

UC BERKELEY STRATEGIC PLANNING

SIGNATURE INITIATIVES WORKING GROUP

SPRING 2018 REPORT

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APPENDIX A4: INEQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

BRIEF SUMMARY:

Inequality is a defining issue of our time; it affects democratic participation and access to education, health, and wellbeing. As a world leader in studying the multiple dimensions of inequality, Berkeley's faculty, departments, and centers are uniquely equipped to develop policies to diminish inequality and broaden opportunity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Inequality is the defining issue of our time and it is at the root of populist movements from the political left and right. Berkeley is the world leader in studying issues regarding the economics, sociology, politics, and policy regarding inequality and opportunity. UC Berkeley researchers were the first to use tax records to show that income inequality has increased dramatically since the 1980s and have done pioneering work on documenting stagnating social mobility. Our faculty have shown how economic inequality has led to political inequality and they have shown how political inequality has led to public policies that have exacerbated economic inequality. This pernicious cycle threatens to continuously amplify economic and political inequality and to put increasing stress on an already polarized political system, a fractured, segregated, and unequal public education system, and America's vulnerable social safety net. Berkeley researchers have also collected oral histories of activists who have worked for racial, gender, environmental, disability, and economic justice and created art, poetry, and song that reflect on the experiences of disparity and imagine a more equal and just future. Berkeley also sets the standard for public research universities by providing upward mobility for its students and successfully educating as many Pell Grant recipients as Stanford has students.

There is more work to do, however. Berkeley needs to do more to translate its research to move the needle on inequality. It needs to identify policies and programs that will make a difference. These policies include social and educational programs, laws and rules affecting opportunity in the marketplace, technologies that provide for greater equality and opportunity, and demonstration projects of new methods of training people for jobs, policing in cities, and providing avenues for opportunity. Berkeley itself also needs to do better in terms of meeting the basic needs of its own students and increasing completion rates among underrepresented groups. We have an incredible opportunity to leverage expertise across the campus to interrupt the cycle of inequality and to elevate

these issues around research and demonstration projects by developing a program in *inequality and opportunity*.

THE CHALLENGE:

Inequality is the defining issue of our time—one that has global, national, statewide, and local dimensions. Evidence is mounting that inequality is bad for everybody. Nations with high inequality also have high indications of obesity, drug abuse, mental illness, anxiety, crime, teen pregnancies, and other dynamics that diminish the well-being of those on both sides of the yawning income gap. Those at the top of this gap are more stressed than ever—despite their relative advantages—as they spend more of their time trying to keep up with the spending habits and lifestyles of the top “one percent.” Those at the lower end find their hopes diminished and their fears about the future increased as they try to find decent jobs and neighborhoods. Those in between develop resentment, anxiety, and sometimes costly coping mechanisms such as working multiple jobs and accumulating credit-card and other forms of debt. In addition, inequality is a central challenge to UC Berkeley’s realization of comprehensive academic excellence. The issue touches all aspects of our mission: research, teaching, and service. Berkeley is a leader in this area and is poised to build on this strength to move the needle in research, policy, and outcomes for our students.

Inequality has implications for wealth distribution, social and political engagement, electoral politics, public education, and health. Berkeley is the world leader in this area in terms of faculty working on these issues across multiple domains, including politics, policy, economics, history, race, sociology, immigration, disability rights, and artistic expression and examination. We are also a leader in addressing inequality and opportunity in higher education. For example, we educate as many Pell grant students as Stanford has students. More generally, Berkeley’s leadership, faculty, and staff, in serving the educational needs of undocumented students, first-generation college students, formerly incarcerated students, and other nontraditional students provide vast potential for generating opportunity for upward mobility, civic engagement, and democratic participation.

These issues are at the top of intellectual, artistic, scientific, and policy agendas in California, the United States, and around the world. Berkeley is a global research and education leader in this area, yet it can do more to develop organizational and institutional strengths to cultivate, support, brand, and disseminate its role to the degree that it deserves.

WHY BERKELEY? WHY NOW?

Berkeley faculty and students uniquely define the intersection between academic excellence and engagement and commitment to problems in the world (or nation, state, or city). That puts us in the ideal place to study inequality and opportunity. Berkeley scholars have been at the forefront of research in this area, and have had intellectual and societal impact. For example, Robert Reich has expressed concerns about income inequality in America since he was Secretary of Labor in the Clinton Administration in the mid-1990s, and he has been a leading figure in bringing the issue to the attention of Americans through his writing, lecturing, media appearances, and movies. Emmanuel Saez’s groundbreaking work on documenting historical trends in inequality (Piketty and Saez 2003) placed these issues on the mainstream intellectual agenda. Henry Brady’s work on political inequality dates back to 1995 (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995) and includes two follow-up books (2012, 2018). Paul Pierson’s work on the political economy of inequality (Hacker and Pierson 2011) has added to our understanding of how politics and economics interact.

A very partial list of Berkeley scholars who have worked in this area provides a sense of the extraordinary breadth of topics and depth of expertise on issues of inequality and opportunity at Berkeley. The scholars include Lisa Garcia Bedolla who has studied ways to reduce inequality in political participation, especially among minority populations; Prudence Carter who has studied race and inequality in schools; Rachel Morello-Frosch who has studied environmental inequality; Georgina Kleege whose work on disabled access has transformed museum practices in the U.S. and beyond; Josh Blumenstock who has developed global poverty indices using novel data science methods; Jack Glaser who has studied implicit bias in policing; Leonard Syme who pioneered in identifying the ways that lower socioeconomic status affects health and well-being; Karen Nakamura who is critically analyzing disability, social policy, and augmentive technology in contemporary Japan and the US; Amani Nuru Jeter who examines racial disparities in health across populations, across place, and over the life-course; Julian Chun-Chung Chow who examines inequality and poverty in ethnic neighborhoods; Cybelle Fox who studies the history and impacts of the American welfare state, especially on minority and immigrant populations; John Powell who has been a leader in studying structured racialization; Bertrall Ross who has examined the structural sources of the marginalization of the poor in the American political process; Hilary Hoynes who has shown how well-designed safety-net programs actually invest in people's long-term well-being; Rucker Johnson who has shown how school desegregation increased the well-being of African Americans; Jesse Rothstein who has shown how targeted school spending can yield better outcomes; Patrick Kline and others who have shown how intergenerational mobility has changed over time and varies by place; Ted Miguel who studies how health disparities in developing countries impede economic development; and many others. Other Berkeley scholars have examined geographic differences in opportunity, the role of education in the intergenerational transmission of inequality, disparities in access to health and health care, the deeply unequal economic and political impacts of climate change, and the role of the criminal justice system in perpetuating inequality. (A fuller list of exemplary scholars working in this area at Berkeley can be found in the expert data base of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society: <https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/expert-database>)

This work also reaches well beyond academia: the Occupy Movement's "We are the 99 percent" slogan was inspired directly from Saez's work. The Disability Rights movement was born in Berkeley when Ed Roberts and other disabled people who had broken through admissions barriers to attend Berkeley began to come together to organize. Berkeley has excelled in artistic and journalistic examinations and documentation of social movements to redress inequality. It is fair to say that UC Berkeley, with its academic excellence and deep-seated interest in this topic across departments, schools, and colleges, is the national leader in research on inequality. Students are actively engaged in these issues, as demonstrated by demand for courses like Wealth and Poverty (filling Wheeler auditorium year after year) and the enormous popularity of minors such as global poverty and public policy, education, public health, and political economy. The campus strength in Data Science and Computer Science represents a real and unique opportunity to link social sciences with engineering to harness information from newly available data sources for the public good. Additionally, the existing institutes such as the Institute for Governmental Studies, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, the Berkeley Opportunity Lab, the California Policy Lab, and the Center for the Study of Race and Gender provide connectors to units around campus and reflect the deep commitment in this area.

METRICS AND MILESTONES:

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN 10 YEARS?

In 10 years, Berkeley is recognized as a global leader in diagnosing, researching, and providing solutions and interventions for inequality. Berkeley scholars will continue to identify and characterize economic, political, and social inequality in all its forms and manifestations including policing, the environment, the economy, the arts, food systems, health and well-being, and education. They will continue to be a national resource for those interested in the facts about and impacts of inequality and opportunity. They will also continue to do research on ways to ameliorate inequality through new policies and new programs. In addition, they will reach out to cities and communities to help them develop new ways to develop these problems. On campus, Berkeley will better reflect this expertise, with increases in student, staff, and faculty diversity, higher retention and graduation rates for students, and a campus climate in which everyone is welcome and everyone belongs.

EXEMPLAR THEMES WITHIN THIS SIGNATURE INITIATIVE:

We invite the UC Berkeley Community to submit ideas (at any stage of development). We also want to hear from faculty already working on research programs within the scope of this Signature Initiative. For any idea submitted, please limited it to 500 words at this stage. Ideas may be specific or broad, but should lend themselves to measurable and time-bound goals.

INEQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION: California has high rates of inequality and poverty yet also has some of the nation's highest rates of upward mobility according to recent work by The Equality of Opportunity Project. We should promote partnerships between UC Berkeley researchers and state and local governments and community based organizations to facilitate policy experiments, data sharing, and solutions. An incubator for these ideas is the California Policy Lab, partnering with California state, county and city governments to collaborate through experiments and evaluation. This work should evaluate the impacts of current policies and the effectiveness of new programs.

INEQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE WORLD: UC Berkeley has a strong program of research on economic development where it has led the way in the use of randomized experiments and other novel methodologies. These efforts should be continued and expanded.

BUILDING RESEARCH BRIDGES ACROSS CAMPUS TO FACILITATE CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH: There is an unrealized opportunity to combine the tremendous strengths in Visual and Performing Arts, Social Science, and Engineering on this campus and across the UC system. Together, through data science, machine learning combined with domain based data, we can identify solutions that are scalable.

REVOLUTIONIZING DATA FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD: Unique data, from governments and private sector high tech firms, are increasingly enabling breakthroughs in research on poverty and inequality. By generating granular, high-frequency data, technological tools have the potential to answer important questions about human behavior and affect positive social change. This is a platform to promote collaborative, multidisciplinary research across campus.

MAPPING INEQUALITY: We should expand our understanding and Berkeley branding in a two-pronged strategy. First, promote data documenting inequality through activities such as the World Inequality Database (<http://wid.world/>) and expand to important domains such as education and health. Second, produce cartographic accounts of these patterns of inequality and study the problem historically so that we can see how and where it has changed. In addition, we can foster the use of visual and performing arts to document the lived experience with inequality through infographics and other displays.

BUILDING SOLUTIONS FOR INEQUALITY: We should harness the talent of faculty and students to translate research to solutions to reduce inequality. How can workers gain bargaining power and increase their share of rents? Can we redesign trade and immigration to reduce rather than exacerbate inequality? How can we increase the pipeline through higher education to grow our skilled labor force? How can we take these ideas to scale? What elements of our social safety net need updating? Is a universal basic income the answer? How can we improve workforce training?

RESEARCH REACHING OUTWARD: We should develop research partnerships with community-based organizations in Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond, and other California cities to work to document and redress inequality. This could include environmental justice, education, labor, and housing organizations, for example. These groups often have sophisticated analyses borne out of their closeness to social problems and their work could be strengthened by the data and research analysis of faculty and centers at UC Berkeley.

PUBLIC EDUCATION: California's system of K-12 and higher education was once the envy of the nation and many aspects of our public education system are emulated around the world. Yet California ranks at the bottom (46th) in state support of public education at the very time that inequality is most acute, and when our schools are racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse, yet still highly segregated according to a 2014 UCLA report. UC Berkeley can help incubate and collaborate with efforts to restore California's funding of its public schools. Campaigns like 20 By 20, which seeks to increase California's funding of K-12 schools to \$20,000 per pupil by 2020, and legislation like Assembly Bill 2731, supported by the Patriotic Millionaires, are examples of burgeoning efforts to strengthen financial support for California's schools and public infrastructure.

RACE, RACIAL PROFILING, AND CRIMINALIZATION: UC Berkeley already has some of the leading scholars dealing with racial profiling and discriminatory police practices. Berkeley should continue to develop ethical responses to the problem of racial profiling, discriminatory policing, and mass incarceration, drawing in detail on the history of racial typing in the U.S. UC Berkeley faculty have broad and deep expertise in quantitative measurement, ethnographic and participatory action research on the many dimensions of unjust policing, criminal prosecution, and carceral policies. Their collective work can help to build and strengthen programs that bring UC Berkeley faculty, staff, and students into dialogue with the criminal justice system—in the form of prison education, legal strategies, philosophical debate, and artistic engagement.

IMMIGRATION: Berkeley should develop a model for responding to the movements or “flows” of migrant bodies across the country. Building on the work of many current Berkeley faculty studying migration, it should learn how and where migrants go, understand the social and psychological impacts of migration, and solve the relationship between migrant movement, crop variations, social upheaval, and cultural intolerance. This would involve the expertise of researchers in geography, history, forestry, anthropology, ethnic studies, political economy, and area studies.

DISABILITY: Building on its historic legacy as a leader in disability rights and access, Berkeley should forge new research strength in the complex and myriad ways in which disability—both visible and invisible—affects identity, social mobility, and full engagement and participation in social and economic well-being. The Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement archives in the Bancroft Library and the pioneering work of numerous scholars affiliated with the Disability Studies cluster within the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society are key resources to build on in this field.

DOCUMENTING INEQUALITY IN NEW WAYS: The arts and humanities can be used to document inequality and to provide a sense of how marginalization and oppression affect human beings. UC Berkeley's cultural resources—such as the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive and the

Hearst Anthropology Museum—and its expertise in journalism provide important ways to document aspects of inequality and to imagine future possibilities.

SUSTAINABILITY: Provide opportunities for inter- and multidisciplinary examinations of affordable housing, environmental justice, and public infrastructure.

UC BERKELEY ITSELF: UC Berkeley itself provides an important site for dealing directly with the many aspects of inequality in America. UC Berkeley already embraces many diverse populations, and it should work to increase that diversity. At the same time, by embracing these populations it has encountered the many challenges faced by these groups such as food insecurity, housing problems, marginalization, trauma, and health problems. As discussed in the Appendix, Berkeley should become a model for how to deal with these problems.

IMPLEMENTATION:

RESEARCH AND OUTREACH

- *Develop a Signature Yearly Event on “Inequality and Opportunity:”* With its wealth of resources, Berkeley could develop a yearly event that highlights the state of inequality and opportunity in particular substantive areas or geographic areas. The event would not only provide an update on the problem of inequality, it would also focus on new policies and programs that could ameliorate inequality.
- *Give Special Attention to How Ethnicity, Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Other Forms of Marginalization Affect Inequality:* Abundant research suggests that the interaction of various characteristics often create especially acute forms of inequality—Berkeley should be a leader in the study of this “intersectionality.” The Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society” provides an excellent foundation for this work. Truly understanding these intersections typically requires an interdisciplinary team of people to understand the multiple interactions that exacerbate inequality. Efforts should be made to encourage the formation of these teams.
- *Work to Design and Evaluate Ways to Reduce Inequality:* Berkeley should identify some promising policies or programs to ameliorate inequality such as a Universal Basic Income, a Guaranteed Job Program, a new Master Plan for California’s Higher Education, or some other program. It should bring people together to design these policies and to find ways to evaluate features of them using various methodologies including local or state demonstration projects.
- *Continue to Support Basic Research on Inequality and Opportunity:* Many of our insights about inequality and opportunity have come from basic research about health, education, human psychology, and other fields.
- *Support Data Science Methods for Improving Research on Inequality and Opportunity:* New sources of data and new methods for analyzing it provide researchers with new ways to understand the impacts of inequality. In conjunction with the Signature Initiative on “Inclusive Intelligence,” Berkeley should continue to lead in applying data science to important issues such as inequality.

TEACHING AND SERVICE

- *Major in a problem, minor in a discipline* (or the reverse): Inequality and opportunity presents the perfect laboratory for the possibility of rethinking the academic major to an interdisciplinary model aimed at understanding the complexity of pressing social problems.
- Design and launch a series of *general education courses* across campus focused on inequality, showcasing the pressing issues and the insights from social science research, and from the arts and humanities.
- *Non-Governmental Organizations and the University*: The University should establish partnerships with a network of NGOs through which Berkeley students and faculty can work regularly and easily. This would present rich development opportunities to create and sustain research-practice partnerships that might generate innovative approaches and solutions to pressing problems of inequality.
- *Application of Knowledge*: Integrate socially productive work in education and development in every major. Integrate international experience more systematically into campus majors.
- *Integration of Social Science and Science*: Develop programs that bring cutting-edge work in the sciences into contact with African American, Latinx, and other communities that are underrepresented in these fields. Examples of key intersections could be in the field of algorithmic bias and racism, issues of data privacy and surveillance, advances in genetic and ancestry testing, and public health implications of medical monitoring and tracking.

CAMPUS UNITS THAT MAY DRIVE THIS SIGNATURE INITIATIVE (PARTIAL LISTING):

- *Departments*: The entire university would contribute to this challenge. Particular departments and units might serve as “hubs” for addressing the challenges and possibilities. These include: Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Public Policy, Public Health, Education, Sociology, Social Welfare, African American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women’s Studies, Journalism, Data Science, Computer Science, Statistics, and Demography.
- *Schools*: Education, Public Policy, Public Health, Law, I-School
- *Centers*: Berkeley Opportunity Lab, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, Center for the Study of Race and Gender, Institute for Governmental Studies, Social Science Matrix, Stiles Hall, Undocumented Students Program, Fannie Lou Hamer Center, California Policy Lab
- *Campus*: The Centers of Equity and Excellence support non-traditional students and require more campus support and awareness of their efforts. Affiliated initiatives include [Basic Needs Initiatives](#), [Berkeley Hope Scholars](#), [Berkeley Underground Scholars](#), [Cal NERDS](#), [Cal Veteran Services Center](#), [Educational Opportunity Program \(EOP\)](#), [Miller Scholars Program](#), [POSSE Scholars Program](#), [Professional Development Program \(PDP\)](#), [Re-Entry Student Program](#), [Student Parent Center](#), [Student Support Services \(SSS\)](#), [Transfer Student Center](#), and [the Undocumented Student Program \(USP\)](#). The Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion is another central hub for work to address inequality.

HISTORY ON CAMPUS OF CROSS-DISCIPLINARY EFFORTS IN THIS AREA:

- The Haas Jr Family Foundation gave a major gift to the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society (HIFIS). The faculty hires with affiliations to HIFIS include scholars in social science and the humanities. This has helped to promote diversity of faculty and recruited faculty and (by extension) students who are invested in multidisciplinary scholarship.
- The Vice Chancellor for Research funded six *Collaborative Research Opportunities* in 2016. Three of these fit into the area of *inequality and Opportunity*: the Berkeley Opportunity Lab (Economic Inequality, Disparities and Opportunity), the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative, and i4Y- Innovations for Youth initiative focusing on youth and inequality. This reflects campus potential in this area and a base to build on.
- The American Cultures Center oversees the required American Cultures undergraduate course requirement that involves courses offered through 49 departments. From the AC website: “After more than twenty-five years, and the development of hundreds of courses, AC has become a staple of the undergraduate experience at UC Berkeley, fundamentally changing and challenging the undergraduate curriculum to better present the diversity of the American experience.”
- The Social Science Matrix facilitate cross-disciplinary initiatives and serves as a hub for social science innovation and thought. Similarly, the Townsend Center for the Humanities fosters 70 interdisciplinary research and working groups on a range of topics. Each of these units can be important research, scholarship, and analytic hubs for work on inequality.
- We are not aware of any failed attempts of such an initiative that we are proposing. Indeed, a core challenge might be to better integrate the existing cross-disciplinary efforts around inequality. We recommend that the campus sponsor a major conference that encourages cross-disciplinary approaches and conversations.

APPENDIX 1 -- BERKELEY AS A LEADER IN REDUCING INEQUALITY

As well as looking outward to help the world, the nation, and local communities deal with inequality, Berkeley must look inward to provide opportunity to reduce inequality. UC Berkeley currently does relatively well in providing upward mobility for lower income students, but there are areas in which Berkeley has fallen short of its mission to provide excellent and equitable education for all students, including concerns about completion rates for underrepresented students and for student athletes. In a post-Proposition 209 California, Berkeley has also faced challenges in the successful recruitment, matriculation, and retention of a diverse student body that fully reflects California. Moreover, with the unpredictability of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, several hundred DACA students are currently in need of particular support on Berkeley’s campus. Another challenge to promoting opportunity and reducing inequality is diversifying science, technology, mathematics, and engineering fields. There is an opportunity for Berkeley to share its advances in research and practice on inequality and opportunity and make a global contribution in this area.

The area of inequality and opportunity provides a platform for not only our research excellence but also our educational mission. Sixty years ago, California adopted the Master Plan for Higher Education on the responsibility of a state to provide access to high-quality education for its citizens. UC Berkeley is positioned to think about a new Master Plan that will account for the current crisis of economic, racial, educational, and political inequality. Such questions that Berkeley might engage in the crafting of a new plan include: What should a master plan look like in today's world? How can we model the next big breakthrough in envisioning a more just and equal California? How can we demonstrate and advance the notion that education is a public good worth the federal, state, and private sector investment?

Here are some of the areas within UC Berkeley where the campus could take a leadership position:

- *Elevating Basic Needs:* Prioritize solutions for food insecurity and scarcity of affordable housing for our students. Given that we educate large numbers of students who come from low-income backgrounds, we need to further support their opportunities to learn through food and housing supports that enable them to thrive. Safe, affordable, and accessible housing is a central challenge in Berkeley's ability to recruit and retain underrepresented students, staff, and increasingly, faculty. Reform financial aid processes to address these issues.
- *Student Enrollment:* Develop and promote strategies to insure that UC Berkeley's applicant pool and matriculated students reflect California. Develop outreach activities and summer mentorship programs for high school students, and food and housing supports for students in need of them. Provide opportunities for students to talk across differences regardless of major and social background.
- *Student Retention:* Invest in strategies to increase completion rates for underrepresented students. Pursue development to support the success of these students, and to support the work of faculty and staff who work closely with them.
- *Promote faculty and staff diversity:* This is particularly necessary in departments who have not been able to hire and promote women and faculty and staff of color. Targeted recruitment of under-represented faculty, staff, and administrators at senior ranks could help address this issue. Diversity in STEM fields is an area for experimentation, development, and progress.

In addition, as noted above, Berkeley should find ways to include the study of inequality in its curriculum and its research.