

Dean's Office Dispatch

Spring 2021 | May 21, 2021

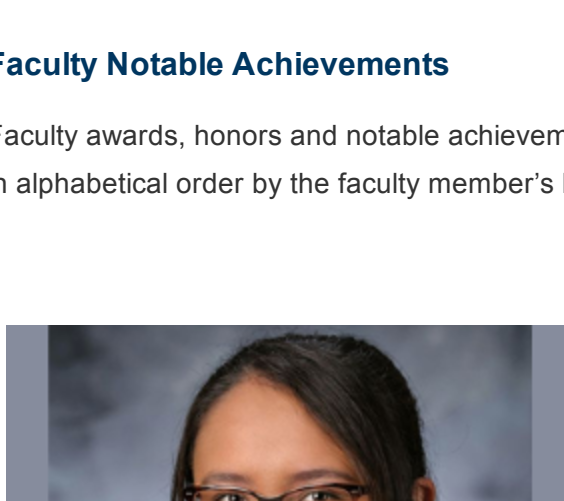
To the SOSC Community:

Just over a year ago, our campus abruptly closed down in-person operations, and began a forced experiment in remote teaching, research and administration. In retrospect, we made this Olympian "pivot" with amazing success, generating insight into a range of topics—how we work, our capacity to innovate and adapt, and, even who we are as a university community. As Social Scientists, we were immediately skeptical about initial commentary on the pandemic, which emphasized how it spared no one adversity. This was true to a point but, as would become painfully clear in the months that followed, the pandemic preyed on and exacerbated underlying conditions of societal inequities. Indeed, this key phrase—"underlying conditions"—became the focus of our first Dispatch [editorial](#), emitted in March of 2020.

A second focus of our critical scrutiny has been the desire to "get back to normal" as quickly as possible. In that first editorial we announced our adamant intention to imagine transformations of our university, assuming a role in national dialogues toward a fuller embodiment of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) principles at work, and toward addressing these same principles in the societies where we live and home. It seems fitting after one year of the pandemic, with the prospect of gradual return to in-person work and sociability, that we revisit these commitments—embodied in the Dean's Office guiding principles and Special Initiatives.

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DIVISIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

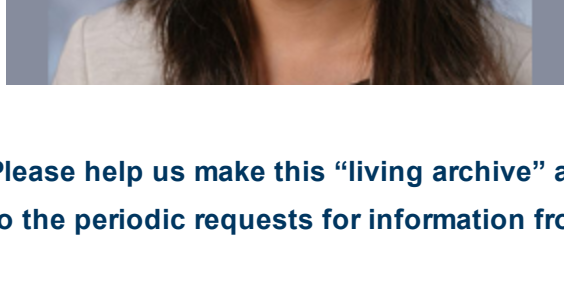


SOSC on Social Media

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date with the exciting things happening in the Division!

Faculty Notable Achievements

Faculty awards, honors and notable achievements can be found on the SOSC [website](#), in alphabetical order by the faculty member's last name.



Student Spotlight

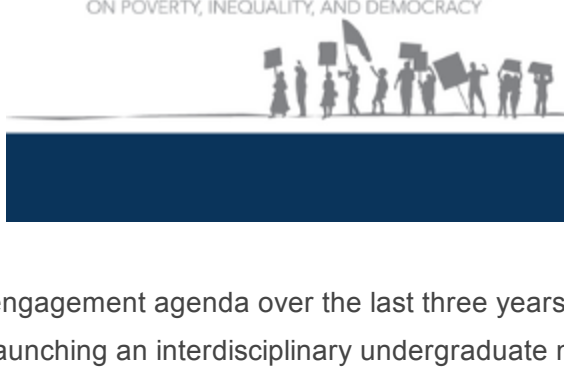
Congratulations to Economics PhD Candidate Danae Hernandez-Cortes who won the [2021 Grad Siam People's Choice Award](#) after giving a presentation on Environmental Economics!

Please help us make this "living archive" as complete as possible, by responding to the periodic requests for information from Tiffany Ibarra.

Divisional Special Initiatives: Spotlight on PROPEL

With great excitement and anticipation, we can now announce the founding of PROPEL (**P**romoting **O**pportunity and **E**quity in Learning). This donor-funded program will recruit incoming first year students with plans to major in the social sciences, offer modest scholarship funding and "wrap-around" support (advising, counseling, social skills, peer-mentoring, career preparation etc.) that will help the students meet their academic goals more fully. We will be drawing on data and best practices from across our campus, and beyond, to design a program best suited to Social Science students. We plan to launch the program on a pilot basis in the fall of 2021, and to build out gradually from there. PROPEL will be guided by an advisory board consisting of three faculty members (Professors Aashish Mehta [GLST], Victor Rios [SOCL] and erin Khue Ninh [AAST]) and four staff members (Tilly Govenor [Assistant Dean, SOSC], Carmiya Baskin [Project Analyst, SOSC], Joe O'Brien [Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Education], and Holly Roose [Program Director, Student Affairs—Promise Scholars]).

We are especially pleased to have received generous and instructive advice from Assistant Vice Chancellor Michael Miller and from the McNair and Promise Scholars, two campus programs that represent the gold standard in goals that run parallel to those we have established for PROPEL. We are especially indebted to Mike Byron, whose generous support helped launch this program, and generate confidence that the plan would prosper.



SOSC Research Centers:

Spotlight on Blum Center

Under the direction of Professor Alice O'Connor (History), and with critical support from Academic Coordinator Joanne Nowak, PhD, the [Blum Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy](#) has developed a robust academic, research, and community engagement agenda over the last three years. The Center has been instrumental in launching an interdisciplinary undergraduate minor in Poverty, Inequality, and Social Justice that is administered by the History Department and has grown to more than 160 declared students in under two years, and in establishing partnerships with more than 25 local organizations working to advance social and economic justice in Santa Barbara County as part of the minor's internship program.

Over the last year, we have also launched two major community engaged research partnerships. The [California Central Coast Regional Equity Study](#), planned and developed in consultation with the Fund for Santa Barbara and the University of Southern California Equity Research Institute, brings together an interdisciplinary team of UCSB faculty with community leaders throughout the region behind a research, policy, and action agenda that advances a more just and equitable region. The Center's initiative in [Cooperative Economics](#) has recently launched with a [Call for Proposals](#) to support undergraduate, graduate, and faculty research, and an inaugural [keynote](#) on African American Cooperatives and Economic Justice by political economist Jessica Gordon-Lembard, who will lead a forthcoming workshop featuring UCSB faculty and community-based leaders in the field. The Center also regularly holds [events](#) that engage our campus and local community in public forums on issues such as prison abolition and the Green New Deal. Blum Center student associates are featured as the hosts of our new podcast [Power to the People](#) which spotlights youth perspectives on issues of poverty and inequality, and lead our annual Poverty Action Week, which this year will focus on the rhetoric and reality of "essential work." For more information, visit our active [Instagram page](#) or [website](#), or sign up for our [monthly newsletter](#)!

A SHOUT-OUT TO OUR STAFF

Content provided by:

Tilly Govenor

Assistant Dean, Division of Social Sciences

Winter quarter passed us by in a blur but we are all happy to embrace the glorious days of spring as we get the process of fiscal close and commencement underway. With the long haul of remote work for a year, staff have been doing their best to keep financial work flowing as smoothly as possible. The Division has a lean number of financial staff experts among its departments and we very recently, and successfully, recruited a financial coordinator who is housed in the Dean's Office to work for two departments in the Division. We are hopeful this innovative model will become a useful tool as we restructure and improve staffing practices, as allowed, for the future. The Assistant Dean is working closely with Swapna Madineni, our Financial Coordinator, the Business Officers and Chairs in the departments of Black Studies and Feminist Studies to create best practices and ideal workflows for this position.

As we draw close to the end of an academic year, there is always that exciting next chapter for some and this year we say fond farewells to two staff members from the Social Sciences.

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PRESIDENT'S POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Content provided by:

Aida Hurtado

Associate Dean, Division of Social Sciences

Professor, Chicana/o Studies

Luis

Leal Endowed Chair

Dean Hale has appointed [Inés Casillas](#) (Chicana and Chicano Studies Department and Chicano Studies Institute Director) as Chair of the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) Divisional Committee. Members of the Committee include: [Miriam Metzger](#) (Communication), [Zakiya Luna](#) (Sociology), [Pei-te Lien](#) (Political Science) and [Aida Hurtado](#) (liaison to the Dean's Office). The purpose of the Committee is to increase the number of PPFP hires and to continue to support the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship.

The UC PPFP Committee has been busy developing procedures for Social Science Departments to tap into the upcoming PPFP pool as early as possible. During the AY 2020-2021, SOSC already has welcomed seven campus zoom visits of PPFP recipients, to consider them for faculty positions. As a result, we are happy to announce that three PPFP recipients have been hired. [Dr. Gio B'atz'](#) will join the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, [Dr. Mae A. Miller](#) will join the Department of Global Studies, and [Dr. AJ Rice](#) will join the Department of Political Science.

We also did well this year with postdocs, here are the names of the PPF recipients and their faculty mentors on our campus:

Dr. Christina Aushana working with [Professor Geoffrey Raymond](#), Sociology

Dr. Olivia Quintanilla working with [Professor David Pellow](#), Environmental Studies, affiliate in Sociology

Dr. Silvia Rodriguez Vega (Chancellor's postdoc) working with [Professor Inés Casillas](#), Chicana/o Studies

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RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

Content provided by:

Victor Rios

Associate Dean, Division of Social Sciences

Professor, Sociology

The Intersectional Justice Faculty Support recipients selected!

The purpose of this Call for Proposals was two-fold. First, we wanted to back our statement of divisional commitment to intersectional justice with budgetary support for research that advances these goals. This support is also especially timely given the differential impact of the pandemic, along familiar axes of intersectional inequalities. We are not sure that we'll be able to continue this program annually, but this certainly is our aspiration. Second, we seek to build intellectual community among faculty with these common interests—some who perhaps are not fully aware of each other's work. The Intersectional Justice grant applications that came in produced a series of fascinating and robust research projects, which in turn makes for an inspiring collective agenda carried forward by the faculty in the Division of Social Sciences. Thank you all for this research that aims to make a difference in the world. To browse the titles and PI's of each recipient for the 2021 application cycle, please read more.

[Read More](#)

JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Content provided by:

Diane Fujino

Associate Dean and Faculty Equity Advisor, Division of Social Sciences

Professor, Asian American Studies

Many scholars in the social sciences have long urged a structural and historical analysis of racism. Following the Derek Chauvin verdict, it is heartening to see mainstream commentary along these lines. Certainly, the ongoing police killings of Black, Latinx, and other people in the midst of the Chauvin trial supported a crucial discussion beyond the "one bad apple" narrative. The responses frame structural racism and structural inequities. This includes the Department of Justice announcing that it will launch a civil investigation of the Minneapolis Police Department. In 2015, the Department of Justice's investigation of the Ferguson Police Department that found that the FPD regularly issued tickets for minor offenses, disproportionately impacting African Americans, that raised substantial revenue through the Ferguson Municipal courts and left those least able to pay the fines with lost jobs, revoked driver's licenses, jail time, and more, showing ongoing, chronic structures of inequality.

In the Division of Social Sciences, Economics professor Youssef Benzarti and graduate students Jacob Gellman and Sarah Lawson examined the data on UC Police Department budget, use of force, and lawsuits against the UCPD alleging crimes and misconduct. They issued a [report](#) in September 2020 that raised questions about policing practices and policies.

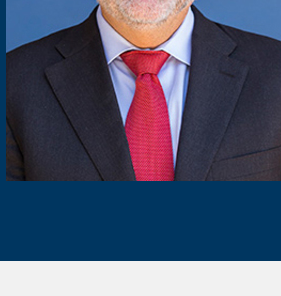
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RESOURCES FOR HOPE AND RESILIENCE

The Derek Chauvin trial has been on the nation's mind, and his conviction has brought forth a wide range of responses—from seeing the outcome as evidence that the justice system is working, to an amplified call for systemic change. We thought the title of this [op-ed](#) by Eugene Robinson—"Derek Chauvin's conviction shouldn't feel like a victory. But it does"—sums up this complexity nicely.

Robby Nadler's research, summarized [here](#), helps to explain why we all are so tired: ZOOM FATIGUE! Robby is the director of our Academic, Professional and Technical Graduate Writing Development Program at UC Santa Barbara.

Finally, we are moved to praise the amazing Arts and Lectures series, "[Race to Justice](#)." This fully virtual series has exposed our campus to the most prominent public voices in the country, speaking, writing, creating and acting in deeply impactful ways on the crisis of racial injustice, and the paths they have forged for an anti-racist practice. For many of these events, our stellar Social Science faculty served as interlocutors. This series has been unique in its commitment to ancillary programs of engagement with students, staff and faculty on campus.



Charles R. Hale

SAGE Sara Miller McCune Dean of Social Sciences