

To produce change, one must act. Within the sociology course, Social Action, students from San Jose State University sought out to produce “changes” in their community through organizing student-led groups aimed at inequalities such as homelessness. To promote the awareness of homelessness within the San Jose community, students organized the Student Homeless Alliance (SHA) in 2006. With the guidance of San Jose State sociology professor, Dr. Myers-Lipton, SHA organized the first campus sleep-out on November 6, 2006, “Poverty under the Stars,” to illustrate to the community the reality of homelessness and poverty. One of the programs within the sleep-out was the screening of Spike Lee’s film, *When the Levees Broke: A Four Act Requiem*. Due to the screening, students and faculty were inspired to take action towards the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast. The following morning, students and faculty launched the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project modeled after President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1933 executive order, Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was aimed towards providing jobs for citizens due to the devastation of the Great Depression.

The proposal of Gulf Coast Civic Works Project is a plan to rebuild the Gulf Coast by implementing “100,000” living wage jobs for Gulf Coast residents. Residents will not only rebuild their own communities, the GCCWP also hopes to restore a sense of personal empowerment and faith in the government among citizens. Inspired by the Mississippi *Freedom Summer(s)* of 1964, Dr. Myers-Lipton and students organized the first *Louisiana Winter* to see the devastation of Hurricane Katrina themselves. Students and faculty from a total of 25 universities traveled through Gulf Coast communities and neighborhoods to promote the GCCWP. *Louisiana Winter* illustrated the actuality of injustice in the Gulf Coast: debris from the storm was plentiful and the eeriness of silence reigned in neighborhoods like the Lower Ninth Ward. The Gulf Coast Civic Works Act, HR 4048, was introduced to congress on November 1, 2007 by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) with original co-sponsorship from Charlie Melancon (D-LA) and Gene Taylor (D-MS). Since the establishment of the GCCWP, students, faculty and grassroots organizations have continued on with the campaign of HR 4048 through a variety of actions and events. The Gulf Coast Civic Works Act rebuilds the Gulf Coast. The Gulf Coast Civic Works Project highlights the danger of ignoring the inequality of one region for such an act threatens the recognition of inequality in our own communities.