

Report from the Social Justice Research Task Force

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1. Executive Summary

The Social Justice Research Task Force (SJRTF) was convened by Chancellor Carol Christ in August 2021 to offer campus decision makers recommendations for supporting faculty, staff, and students pursuing research on social justice issues. Toward that end, SJRTF members collected information from relevant stakeholders both on and off campus through interviews with individuals, groups, and organizations; a survey of campus members; and research on peer institutions. These inquiries were guided by four principles: connecting people who are engaged in research supporting social justice; maximizing impact; increasing visibility; and valuing community engagement.

The SJRTF found that UC Berkeley currently lacks the infrastructure required to adequately support social justice research. The absence of a shared campus infrastructure that is intentionally designed to advance social justice research imposes real costs on UC Berkeley.

- There is a **reputational cost**: many stakeholders, both on and off campus, believe that the university leadership's lack of attention and support for social justice research reflects insufficient commitment to issues that primarily affect marginalized communities.
- There is a **relationship cost**: productive relationships cultivated with community partners often dissolve when individual researchers or staff leave the university, generating mistrust and resentment. Further, because UC Berkeley researchers are not coordinated in their approaches to, or work within, communities and community-based organizations, our partners are often confused, conflicted and/or overburdened by the multiple, uncoordinated requests researchers make on them—all in the name of UC Berkeley.
- There is also a **resource cost**: campus members waste time and money through duplicative efforts that might have been avoided through greater coordination.

The SJRTF found that 65% of respondents surveyed would like to see the creation of a campus network to enhance collaboration across disciplines. Conversations with representatives from peer universities indicated that creating directories for social justice scholars and community scholars could create increased sense of community among researchers. UC Berkeley researchers commented that such platforms could help them to more effectively identify other researchers across campus who would be interested in collaboration.

The SJRTF's data collection efforts found, in particular, a strong consensus from social justice researchers across campus that identifying, securing, and managing extramural funding for their work is very challenging. While UC Berkeley excels in groundbreaking research related to social justice outcomes, most researchers struggle to adequately fund their research programs and their students. Many social science researchers struggle with identifying extramural funding opportunities, receiving adequate support in proposal development, and post-award grant management.

Recommendations

For the near future (0-2 years), the SJRTF proposes the following set of recommendations. These are actions that the campus can begin to undertake immediately:

- Create a virtual hub or commons to serve as a clearinghouse for information to help social justice researchers connect, collaborate, and navigate campus resources. This should include a campus directory for researchers, staff, and affiliates who self-identify as working on social justice issues to channel inquiries, connect potential collaborators, hold joint training sessions, and build community through shared events such as seminars and workshops.
- Create a team of dedicated staff to support social justice and community-engaged research. This could be done through identifying staff in key campus support units who can help to address the specialized needs of social justice researchers. This should include building social justice research expertise within the campus' grant-writing

community and connecting this expertise more closely to campus organized research units (ORUs), research centers and institutes and other spaces where social justice research (SJR) is pursued on campus.

- Survey ORUs, centers, institutes and campus affiliates to identify shareable services, resources, and spaces, to publicize their availability (via the virtual hub), to consider their implications for designing shared infrastructure, and to eliminate wasteful duplication.
- Identify an existing physical space (or determine new space to be built) to serve as a focal point for the social justice research community on campus. **This should be done in consideration with the relocation of the Institute for the Study of Social Issues (ISSI) as a potential hub for social justice research.** This space could be used to co-locate the offices of ORUs, centers, institutes and groups with shared interests and needs, further facilitating collaboration and efficiency. The space would also play an important role in showcasing the work of campus affiliates and underscoring the university's commitment to social justice research.
- Appoint a design committee of community-engaged scholars to propose solutions for the following two areas:
 1. Draft and socialize a campus-wide institutional stance on—and commitment to—community-engaged research and an accompanying set of principles¹ for how UC Berkeley will responsibly and ethically engage with community partners.
 2. Establish distributed points of contact (and/or cross-learning and coordination models) for community partners/partnerships consistent with the principles established by the above-referenced process.
- Identify social justice research as one of the three top fundraising priorities for campus. Pursue the following as near term targets of opportunity for fundraising among alumni and philanthropic donors:
 1. Creation of seed and sustainability funding program for social justice researchers to encourage exploration of new ideas, collaborations, and community partnerships that can (a) pave the way for larger extramural funding opportunities, and (b) sustain community partnerships in between research funding cycles.
 2. Fundraise for existing campus mentoring programs focused on students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds to ensure their long-term viability and success.

¹ The principles suggested should build on and harmonize with the [Campus Principles of Community](#) and the [Principles of International Engagement](#).

3. Fundraise for a large-scale dedicated mentorship and fellowship/training program for undergraduate and graduate students interested in pursuing social justice research, building cohorts of students networked with each other and faculty across campus units and disciplines.

For the medium term (2-5 years) the SJRTF recommends the following:

- Create a campus-wide “Community Fellows-in-Residence Program” that would provide paid opportunities of distinction to community experts to share their knowledge and experience with the UC Berkeley community through, for example, lectures, courses and research collaborations.
- Invest in a Center for Social Justice Research (or comparable campus-wide structure) to assist social justice researchers with funding (from finding extramural funding opportunities to proposal development to grant management) and coordinate community partnerships. Long term goals for this center should include: increasing the overall amount of funding available for social justice research; creating a mechanism for a percentage of return on indirect costs to provide more resources for the complex collaborative work this research requires.

For the longer term (5-10 years), the SJRTF presents the following recommendations:

- Explore deliberate long-term investments in communities and community partnerships. Campus should consider, for example, the creation of a community incubator space for social justice research situated in the Bay Area and East Bay (Berkeley, Oakland or Richmond) to serve as an accessible space for community partners to network, train, and exchange ideas that form the basis of university-community research partnerships.
- Build a campus-wide data infrastructure that arranges for access to and links education, health, juvenile justice, social welfare and related data that campus researchers often rely on for social justice research.
- Elevate social justice research as one of the top three overall priorities for campus and pursue the creation of an endowment for social justice research to ensure continuous support for this area over the long term. This could include support for large-scale graduate student fellowships, support for undergraduate discovery experiences in social justice research, and support for faculty mentorship.

2. Background to the Task Force

The Social Justice Research Task Force (SJRTF) was convened by Chancellor Carol Christ in August of 2021 for the purpose of “recommending to campus decision makers how UC Berkeley can best support faculty, staff, and students pursuing research on Social Justice issues.” The committee was tasked with identifying UC Berkeley’s current strengths in this work, as well as

areas where social justice research (SJR) could be better supported, with particular attention to shared resources, collaboration and fundraising. The 2020 decision to close the Institute for the Study of Societal Issues (ISSI) and distribute its centers and programs to other administrative units is also an important part of this task force's backstory. A surge of protest from alumni, students, and faculty attesting to the success of ISSI in advancing the careers of underrepresented minorities and the critical importance of a gathering space for underserved students and faculty led the campus to rescind the decision. In being tasked with investigating the status of social justice research on campus, writ large, the SJRTF was asked to consider the particular role of ISSI and its potential to do a significant amount of work in this area. Because the SJRTF focused on the larger picture of lifting up social justice research at UC Berkeley, it did not make specific recommendations for ISSI itself. However, the reader will note several instances in the report where ISSI is mentioned as a potential anchor or synergistic force which the Task Force hopes will guide future conversations on the role ISSI could play for social justice research at UC Berkeley.

Additionally, there are a number larger initiatives and efforts motivated by campus' commitment to social justice which include a series of cluster hires (Climate Equity & Environmental Justice; Native American and Indigenous Studies; Latinx & Democracy; Anti-Racism & Social Inclusion; Understanding (Non)Citizenship; and AI & the New Dynamics of Inequality in U.S. Society) that will need added infrastructure and support to ensure that new faculty in these areas will thrive at UC Berkeley. Finally, there are a growing number of social justice oriented efforts on campus that include the [Hispanic Serving Institute](#), the [African-American Initiative](#) and the Anti-Racism Steering Committee, the Task Force hopes can become more integrated into the fabric of social justice research at UC Berkeley.

To guide its work, the SJRTF was asked to focus on the following questions:

1. How can campus give greater visibility and support to the excellent and impactful social justice research that is done at Berkeley, especially by our underrepresented minority faculty, students and postdoctoral researchers?
2. What physical space(s) is/are needed on campus (or adjacent) to support the social justice research community at Berkeley?
3. How does the campus ensure that social justice research becomes a priority for its Light the Way campaign as well as other decanal and unit campaigns?
4. What organizational model(s) should Berkeley consider that would facilitate a future-focused, harmonized, and strengthened organizational structure for social justice research?
5. What are some best practices in supporting social justice research as gleaned from peer Universities?

The SJRTF acknowledges variable applications and understandings of "social justice research" as a concept. In conducting its work, the task force used the following definition of the term:

- Research activity that directly or indirectly leads to bettering the lived experience of marginalized communities and/or individuals located locally or globally.
- Research that seeks to understand how hierarchies and power structures influence and perpetuate social inequities (e.g. ranging from environmental, housing, healthcare, and economic inequities, and more) and include lenses such as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender expression, sexuality, disability, socioeconomic status and any intersectionalities.

Other considerations discussed include:

- SJR seeks to understand and interrogate how research is framed, who determines what research is pursued, who gets funded, and who gets to participate in the research from the beginning.
- It follows rigorous methodological and ethical standards, as do other forms of scholarly research.

(For more information on how researchers surveyed responded to the above definition, please refer to [Appendix A](#)).

The mandate for the SJRTF's work is more timely than ever. The democratization of knowledge and knowledge production is central to UC Berkeley's public mission, particularly given the university's contested origin as a land grant institution. As the premier public research institution in the US, UC Berkeley is in a unique position to commit to social justice research and to offer a model to other universities for how they might support social justice researchers. UC Berkeley's reputation is built, in part, on its commitment to social change and visionary thinking. Increasing capacity and support for social justice research will help to maintain that legacy and the Berkeley brand.

3. Methodology & Data

To provide campus decisionmakers with a set of credible and actionable evidence-based recommendations, members of the SJRTF pursued a multipronged strategy to collect the necessary information from relevant stakeholders both on and off campus. The SJRTF's methodology drew on four sources: (1) meetings among task force members; (2) interviews with individuals, groups, and organizations; (3) a survey of campus members; and (4) interviews with selected peer institutions.

Task force meetings: SJRTF members met 9 times throughout the 2021-22 academic year, or approximately once per month. Representing a cross-section of campus units, SJRTF members used these regular meetings to come to an agreement on priority areas to investigate, to identify relevant individuals and groups to consult, and to share ideas and information. These meetings served as a forum for processing insights gained through stakeholder interviews and the campus survey. Importantly, the meetings were also used to reach consensus on core themes for proposed recommendations as well as the content of those recommendations.

Stakeholder interviews: SJRTF members held a total of 39 meetings throughout Spring 2022 with representatives from campus divisions, ORUs and research centers, and community organizations. The SJRTF conducted five meetings with campus leaders, including deans and the Senate Committee on Research (COR); 26 meetings with individual researchers and representatives from campus ORUs, groups, and programs such as the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative (BIMI), the Graduate Assembly, and the Othering & Belonging Institute, among others; and eight meetings with community partners such as Stiles Hall, the City of Oakland's Race and Equity Department, the Berkeley Unified School District, and Movement Strategy. Meetings typically involved short presentations to introduce the SJRTF's goals and semi-structured interviews based on a common set of questions, depending on affiliation to the campus.

Campus-based stakeholders were asked the following set of questions:

- What do you see as UC Berkeley's greatest strengths and persistent challenges in social justice research?
- What would be a game-changer for UC Berkeley social justice research?
- How could Berkeley sustainably fund social justice research?
- Should Berkeley have a dedicated space on campus to showcase/support social justice research? Where should that be?
- What is needed for Berkeley's social justice research to have a greater impact in society?

Community stakeholders were asked the following set of questions:

- What have been barriers to working with UC Berkeley researchers? Or what facilitated partnerships with UC Berkeley?
- What aspects of your current partnerships (if any) with UC Berkeley have gone well? Please describe the challenges.
- What are you looking for in a university research partner?
- What kinds of research topics are top priorities for your organization?
- What does "social justice research" mean to you or your organization?

Campus survey: To collect systematic feedback from campus members on priorities and concerns related to social justice research, SJRTF members designed a survey that was fielded between March 17 and April 15, 2022. The survey included 15 substantive questions asking respondents to provide their perspectives on the university's current strengths in social justice research and those areas requiring further support to enhance the university's research mission (e.g., fundraising, collaboration, training). A total of 149 valid responses were received from Senate faculty (62% of respondents), lecturers (12%), staff researchers (9%), staff (9%), postdocs (4%), and others (3%). Respondents work in the social sciences (56%), STEM (27%), the humanities (9%) and other fields (7%). Over 84% of respondents identified their work as engaging with social justice themes; 7% responded maybe; 11% responded no. For visual representation of responses to survey questions, please see the graphs in [Appendix A](#)

Peer institutions: The SJRTF conducted interviews and collected materials to assess notable efforts made by peer institutions (UC Davis, UCLA, University of Minnesota, University of Delaware, and Stanford University) in support of social justice research. These institutions

represent a range of models. For example, UC Davis created a high-level leadership position (a Vice Provost of Public Scholarship & Engagement), to provide faculty and community stakeholders with a focal point for coordination and capacity-building. At the University of Minnesota, the Office for Public Engagement, headed by a vice president, has created several online resources to help campus researchers find collaborators in community-engaged research, including a Community Scholars Directory, a Social and Racial Justice Scholar Directory, and the University of Minnesota Public Engagement Footprint Database (a mapping of community engaged projects). University of Minnesota's Office for Public Engagement also hosts a Conference for Community-Engaged Researchers to foster collaboration and learning and offers seed funding for departments to support community engaged research.

4. Principles & Considerations

To begin their work, the SJRTF reflected on the question, "What do cultures and structures of support for social justice research look like and how do we help build those at UC Berkeley?" The four guiding principles that emerged from this initial conversation then framed the inquiry and approach:

Connecting People: There are over 65,000 faculty, staff, postdocs, and students in our university community; finding people who are investigating similar research questions can be challenging. **Interdisciplinary collaboration** is central to the success of social justice research and connecting people is an important value. **Mentorship** is another key aspect of connecting people and can happen in many ways: from faculty to students, from graduate students to undergraduates, or from veteran researchers to early career scholars. Finally, connecting people (through interdisciplinary collaboration or mentorship) creates an improved **sense of belonging** for marginalized students, staff and faculty who may be engaged in social justice research.

Increasing Visibility and Maximizing Impact: Increasing visibility and maximizing impact will be enabled, in part, through the **translation of research to policymakers** and other influential people and institutions, as well as the **communication of research findings in a form that is actionable** to community members. In addition, facilitating communication among campus researchers to encourage innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to social justice research; and creating linkages across disciplines, dialogues and datasets will be critical. Spot lighting and championing social justice researchers and their work to Berkeley's growing community of alumni and donors is ever crucial to **successful fundraising**, a required condition for maximizing impact of social justice research, and may include grants, gifts, and other forms of investment such as time and talent

In order to amplify the impact of Berkeley's social justice researchers, the SJRTF concluded that the **co-location of space and resources** is an important practice, which may include sharing space, sharing resources, or being located nearby to ease collaboration. Finally, the **identification of a physical space** on campus or the creation of new space will help UC Berkeley to build a national profile of engaged scholarship in this area. Additionally, identifying SJR communities (such as ISSI or the Othering & Belonging Institute) to anchor such spaces will

be critical to this process. We imagine a physical space to be welcoming to community members and community organizations who are also engaged in social justice research, as well as a hub for campus-affiliated researchers and students.

Valuing and Elevating Community Engagement: As many Berkeley researchers pointed out in their engagements with the SJRTF, social justice research originates in large part from grassroots organizing and work in local and global communities. Furthermore, when engaging in social justice research, attention to how researchers engage (including the language used and the selection of methodologies) is just as essential as what they engage about. It is all too easy to undermine the purpose of the research (advancing social justice) by using methods that position research partners and community members as “subjects.” For this reason, **support for identifying, maintaining, and honoring partnerships with community organizations** is a central tenet to valuing community partners. This necessarily includes **investing in communication with community partners** where communication is reciprocal. Berkeley researchers need to be listening and hearing from external communities and community organizations as much as they are talking to communities and community organizations. UC Berkeley, like many other research universities, has a legacy of harm in many communities and must work with intention to create new mindsets and methods related to community engagement, partnership and collaboration. One step in that direction is to **make university resources more accessible to community leaders, community researchers, community organizations and community members**. True partnership requires mutually beneficial collaboration among and between community partners and UC Berkeley representatives, as well as co-creation of goals and programming. This exchange should lead to shared principles and priorities for utilizing UC Berkeley and community resources, including space, technology, equipment, time, energy and expertise. Finally, many Berkeley researchers and community partners express a need for **community organization-led training, in order to ensure respectful, ethical—and, therefore, successful—partnerships**. This training should be done in conjunction with our community partners and include deep listening.

5. Areas of Strength

While the stakeholder conversations often focused on what UC Berkeley could do to improve its support for social justice research – including its reputation and role among locally affected communities – it is important to take stock of UC Berkeley’s strengths in this area before discussing the areas requiring targeted interventions. This is *not meant to be an exhaustive inventory of Berkeley’s strengths in social justice and community-engaged research*, but rather a discussion of demonstrative examples that emerged from the various stakeholder conversations.

Demand for social justice research opportunities among undergraduates students:

Interviews with faculty, lecturers, and staff revealed a genuine eagerness from students to work in this area. A comment from the faculty/staff survey conveys this sentiment well: “Students are hungry to participate in racial and social justice research!” Many interviewed respondents noted that, among the undergraduate population, underrepresented or marginalized students are

frequently drivers of community-engaged research on campus. Another comment from a survey respondent captures the spirit of what our undergraduates bring to campus: “Students who are interested in pursuing social justice research often have lived experiences directly tied to their research interest and/or have experienced marginalization themselves, so supporting these students with training and funding opportunities is an important avenue to drive social justice research forward at Cal.”

Dedication of faculty, researchers, lecturers, and staff who support social justice research: UC Berkeley is respected for its tremendous strength in social justice research areas, including health equity and social determinants of health, climate equity, environmental justice, and education. Of note is the recent creation of the interdisciplinary [climate equity and environmental justice roundtable](#) as well as the substantive work of the Othering & Belonging Institute, the Lawrence Hall of Science, and the breadth and expertise offered by UC Berkeley’s professional schools, particularly in community engaged research.

A noteworthy example of excellence in this area is the interdisciplinary team led by Professors Emily Ozer and Susan Stone with the support of a William T. Grant Foundation Institutional Challenge Grant. Building on 6+ years of networking, incubation, and external partnership development across campus, this team brings the School of Public Health, Department of Psychology, School of Social Welfare, Graduate School of Education, and the Department of City & Regional Planning together with community partner, San Francisco Unified School District, to tackle institutional barriers as related to SJR-oriented and other community-engaged research. The intensive collaboration focuses on: 1) strengthening recognition and value of partnered research, promoting incentives and addressing pain points in faculty career advancement; 2) addressing and proposing solutions for administrative pain points in partnered research that include human subjects review, data use agreements, MOU’s, administrative and financial burdens for investigators and external partners; and 3) designing approaches to create sustained and scaled supports for recruiting, funding, and training graduate and undergraduate students across labs and units (e.g. “public purpose” pathways).

Since starting this effort in 2020, the team has made progress in encouraging campus to adopt new guidelines and policy around [assessment of community-engaged research](#) for faculty merit, promotion and tenure (64% of individuals in our survey indicated this issue to be important to them). Given that this team will continue to play an integral role in promoting partnered research at UC Berkeley, the recommendations from this SJRTF report should be seen as complementing their efforts.

The above efforts are especially critical to those faculty who do community-engaged research and who feel they have to choose between advancing their academic careers and doing community impact work. One faculty member interviewed commented that she struggled with advising students on whether or not to encourage them to pursue their interest in a community-engaged research pathway because doing so may encumber their advancement in academia.

In addition, UC Berkeley has devoted faculty, lecturers, researchers, and staff who are running important student mentoring programs, often on a shoestring budget, focused on social justice. The American Cultures Center, Berkeley Food Institute, McNair Scholars Program, Marco Antonio Firebaugh Scholars Program, Institute for the Study of Societal Issues (ISSI), Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative (BIMI), i4Y - Innovations for Youth, and the Berkeley Underground Scholars are just a few of the many programs that provide transformative experiences for our undergraduate students across campus.

6. Key Thematic Areas and Recommendations

Based on its consultation and survey work, its internal conversations, and its assessments of UC Berkeley's current strengths and weaknesses, the SJTF has identified the following thematic areas that require critical intervention and key recommendations for next steps.

A. Investing in Infrastructure to Support Social Justice Research

UC Berkeley lacks the infrastructure required to adequately support social justice research. While the university has a large number of researchers dedicated to social justice issues (121 survey respondents affirmed they work in this area), there are no shared institutional mechanisms to disseminate new knowledge, facilitate cross-campus collaboration, learn best practices, or liaise with off-campus partners. The absence of such mechanisms helps to explain why 42% of survey respondents give the university letter grades of C or lower for its current support of social justice research (e.g., funding, space, staff support, fundraising support, proposal development).

Individual scholars, ORU representatives, and community partners consulted by the SJRTF consistently point to the absence of campus-wide coordination and support mechanisms as a key obstacle to UC Berkeley achieving greater impact through community-engaged scholarship and policy-relevant research.

As articulated in the Executive Summary, **the absence of a shared campus infrastructure that is intentionally designed to advance social justice research imposes real costs on UC Berkeley**; our reputation, relationships and resources are compromised when social justice researchers have to rely upon piecemeal support.

UC Berkeley's infrastructural weaknesses will become more salient in the near future due to emerging trends. First, the university has used cluster hiring to recruit many new faculty who are engaged in social justice research (e.g., Latinx and Democracy, Climate Equity and Environmental Justice). These scholars will not only need to draw on campus support to set up their research projects, but the university will also need to invest in that infrastructure to ensure their success. Second, peer institutions like Stanford (with the creation of the [Stanford Impact Labs](#)) and UC Davis (with a more recent creation of a [Vice Provost level office for Public Scholarship and Engagement](#)) are making significant investments in social justice research on their campuses. A failure to take comparable action could underscore UC Berkeley's lack of

competitiveness in this area, hurting its ability to recruit new faculty, secure philanthropic funding, and forge new community partnerships.

There is strong demand for a shared campus-wide infrastructure. Respondents to the SJRTF's survey offered clear support for three specific measures.

- Over 65% indicated that it would be important to **create a campus network to enhance research collaboration** across disciplines. This is discussed further in the next section on interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Approximately 69% stated that it would be important to **create an organizational structure to coordinate and sustain community-university research partnerships** over time.
- Over 52% stated that it would be important to **create shared spaces on campus to collaborate and build community** for social justice research. Space is a particularly important consideration, given that the imminent closure of the space housing the Institute for the Study of Social Issues (ISSI) will lead to the loss of 23,000 square feet of centralized space dedicated to social justice research. The loss of the use of that space is a divestment in SJR and the scholars who conduct that research, many of whom are from underrepresented or marginalized communities.

Given the demand for a campus-wide infrastructure to support social justice research, the SJRTF presents the following short-term (within the 2022-2023 academic year) and longer-term goals for the university:

Short Term Recommendations

- Create a team of dedicated staff to support social justice and community-engaged research. This could be done through identifying staff in key campus support units who can help to address the specialized needs of social justice researchers navigate a range of research support areas from identifying funding opportunities and proposal development to fundraising, and navigation of ethical review complexities to proposal submission and grant management.
- In collaboration with Industry Alliances Office (IAO), VCRO with guidance from social justice researchers, work to create standardized university-level data use agreements (MOUs) with data source entities that campus researchers commonly draw on for education, health, juvenile justice, social welfare, and related information.
- Survey ORUs and campus affiliates to identify services, resources, and spaces that can be shared in order to publicize their availability (via the virtual hub described in the following section), consider their implications for designing shared infrastructure, and eliminate wasteful duplication.
- Identify existing physical space (or new space to be built) to serve as a focal point for the social justice research community on campus. Campus should consider how this can be achieved in coordination with units that focus on social justice research such as, for

example, ISSI. This space could co-locate the offices of ORUs and groups with shared interests and needs, further facilitating collaboration and efficiency. The space would also play an important role in showcasing the work of campus affiliates and underscoring the university's commitment to social justice research.

Medium Term Recommendation

- Invest in a Center for Social Justice Research to assist social justice researchers with funding (everything from finding extramural funding opportunities to proposal development to grant management) and coordination of community partnerships. This could also evolve into an office to guide and drive donor interest and potential philanthropic contributions. Long term goals for this Center should include: increasing the overall amount of funding available for Social Justice Research; creating a mechanism for a percentage of return on indirect costs to provide more resources for the complex collaborative work this research requires. Further exploration of this idea with social justice researchers should be done to determine whether this should be centralized or decentralized by disciplinary groupings.

Long Term Recommendation

- Build a campus-wide data repository that arranges for access to and links education, health, juvenile justice, social welfare and related data that campus researchers often rely on for social justice research. While this could prove to be a knotty, challenging undertaking due to data access restrictions, a linked database would be a tremendously powerful tool for social justice researchers as well as the larger social sciences community on campus. Consider how the [California Policy Lab and its data resources](#) might be leveraged to help in this effort.

B. Facilitating Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Social justice research is often, by its very nature, inter- or multi-disciplinary because the issues it tackles are complex and multi-dimensional. Several interviewed researchers commented on how challenging it is to find potential collaborators outside one's immediate department, and that they rarely had time to do so. In addition, the task force found it extremely challenging to map the social justice research landscape in the absence of a single or unifying portal; it is difficult to capture the big picture and easy to inadvertently leave out people and initiatives.

As noted above, the SJRTF's survey found that 65% of respondents believe that the creation of a campus network to enhance collaboration across disciplines is either very important or important to them. Conversations with peer universities indicated the importance of having developed directories for social justice scholars and community scholars in creating a sense of community among their researchers. Such resources can help track how a community of scholars has grown in one's institution and can serve as a starting point for rallying scholars around events, interdisciplinary curriculum, and funding opportunities as well as a platform for tracking who is doing what and where in community-engaged research partnerships. As well, pairing these tools for collaboration with community building activities such as seminar series,

workshops, conferences and spotlight articles on social justice researchers and their work can further enhance a social justice research community of practice.

There are many possibilities for the campus to explore to promote interdisciplinary collaboration. Thoughtful examples from two peer universities are described below as starting points:

- University of Minnesota created a [Community Scholars Directory](#) and, after the murder of George Floyd, a [Social and Racial Justice Scholar Directory](#). Additionally, the campus hosts a directory for [Centers and Institutes doing Public Engagement work](#) and an effort that maps community engaged projects called the [UM Public Engagement Footprint Database](#).
- UCLA's Center for Community Engagement has developed the [Collaboratory for Community Engagement & Public Service Activities](#), a flexible platform that is being adopted by many Universities across the country.

UC Berkeley researchers commented during interviews that such platforms could serve as an internal "bulletin board," where campus researchers could pose projects that might be of interest to other researchers across campus. For community stakeholders and social justice organizations, a portal could be a place where they pose questions and issues to Berkeley researchers.

Two models of social justice oriented interdisciplinary collaboration that emerged in the SJRTF's conversations warrant further description. [The Black Studies Collaboratory](#), funded by Andrew W. Mellon Just Futures Initiative, was created to bring together artists, activists and scholars with an inspiring mission to bring Black Studies out of the classroom and into local communities and broader public discourse. The recent creation of the [Climate Equity and Environmental Justice Roundtable](#) which includes faculty in the Climate Equity & Environmental Justice cluster hire, holds promise for more impactful interdisciplinary collaboration in this critical area of research. Related recommendations for enabling interdisciplinary collaboration are described below.

As a tangible goal to be achieved in the next academic year, the SJRTF recommends that the VC Research, in consultation with UC Berkeley social justice researchers, spearhead the following initiative.

Short Term Recommendation

- Create a virtual hub or commons to serve as a clearinghouse for information to help social justice researchers connect, collaborate, and navigate campus resources. This should include a campus directory for researchers, staff, and affiliates who self-identify as working on social justice issues to channel inquiries, connect potential collaborators, hold joint training sessions, and begin building a community brought together by shared events such as seminars and workshops. The campus should look to peer universities that have already developed virtual hubs to determine what model is best for UC Berkeley.

C. Elevating Community-Engaged Research (CER)

UC Berkeley is not unlike other academic institutions that have, and continue to engage with communities for their own institutional gain. Candid conversations with UC Berkeley researchers and community organizations alike with the SJRTF raised many concerns and issues around UC Berkeley's reputation in the East Bay and San Francisco communities around past and present community-engaged research, and the history of extractive "parachute" methodologies. Below are illustrative comments that emerged from these conversations. Those in quotation marks are direct quotes. Additional critical feedback from community stakeholder interviews can be found in [Appendix B](#) as well as more information on how the SJRTF is defining community-engaged research, and background and scope of the CER stakeholder discussions.

- "The University's framework around marginalized communities buys into the dominant media narrative that black and brown people are diseased, problematic, helpless, and need to be contained, controlled, killed or saved. This is the framework in which many researchers are trained."
- How is UC Berkeley being held accountable for actions and their work in the communities? What steps will UC Berkeley take (and communicate) its accountability?
- "The University needs to address its past harms to communities. What's the compensation around what's been extracted (from the community) already? What is owed to communities going forward? What is just compensation for community time and effort?"
- UC Berkeley doesn't have enough students and faculty of color doing research with the local communities.

Further, many community partners cited issues around **lack of training and preparation/knowledge** of UC Berkeley scholars before entering a community. For example, UC Berkeley students might enter neighborhoods in West Oakland to do partnered research without understanding the relevant history, including decades of structural racism.

Faculty, staff and community stakeholders indicated that **greater coordination is needed at UC Berkeley for researchers who pursue community-engaged research**. Researchers specifically cited the importance of having institutional memory, continuity, and continuous relationship building in community-engaged research partnerships. "UC Berkeley lacks a 'home' for researchers to achieve consistency," remarked one UC Berkeley researcher. For example, what happens when a faculty member at UC Berkeley, who has decades worth of community-engaged partnerships, retires? Who or what on campus holds the knowledge of these partnerships and who does the work to continue building and deepening those relationships?

Several community stakeholders expressed a need for a single point of contact at UC Berkeley. This was especially true for local school districts where a given district may have multiple projects across several UC Berkeley units. For example, several Bay Area school districts have

research partnerships with UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, School of Social Welfare, School of Public Health, School of Optometry and Department of Psychology, and The Lawrence Hall of Science. Who on the Berkeley campus can hold together the whole picture of how UC Berkeley is working with each local school district? How can the campus avoid overtaxing our valued community partners with multiple inquiries from multiple UC Berkeley individuals?

A few stakeholders were generous in sharing their framework and models used in partnering, examples of which can be found in [Appendix B](#).

A number of community partners and UC Berkeley researchers pointed toward **the need for UC Berkeley to have an institutional stance (flowing from the Chancellor) on community-engaged research**, how the campus values it, and what the campus will do (materially) to support it. **The adoption of a set of principles to help guide UC Berkeley researchers to be responsible and ethical partners in community-engaged research will help nurture mutually beneficial and productive research and partnerships, and help repair damage done by previous endeavors.**

The following recommendations should be pursued in close collaboration with community partners. This will ensure that research agendas are co-created to be mutually beneficial, avoiding the problems that result when campus makes its own assumptions about what would be useful to community members.

The SJRTF recommends the VC Research take a lead role in appointing and convening a design committee composed of community-engaged scholars to design solutions for the following two short-term recommendations below as a first priority. Subsequent to that (and time permitting), the design committee should consider strategies and options for how the campus could carry out medium and long term recommendations below. The design committee should convene over the next academic year and should be appropriately resourced with funding to cover researcher time and commitment that could include summer salary, stipends and/or student/postdoctoral researcher assistance.

Short Term Recommendations

- Draft and broadly socialize a campus-wide institutional stance on and commitment to community-engaged research and accompanying set of principles for how UC Berkeley will responsibly and ethically engage with our community partners. This should be led by UC Berkeley community-engaged researchers on campus, with help from the Office of Research, and in collaboration with community partners. This should be supported by campus leadership—flowing from the Chancellor.
- Establish and fund models for stronger cross-learning and coordination, potentially including a distributed point of contact for community partners/partnerships, consistent with the principles established by the above-referenced process.

Medium Term Recommendation

- Create a campus-wide “Social Justice Community Fellows-in-Residence Program.” This would entail the creation of paid opportunities of distinction for community experts to give lectures, teach courses on campus, and/or collaborate with faculty, staff and students to educate the UC Berkeley community on issues of importance to the community, and on best practices for engaging communities in co-creation of research priorities. While such a program would provide Berkeley students with opportunities to train and gain valuable real world perspective from community members, campus should first explore with community partners what would be of value to them in participating in a fellows program. Such a program should be designed with community members’ needs and desires in mind.

Long Term Recommendation

- Explore deliberate, long-term investments in communities and community partnerships that promote social justice. For example, the campus should consider creation of community incubator spaces for social justice research situated in our Bay Area and East Bay communities (Berkeley, Oakland or Richmond). Incubator spaces would serve as accessible and safe spaces for community partners and social justice researchers to come together for networking, training, and the exchange of ideas that form the basis of university-community research partnerships. The incubator model could serve as a magnet for philanthropic investment in programs and projects co-developed by campus researchers and community partners. Part of this long term community investment should involve the creation of dedicated community engaged research relationship liaisons to help community groups connect with relevant units and researchers on campus, navigate campus bureaucracy, and conduct appropriate follow up.

D. Supporting Underrepresented and Marginalized Scholars and Students

A theme that cut across discussion of faculty, staff, student, and community research projects involved the intent and motivation that researchers bring to their social justice research. In particular, the lived experiences of social injustice among underrepresented and marginalized scholars often lead them to pursue projects in this area. However, while scholars of social justice are committed to their projects, the feedback received from some stakeholders indicates that those individuals often face more obstacles and a higher burden of proof in advancing their research. As mentioned previously, many of the faculty, lecturers, and staff involved in mentoring students in social justice research or community-engaged research report feeling burnout and limited capacity to mentor all those students who would like to be involved.

Scholars and students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds are engaged in cutting edge work. In this respect, research pipeline programs like the McNair Scholars Program and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship tend to emphasize traditional disciplinary gateways into the professoriate. However, these programs are often constrained when addressing the multidisciplinary and novel approaches that students seek to pursue. For example, students wanting to explore new modes of gathering evidence (e.g. through emerging media, cell phone video, social media platforms, mixed arts etc.) may not be as readily accommodated by

traditional research pathways that tend to emphasize and reward more book based scholarship experiences. Thus, students in traditional departments often rely on bifurcated mentorship, that is, they may have to seek mentorship from faculty or community members working with more non-traditional approaches. This can often lead to a lack of program cohesion which should be addressed both internally within campus and in consultation with the agencies and foundations that fund pipeline programs.

Research funding mechanisms on campus are structurally set up to reward conventional research models and structures that fit into a limited menu of disciplinary categories. Social justice research, however, is a growing area of research and practice, particularly through projects pursued by scholars and students from underrepresented backgrounds. The campus should create funding mechanisms to reward research that seeks to address social justice issues from innovative approaches by researchers who have a vested interest in that work.

Inclusive and equity-minded faculty and student recruitment are intimately tied to support for social justice research at UC Berkeley. Social justice research can only thrive if there is a critical mass of scholars at Berkeley who value the work and can meaningfully engage with it. It is not enough to bring diverse members into the campus community to do research. UC Berkeley must support them so that they can advance academically and professionally. However, for many scholars from underrepresented backgrounds, this sometimes means helping them negotiate expectations for what counts as expertise in a given field. In many ways, these scholars are charting new approaches to tenure and publishing, but this often seems to come at a price that is not always acknowledged by the university.

Social justice research is of particular importance to the recruitment, retention, and promotion of underrepresented students and scholars at Berkeley. For this reason the SJRTF believes that targeted support in the form of dedicated mentorship programs and fellowships for students conducting social justice research will have the net result of increasing overall campus faculty and student diversity, both through retention and by building a community that helps recruit new scholars and students. The financial support and mentorship provided to scholars doing social justice research should be substantial enough to communicate the significance placed on the value of that work. This should be an area that is prioritized in fundraising efforts and the resulting academic products should be duly recognized during promotion evaluations.

There are already many programs and professionals doing exemplary work everyday in creating the necessary conditions for the production of meaningful social justice research. Due to the limited time and scope of the SJRTF, the Task Force believes that a much more focused effort and analysis is needed to make specific recommendations for how UC Berkeley can best support underrepresented and marginalized scholars and students. To that end, the Task Force provides below some *general guidance on six critical areas* that will need further study. As a result, this section is formatted differently from the others.

Academic Advising and Helping Students Navigate Opportunities: To support underrepresented and marginalized students, campus departments should invest in the academic advising that better connects students to the curriculum and research

opportunities that reflect their lived experiences and their substantive interests. One compelling example is the [SEED Scholar Honors Program](#), which, through a high touch commitment to student success, focuses on supporting and inspiring historically marginalized undergraduate populations majoring in all areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Mentoring: To encourage students to pursue a life as scholars, they should be able to establish relationships with faculty mentors while also being able to participate in peer mentoring communities where they can develop discursive expertise. This vertical (e.g. faculty mentoring student) and horizontal (e.g. undergraduate mentoring undergraduate) approach is already present in several of the pipeline programs that are designed to develop paths to the professoriate. One such program that cultivates horizontal mentorship is the [Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program](#), a national program and network of which UC Berkeley is a member. The Task Force believes that coupling the vertical and horizontal approaches to mentorship is a model that has great potential for scaling and supporting a greater number of underrepresented and minority scholars and students.

Leadership: Supporting underrepresented and marginalized scholars and students at Berkeley means making sure that these scholars know and have opportunities to gain leadership positions within their respective academic fields and professional organizations. Often, this requires supplemental professional development training or workshops.

Accessible Learning Environments: Critical to the success of underrepresented and marginalized scholars and students is the availability of accessible learning spaces and resources. These include culturally inclusive classrooms, tutoring areas, libraries, and labs. Especially in a university where the culture of meritocracy and academic competition can often lead to restrictions on access to certain resources and courses, making sure that there is equity in related processes is important. Any discussion on accessible learning spaces for underrepresented and marginalized scholars and students should be integrated into the deliberations on space and infrastructure for social justice researchers mentioned in section A above.

Connecting Underrepresented and Marginalized Scholars and Students with Opportunities for Advancement: One important possibility for further exploration is for campus to facilitate the exchange of information regarding fellowships, postdoctoral, and faculty positions that might be coming on the market and for which our students might be prime candidates. While the Office of Undergraduate Research & Scholarships is a solid resource for sharing information about student research opportunities, the campus could benefit from a more integrated and amplified approach around social justice research opportunities. Integration of social justice research opportunities and experiences for students into the “virtual hub or commons” mentioned in Section B could help connect students with the broader campus social justice research community.

Assessment: Developing a systematic process of assessment for social justice research can help underrepresented and marginalized scholars and students understand how their work has progressed from one term to another. Demonstrating how one's research has evolved over time is not only an important part of the research process, it is fundamental to the way the campus communicates its growth, and encourages renewal of commitment to supporting underrepresented and marginalized scholars and continuous improvement over time. Assessment is most useful when it's built into a new process or program.

E. Funding

The interviews and survey conducted by the SJRTF yield a strong consensus from social justice researchers across campus that **identifying and managing extramural funding for SJR is very challenging**. Although UC Berkeley's current Light the Way Campaign does highlight the theme of "Democracy and Equality" as part of "[Research for the Public Good.](#)" democracy and equality do not adequately capture the full breadth of social justice research activity on campus.

UC Berkeley excels in groundbreaking research related to social justice outcomes, **but most researchers struggle to adequately fund their research programs and their students**. Without a significant federal agency to fund their work, many social science researchers have to patch together a variety of modest foundation and state grants, or pursue philanthropic dollars, to fund their research programs and centers, making it hard to support a stable research group that can help their faculty pursue and carry out extramural funding opportunities. Faculty in the social sciences and the humanities all signaled that the challenge of funding has limited their ability to pursue certain kinds of work and to apprentice graduate students in the ways they would like to.

Despite the challenges, there are recent successes such as the African American Studies Department's [\\$2.8M grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) to create the Black Studies Collaboratory. This project has been transformative for the Department and for the presence of Black Studies on campus. One important aspect of this grant is the seed funding it has provided to related projects through mini-grants across campus. Campus could consider the Stanford Impact Labs approach; Stanford has created an R&D model for social sciences that makes staged and sequenced investments in partnerships between leading researchers and practitioners to support innovative programs, policies and interventions to address societal challenges.

The SJRTF survey found that 36.9% of respondents would encourage the campus to prioritize philanthropic sources in securing external funding to support social justice research. The next two largest extramural funding sources prioritized by respondents were foundation/corporate grants (16.8%) and federal/state grants (16.1%).

The SJRTF believes that major private donors, particularly UC Berkeley alumni, care about social impact and social justice research and may be willing to contribute to targeted opportunities. Consider Stanford recently announced the [Doerr School of Sustainability](#), a

\$1.69B philanthropic effort, and the Goldman School of Public Policy's California 100 project, a philanthropically supported by \$18M in effort over two years that is being led by UC Berkeley, with other universities such as Stanford and UC Riverside as partners. The SJRTF believes UC Berkeley has tremendous potential to raise visibility and donor support, especially among alumni, for the excellent social justice research already associated with the university. With this in mind, the SJRTF recommends the following set of actions.

Short Term Recommendations

- **UC Berkeley should identify and highlight social justice research as one of the top three overall fundraising priorities, campus-wide.** The following opportunities should be targeted immediately:
 1. Creation of seed and continuity funding program for social justice researchers to encourage exploration of new ideas, collaborations, and community partnerships that can pave the way for larger extramural funding opportunities and long-term programs of high impact research with community partners.
 2. Fundraise for existing campus mentoring programs focused on students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds to ensure their long-term viability and success.
 3. Fundraise for a large-scale dedicated mentorship and fellowship/training program for undergraduate and graduate students interested in pursuing social justice research, building cohorts of students networked with each other and faculty across campus units and disciplines.

Long Term Recommendation

- The campus should pursue the creation of an endowment for social justice research to ensure continuous support for this area for future generations of social justice scholars. This could include support for large-scale graduate student fellowships, support for undergraduate discovery experiences in social justice research, and support for faculty mentorship.

Final Thoughts

UC Berkeley's social justice and community-engaged researchers are among the campus' greatest strengths in creating positive change locally, nationally and globally. While recognizing this fact, the SJRTF's engagement with varied constituencies across campus over the past year has made clear that there is ever-growing interest among students, staff, and faculty to pursue social justice and community-engaged research. Will UC Berkeley be prepared to compete for the talents and energy of these individuals *and* be able to provide a culture of support where their research will thrive? The Task Force's inquiries led members to understand that no one solution exists, but that answering such a question necessarily begins with lifting up and supporting our existing social justice research community of practice.

Considering the multiple challenges faced in sustaining SJR, the SJRTF has proposed a multi-layered approach with specific recommendations for “what the campus can do now” and other recommendations that ask campus leadership to convene relevant Berkeley experts, in collaboration with community partners where appropriate, to design the best possible solutions. This will require an ongoing process of working together *and* campus investment that, in the words of a community partner, will permit UC Berkeley to pursue the “healthy struggle” of social justice research over the long haul.

[Appendix A:](#) **Survey Results, Stakeholders Interviewed, and Feedback To Consider for Further Study**

[Appendix B:](#) **Community-Engaged Research**