

## **Division of Social Sciences Crosscutting Areas of Convergence**

These are areas that are crosscutting in the social sciences and which provide a point of convergence for bringing together like-minded faculty whose research and teaching interests have some complementarity. Four broad areas were identified: Social Policy;, Race/Racism and Critical Race Studies; Culture/New Media/Technology; and Inequalities, Political Economy, and Globalization.

### Social Policy

There is strength and expertise, division wide, on social policy issues ranging from fundamental issues of policy development and implementation to the specifics of social policy on such issues as the environment, immigration, sexuality, labor and the economy. Several have potential to develop in ways that would bring distinction and high visibility o our campus. Among these are work on the environment, immigration and what is broadly called “California Studies.”<sup>1</sup>

### *Environment*

Faculty in Economics, Political Science, Anthropology and Sociology are all interested in environmental policy. The Economics department has a strong group of faculty working together with the Bren School to train and conduct research on environmental economics. This is an area of great promise both academically and in terms of providing a range of career options for students specializing in this field. This is also an area that has significant potential for funding, especially in collaboration with the sciences and engineering.

The focus on environmental economics is complemented by the research of anthropologists working broadly in the area of evolutionary and ecological studies. Examining the human-environment relationships from prehistoric times to the present, they explore such topics as resource conservation and management, environmental impacts of commercial development and impacts of environmental change. This group already links with Environmental Studies, the Development and Evolutionary Psychology area in the Psychology Department, and the UCSB-UCLA Evolution, Mind and Behavior (EMB) program. Existing links to Geography and Geology could also be expanded.

Political Science is another department where there are deep resources in environmental policy. With three political scientists working in this area, one senior political scientist in Bren, and a junior appointment being considered for Bren, this is an area where we have one of the largest clusters of political scientists working on environmental policy at any

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<sup>1</sup> These do not exhaust the policy domains that scholars in the Division pursue nor is it meant to imply that only these will be supported. Others may be supported as well, such as work on “Asset-based Social Policy” which represents my long-term scholarly interest.

university in the country, and doing so from domestic, comparative, and international perspectives.

### *Immigration*

Immigration is another area where there is strength among the faculty and a desire to build on that strength in a number of departments and programs. For example, in the Asian America Studies Program there are clear aspirations to make social policy, legal issues and immigration law an important focus of their work. This work would be distinctive in its focus upon Asians and Pacific Islanders from the Pacific Rim complemented by a comparative dimension between different ethnicities within the US. This takes advantage of UCSB's Pacific coast setting that looks both west and south.

Research on immigrant communities, and the social processes of immigration abounds in the division in Sociology, Chicana/o Studies, Political Science, Anthropology, and Black Studies. This area is ripe for cross division collaboration as well, particularly with history.

### *California Studies*

A final area that seems to be developing centers around what loosely could be called "California Studies"-- a focus on social life and social policy related to California. The two departments that seem posed to focus on this area of study are Anthropology and Sociology.

Anthropology is organizing a concentration in their department which constitutes a constellation of faculty expertise that includes prehistoric and post-contact archaeology; paleo-biology; contemporary migration studies, particularly of Latin American immigrants; labor studies; health issues, science and technology studies; and culture resource management. This concentration would focus on all aspects of social life in California, from prehistoric times to the present, as well as the intersection between society and human biology. In varying degrees, much of the research and education would be issue oriented. Cross-campus and inter-campus links include CITS, the Labor Studies Group, and UC-Mexus.

At the same time, Sociology is considering a focus on an Initiative in Latina/o Chicana/o identity and community. This is both an opportunity and a challenge. While the State of California is undergoing major social transformations associated with the growth in the Chicana/o and Latina/o populations, so that they now comprise nearly one-third of the population, it is clearly within reach that the UCSB Department of Sociology might quickly emerge as one of the top national centers of research and graduate training on the social lives of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in the U.S. Currently, the department has one scholar whose work is centered on the questions of Chicana/o communities (Segura), and two scholars who conduct research on globalization and Latina/o community formations in the U.S. (Robinson and Appelbaum). The further development of this area would contribute policy-relevant research data to California and national decision-makers, contribute new models and theories to the academic fields concerned with racial issues

and conditions, and it would signal to the local community that UCSB sociology is mindful of its needs and interests. Because of its policy relevance, it also would likely enhance the level of extramural funding and facilitate the research training of an increasing number of our graduate students who are working in this area. The need for additional curricular development in Chicana/o and Latina/o sociology is urgent given the demonstrated interest in the area (over 575 students recently signed a petition requesting additional sociology faculty and coursework in this area) and the inability of the department to offer more than two courses in this area per year. Areas that need to be developed include migration and demographic transformations, inter-group conflict, the sociology of education, and sexualities.

### Race/Racism/Critical Race Studies

The social sciences at UCSB has long been a strong center for the scholarly understanding of the dynamics of racial and ethnic relations, both in the US and in comparative perspectives. Much of the energy for this has come from the presence of strong faculty in this area in the Ethnic Studies Departments – Black Studies, Asian American Studies and Chicana/o Studies. But increasingly, we have also been building this strength in other departments in the social sciences, namely Sociology, Political Science, Law and Society, and Women’s Studies. We are now poised to take off in this area by organizing around the conceptual notion of “New Racial Studies” which focuses on the new context in which race and ethnicity are embedded in the U.S. and abroad. The New Racial Studies tries to understand the social dynamics of race and ethnicity in the post-civil rights context, where race is no longer a black/white focus, but multi-racial and multi-ethnic. In the US this post-civil rights phase shifts the focus on the confluence of race, ethnicity, gender and immigration status with their attendant identities on the patterns of social stratification, policy preferences, political orientation, and social movements.

#### *Understanding the Post-Civil Rights Context*

After the end of the Civil Rights Movement, the passage of anti-discrimination laws and the ups and down of affirmative action, there is a strong need to better understand the new context in which race and ethnicity is embedded. Much of this has to do with issues of global population movements which have created new populations and new forms of race and ethnicity. Many faculty throughout the division are examining these issues. For instance, faculty in Asian American Studies, Chicano Studies, Sociology, and Global Studies are examining the consequences of global immigration for the US and other societies. Law and Society and Asian American Studies faculty are examining the political consequences of immigration, and faculty in Political Science are looking at the implication of multiracial and multicultural identities on social and political attitudes.

#### *Intersections of Race and Gender*

A defining feature of New Racial Studies is its emphasis on the interaction of race with gender, class and sexuality. Our faculty is thoroughly committed to scholarly work that examines these intersections. Faculty in this area are represented throughout the division.

In sociology there is a strong group of scholars examining such issues as the intersection of race and gender in Latino communities; international ethnographies on racial justice and gender, sexuality and race; and, gender, race and development. In Women's Studies, a group of scholars are examining the intersection of race and gender in several contexts; movements for racial and economic justice; sexuality; and transnational women's movements. In Law and Society several faculty focus on issues of racial exclusion in relation to security, taxonomies and legal heuristics with a strong focus on how gender interacts.

### *Center for New Racial Studies*

With a seed grant from a major national foundation, Professors Winant of Sociology and Parker of Political Science have started bringing faculty interested in these issues together to form a Center for New Racial Studies. This is one of the important ways we can bring focus and coherence to this potentially rich line of crosscutting work.

### Culture/New Media/ Technology

Another area that we can build upon and continue to gain coherence and strength in is our work on culture/new media/technology. We have individual strengths in each area and with a focus on their crosscutting interests we can make significant contributions that are not only academically strong, but also of interest to particular publics, including, but not limited to, public policymakers. What is so exciting about this work is its methodological pluralism. Knowledge is discovered from a broad range of methodological strategies; from survey research to content analysis, to ethnographic research, to sophisticated experiments.

### *Culture*

The study of culture is one of the most ubiquitous areas in the social sciences. On our campus we have one of the most distinguished sociology departments in the US working on culture (Sociology was ranked #5 by U.S. New and World Report for its program on culture). Among faculty working in this area there is a strong focus on the formative role of cultural factors in knowledge formation, political regimes, institutions, and the politics of gender/sexuality. Faculty in Sociology, Global and International Studies, Political Science, Women Studies, and Communications are interested in issues of the constitutive elements of culture (i.e., language), cultures of resistance, and the role of culture in social movements, religion, and globalization.

An additional focus on culture comes from the more humanistically oriented members of the Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies programs. Their more textual methods examine culture from the perspective of aesthetic and cultural studies with a focus on how "race," "gender" and other identities are "constructed" and "deconstructed" in historical and contemporary fiction and biography.

### *New Media/Technology*

A growing interest in the social sciences, as well as across campus in the humanities and engineering is the social impact of technology and new media. Much of this work is brought together in the activities of the Center for Information Technology and Society (CITS), a multi and interdisciplinary collection of scholars engaged in a research program that focuses on how new media environments affect collective action and social structures. Currently working within this research strand are colleagues in Communication who study the role of information in collective action and organizational change, sociologists who study social movements and new media, and anthropologists who conduct ethnographic research on political organizing in Central America using the Internet.

Another dimension of this work in this area relates to the social organization of the production of media products in such diverse arenas as television production and screenwriting and song making and the recording industry. And finally, issues of the varying usage and exclusion of new technology by minorities and women that has been a core concern of faculty in Ethnic Studies.

This work has the opportunity to be taken to new levels by the new Center for Film, Television and New Media, which is an interdisciplinary effort of the Social Sciences and Humanities Division.

#### Inequality, Political Economy and Globalization

A traditional core concern in the social sciences has been the nature, sources and consequences of social inequality. The social sciences at UCSB are uniquely positioned to focus on these questions in a number of areas, but particularly through the prism of globalization. We are developing a strong cohort of faculty who are examining social change by focusing on the social, economic, technical, and cultural forces that are transforming the US and societies around the world. By focusing on transnational processes, interactions and flows, rather than international relations, social analysts in this tradition are able to make intriguing and illuminating connections to issues of social inequality that are important and timely.

A key component of this work is rooted in the area of political economy. This work ranges from research on the political economy of flows of money and capital in the world economy to issues of monetary policy and the interplay of party politics in different national contexts to research on U.S. tax and fiscal policy. Another line of research focuses on tracing the global forces responsible for the manifestation of social problems in one place, such as the study of garment workers in LA, which leads to analyses of the global structure and forces affecting the apparel industry worldwide. Scholars in Political Science, Sociology, Global Studies, and Black Studies are hard at work on issues of this sort.

The focus on inequality also leads to attention on how global social movements are developing to respond to these issues. With a growing and increasingly recognized group of scholars in the field of social movements and collective action we are primed to be one

of the leading places to understand the sources for the development of social movements, the study of protests events and collective forms, the role of oppositional consciousness and collective identity in collective action, and how social movements have been affected by and shape the larger culture. We are engaged in a wide ranging set of empirical studies of global social movements; anti –sweatshop and labor organizing; the role of feminist and anti-racist social movements on utopian thought,; women’s movements in the Third World; fundamentalist and terrorist movements; and the human rights movement. Scholars in Sociology, Global Studies, Asian American Studies, Women’s Studies and Law and Society are engaged in this work.

Giving impetus to this line of work is the proposed Center for Global and International Studies and the new MA program in Global Studies. These new vehicles will enable scholars and students to project to the public our interest and scholarship in this area. Likewise, scholars in the field of social movements are seeking extramural funding for a cross-campus initiative with UC Irvine to develop a Center for the Study of Collective Action which would serve as an organizational venue and training program for stand-by-research teams prepared to conduct systematic research on collective action and protest events in California, the US, and in international venues. This would put us in the vanguard of exciting social processes that are of significant public interest and concern.

### **Mechanisms for Promoting Public Engagement**

Scholarship alone will not produce the kind of public engagement that I envision. Along with the scholarship, we must also promote the kind of mechanisms that will enable our most entrepreneurial and public minded scholars to be inspired to place their scholarship in the public sphere through special publications intended for non-social scientific audiences, media appearances, testimony to public agencies and various legislative bodies, and translation of appropriate research to the non-profit sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. Several mechanisms are being considered as ways to kick-start and sustain this kind of engagement. They include: a regular general social survey of the three county Santa Barbara region; annual products that describe our research in particular areas; and, on-going lecture series and conferences.

Working with the Institute on Social, Behavioral and Economic Research (ISBER) we are hoping to secure funding for a regular social survey of attitudes and opinions of residents of the three-county Santa Barbara Region. This survey would include a panel of questions that would allow us to tap change in attitudes on a number of issues of interest to the community over time. It would include as well, a topical module that would reflect a Principal Investigator’s particular scholarly and public policy interest. Each time the survey is given, a new PI’s interest would be reflected in the topical module. Over time, we would expect that module to be financially supported by extramural funding that takes advantage of the existence of the survey. We would provide public summaries of the findings of this survey as an insert in local press such as the Santa Barbara News-Press and/or The Independent. In keeping with our interest in engaging the public, we would also provide public summaries to local organizations and interested groupings, both written and in-person. The vehicle of a general social survey will provide clear data that

we could share with the general public and over time, become a resource for the greater Santa Barbara Community. We are now in the process of preliminary fund-raising from private individual donors.

Another mechanism we are considering is an annual product that communicates a particular area of our research to the general public in a compelling and understandable way. Farthest along in our thinking on this mechanism is the work of CITS. With a host of researchers working on the impact of technology and new media at UCSB we are poised to assume high visibility and a strong identity for this kind of research. However, given the multi- and interdisciplinary nature of this work, it is not easily assessable to the public. It is most often found in journals and outlets that do not reflect the genuinely interactive way it is being produced here. One possibility is that each year we produce an accessible, readable and engaging report on New Technology Research at UCSB, that would be a synthesis of the research published and produced here in that area. We would hold press conferences in San Francisco and Washington D.C. to introduce it to the media and relevant constituencies. Such a report could be covered in the technology press and looked forward to and depended on every year for the insights that it provides.

One of the most traditional ways in which scholars communicate their work is through conferences and forums. We want to do more forums where our work is interrogated by or commented upon by people outside the academy. Constituencies in the civil rights community for example, who may find our work on the New Racial Studies challenging to their conventional understandings, could be an integral part of a conference of this type. This is one way to engage with relevant constituencies in ways that are more likely to generate two-way conversations. Likewise, in our work on environmental economics, we would have the opportunity to provide conferences that bring regulators, the private sector, and representatives of the environmental movement together to engage the issues.

Over time, we will develop additional ways to engage the public with our work. What is clear is that this is not business as usual. It requires us to communicate our work in clear ways, listen to what others think of our work, and have a foot in the world beyond the university. It would be great to think that this is something that the majority of the social science faculty will embrace, but initially it will more likely be a small group. Our challenge will be to make this look attractive, both by providing impetus with funding opportunities initially and by also demonstrating that it can be exciting and very personally gratifying to have one's work matter beyond the academy. Our initial success, however, will depend on finding the extra dollars that will make these mechanisms work for our faculty.