

UC SANTA BARBARA Social Sciences

A Fund for Student Success

We have a special responsibility for assuring the success of our students, defined by a series of measures including: timely graduation, satisfaction with their program of study and college experience, robust post-BA plans for further education and / or gainful employment, etc.

We are proud that our Division serves a high number of students whose life conditions and educational background make them apt beneficiaries of the “California dream” for upward mobility through education. Our data on this group of students—provisionally named “educationally underserved,” since that arrive at UC Santa Barbara having come from underfunded high schools and broader life conditions that often did not allow for full academic preparation. We have composed the category “educationally underserved” drawing on three groups: underrepresented minorities, first generation students, and low-income students (as measured by Pell grant recipient status). The 188 students in the Social Sciences who belong to all three categories experience a 20% gap in 4-year graduation rates in relation to their white, non-underserved counterparts. This is one indication that focused help is needed.

The Dean’s office will work with the leadership of key SOSC departments, and other campus units, to devise a “wrap-around” program to enhance chances for success among these underserved students. While there are many programs already in operation on campus that contribute to these goals, we have identified significant gaps in their coverage and effectiveness, problems that are compounded by a series of obstacles associated with the over-enrolled status of our five most heavily subscribed majors: Economics, Communication, Political Science, Global Studies and Sociology.

The pilot phase of this program will begin in the 20-21 academic year. When COVID-19 required a rapid shift to remote instruction in the spring of 2020, existing inequities affecting UCSB students grew even more acute. Our challenge now is to restructure our student success pilot program, taking into account both online and in-person teaching modalities.

Funding Priorities

Pilot Phase: Initial efforts to develop and prove the concept are funded by generous gifts to the Dean’s discretionary fund.

Phase 1: We seek \$1M Current Use Funding over the subsequent 4 years to provide an infusion of support to launch student support program and to establish staff leadership.

Phase 2: A \$2.5M Endowment will solidify the future of this program, providing a foundation of support to realize our vision & goals, including student support, teaching & space.

