or set of individuals with specific needs. Pam, an alumna who works in mental health, spoke of "project(s) that will kind of better the populations that they're serving," while Brian spoke of disadvantaged people and the need to "give them the dignity" of a job. Marg, another alumna, took up the idea of service: "You have something that you see you can start off with service projects or volunteering and charity work and all of that," but she extended this to include a larger context: "I recognize(d) the social injustices taking place everywhere, in many communities . . ." And Diane, an MBA alumna, stated that "social change is about helping every individual achieve their potential so that they can reach down and help the next one up."

In addition to using language that anchored social change within the concept of helping, many interviewees described their own social change actions in terms of the *desired effect on*

others. They used terms such as "(re)build", "develop", "empower", "improve", and "modify" to describe the outcomes of their work for social change. Tom, a faculty member with philosophical groundings in the quality movement, strives to encourage people to build on the positive. "Social change is making something better" and encouraging that movement forward.

The Ripple Effect

The vast majority of respondents noted that a single person can be responsible for social change: only two of the 30 respondents indicated that a "critical mass" (Eileen's term, further arbitrarily defined as 30% of a population by Diane) was necessary to effect significant social change. However, most participants acknowledged that social change can begin with a single individual but his or her efforts require expansion. Many participants used the term "ripple" to note the movement from the single person to a group of people, and then to a larger impact. Kim, a student who came to the university precisely because of the social change mission, is a teacher. She instructs her own students that "whatever they do should be important to them and make some kind of ripple." Alumnus Charlie called it a "gravitational wave," as in physics, that ultimately impacts the farthest reaches of the universe.

For the most part, social change was seen in terms of making progress. Paige noted the idea of "paying it forward" and other interviewees used the concept of moving forward in a positive way as part of their social change definition. Over half the interviewees thought that both accentuating the positive and removing the negative were involved in social change, but nearly as many indicated that a focus on the positive was crucial for social change. Only one respondent indicated that the single goal of social change was to remove a negative. The notion of social change by an individual, often for the benefit of another individual, was prevalent.

Changing Perspectives and the Role of Education

Participants in each interview group identified education as an important feature of how they understand and approach social change. Alice, an alumna who had a successful military career and now focuses her efforts on teaching, put it this way: “Social change to me is being able to, I guess, implement or work hand-in-hand with students to help them further their education so that we help our community become a better community. It's making sure that education is the priority as well as being concerned about the community and the economic status of the community and the children in the schools.”

Moreover, each group had representatives who spoke of “transformations” in perspective as a key feature of social change. Brenda, an alumna who studied aging women, linked social change to changing perspectives: “Social change is taking the norms, the mindset, the expectations, the assumptions of a society and beginning to shift them, hopefully in a positive way.” Wendy, an alumna who has started her own school, acknowledged that her hope and her goal “is that kind of the change that the school is in our community--that it goes beyond just the children and the families here, but actually that we start this new conversation of what education can be.” Margaret, a faculty member in human services, spoke of beginning social change at a “very grassroots level, where you can shape a person’s values, or maybe their attitude, maybe their beliefs . . . which in turn, basically diffuses out to other aspects of society.”

Secondary Themes

Reliance on Context

The task of articulating a definition of social change was not simple for most participants. In terms of elaborating on social change definitions and examples, some participants noted the importance of context. Becky, a doctoral student in Public Policy and Administration, focused on context: “Let’s see. Well, that depends on the project. It can be an individual that’s changed

something in their life or it could be a process that's changed or it could be a policy. That's hard without knowing an example."

Social Change and Benefit to the Initiator

"Who is social change for?" As respondents considered the beneficiaries of social change, some admitted that social change action promotes benefit for the change initiator. Paige noted that the first thing that changes in social change is often the self: "Well, I hope first, before anything, we're changing our lives, who we are, what we believe, and what we think. You have to do that first before you can actually make a difference in the community." Charlie, an alumnus who has founded a business to promote cross-cultural communications, spoke similarly of the need to build the "self" in order to effect social change: "And by doing that I enrolled [here] and hoped to develop those strengths in myself, which gets back to the Gandhi point that you become the change you want to see by empowering myself, educating myself, engaging myself . . ." Arsi proposed that social change serves a dual purpose. "I think it's not only for the person that initiates the social change but I think it's for a broader audience and it can include the community." Ray stated that this is a "central truth to the human experience. When you help people, you personally benefit, and when you help enough people or you get together a large enough group, you can help society benefit." Christine admitted, "I think very selfishly. It's definitely for myself because of all the things that go with it, but I think the goal is that there will be some value or benefit for us universally."

Discussion and Implications

The participants in this study were focused on others. an admirable quality, enacting the "servant-leadership model" (Greenleaf, 1977, among others) for improving organizational effectiveness and creating change. A few of the participants acknowledged benefit to themselves

in engaging in social change activity, usually in the form of personal satisfaction that can come about by doing something good for others. One interviewee expressed the even more cynical view that all we do is tainted by a level of self-serving. Social justice and equity were seen by some to be objectives for social change action but in the form of bringing about for others what they themselves already possesses. A few spoke of supporting democracy by their actions, where all work together for the common good.

The enthusiasm and momentum around helping others was very notable in this group of interviews. By itself, however, a focus on improving conditions for another may not be sufficient for thorough-going social change. Under some conditions, especially when root causes are not addressed, it can be experienced as disempowering and patronizing by the recipients, creating two levels in a community—*the helpers* operating from a privileged position and *the helped* operating from a position of need and deficit—and neither level is transformed by the activity. Importantly, it may not always reveal that one might be implicated as a member of a group that could very well be the source of the problem being addressed.

As indicated, one of the persistent themes in the scholarly discussion of social change is the clear distinction between charity and helping on the one hand and change and justice on the other. In the coded analysis made of the definitions and descriptions of social change, the theme "charity and alteration" was one of the most prominent. It was described as serving or helping others so that their lives and possibly the lives of an ever widening circle will be changed. The analysis found that the participants in this study tended to speak more often in terms of "charity" than "change".

Real-life examples of social change activity, however, are seldom as clear cut as descriptions of charity and change in the literature suggest. While charity predominates in the

descriptions and actions of the participants, and social change activity was conducted by individuals or small groups engaged in the same effort and focused on a specific needy group, and even though most of the change was seen as making a difference in the lives of individuals being served rather than in the systemic structures that make up society and its institutions, many nevertheless saw their activities contributing to change in a larger context. Much of this change was envisaged in terms of hopeful thinking about the long-term potential and "ripple effect" of their efforts, rather than in terms of the impact of deliberately planned or collaborative action. The larger changes were considered *post hoc* effects rather than outcomes planned from the beginning. Not apparent were strategies based on an analysis of systemic flaws and developed to address root causes, bringing all players into the planning, and being deliberate about making long-term and sustainable changes.

The analysis which looked for common themes in the responses produced encouraging news for those who work in higher education. Both faculty members and students spoke of the transformative power of education to change perspectives and attitudes. They spoke of the power of class discussion forums, learning from different others in classes, curricular topics that specifically addressed needs and opportunities for social change activity, practical projects undertaken as class assignments, and the example of faculty members and other students who were engaged in social change activity. Faculty members also spoke of the importance of one-on-one mentoring of students who were in the process of developing a change project.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study opens up several questions that suggest areas for additional research, some that arise from expanding and strengthening the original study, and others to follow-up on leads from this study. Among the first set of questions is how wide-spread these views and

understandings of social change are within the context of this university. So, this interview study with its referral sampling approach might usefully be expanded to the whole university community for a more thorough-going data set, perhaps employing a survey to provide quantitative measures of the strengths of the many responses represented by the sample in the original study. Then too, given that this study was conducted in one institution whose mission is to create positive social change, what would other institutions, traditional and online, find if they were to conduct similar investigations? This question is important if the institution wants to more fully realize its social responsibility in community outreach by providing an initial sense of some of the common themes , with their strengths and weaknesses, that might exist already in the institution.

In follow-up on leads from this study, studies of teaching and learning strategies might help determine the most effective for expanding ideas of charity to include a change dimension, and to prepare students in the skills needed for social change as efforts toward justice and equity and/or empowerment and agency.

Limitations of the Study

This was an exploratory study whose purpose was to discover the understanding and practice of positive social change as a component of the mission of a large U.S. online university. The sample size was small and purposefully selected for the participants' involvement in social change activities. As a result, it was comprised of a majority of participants who live and study in the United States. There was a general intent to include participants with diverse racial and ethnic background and gender. The end result is a range of values along with diversity in culture, gender, and ethnicity in this group of participants and an equally wide ranging number and kinds of contexts and opportunities for social action being

addressed by them. While this is a limitation of the study, it also is representative of the complexity of understanding social change and those who are active within it.

Missing from the research design is the involvement of a designated external community in the project. Our identified "community" includes the faculty, students, and alumni of the institution. As faculty members, the researchers are part of this community and we relied upon other faculty, our students, and our alumni to help identify participants, perfect the interview guide, provide a debriefing after each interview, and support member checks. The University's external communities, less well defined, are all the communities in which our students, faculty, and alumni practice positive social change. The difficulty of creating touch points with all external community constituency groups, challenging even for land-based institutions, would have been prohibitive for a study of this size.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that faculty, alumni, and students at this particular institution show strong passion to make changes for "the greater good." It also shows that for those who are actively involved, some of the distinctions made in the literature do not hold in their understandings and practice of social change. Activities that at first glance might seem to fall into the category of *charity* were also undertaken with the expectation of a "ripple effect" that would manifest itself as *change* in the broader society. "Helping" and "altering" concepts were used together to describe the purpose of an activity. In other words, service activities were often understood to be aiming for *social justice* or *self-efficacy* which takes them out of the realm of simply *helping* (a potentially disempowering relationship) and into the domain of real *change*; from a focus on a single individual or group of individuals toward creating an impact through these individuals on the wider community. This move from *charity* to *change* was not always

fully understood by participants and could be strengthened even further by preparing students in the skills and knowledge to turn their scholarly understandings and personal commitment into even more effective community engagement and long-lasting impact that more deliberately looks to creating systemic change.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Was working for social change important to you before you came to [this institution?]

If yes, how were you involved?

Was the social change mission important to you in making your choice to come to [institution]?

From your perspective, what is "social change"?

From your own observations, can you give some examples of what you mean?

What is *changed* by social *change*?

Who is social change for, primarily? [Me? Others? The whole planet?]

How many individuals need to be engaged in order to call it social change? Is one enough or does it need to be more? How many more?

How important is it for social change to focus on policy and policy-makers?

What do you think of when you think about political activism? How important is political activism in social change? What kind of political activism would you engage in? (or encourage your students to engage in)

Is social change more about removing something negative or nurturing something positive?

How do you feel about having social change as a goal of your teaching, learning, or professional work?

How important is the goal of fostering social change in understanding your role as a faculty member, or planning and undertaking your studies as a learner, or developing your career as a graduate?