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CENTER



CHANGE
THE WORLD

Fiscal Equity. Housing. Food Access.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

BLUM CENTER

on Poverty, Social Enterprise & Participatory Governance

OUR MISSION

Locally and around the world, poverty and economic insecurity limits opportunity and reduces life chances. But it does not have to be this way. UCSC's Blum Center addresses the causes and consequences of poverty and demonstrates how participatory governance and effective policies and programs can alleviate economic hardship. It is not about fixing people, it is about fixing systems.

OUR WORK

The UC Santa Cruz Blum Center is part of a network of centers working on poverty across all ten University of California campuses. We take a multifaceted approach to poverty alleviation and focus our work in three crucial areas: **fiscal equity, housing, and food access.**

Our community-engaged research brings together students, faculty, nonprofit leaders, and key stakeholders who share an interest in promoting economic equity, and expanding access to affordable, high-quality housing and food. Our projects promote social enterprise that stimulates shared prosperity and governance that is participatory and inclusive.



We foster poverty alleviation, social enterprise, and participatory governance by:

- Supporting collaborative, solution-focused research and anti-poverty initiatives
- Equipping individuals, families, and communities with the information they need to make an impact
- Providing paid internships for undergraduates to gain experience while significantly contributing to community organizations
- Amplifying the perspectives and experiences of disenfranchised communities
- Writing policy briefs to inform action



ANSWERS FROM THE CENTER DIRECTOR

Q: What makes the center's work unique?

A: Whether our research is conducted in Santa Cruz County or on the other side of the world, we work in partnership with community organizations and key stakeholders. We believe the most effective strategies to alleviate poverty come from research and decision-making that are participatory and inclusive. Our focus on students as agents of change sets us apart. We are committed to educating students about poverty alleviation, and providing opportunities to gain firsthand experience researching and working on these issues.



Q: How are students involved in your work?

A: Our Blum Scholars program provides students with small grants to conduct collaborative, community-based poverty alleviation research. Blum Scholars share their findings at events that bring together community partners, students, faculty, and other stakeholders. Our paid internship program places students with local nonprofits to work on issues related to economic justice. Student ambassadors help raise awareness of poverty and Blum Center initiatives. We're also developing a certificate program in poverty studies that will recognize students' coursework and achievements.

Q: What do you mean by "participatory governance?"

A: Too often, low-income groups are excluded from governance and important decision-making, even in their own communities. Participatory governance is one way to fight exclusion and foster greater equity. At its core, this is about breaking down barriers, engaging diverse stakeholders in all levels of decision-making, and broadening opportunities for participation. For democracy to work for all of us, everyone's voice needs to be heard. Many of our community-based projects seek to amplify the perspectives of underrepresented groups and foster inclusion.

MAKING AN IMPACT

A Community Garden Green Kitchen: Diversifying Family Income Sources in Watsonville

Flora Lu, a professor in environmental studies and a Blum Center advisory board member, and a team of UCSC interns worked with Calabasas Elementary School's staff and parents to develop a community garden located on the elementary school's campus.

The one-acre farm, located on a once underutilized lot, now produces healthy food for food-insecure families. It is also strengthening connections between parents, the school, and the community.



Promoting Fiscal Equity in Santa Cruz County

Gillian Bogart, a graduate student and member of the Blum Center's fiscal equity hub, developed "dashboards" that raise awareness of the financial health of families in Santa Cruz County.

Created in partnership with Santa Cruz Community Ventures, the guides include information on poverty, wages, housing, and labor-force participation. They are now being used to inform decision-making and advance policies that will improve economic security for Santa Cruz County residents.



THE DIFFERENCE IS YOU

With your help, the Blum Center will accomplish these goals:

- Create undergraduate and graduate certificates in poverty studies
- Increase support for high impact student internships
- Increase support for student and faculty research projects
- Showcase local projects as models for regional, national, and global change
- Hold an annual summit of poverty leaders and scholars
- Host a speaker series featuring prominent economic and social justice thinkers and advocates
- Endow a chair in poverty alleviation
- Endow the directorship of the center

We depend on private donations to help fund the vital work we do. **Thank you for your support!**



“

As long as poverty, injustice, and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.

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— Nelson Mandela

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Contact the Social Sciences Development Office
at 831-459-3857 or by email at socsci@ucsc.edu.



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